

THE PLOUGH

THE QUARTERLY
OF THE
BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

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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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'WE WANT TO DO DEEDS WITH GOD'*

CHRISTOPH BLUMHARDT

Christoph Blumhardt was identified with the Religious Socialist Movement in Germany at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. The talk is translated from 'Ihr Menschen seid Gottes' (You Men are God's'), a collection of his sermons and meditations published in 1936 by the Rotapfel-Verlag in Zürich.

On the whole it is truer to say, 'God wants to do deeds with us'. Really we cannot just do things with God; God is not a tool to be picked up by the handle and hammered away with. Men have got a little too accustomed to this idea, and when a man appears to be making use of God in this way we are almost inclined to call it faith. But this is where false powers often creep in, and the result is false miracles, false signs, and false prophets. The true character of goodness often gets mixed up with much that is false through the fault of men who are so absolutely determined to enforce it that many of them never notice when they are acting wilfully instead of with God.

One thing is certain: God wants to do things with us—provided we allow ourselves to be prepared—and this is something that does not happen so quickly. It is very dangerous to act with people who are not at all prepared; things get done for the kingdom of God which lead to the greatest nonsense—all with good intentions and always with the motto, 'We want to do deeds with God'. Consequently we have to be very careful to allow ourselves to be prepared. We cannot be too sober or too cautious in seeing that we men remain men. Into this really human situation God wants to pour the healing power of his truth.

But God must do deeds with us, otherwise we do not live at all. That is why it is so important to give ourselves for God in the little things as well, and especially in daily life. We must become quite

*The reference is to Psalm 60, verse 12, of which the German version translated would read in part: 'We want to do deeds with God'.

different people if we are to become a folk with whom God can do things in the world. Our ordinary Christianity is not enough; that is why our dear Christians have to keep themselves prudently hidden. They do not count in the world; no deeds can be done with them. We must let ourselves be put in order for God anew, and that makes me think of the early days of Christianity. Of course, many wrong things crept in there, too, but for a long time Christianity had something impressive about it; Christians were really on hand for God; they were like tools with which God could overcome the world, and the result was that, at the very least, Christianity could not be rooted out. To be sure, not everything was fine with them, but there was a dedication to God which is hardly to be found today. With us everything is rather gentle and stupid, but God needs alert people, quick of understanding—not of the head but of the heart—not people who believe every superstition, who easily fall for what is sensational, and who lack the absolute certainty that, 'It is God, the one true God, alone who counts in the world, and I will let myself in for nothing else'. People who are not sure of this are not prepared for God to do deeds with them. We must get ready for this, and it is not so difficult, especially if we will let God do the deeds.

But do not think too much *how* you will do it—God will accomplish it in you so that it comes quite naturally and you hardly notice it. In any case, it is not your doing. If you are good, that is not your deed or effort—it is God's doing, God's work, and you will find it comes to you quite naturally. Goodness must be like the best-fitting garment we have—it must look so natural that no one can think, 'That is a good man' but 'There for once is a real man!' Then, so to speak, the special religious quality is lost, and the simple, natural man emerges—that is God's work! When I see a man to whom goodness comes naturally I say, 'God has really done something with that fellow', and that for me is like refreshing water.

On no account may we ourselves lay this foundation, it must be done by God, for the foundation which has to be laid is a foundation for mankind. We must be prepared so that God can do things to men through us. We must act humanly, aiming to be all things to all men. If we do not succeed in this, God can do no deeds with us.

Why do we like reading the Bible so much? Because the people in it are so human. What a natural man Joseph is! Abraham and David—how natural they are! If they make mistakes too it is not so bad, they are human. That is why anyone can read the Bible, because everyone feels the words are addressed to him and can think: that applies to me just as much as to Abraham. There is no coercion anywhere, and that is why we value the Bible so much. Read it right through: each individual with whom God acted had to become a

completely free man; always free, always freeing himself from everything—otherwise nothing could really be achieved with any of them. If God has a whole man he can do things with him, and they will be the right deeds, they will be the works of the Father in heaven. Before, they were Christian deeds, and these are quite nice too—human deeds can be quite nice—but what will save the world in the end are the works of the Father.

Something has to happen; it must be possible for God to be among us as *creator*, that we may see creative works of God. If we get to the point once again where something *creative* happens, that is the greatest hour in God's kingdom. There must be deeds. The dishonest, the rude, the rough, and the foolish in man must stop—but how? The majesty of the Holy Spirit, the greatness of Almighty God must be among us. Things must happen to your heart and to every heart, to our bodies, and to everything that lives—in the earth and in the air—some deed of God.* For this, God wants to use us—we are to help him. And so we say with joy, God wants to do deeds with us and he will because we want him to and because we are not so bold as to think *we* can do something—we can do nothing. But God will do so much with us that the world will marvel—with his children he can do anything!

IS THIS ESCAPE?

STAN EHRLICH

This article was written by the member of the Bruderhof at Primavera who wrote, 'Are we made for a Brotherly Life?' in Vol. II. No. 4. He and his wife came from a circle of young intellectuals in Buenos Aires.

They tell us we are withdrawing from the world and its history. They say we are spending our lives only with those who think as we do, that we are thus depriving ourselves of all chance to act effectively on behalf of our convictions 'in history', 'in the world', in the place 'where we have been put'.

What can we answer to this?

The first thing we must get clear is what these ideas 'in the world' and 'our place in the world' mean. Is it really true that every one has been put where he is by God's will? Has every one been assigned a certain battle station, a certain responsibility that is his alone? I think a responsibility was given to the human race the moment it was created. This was, and is, to love God, to praise him, and to bring the whole of creation back to him, and today this is still the first and most important responsibility we have.

*Blumhardt believed that God's spirit must transform the material world as well as the spiritual—that the whole creation must be redeemed.

When creation fell, there began the history of the 'world', the sum of our still free but no longer pure wills. The tangled components of force in this history have produced the particular situations in which each of us finds himself today. These situations were not produced by some blind enigmatic fate, to which we are so fond of passing on the blame. In the beginning they arose as the result of human decision and responsibility, and human decision goes on producing them today. If we think we have been 'put in this place' we are wrong; it was not God's will that chose this place for us any more than our own will. We were put here by the force of events loosed by men. When we reflect and come to ourselves, the first thing we must do is to confirm, by a genuinely free choice, that the place where we are is really ours. But if we feel that this place does not fit with our destiny as a creature of God, we must choose another where we believe this destiny can best be fulfilled.

And what does working in history mean? What does it mean, in the first place, to be in the midst of history?

It is true, as I have just said, that individual situations are profoundly interdependent; each determines the course of the others. Thus human history is an inseparable whole. But I cannot believe that merely being in the maelstrom of history automatically means living in this history. You may be in the whirl of the big city, take part in its outward life and be exposed to all the consequences of historical happenings, but to have a true relationship to history is much more than that. World history is events, human events, and a man shares in it only if he does not simply let it happen to him and around him, but does his part to determine its course. This sharing in the formation of history is what I should call working in the world. That is really living with history.

People who have the same faith and live together at the same place are not necessarily turning their backs on world events—if they do what they do with the realization that their lives are true to a freely chosen conviction and that this conviction has a clear relationship to the history of the world. Their relationship to history, their working in history, is expressed in two things: in refusing to be the unwilling tools of forces which they know are destructive and ruinous, and at the same time in putting themselves at the service of the power which will lead men back to their original destiny. And so we who live in community do not separate the history of the world from the history of salvation in the way others do.

This is probably the fundamental difference between our attitude and that of others. We believe in the absolute unity of creation; we believe that every individual living being is profoundly bound up with the whole. And we do not believe that we can separate our own salvation,

our own redemption, from the redemption of the whole world. Nor can we approve of any material security that is not available equally to all people. We believe that our redemption, our return to God, is bound up with the redemption of the whole creation. We must not separate the things that belong to our salvation from the things that belong to world history. The affliction and distress of the world are not historical conditions we should like to free ourselves from—for instance, by the use of wealth; they are our affliction and our distress. World history becomes the history of our salvation. An inner imperative drives us to share in the redemption of the world. The course of history is no longer something that is no concern of ours; it becomes our history just as what happens to us and with us extends its effect into history.

This means that we must not admit limitation of our actions through circumstances; circumstances are nothing other than the consequences of our own human actions down through the centuries. We must not adapt ourselves to history. We must be willing to direct history. Is that utopian, megalomaniac? We do not believe it is.

We do not imagine that we ourselves are influencing the course of things here and now. We know that the forces at work in history are stronger than our human wills. These forces rise out of the compounding of emotional forces, and finally sweep the people who have formed them along with them. They become spiritual powers of good and evil. We can join one camp or the other by free choice. Our decision will strengthen one power and weaken the other. Both powers have been able to exert their influence on history because of the freedom of created things, but it is only the relative freedom of the creature that causes the struggle here, not the final integrating freedom of God. His power and spirit sustain all creation; they will sustain those who hold freely and trustingly to him in their striving for unity.

All this means that the necessity of our working in history, in the world, cannot be separated from our faith. It is not that we as human beings can bring about God's kingdom: that would really be utopian. But the kingdom will come, if we hold to the spirit of the kingdom. Taking this stand must not be limited to the maintaining of a certain attitude. The attitude of faith implies that it must be worked out in terms of history—world history, in a daily radical practical application, serving the spirit which will one day rule the earth.

Because we have declared ourselves for this spirit and this practice, we cannot feel that we have separated ourselves from history. In fact, it seems to us that we have incorporated ourselves into history in a truly free choice for the stand which seems to us to be God's will and which commits us to that degree of dedicated service which community life is. We know we stand with the world from the moment that we declare common cause with it, to the extent that we cannot separate

its distress from our own, so that, in fact, its distress becomes our own and we make our redemption dependent on its redemption.

Our deepest wish is not to get away from a painful world by escaping into the search for God. It is to testify to an alternative which serves God in protesting against the pain of the world. We have no wish to abandon the world; we want to make it the dwelling-place of God-filled men and women. We do not want to get out of the world to God; we want God's will to rule again on earth in that we make his will our own.

But this endeavour is so far above us it can never be carried out by partial means. As long as we do nothing but undertake minor, partial repairs here and there we cannot hope for anything to come out of it. If we want everything, we have to give everything. It is impossible to win the new and at the same time cherish something of the old, once we have seen the untruth of the old. If we want to work for unity we feel we should not go on in the existing social and economic conditions that divide people and pit them against each other. And isn't there something historical about social and economic conditions? Are we not living in history if we oppose these conditions by clearly putting a better system into practice?

In the place 'where we have been put' our real life-responsibility was hemmed in by conditions which we rejected and felt to be wrong. Should we have stayed in that place when we were shown and given the possibility of a new way of life? Is it not rather the person who stays where he is to seek his own personal salvation who is separating himself from the world, even if he lives in a city with ten million other people?

Repentance is no empty word. Its first movement is a rejection, not of the world but of the things in the world that are antagonistic to God. From the world itself, the creation of God, in which all of us are completely involved and embedded, we cannot and do not wish to turn away. In our repentance we need have no fear of separating ourselves from the world. We should rather be afraid to remain involved in things in this world which we cannot escape.

All of us hope for a future of peace, love, and brotherliness. The fulfilment of this wish is not bound to any place. It depends if people make a reality of it. And so we want to make use of our lives to show and shape—now in the present time—the image of the future. We have turned toward the future, changed our direction in the present. And since our existence spans the arch between present and future, we believe that it is history we are living.

IN GERMANY TODAY

WHAT IS OUR TASK?

Have we of the Society of Brothers a special contribution to make in Germany today? Hans Zumpe asks this question and answers it from his experience. The individuals who first went back to Germany from the Paraguayan and British communities after the Second World War went mainly to try to rescue war orphans and refugees. Hans Zumpe speaks of the wider task in Germany itself, which has occupied us since that time. It should be noted that the following extracts are from a letter addressed to the brudershof members in preparation for the coming conference in Paraguay.

If today we consider the question of where we shall put the main strength of our brudershof mission we have to say that God answered this question in fact some time ago when his finger pointed clearly to North America. It is true that we are not the ones who are acting—it is much more that something is being stimulated by God. We experienced a real movement of God like this in Germany after the First World War, in England before the Second World War, and now a similar movement has come into being in the United States. The surfeit of civilization and culture which has been reached there leads many to long for a life of simplicity and brotherhood and causes them to dedicate themselves joyously with all they have to the higher good, so that surrender of property is actually a relatively simple matter.

But should God's clear pointing to the great field of work and harvest in North America mean now that we no longer have a commission for the land of our origin in the heart of Europe? There, unbelievable as it sounds, people seem to have nothing more pressing to do than to scratch their lost property together again or to build up anew and cling to their possessions in a childish way. Have we no longer a task in this country where the general attitude of the man in the street is, 'Let's live; tomorrow we die'?

We have in Germany as perhaps nowhere else the possibility of linking up with history. Our beginning there after the First World War was part of a great movement of God which influenced a whole generation—the *Jugendbewegung* (Youth Movement). Even today we can make immediate contact with old members of this movement. A key-word is enough and old memories are awakened and old ideals come to light. We keep finding that new contacts are established through old friends. Sometimes one has the feeling that we are called to a late harvest after a sowing by the founder of our community and the men of his time many years ago. And doesn't such an opportunity also mean a duty, since, as far as we know, we are the only group of the Youth Movement which went on to live as a church-community? This, to

our way of thinking, was the way and direction which God once pointed for the larger movement.

Be that as it may, the establishment of the Sinntal-Bruderhof and the present situation in Germany have in fact brought us to a new stage of our task.

In the first stage we travelled about and told of the bruderhof communities in far-away countries. This attracted people who were eager to emigrate, and it had a special appeal before the currency reform when everything looked dark and there was a general tendency to flight from Europe.

In the second stage, at Hohenstein, we were able at least to invite people to come to us—although we had to add straight away that this held good only for the summer. Besides, we had no real work possibilities, and this may have given quite a wrong impression to those who came wondering whether they should dedicate themselves completely to our life.

In the third stage, which we have now entered by the establishment of the Sinntal-Bruderhof, we can at last say, 'Come and stay!' Before the end of the year, with good progress in the rebuilding of the 'Sinnthahof' we should be able to provide accommodation for fifty.

What lends our situation in present-day Germany a special, even a unique stamp, is the convergence of three factors—the need which has come about through rearmament, our answer to it in the form of permanent peace work, and the desire of circles of friends such as the *Nothelfergemeinschaft der Freunde* and the Mennonite Central Committee, to further a peace service for war resisters. This service, it is felt, should provide a task of a social and generally useful kind such as is already recognized in North America in place of military service.

Two other factors come into the situation. Isn't a young man's peace attitude shown more convincingly if he is engaged in work for peace before the question of military service becomes acute, before there is government pressure? Also, it is said in authoritative circles in the West German Republic that any peace service which is likely to be recognized will have to be as hard both in length of service and in living conditions as military service, and that young men will not be allowed just to keep on in their former occupations and earn good wages when these opportunities are lost by men who are drafted.

Since we are better able than any other group in Germany to offer a completely consistent peace service, do we not have a call to create a task in which young men can take part? Didn't we in the same way, in the Sannerz and Rhön-Bruderhof days, find a special task in caring for unfortunate children and taking in tramps, as the 'will-to-help' of the bruderhof coincided with the particular need of that time

which cried out for something to be done? Wasn't it in exactly the same way that our hospital work was built up in Paraguay? Must we not, in every country and at all times, link up with what is the obvious need? Shouldn't the saying we so often use, that community has an answer to every need, be applied specifically and directly to the perplexities and difficulties resulting from the rearmament which lies right at the door of our bruderhof in Germany?

HANS ZUMPE.

THE BRUDERHOF AND GERMAN C.O.'s

The question of how Conscientious Objectors will fare under the proposed conscription in Germany was discussed with Arlo Tatum, secretary of the War Resisters International, when he visited the Wheathill Bruderhof recently. Now he has written the following article from the point of view of the absolutist objector.

On the sixth of March the German Bundestag, by 390 votes to 20, passed into law provisions for military conscription. The twenty Socialists who voted against the bill were described by the *Manchester Guardian* as 'pacifists against all rearmament'—a rather cheering comment. Indications are that actual conscripting of young men will not commence until late 1957.

According to the bill, 'conscientious objectors may be forced to perform other forms of national service'. This means there will be alternative service of some kind, outside the army's jurisdiction. This is fruit from the hard labours of many concerned individuals and organizations.

Although this law had not been passed, Germany and the 'Sinnthahof' were chief topics of conversation during my week-end at the bruderhof in England. As a non-member I was impressed and gratified at the enthusiastic support for the idea of making the 'Sinnthahof' a centre for pacifist activities and a source of support for the war resister who is too busy working for a new, warless world to be conscripted into the Germany army. Bruderhof members are deeply concerned about the pressing problems of the world community, and perhaps even the severest critics of the bruderhof will come to realize this as the 'Sinnthahof' programme develops.

All of us hope that the required alternative services yet to be designated will be of a constructive peace-making nature, and that the 'Sinnthahof' will be able to make its contribution. As this issue of THE PLOUGH goes to press no one can say with assurance how satisfactory the opportunities will be for conscripted pacifists, but certain issues are fairly clear.

Firstly, there are likely to be a few so-called 'absolutists' (such as me) who will—on principle—refuse to co-operate with conscription regardless of what alternative services are approved. No doubt they will be imprisoned along with those who fail to obtain the conscientious objector classification. The 'Sinnthahof' can offer loving support to these objectors and might see its way clear, in cases of special need, to accept into the community dependants of the imprisoned. Some of these men may need a temporary home after release or might wish to make a peace witness through work at the 'Sinnthahof'.

Secondly, there will be the alternative service men—a substantially larger and more varied group. Some will consider their lot a sad one, and their alternative service as 'forced labour'. Much as I sympathize with their dilemma and wish them well, I find myself without suggestions as to how the 'Sinnthahof' as such can assist them. Their unhappiness can spread like a disease in the community, as indicated by the ill-fated C.O. camps in the United States during the war, and to some extent in the Danish Alternative Service camps of today. A man who feels himself to be doing 'forced labour'—whether he be a pacifist or soldier—can only be advised to change his attitude or to cease his labour and become a free man.

This is one reason why I feel the 'Sinnthahof' should not seek to become an approved alternative project to which agreed numbers of war resisters are assigned. Under such an arrangement it would be an instrument of the Government's conscription machinery, not a means of pacifist witness and Christian communalism. In the long run, it would be a dis-service to the cause we cherish and wish to further.

If, on the other hand, specific war resisters feel drawn to the 'Sinnthahof' and wish to express their own convictions by working there, I hope very much they will be welcomed as temporary co-workers and that the German Government will recognize such a voluntary arrangement as 'alternative service'. There is a profound difference between the two possibilities.

May the 'Sinnthahof' become the living, growing symbol of the bruderhof's contribution to the pacifist movement!

ARLO TATUM.

THE DISTANT DRUMMER

'If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is
because he hears a different drummer . . . '

THOREAU

He faced his judges alone. Yes, they are like
A wall of rock, he thought,
Which I must climb without fear or excessive hope.
It is only impossible now ever to turn back.

And when was the first time, they asked him,
That you were reprimanded for breaking the line?
He said, It was the morning following
The night I became aware of the distant drummer.

They frowned. Are you speaking of one of our own men?
There is none who would lag behind
Or advance so far ahead. He answered, steadily,
The drummer I speak of was not of our own ranks.

Their anger flamed. Then why did you pay attention
To one of your country's enemies? And he, quietly,
You are mistaken. This drummer serves under no flag.

There followed silence. He thought, When an April sky
Is covered with storm clouds, a moment comes
When the clouds thin out and a flicker of sunlight trembles.

They asked him, Who, then, was the distant drummer,
That you should give to him this strange obedience?
He answered, His name I do not know.
I only know his hands move to a rhythm
Utterly at variance with that to which we march.

Answer our question. Why did you obey him?
(O sunlight flickering fitfully through the cloud-rift,
Is your beam steady enough for comprehension?)
He answered again, Only they who have heard the drummer
Can know the insistence of the beat in the dark,
The imperative call.

And what of the loyalty you owe
To the music of our own drums? He spoke for the last time, saying,
The distant drummer plays with the master touch.

At that they took counsel together, preparing for judgment.

WINIFRED RAWLINS.

RETURN TO EUROPE

EMMY ARNOLD

It was quite a special joy after almost nineteen years abroad, fifteen of them in South America, to be able to revisit my old home in Germany where our life in community began after the First World War. Unfortunately we had to leave it in 1937 under Hitler. I should hardly have imagined eighteen months ago that I could dare to make such a journey. The years in a hot, sub-tropical climate with at least eight months of summer had not passed without leaving their traces. Yet it had been my desire and goal to be able to see the old home and the communities in other parts of the world which have come into being from this beginning.

So I set out on the 7th of July last year from Primavera in the backwoods of Paraguay where we have been able to build up three villages based on brotherly community and where about seven hundred people, old and young, are now living. First came the trip by air to Asunción, the capital. I spent a few days in our bruderhof-house there—actually there are now three houses, in which up to fifty people are living and working. We have also a shop where products from Primavera are sold—especially wood-turnery but also fruit juice and honey and other things. In this little establishment there are twenty to twenty-five young people who are getting their training. There is always a very active life in the household, a constant coming and going, with visitors from different countries on the way to and from Primavera by boat or air. On the 12th of July we went on—a little group—by aeroplane to Montevideo, Uruguay—Grace Rhoads, a member from North American Quaker circles, who was to help in the European task, and four girls who were to get training in Europe. For some years there has been a small group in Montevideo which is especially engaged in horticulture. Here, too, there are young people in training. How happy we were to visit this settlement and to feel again so exactly the same spirit which unites us in all our places and holds us together in love!

Our next goal was the Wheathill Bruderhof in England. We sailed on the *Highland Brigade* and arrived in London, full of expectation, on the morning of the 4th of August. We were fetched with all our luggage by our people in two cars. What rejoicing there was over the reunion! Now—on European soil—we drove for six to seven hours in glorious summer weather to the Wheathill Bruderhof in Shropshire. How happy we were on our arrival there to see many well-known faces and to get to know the new people about whom we had heard so much! At Wheathill, as in Primavera, people of different countries, professions, and classes are united in common work. Two languages, German and English, are spoken. The Wheathill Bruderhof is beautifully situated among hills and in good weather there is a very wide view towards the

plains in the east and the mountains of Wales in the west. After so many years of other plants and trees I was able again to see beautiful wheat-fields bordered with the well-known English hedges, little beech-woods with blooming heather around them, and pines and birches. I immediately felt very much at home in this circle. I kept remembering a verse out of one of Eberhard's songs:

'God's spirit pervades and fills the air,
Leaps over mountain, alp, and plain,
Brings what is farthest near,
Fresh-blowing wind to those far away.'

On the 15th of September I travelled with Hans and Emi-Margret Zumpe to Germany. I crossed the Channel in great expectation. We travelled non-stop to Nuremberg, the city nearest to Hohenstein, where we had a bruderhof-house last summer. I had quite a strange feeling as the German customs officials got on the train at the border and asked for our passports—all in German, after our years of dealing in Spanish or English. We stood most of the time for the whole length of the Rhine to see once more the old castles and ruins of the Rhine valley. I recalled especially a journey by steamer years ago with my husband. The Rhine itself seemed very small to me after having known for years the great rivers of South America, especially the Paraná-Paraguay, but the banks of the Rhine are far more beautiful. We passed through Cologne, Wiesbaden, Frankfurt, Gemünden, and Würzburg, all cities which I knew very well. We could not see very much of the war damage from the train.

I enjoyed listening to the conversations of fellow-travellers. On the whole people spoke with a good deal of satisfaction of how Germany had recovered so quickly in the post-war years. A pessimistic tone was also noticeable: now it had been rebuilt, only to be destroyed again in a few years. Don't save; enjoy life now. Everything has been lost twice over. . . One man told all that he had been able to do for himself with good work and pay. For me, as one who had lived so long abroad, the opinions of these travellers were very interesting and significant.

In the evening we arrived at Nuremberg where we were awaited by car. It took a good hour to reach Hohenstein in the Franconian Alps. Since it was already dark we could not see anything of the beautiful landscape, only note that the road kept going higher and higher. We had to walk the last part up to the castle. Here, too, I met familiar faces and we were so heartily received that we felt completely at home.

Next morning we could see the wonderful view from the castle—these woods and valleys! It was almost unbelievable after knowing only virgin forest and prairie for so many years. Nature there, too, in that far-off land, has its special and beautiful character, like every creation of God. But this was really overpowering for me!

Although it was already rather far on in September there were still many guests at the bruderhof-house and I gradually became aware that I had to familiarize myself anew with the situation in order to understand and get to know the people again. My first impressions were of the German language after so many long years, and the German folk-songs which rang out in such a homelike way from the school-children in the village, as they were sung in my childhood. I asked myself sometimes where all the years could have gone.

Then I had the opportunity to take various journeys in our car. I had not seen such good roads in any of the cities where I had been for so many years. In the old cities such as Nuremberg and Würzburg I saw how much building was going on. It seemed almost unbelievable to me after all the pictures I had seen in illustrated magazines and books showing war-ravaged Germany. I could not feel that I was in a country which had lost a war. The people looked well nourished and simply but well dressed and were, so to speak, satisfied when I talked with them. Good work, good earnings—these were my first impressions. But when one got into deeper conversation, one felt very strongly that after all one had not lived through things with them and that it was a different situation now than the time after the first war. I found a rather strong distrust among people. 'You were not here when these frightful things happened and had to be endured. We have lost confidence in everyone. We depend on ourselves and our own strength now. Nothing else is left us.' That is what we kept hearing.

One had imagined that it would be as in 1920-30 when there was a very wide-spread youth *movement* or proletarian *movement*. Today it is entirely different. And yet we found, not only among our old friends and acquaintances (where for the most part people recognized me still after twenty years) but also elsewhere, a real longing for an entirely different life. There is not a great enthusiasm, as in the years after the First World War, but there is a silent longing in many hearts in Germany. People do not listen to words. They want to see action. They want something that is whole, not partial, and are touched only if the deed stands behind what is said. There is still a certain mistrust—they have been lied to and betrayed so often. And now, just in this situation, our bruderhof communities feel a strong urge to build up again a brotherly life in Germany, with a true witness of deed. I had the feeling that I had still very, very much to learn, but although I believe that the new beginning at the Sinntal-Bruderhof will not be an easy one either economically or in bringing community into being, yet I am almost certain that there will be not a few who still fundamentally desire true community.

A visit in Nuremberg to the Brothers of the Common Life, whom we had known for many years, strengthened our contacts with old

friends, Brother Eugen and Brother Hans, and we made new friends there with whom we soon felt a close bond. One evening I told about our early years and our further history, while Hans Zumpe showed coloured slides, especially of Paraguay and the development there.

A very special event on this journey was my visit to the Rhön-Bruderhof, which we had bought cheaply in 1926 as a run-down farm. After years of sacrifice yet with real enthusiasm the place had been built up, but it had been confiscated by the Gestapo in 1937. It gave me quite a shock to see all the houses we had built—the main house in which the dining-room served for the common meal-times, discussions, and meetings, nearly falling to pieces, a ruin! In front of the entrance-door one can still read, carved on the beams: 'He who is near me is near the fire' (a saying of the Lord from the time of the early Christians) and in the brotherhood-room where, as everywhere, the benches along the wall have been torn out, 'That we love one another from the heart—and remain at peace, in one mind'. Other buildings have been put to other uses; thus our fine bakery has become a horse-stable, the gable-house a cowstall, and the little isolation-ward a chicken-house. At the sight of this bruderhof which had been so dear to us I was reminded of the song which we first sang at the dedication of the children's house in 1928:

'Even though the house may fall—
And what misery that would cause—
The spirit lives within us all,
And our stronghold is God.'

After we had visited the rooms which served as library, nursery, publishing and business offices, and the rooms where our family had lived, we walked that same evening up to the burial garden. Up the little hill which we had planted with trees we went, to the place where Eberhard, Else von Hollander, and two of our community children have rested for so long. After nineteen years I was revisiting for the first time this silent, wonderfully beautiful place, situated among high pines and surrounded by walls of stone which our own people had carried up there. The hours there were at the same time a *reminder* and a *challenge*, 'that out of the world of death life comes'. 'Work while it is yet day! Night is coming when man can work no more.'

In the glorious October weather we revisited Schlüchtern and old Fulda, places we had known so well in the past. On the street and in shops some people recognized us and several times I heard the comment 'Such good old customers!' A mason who had worked with us in 1932 offered to help in the rebuilding at the 'Sinnthalfhof'. It gave us a shock that the formerly well attended synagogue at Schlüchtern is now a clothing business. We also visited Sannerz, our first home, and were quite warmly received at the inn.

Then I spent a few days at the conference which the Free German Youth Movement held at Hohenstein. Among the sixty attenders one felt very warmly the Free German spirit of more than thirty years ago, the kindly open bearing towards the brother, the putting oneself into present-day relations, and the wish to understand modern youth.

On the evening of the 30th of October our sister and fellow-worker Else Ingold was called into eternity at the hospital in Hersbruck, the little town near Hohenstein. This happened in the midst of the conference. We buried her peacefully on the 2nd of November in the burial ground in Kirchensittenbach. This was really the last common experience at Hohenstein, and it brought very close together the seventeen of us who were still there.

Then at the 'Sinnthahof' I found the beginnings of a new bruderhof. The little group there was working away with great joy and hope. Much was still lacking—money, materials, and equipment—but it was a real beginning. Now we are converting a top floor of attics into a dormitory so that we can invite workcampers and others to join us in the task. Who will work with us?

HE calls us in one band as labourers
To bring his harvest. Therefore we await
His charge, until he come and shall empower
Us for his service.

Come, O wind and fire!
With thy pure Spirit sign us. . .
Hallow for thine own cause thy worshippers
That one for thee the work, one the desire. . .
Give us thy gift of tongues that we proclaim
Throughout all lands the glory of thy name.
Into each outcast place and region come,
That we, the alien born, find now our home
Where God in his uniting love has poured
His Spirit: one our tongue to call the Lord,
One in our heart, the strife and tumult ceased,
That all the earth may hold thy
Whitsun feast.

EILEEN ROBERTSHAW

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

These extracts from letters written by a German friend of the brudershof are presented here in the form of an article. Her experience as doctor, social worker, and lecturer for teachers and welfare workers has brought her into contact with many communities of unfortunate people, and she has a real concern to find a way out of the isolation from which such people suffer. In the second part one of our members tries to answer some of the issues raised.

EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY

The average man today is asked, 'How do you want to plan your life, what do you want to strive for and attain?' The question, 'What can I contribute to human life so that we all can be happy and make others happy, and no one need hunger and freeze?' is hardly ever put, but is considered to be the task of the state and the public welfare worker. Each is seeking his own personal happiness, and the happiness of others is not important except as it leads to one's own happiness, while that of unknown people is completely unimportant. A family-community is the most that is striven for, and it is felt that this community should be as small as possible, with grandmother and aunts best taken care of in an old people's home.

Life can become a hell if we do not learn to live as a community, if each only runs after his own happiness and tries to push aside all who might want to hinder him. The temptation to strive for his own happiness and, on the way, to heap as much of the drudgery as possible on others, at the best paying them for it, that is the poison of our civilization, which cannot be counteracted by all the Christian instruction in the schools. We do not really want to be our brothers' keepers any longer, but we pay our taxes and out of them, keepers for others are employed and paid.

But when we see the individuals whom fate has herded together on account of some calamity—the blind, the deaf-and-dumb, the crippled, the old, the tuberculous, the feeble-minded—then one feels that here are despised people of whom the many free individuals striving to better themselves take no notice. The conscience is eased because they have been 'well taken care of', but such people are worthless ballast, and they feel it themselves—taken care of, receiving charity, without any sense of joy or purpose in life, a burden to the able.

The lack of community feeling is a serious sickness, for which a remedy must be found, and you know much about such remedial care. Gradually we can come to suffer so severely from this illness that we become estranged from each other, until we fear and hate and even kill each other. And this illness of not being able to live together is

very contagious and dangerous. It produces unhappy people, suicides, 'criminals'—and pleasure-seekers.

Man today believes that pleasure is the source of happiness; one enjoys one's partner in marriage, children, food, drink, art, excursions, the speed of motor travel. Money—which is to be gained by work—exists in order to procure such pleasure. To want to be happy is a matter of course; to make others happy is a lesser sort of happiness. This can be seen in families, in schools and teachers' colleges, in clubs, in unions—in fact there are relatively few people in our much-lauded state of 'freedom' who are not out for pleasure.

The question is really one of 'education for community life'. How shall we learn to live in community if we find so little of it in the course of our education of children? What do the school children see? The teacher likes the bright ones and despises those who are not so gifted, even if he tries to be nice to them. The children either become ambitious or they lose interest; they almost never live as a class-community but, coming together at random in crowded classes, they form little groups and gangs, mostly united in not letting parents and teachers see into their lives. No spirit of community can come about in this way.

How is it possible for us to learn to feel responsible for one another again? How is it possible to have an education that does not give rise to cold individualism? Surely our task today is to bring about joyous and living community, but one often experiences in one's own family how difficult this is, even in the simplest and most natural community of all, under ordinary conditions.

On the other hand, the community life which Father Flanagan created among youthful delinquents in Boys' Town, U.S.A., was a real community in which joy and a sense of responsibility and dependability grew—and it was not a community which had been selected, but one that came together by chance.

From a group that has come together at random a 'collective' arises, formed through a common task, but how does a living community arise even out of a group of companions of fate—blind, old, cripples—a living community in which people happily and joyously, each in his own way, become capable of work? For much joy comes from the human capacity for creating and producing.

Bruderhof, Boys' Town, community of work, group, team—these are the attempts already at hand to overcome the sickness of incapacity for community life, and the bruderhof seems to come especially near to the heart of the problem.

What in your experience is the essence of community life?

When we have found the innermost essence of joy-giving community life and are able to recognize it clearly, we can begin to collect

experiences of how mutually to educate ourselves in this art of community life, and no longer lead each other into the temptation to seek just our own happiness. We educate by incessant practice—how is community to be practised? No one knows that better than you.

OUR BRUDERHOF EXPERIENCE

We were glad to get the letters in which you put before us, very vividly, some of the thoughts and concerns which you shared with us during your short visit to Hohenstein last summer. You point to men's incapacity for community as the grievous basic malady of mankind, which in turn gives rise to all manner of more specific ailments in the social body as well as to the widespread lack of joy (as distinct from selfish 'enjoyment'). Like us, you are deeply concerned about this state of affairs and you are searching for a way back to that sense of a common solidarity and mutual responsibility which men ought to feel. You have worked especially with handicapped people who are forced to live together but have no sense of community, and we, too, feel that there is a sad lack of concern for such people. And now you turn to us, as people who know something about group living, with the questions: How can community come about? What lies at the heart of it?

I want to try to answer your questions on the basis of our bruderhof experience. Those acquainted with us know that we are (like Father Flanagan's boys whom you mention) a very mixed group, of about 17 nationalities with the most varied cultural backgrounds, characters, and temperaments, but we have in common just that *incapacity* for true brotherhood which is characteristic of people everywhere today. How deeply we are infected with the virus 'individualism' one learns only in community. But there is another and more essential quality which bruderhof people have in common—and that is an inner 'must' which calls us to this life. In response to this we feel we must turn away from all within ourselves that wants to hinder or destroy brotherhood—be it pride, jealousy, touchiness, opinionatedness, talking behind other people's backs, or whatever it may be—not to mention outer possessions (which, actually, are much more readily given up than our self-will in its various forms). As far as we hold on to anything as our own and refuse to share it, so far do we stand in the way of brotherly community. We must 'practise community', then, by giving all we have and are every day anew. Individualism is so deeply rooted in our hearts that we must continue ceaselessly the 'exercise' of putting our selves out of the way.

All that human effort and practice can achieve is to clear the hindrances out of the way; it can never bring about true community itself. We may train ourselves to feel responsible for our fellow men, to think of them and give them little joys here and there, but this is

very far from community, which can only be given by God. When you ask what, in our experience, is the essence of joy-giving community life, we have to acknowledge quite simply that this central and ruling place belongs to the ever-living Spirit of truth and love who manifested his gathering, barrier-breaking power at the first Pentecost in Jerusalem. He alone is able to create and maintain genuine, deep community—among those who put away all that obstructs his coming, who, expectantly, like the disciples in Jerusalem, open their hearts to him and allow themselves to be ruled and guided by him individually and corporately. This spirit is also the wellspring of that joy which men experience in true life in community. Where God is wholly trusted and obeyed the most 'motley crowd thrown together by fate—blind, old, cripples', can become a living, joyous community.

Since community, then, is not to be learned like a trade or a profession, one cannot expect it to come forth as the inevitable fruit of a special education, although it is important, as you point out, to let our growing children experience true, living community. It would be a wonderful thing to give more and more children the opportunity to be brought up—like those taken in by Don Zeno Saltini in his 'town of brotherly love', Nomadelphia—in such an atmosphere, and, of course, the more people who are willing to give themselves to the cause of brotherhood, the better we should be able to take up such a task. Nevertheless, we must remind ourselves that even young people brought up in community must be allowed to decide freely whether or not to come into the common life.

If true community cannot be brought about by education alone, it can be achieved still less by regimentation or any outer means. All that the great totalitarian movements of our time have managed—although they are trying to do what Christianity ought to do—is to produce frightful distortions and caricatures of this life so as to frighten countless people away from any further dealings with community. We are experiencing this fact in Germany as an aftermath of the Nazi regimentation.

On the basis of what has been said you will surely understand that it would be a vain endeavour to inject, as it were, a dose of community atmosphere into some group badly in need of it, by, say, sending a few of our members to live and work there, if there were no inner readiness in the people to put away the manifold things which commonly stand in the way of community. From our experience we know there is no easy, quick way to brotherly community between men. It is essentially an inner response which cannot be brought about by outer means.

The best way, perhaps the only way, to attack the disease 'incapacity for community' is to overcome it within ourselves in order to be able to show the way to others.



TEACHING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

ANNE GALE

The world is like a round ball. But it's even bigger than a ball. It is made of everything. It turns slowly. It turns as slowly as the little black hand on the clock. If it went too fast, we'd have night-day-night-day-night-day, and no time to play. Then you would get up, put your clothes on, and then—whoops—you'd have to go back to bed again. If the world went too fast, you'd tear your pyjamas, dressing so fast. If the world went too fast, everything would fall.

The world turns and then the other place has sunshine, and that place has night time. The world turns and the sun stays in the same place all the time.

If the world was going too fast and two winds bumped each other, I think the world might fly apart.

If there wasn't anything in the world, then there would be no world. It's true—no people! No trees! I'm wondering how it looks, even!

The world would be empty. There would be nothing, nothing, nothing.

. . . Six- and seven-year-old minds trying to take in the mystery of time and space and being. We like our story and we read it over and over again. We laugh hilariously at the thought of having—whoops—to go back to bed again. And we puzzle and puzzle over what happens to nothing. We watch and watch the globe in our room—the way the

sun warms it and falls away from it—the way you can run your finger down and down from where we are at Woodcrest until you find Paraguay, where Philipi and Moneli and Joy came from. We try to imagine Stevie and Jill riding in a train for two days and coming to Forest River, and it is there on our world, too. The world begins to find form for these children, but beneath this new consciousness of it, there is a deep and solid knowing and belonging and closeness to life that is a child's. In a special way, I believe this is true of children in community.

Teaching children in community is to live with children. It is to be part of what they are. It is to be included in the sense of 'family', which, for them, encompasses a whole community of 150 people, working and sharing directly in each other's lives.

The morning begins with a ten-year-old racing from one end of the 'hof to the other, shrilly whistling the community to work. Children converge from all directions, and I am sure to have five or six jumping escorts as I reach the rambling, old, ginger-breaded mansion that takes in 'the school' on its two lower floors.

We are together all morning with one of the fathers sharing responsibility for fifteen six- and seven-year-olds. We study hard, we play hard, we laugh a great deal and we sing a great deal. And we have seven-year-old problems. 'But Nathan *did* bump me, and I didn't *want* him to!' 'They say I can't use their blocks!' Children, as do we all, find there is work to living together.

At the noon hour, the children rush to their chores: setting table, putting the room in order, getting food already prepared in the kitchen. There may well be a dropped plate or a pulled pig-tail on the way, but all crises are calmed, and we sit down together, often to sing our favourite song: 'This is the day the Lord hath made. Let us rejoice in it and be glad.'

A visiting teacher came to me one morning, astonished: 'The children do their own dishes!' Work, too, is a part of the life of community. Children in community are so close to the work that is needed and necessary for daily existence. They know that Gale's mother helps to cook the food for everyone; that Larry's daddy keeps the garden in the spring; that Ned's father goes down the hill to the shop each morning. We go down that hill ourselves, to watch the machines, and listen, and smell wood and glue and sawdust smells. We follow the measuring of wood, the biting of saw, and we go back home to examine the blocks on our own shelves. And it is a part of our own experience, that man needs to work.

As I walk across the 'hof after the mid-day rest, a small head pokes out of a high window, and a voice calls, 'Anne Gale, see this!' A whiff of soap bubbles floats into the air. Another child runs up. 'Come slide with me!' and we share a piece of cardboard going down

the sliding hill. And then, the afternoon programme begins. Perhaps this afternoon I have the three-year-olds. Or the fours or the twos. We may spend these hours out in the centre yard, helping older brothers and sisters to build a snow-man family. A couple of mothers are with the other groups, and it seems very natural that we all share our play in this way. An older child may stop to scold a younger for getting wet feet. Another may bend to wipe a nose for a smaller child. The snow-family grows: a fat snow mother carrying a baby, a small snow child, a father, and even a dog with a stick for a tail. They beam cardboard smiles after us as we turn in together for supper.

Later, bending over supper dishes in the little bay-window balcony of the old main house, I look out over the 'hof and watch the children cut their zig-zag paths home through the twilight. In an hour or two their parents and I will sit down together for our evening meal.

I am so much more than a teacher for these children, and yet, I am so much less important to them than I'd ever thought a teacher could be. In my teaching of three-year-olds in a social work setting, and in my teaching of four-year-olds in a modern private school, and in all the other dabs of experiences I've had with children, I had over and over again felt that I stood alone for a child as a foot-hold of acceptance and security and supporting love, against a world of conflict and confusion and adult standards and artificialities. I believe many concerned teachers sense the over-burden their knowledge and love for children places upon them. As I turn back, I recognize now



even more clearly than then, the helplessness of being so dissected and impure a piece of strength, so incomplete an answer.

In community, that which is important is not so much what a teacher is to a child, or what a child is to a group; rather, it is that each—teacher, child, parent—senses himself to be a facet of a whole and unified life, and therefore very deeply a part of, and belonging to, each other.

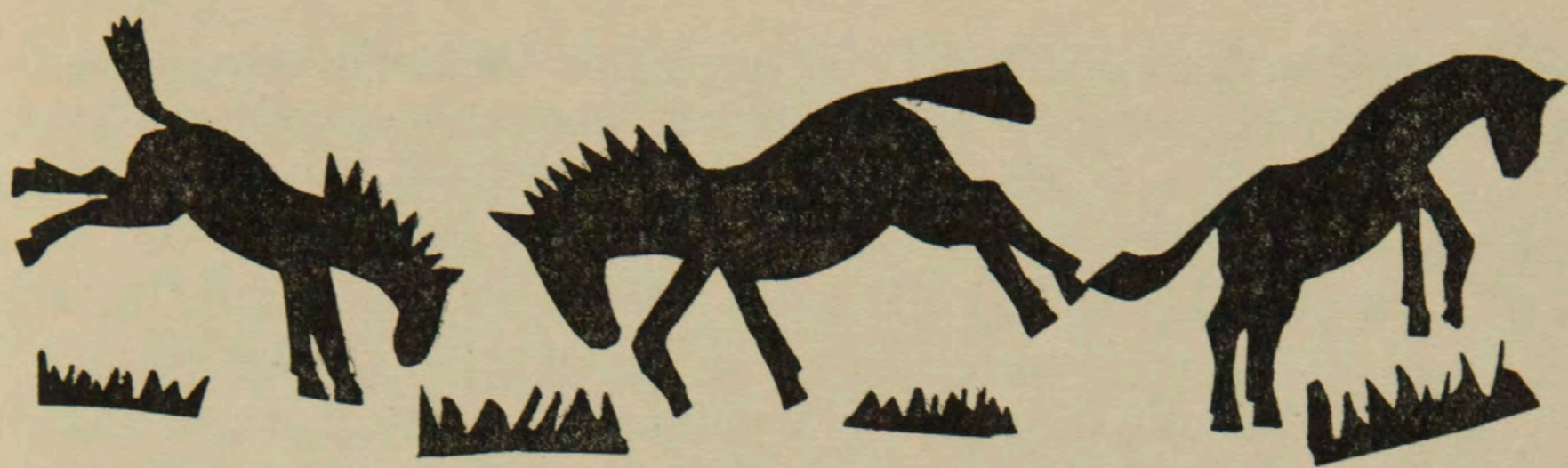
In the totality of this relationship: for the child, to find in his teachers, his parents, and all adults he contacts, a body of trust and shared purpose which is a rock to him in his growth; for the parent, to feel oneness with teachers and with the larger environment as he faces the growing of his child; for the teacher, to know no division between himself, the parents, and the larger community as responsibility for the child is shared—in this, something new is freed within child, teacher, parent.

Thousands of textbooks and years of study have been spent, in our last American generation, on the problems of the child and his needs, his creative personality, his social adjustment, and so on. One can feel the modern child sigh under the weight of the psychology books on his parents' bookshelf. Coming to community as I did, with a load of these same books under each arm, it is with a broad smile that I tip them up to the top shelf of my cabinet to find their proportionate place; all my concern to ferret out the finest methods, techniques, theories of achieving a creative and freeing experience for children, is now given over to living that relationship with them. It is the most energetic and vital and growing thing I know.

The prevalent schools of 'permissive', 'progressive' educational thought in their many forms are born in rebuttal to the scheme of de-personalized, mechanized, categorized society and what it does to a child. In the cutting away of these superstructures, life is seen more really and more simply. Children can become just children, with their own time to grow and absorb life.

Living in community for us is a seeking together for growth. There is a continuous flow of new people, new situations, new problems. One must be open to take in the steadily changing surface of community. Yet, from the strength and surety of the underlying unity we share, comes an amazing capacity, in both adults and children, to receive from and give to each new experience. Truly it is that neither teaching nor learning is limited to classroom or text-book, but each is part of life lived together.

It is in this way children and adults stand as one. In this way, we are truly part of each other. It is the deepness of this finding life together that brought little Danny to me, the other day, with his picture of a red and purple sky: 'This is the sunset. It is shining over Woodcrest!' And that shining was in his face.



CHILDREN AND ART

MARGARETHE BÖNING

Guests and visitors at the Wheathill Bruderhof often ask us, 'How is it possible for your small children to draw such remarkable pictures, so free, so happy, and glowing with colour?' When the people who ask such questions stay with us—not just for an hour but for a longer time—they very quickly find the answer: it is because these children grow up in a community whose basis is brotherhood, peace, and joy. In the communities of the Society of Brothers wherever they may be found—in North America, South America, or Europe—men of different nations have come together feeling a deep inner need to seek a new basis for life. They feel clear that men are intended by the Creator to be brothers and should share with each other in mutual aid and love everything the earth produces.

Our children grow up in free, natural surroundings, in the midst of flowers and animals. They themselves belong to the community, they often have many brothers and sisters, and they are always among other children. The alternation of the seasons, holiday celebrations, and everything that they experience comes straight out into their paintings because there is no stereotyped training. Their work is direct and unhampered, so that it is an expression of the purest joy in life.

It reminds me of conversations with artist friends in Germany where so very often the theme was the longing for this primitiveness which children show in their compositions—the longing for the purest expressionism which takes form from inner experience without the interposition of intellect, form, or problems of colour.

And so we come to the situation of the modern artist as such. Surely there lies the deeper longing of all men at the root of the striving of many modern artists for simplicity and the free, unconventional directness of childlike creativity. Has not the concept of 'art for art's sake' been shown to be false in that it sees the task in art itself? This conception has led to ever greater individualization and isolation of the creative person and to a separation from his real task of putting himself and his gifts at the service of God and thereby at the service of men. I know an artist who is carving his strange-looking stones in utter isolation, cut off from men, living under the most wretched

circumstances, but unwilling to do any other work. He is possessed with the idea of finding the 'form of forms', like a person with a mania. It is a fact, too, that in Munich alone, after the war, there were 10,000 artists without work who all thought that their only purpose in life was to live for their own special gift! Over-specialization in art, as in all fields, has not led men together, but caused them to keep turning on their own axis in greater and greater isolation, getting further away from reality. But this hangs together in the deepest sense with our world order based on profit-making and human success, of which the artist is also a part.

We believe that the solution of these problems, which are becoming so acute in art as elsewhere, lies in a life of self-giving, dedicated brotherhood. Only in a life which is built on the sustaining basis of love is self-giving in service possible, and only in such a service can the joy in God's creation take shape out of ever new and deeper experience. There we become joyous and unburdened again and are able to share our inner joy or sorrow with others, as children do.

FORUM

*More about Aiyetoro**

I would like to report to you on a meeting we had today with Lee Kleiss. She has been with us now for about four weeks and has been helping in the school in Ibaté. During the last couple of years Lee has visited India and Pakistan as a member of an I.V.S.P. team and she has spent about a year in Nigeria where she has twice visited the 'Holy Apostles' Church Community' in Aiyetoro.

Lee began by telling how she had been surprised to be invited on the first evening to a meeting of the community. In the hall there was a raised platform with a table and chair and there sat Baba (meaning 'father', the leader of the community). At this meeting all were present (probably over one thousand people), including even the youngest children. The purpose of the meeting on this occasion was evidently to clear up all the misunderstandings among the members of the group which might have occurred during the last few months. Each one who had something to say addressed his words to Baba, who answered and advised until the parties concerned expressed their agreement.

Some asked her to speak about the *bruderhof* (though she had not yet visited one), and she first told Baba about it. His main question was whether they had common property, and only when this was clear was he interested to hear any more. A meeting was arranged at which she could tell all the people about our communities; this meeting

*These extracts from a recent letter from Primavera add to the picture of the Nigerian community described in earlier articles and letters. (See *THE PLOUGH*, Vol. I, Nos. 1 and 4, Vol. II, No. 3, and Vol. III, No. 1.)

was held at 10 a.m. and was given over to Lee. After her talk on the bruderhof many people spoke with her and all were amazed at the similarity of our beginnings.

The plan of the day in Aiyetoro is: Work—7 to 4, with a mid-day meal in the dining hall lasting one hour. Family time and supper is then till 7 p.m. and from 7 to 9 every evening there are courses in which everyone out of school eagerly takes part and those who know a bit more teach those who know less. They learn reading, writing, English and arithmetic. The teachers have a hard work schedule starting at 4 a.m. when they study among themselves till 8. Then school starts and lasts till 3. From 4 to 6 they study again themselves and then they teach the others from 7 to 9. Originally the people of the community did not want to educate their children, but the Government's compulsory education law forced them to start a school to avoid having to send their children out.

When asked about their beginnings, Lee answered that they are not historically minded and cannot remember details, but the actual break-away from the 'Christianity' of the area was over the birth of twins, it being the custom to let such children die. Apparently when twins were born to one of the important people in the area some questioned the Christianity of letting them die, and with this a large number of people began to seek more deeply for the true meaning of Christianity. This was mostly in one tribe and for ten years they preached and were persecuted. The original Christian influence seems to have come to that part of Nigeria from a fundamentalist sect in the South of the United States and this, known in Nigeria as the Cherubim and Seraphim, is quite a widespread group in the country. The community began in 1947.

ART ROSENBLUM.

BOOK REVIEW

BEFORE NO HIGH ALTARS. Poems by Winifred Rawlins.
Exposition Press, New York, 1955, \$2.50.

These poems, by an American Quaker, have an ease and felicity which is almost unusual today. Rhyme and rhythm flow naturally from her pen by their simplicity and fittingness. One is easily caught up in the atmosphere of this little book—a more rarefied atmosphere perhaps than that of our poor sinful world. Miss Rawlins writes with imagination and poetic insight of the inner life, fusing sensuous beauty with a more serious challenge, as in 'Vernal Equinox'. She seeks an answer to the eternal questions and finds it in a vision which includes something of paganism, of Indian mysticism, and of Christianity. Her conception of evil, for instance, is hardly the Christian one, in the 'Transformation', and there is something of the land of faery in the 'wild and haunting symmetry' of some verses. As she expresses it most aptly herself, she is one of her own 'enchanted children caught up by the magic of our infinity'.

W.H.

NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY by J. B. PHILLIPS.

Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1956, 10s. 6d.

Year after year, new translations of the Gospels and other books of the New Testament are published and each gives a new freshness to the words that have been read time and time again. Only a few can feel the direct impact and revel in the forceful simplicity of the Greek, and then only if they are able to free themselves from all the theological and traditional appurtenances which have blurred the original. The effect of this kind of intensive study is to be seen in the translations of the New Testament by the Rev. J. B. Phillips. In addition to the four Gospels, he has given us Paul's epistles as *Letters to the Young Churches* and Luke's Acts of the Apostles as *The Young Church in Action*. Now he has drawn upon his experience of this work and has presented his conclusions about the life and religion of the early Christians. This new book has been published after the author had frequently been asked to preach and lecture about the New Testament, which invariably led to a discussion of what was meant by New Testament Christianity.

'I have been enormously heartened', he writes, 'by the fact that there are thousands of people who are sick of narrowness and churchiness, and who long for the fresh air of the New Testament. There is, I find, a hunger, sometimes almost a desperate hunger, to regain the shining certainties and revel in the freedom and power of the new-born Church. My own experience is necessarily small, but I am of the opinion that so great is the longing for New Testament Christianity that it will be along this line that true spiritual revival will come.'

New Testament Christianity is for Mr. Phillips a quality of living derived from the realization that God became one of us at a point in history and that this world is 'continually interpenetrated by the world of the Spirit'. The early Christian Church was alive to this truth and 'we can read for ourselves to what miraculous triumphs the Spirit led them'.

The study of New Testament Christianity is therefore inevitably a study of New Testament Christians—their relationships, their dedicated action, their power of faith, their 'buoyant God-consciousness'. They were ordinary human souls, but 'we may find as we compare the life-attitude of New Testament Christians with our own that a subtle but disastrous change has come over us in the intervening centuries'. Did Jesus found a Church which was intended 'to taper off into ineffective mediocrity'?

What is it that has deteriorated in Christian life? Mr. Phillips points first to the faculty of faith—a faculty that has 'degenerated into a rather dogged holding on to something which we believe to be true'. But faith should be a faculty as real as seeing or hearing, thinking or

feeling. The exercise of this faculty does not lie in conformity to the existing social order. Jesus asked, 'How can you believe while you receive honour one from another?' That infers, Mr. Phillips points out, that 'we must be prepared to disregard the honours, commendations, and even values of this passing world'. There can be no recovery of the vitality and vigour of New Testament Christianity 'until we who call ourselves Christians dare to break through contemporary habits of thought, and touch the resources of God'.

Mr. Phillips places faith, hope, love, and peace as the cornerstones of the Christian life. Each chapter of his book calls the reader to act boldly and radically to regain the vital reality of that life. Such action may be costly and painful; it may mean 'a certain opposition in the ordinary earthbound pattern of thinking' and we may find ourselves in 'a certain reluctance comparable to the physical pain we experience in bringing into play a long-disused muscle'. In any case, it is obvious that life cannot be the same again once one has owed a 'heart-loyalty' to Christ and to the fellowship of Christians.

Fellowship was inseparable from the life of the New Testament Christians. It was more than expediency in the face of an overwhelming pagan world that kept them together; they were of 'one heart and mind', 'the body of Christ', outwardly manifesting a deep spiritual unity, sons and daughters of the same Father. They were pioneers of a new way of life and regarded themselves as expendable for the cause of the Kingdom.

This recovery of New Testament Christianity, then, as Mr. Phillips sees it, can only come through the radical change of the individual, as each exercises those faculties which bring him into this loving relationship and unity with the contemporary Christ and his fellowmen. But he has realized from his studies that this can only be effective in the world through the fellowship of the gathered Church. From such a fellowship, Christians can permeate the society in which they live. But this renewal cannot come 'in the mass'. 'Even in the most vigorous and flourishing days of the Young Church, the followers of the Way were a tiny minority.' Individuals have to be *loved* into the Kingdom of God.

It is, then, rather surprising that Mr. Phillips regards it as important—and, indeed, essential—to cling to the traditions and existing organization of the historic churches. That men should burden themselves with lifeless forms is surely a contradiction of much that Mr. Phillips has so ably revealed.

'Through the centuries', he writes, 'there has been no deep and lasting revitalisation of the Christian religion unless the rekindled faith has been welded into the life of the existing Church. Enthusiastic "splinter-groups" and separatist movements may blaze impressively

for a time, but if the new life is to be effectual it must flow into the body of believers already existing, however moribund and defeated they may appear to have become.'

Mr. Phillips runs in danger of discrediting the part in Christian history played by the Anabaptists, Mennonites, Quakers, and others, all of whom separated themselves from their contemporary churches.

Jesus said to his followers, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them', or in other words, where two or three are truly united in Christ, in heart and mind, *there is the Church*.

While Mr. Phillips is right when he says: 'It is not so much the isolated Christian as a purified and refreshed fellowship which will be the effective witness to a largely despairing world', the question still remains whether the Church can persist if the fellowship has ceased to be pure and fresh. If a new beginning is to be free and vital, must it not be a truly new and untrammelled springing up of life?

D.P.F.

UTOPIA AND EXPERIMENT. Essays in the Sociology of Cooperation, by Henrik F. Infield. Praeger, New York, 1955.

Here is no heart-cry amidst the birth pangs of community. The co-operative communities are studied as laboratories from which to draw 'scientific insight' to 'help mankind to control the direction civilization will take in this age of transition to a new phase of civilization'. As modern physics studies the atom, so Infield studies the smallest units of society.

Absolute goals have no interest for Infield. The Hutterians, for instance, he admires for the 'sense of security' common to them all. Yet with their 'sectarian creed' and insignificant numbers (9,000) he dismisses them as 'Utopians', 'a freak in the sociological side-show'. A 'modern' community, to satisfy Infield, must arise out of some 'very tangible basic need' which private enterprise is thwarting. The Rochdale principles of the co-operative movement, to establish a self-supporting home colony of united interests—form the basis of 'modern' community.

Infield finds it impossible to apply the propertylessness of the kibbutz to highly civilized countries like North America. The owning of nothing might be admirable for the 'penniless youngsters who were wholly dependent on outside aid', but the pattern for North America he finds in the spontaneous movement in Saskatchewan toward co-operative farming, especially in the small Sturgis Co-operative. The by-laws of Sturgis combine the private retention of property with contribution of personal service to the community, and this modification of community to suit the rugged individualism of *homo americanus* Infield hails as felicitous. Actually the Sturgis pattern has still to prove itself. . . . Neither is it scientifically established that successful private farmers are more likely to succeed than others in community,

nor that higher education and social recognition are factors that make for success. . . .

The second half of the book describes the sociometric tests Infield conducted in four co-operative communities. One who has undergone these tests describes for the present reviewer this scientific approach to community as dissecting the flower and naming every part, yet finding that the life of it escapes you. True, these tests may put a finger on trouble spots within a group, but with psycho-analysis they share the weakness that to expose the evil is not to have the strength to overcome it. Unless the immediate power of forgiveness is present to overcome the evil and effect reconciliation, the analysis can have only a depressing and dividing effect. Typical sociometric questions are: Whom would you choose to work with, to sit by at meals, to discuss personal problems with, etc.? These sociometric tests centre in the community-ego, whereas the apostles of love from the Buddha down to Albert Schweitzer recognize that overcoming love is a power that comes from a source above.

The idea of community as represented in these studies is limited to what Hegel called the realm of necessity, to the talents and gifts of men as they are. If such groups provide the guide-post to a new era of civilization, we must despair. They have not yet leaped into the realm of freedom. The way of community is to represent the future brotherhood of man as present reality. D.W.

THE CONFESSIONS OF JACOB BOEHME. Compiled and edited by W. SCOTT PALMER. With an introduction by Evelyn Underhill. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1954. \$2.25. Methuen, London, 1955, 6 shillings.

This book can be recommended most strongly as an introduction at the deepest and clearest level to the seventeenth century mystic. One feels strongly the common nature of men, and our common need for another spirit to guide us to God. One realizes in reading these 'confessions' how deeply, passionately true it is that we must give all that we have—and none who have found a clear way have ever claimed the giving to be easy.

The compiler has sought in this book to find a 'spiritual autobiography' in the writings of the man. There is, certainly, a continued personal note in this collection, but always the personal comes in to clarify man's contact with the universal, as, indeed, Boehme makes clear is his purpose. He speaks 'as a soldier who has been in the wars' to all men, then or now, engaged in the continual struggle with evil and with the world. One caught up in this struggle would do well to have this book by him as a map upon the journey, or a friend along the road ahead. J.P.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The Blumhardts, father and son (Christoph is the son), had a strong belief in the power of God's spirit to effect a change in the material world through those who are ready and willing. Their writings have always influenced and challenged the members of the bruderhof movement.

Stan Ehrlich gives an answer to maybe the most frequent question that members of the bruderhof communities are asked.

We are especially occupied with the problem facing young Conscientious Objectors in Germany today. The Society of Brothers feels that the whole life of the members of the bruderhof represents a permanent, voluntary peace service, that is, a dedication of all powers and gifts for the building up of a new, peaceful order of society. We hope and wish that the newly founded Sinntal-Bruderhof will become a place where—in the midst of the remilitarization of Germany—true peace can be built and witnessed to and where young people, whether they come for a shorter or longer period, can be offered an opportunity to make a practical demonstration of their convictions for peace. Two contributions touch on this question—the articles by Hans Zumpe and Arlo Tatum.

Winifred Rawlins, of English birth, is known to many as Associate Head Resident at Pendle Hill, Quaker centre for religious and social studies, near Philadelphia. She is now becoming known also for her poetry, which is represented by 'The Distant Drummer'* from her new book, *Before No High Altars*, reviewed in this issue.

Eberhard Arnold's widow Emmy shows at seventy years her characteristic courage and joy in life in this account of her current journey among the brotherhood communities.

How is it possible to bring living community to the many groups of unfortunate people who have no place in society as it is? We feel that this problem is a matter of increasing concern to people in England and North America, and one of our members puts forward some of the thoughts which come to mind in considering this very difficult question from one of our German friends.

The education of American children is so much a principal interest of American parents that we feel sure Anne Gale's lively account of teaching at Woodcrest will find a response among many of our readers. Margarethe Böning's brief article adds the experience of an artist.†

As we are giving so much space to the Sinntal-Bruderhof in connection with the problems of Germany we are postponing more definite news of the Bruderhof communities until the next issue.

* Printed with the author's permission.

† The paper cuts are by 12-year-old school children at Wheathill.

Second International Workcamp at the Wheathill Bruderhof

28th July – 5th September

1956

Last year's workcamp was considered by the *Nothelfergemeinschaft der Freunde* to be so successful that a similar camp is being arranged this year under their auspices. Buildings were erected for housing accommodation and school, and young people of seven nationalities joined with our youth in discussions and folk-dancing as well as the work. (See their account in *THE PLOUGH*, Vol. III, No. 3, 'Building Together at Wheathill'.)

The project this summer will include making a children's playground on the site of the present cow-yard and laying out paths around the new buildings. Our maintenance costs last year were covered by contributions, in cash and in kind, from interested friends. We appeal for similar help in 1956 to make possible this project in the field of international understanding and the giving of a positive peace witness.

We should be glad to know of young people who would like to join in the camp.

For further information, please write to :

WORKCAMP

SOCIETY OF BROTHERS

BROMDON, BRIDGNORTH, SHROPSHIRE

The Addresses of the Bruderhof Communities

ENGLAND

Society of Brothers
Bromdon, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

U.S.A.

Society of Brothers
Woodcrest, Rifton, New York State

Forest River Community
Fordville, North Dakota

PARAGUAY

Sociedad de Hermanos
Primavera, Alto Paraguay

Sociedad de Hermanos
Fulgencio R. Moreno 132, Asunción

URUGUAY

Sociedad de Hermanos
Casilla de Correos 1269, Montevideo

GERMANY

Sinntal-Bruderhof
(13a) Bad Brückenau