

THE PLOUGH

THE QUARTERLY
OF THE
BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

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COMMUNITY GROUPS IN ENGLAND—
OBSERVATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS

LESLIE STUBBINGS

SUMMER 1953



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THE PLOUGH

The Quarterly of the Bruderhof Communities

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Summer 1953

MAN AS GOD'S LABOURER

I cannot fathom God's whole design, the design for which the universe exists and lives; but I can comprehend the divine work which is being accomplished in this world and in which I participate by living.

This work is the annihilation of discord and strife among men and among all creatures, and the establishment of the highest unity, concord and love.

It is the fulfilment of the promises of the Hebrew prophet who foretold a time when all men should be taught by truth, when spears should be turned into reaping-hooks, swords be beaten to ploughshares, and the lion lie down with the lamb.

So that a man of Christian intelligence not only knows what he has to do, but also understands the work he is doing.

He has to act so as to co-operate towards the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. For this he must obey his intuition of God's will, *i.e.* must act lovingly towards others, as he would wish others to act towards him. Thus the intuitive demands of a man's soul coincide with the external aim of life which he sees before him.

Yet we find people, calling themselves Christians, who decide that in such and such circumstances men ought to abandon God's law and act in opposition to it, because (according to their conception) the effects of actions performed in obedience to God's law may be detrimental or inconvenient.

According to Christian teaching, man is God's labourer. A labourer does not know his master's whole design, but he does know the immediate object for which he has to work. He receives very definite instructions about what he should do—and especially about what he may not do lest he should hinder the attainment of that purpose towards which his labour should contribute. Otherwise he has full liberty. And, therefore, for one who has understood the Christian conception of life, the meaning of his own life is perfectly plain and reasonable, nor can he have a moment's hesitation as to *how* he should act, or *what* he should do to fulfil the purpose for which he lives.

LEO TOLSTOI



SUPPLICATION

God, our Father, dwelling in space and in the heart of man,
Here and everywhere, now and in all time,
Creating good, yet letting evil be,
Great God of justice and of love, behold,
Deep floods of hate and ruthlessness have swept across the earth . . .
When wilt thou tread the power of evil underfoot,
Incomprehensible Power, Almighty One—God?

See, Lord, I stand before thee, naked and weak,
A man, with empty, outstretched hands,
Receiving life through grace, created in thy likeness:
Longing for justice, longing for goodness,
Bearing the fire of love deep within,
But free to choose and a constant prey to satanic whisperings,
Lost in the darkness of our time.

Men say they have no time for thee,
They think of money and bread, sport and entertainment,
While the machines of our time hurry and hum
Blaring in thundering rhythm the deceptive song
Of progress—glorious progress with joy, with liberty—
And the shrieking laughter of demons beneath is smothered and
ignored.

Lord, silence the song of the sirens of death
That men may chant the hymn of thy honour—the hymn of life.

The time of the 'last man' is upon us,
The time proclaimed by Nietzsche, seeker and unbeliever.
The 'last man'—who is he then?

The man who desires comfort and quiet,
Lazy, peaceful times, cheap joys, and sorrows in small doses;
His life-achievement a car, a wireless, a garden, a house,
Social activity and a short holiday.
He never gives his all, his alms are pennies.

Father, I stand and wait with my brothers
In trembling expectation of the reaper
When the fulfilment of time—
The day to harvest the ripening fruit—
Breaks in upon us:
Lord, help us build thy city on the hill,
A light and beacon to the peoples of the earth,
Until thou, Unfathomable Power,
Hast created thy kingdom of love.

Translated from the German.

POWER WHICH IS PERSON

JERE BRUNER

Beyond the compelling sequence of routine actions and routine hopes, something in us keeps groping for the real answers to the root questions asked of human life in this time and any time. Real answers. And yet closer inspection seems to show *answers* and *reality* on either side of a great gulf. The military prospect of the atomic age is unbearable. But there is a sombre turn of mind which prefers truth, even if it is death to know the truth; which cannot bear the smell of illusions. One thinks particularly of Simone Weil, but the whole trend of existentialism is of the same quality. Raw events have overwhelmed meaning and displaced it: well and good—the brave man will adjust to a world without purpose, and pick his way through the stream of events with the grisly courage of the Stoic. To look truth in the face is to realize the sovereign reality of death, implicit in every moment, and to act in its shadow. Apart from this shadow there is no guide. Standards, norms, are all illusions which must one after the other be purged away.

But a life apart from some purpose is only an existence. If he is submerged too far in events, a man will rebel and struggle back upward for air. If there is no sense in existence, then one must be made for it. And so there are the dogmas of a dozen ideologies, offering complete theoretical explanations of the world into the last detail—the 'terrible simplifications' designed for mass consumption, but attractive to the intellectual as well, perhaps for that very reason, that they seem to offer a foundation for the social unity of great numbers, in contrast to the isolation of modern art and poetry, and the confusion of what was once liberalism. The world marches to Rome and Moscow in its great hunger for a myth to make life endurable.

What is it that is so hard to endure? Perhaps it is the inconvenient situation of being a person in an impersonal world. In the phrase of Martin Buber, a man searches for a *thou* which will respond to him in human terms, but turn as he may, he finds only an *it*. It—the overwhelming spaces of the stars, a vastness that makes human life altogether an absurd trifle. Whether the stars are an army of unalterable law, or whether this law is at the end a mere statistical veneer over a depth of uncertainty, we are confronted with an *it* which has no need for our politics, our speculations, or our history. And in the realm of the infinitely small, substance dissolves into an empty space disturbed by a few circling wave-patterns. There is a kind of delight in this pursuit of reality to its evaporating point, an ascetic joy in the cold realms where nothing lives. But human life will also be impossible in the midst of a world without person.

Closer to experience is the complex hierarchical *it* of modern industry and the modern state, where regulations condemn the individual

or reprieve him (if his papers are in order) taking in any case no account of the flesh behind the form. Franz Kafka was the great victim and prophet of this aspect of contemporary existence. Along with it goes the impersonal flood of modern technology, the *it* of the machine, which comes up one avenue of life after another to meet us. We are kept in comfort, fed, clothed, warmed, transported, amused and instructed by machines. The clearest case in point is one of the great triumphs of technology, the atomic bomb, symbolic of all the apparatus of modern warfare. If it was once God who was taken seriously and reckoned with as the last word of reality, as elemental force, mystery, and the master of the apocalyptic future, then the Bomb (also with a capital) is now the only serious contender for the vacant office in the hearts and minds of many people. The world of technological progress sought to banish fear, superstition, and arbitrary power, and arrange an air-conditioned paradise run on schedule, where pain, want and accident should be no more, and there would be no need either of God or conscience or any other outmoded restriction upon healthy physical and cultural fulfilment. And now, at the end of the line of better medicines, better bed-springs, television, overnight flights across the continent, and effortless cookery, wait fear, superstition and arbitrary power, this time with no face and no shadow of benevolence. Who that has seen pictures of that mushroom-shaped cloud boiling up into the stratosphere with its load of death and fragmented matter, has not been caught up in grim awe and somehow sensed the arrival of a new god? This god, too, is a very present help in trouble, or as we prefer to say, the key to the defence strategy of the free world. While the bomb is with us, who can be against us? But whereas the old God could always be presumed to be on our side, there is some doubt about the new one. The Russians have *it*, too. The Bomb, being an *it*, is less subject to our wishes.

It, in name as well, is the *id*, the tangled unknown within us, but not of us, where chance occurrences of childhood hide and exert their tyranny into the present. The definite vogue of amateur psychotherapy marks the high tide of anxiety and insecurity: it seems to offer a tool for cutting a way through the wilderness formed by the collapse of traditional axioms of social behaviour. But it sometimes happens that the patient is more fascinated by the process of self-observation than by the prospect of cure. Then everything becomes problematic, the fatalism of the *id* takes hold, and action is suffocated by analysis. This is the more likely because the aim of the cure is itself an uncertain matter. The patient is to learn to be 'normal,' to adjust to the normality of a world without purpose beyond his job, his friends, his hobbies, and his animal needs. Normality is an environment including conscription and war, political cynicism, sexual chaos, mass-produced

amusements, mass-produced ideas, merchandised religion, and the future of the Bomb. The individual is to be fitted into this pattern with the minimum of tension. Who stops to consider what 'normal' and 'healthy' really mean? How many of these tensions are the hunger for bread in a world of stones, for genuine values and action in a world of rash deeds and useless meditation, a world of boredom relieved by catastrophe?

There is a 'normal' for which every fibre of the human cries out, no matter how faint or repressed this cry is. It calls for another life, another society and culture entirely, and can only be satisfied in the concrete experience of this new society, and in the work of opening its gates to all that still live in the old. Something entirely different is demanded, not merely a reform or progress within the framework of the *it*, whose other name is fate, and which of its nature refuses any essential change, and asserts itself as 'things as they are,' as they always were and always will be.

The fountainhead of this new society, the only reprieve from the *it*, is the Thou of the living God. The Hebrew expression that is usually translated 'I am that I am' might better be rendered 'I am He who is *there*.' At first, and finally, there is only this sense of overwhelming being—of Power which is Person. It is neither the impersonal power of fate, which is wholly other, and indifferent to man; nor is it the powerless person of the God who was expected to answer all requests that 'my will be done.' Whoever has met with the living God has found solid ground and a hand to reach to, no matter how absurd this seems to old prejudices and the jibes of self-criticizing humour. Logic and answers can shrink and become laughable, but a living reality is beyond being vulnerable to idea and emotion. It brings something else into the world, and changes its whole meaning. The Power which is Person is not an emotional consolation, but a Will to meaning and rightness. Simply by being there, it makes a definite demand upon us, and draws us onward along a path where we must dare, act, and commit ourselves if we are to go on, or get any answers to the questions we ask, because thinking and living are here inseparably bound up together.

And this daring, this commitment, this path itself, is what is properly intended by that much-abused word, 'faith.' Faith is more than human confidence in the future of a business, a nation, or one's own ambitions. Nor can there be any talk of 'The Faith,' or this or that faith, which mean at most one of those collections of slogans with which parties and churches combat each other, and keep at arms' length the realisation of an unhealed and unchanged system of society. Faith is voluntary obedience to the law of the living God and brings salvation to the man who directs his life accordingly. It goes over the same ground travelled by the stoical search for truth and the subsequent

recoil into myth, but with this difference: its point of turning is no short-circuit, no failure of nerve; it is a thorough fusion in which hope and meaning are not a retreat from honesty, but spring from it.

The course of faith descends from one bitter insight to another, to final disillusion. On this way there can be no turning back, no shred of self-deceit until the last station is reached, where the self and all it is stand revealed. Here there is no more illusion, not even the final one of the Byronic suffering hero, who stretches himself on the rack of his own despairing honesty, and dares to see what lesser spirits tremble to look upon. That too is exposed.

And here, at the point of nothingness, which Boehme called the gates of hell, another force can set in. Whether this experience opens up a gate before us, or a gate within us, it is the living God who makes this hell a gate instead of a dead end. There is no return—but there is a way through. Life is injected into death, palpably, and from without, in a way that takes one by surprise. The self which seemed dead and deprived of all room to move in comes to life and finds joyfulness and action again. Much that was apparently lost returns, but in a different way. Much more that is new, or lay buried, is discovered. Life has begun again from its elements, and what follows is organic growth. There is relative maturity and relative immaturity in growth, there are the pains of growing, and standstills followed by spurts ahead. What was learned on the other side of the gate remains in solution; the ruthless honesty of the descent will continue to have its uses. But one thing remains true: a new organic unity has been founded, where there is always help and hope, where once baffling contradictions turn out to complement each other. Free of conflict and tension, we can go to work as real human beings, unchanged in their humanity, but rooted in another soil and breathing another atmosphere. The relationship with the living God has been established, and a new sun has risen.

The point in all this is the experience itself, or rather the object of the experience, and that is a peculiarly incommunicable thing. The best one can do is to attempt a metaphorical description. Just what metaphors we use is a matter of secondary importance. Faith is not a set of suitable answers that a man can be persuaded to accept. The only persuasion is the impact of the living encounter, which no human dialectic can produce. When that has happened, one suddenly discovers what it was that the words were hinting at.

Words can become weapons of argument, but one thing is beyond dispute, and that is the fact of the social life which arises out of this encounter. Its characteristics are fairly uniform, whether we are speaking of the first Christians in Jerusalem, the communities of the Eiro-Scottish Christians before they were brought into line by the emissaries of Roman Catholicism, the Cathari and Friends of God in the Alpine

district before the Reformation, the non-violent Anabaptists of the sixteenth century, with their line of descent to the present Hutterians of the United States and Canada, or the Family of Jesus in China and the Negro fishing community in Nigeria. This sort of life is the expression of the connection with the living God, and brings the Sermon on the Mount into actuality.

Religion does not exist for such communities in the sense of divine services which take place parallel with ordinary life and are supposed to have some effect of their own when performed. The old Anabaptists, like the modern Hutterians, held their meetings in their dining-room. Grimmelshausen, in *Simplicius Simplicissimus*, complained that this sect had no churches. That is because the relationship with God forms and fills the whole of life, and not just one hour on Sunday.

Economically, it means community of property, work, and consumption; the free exertion of each member for all, to the limit of his ability, and the care of each member by the community, according to need and to what the community has. This is not a mechanical equality of duties and rights but the functional working of an organic body. Many abortive attempts at communal living have begun with merely intellectual oneness and promptly been shattered by factional strife over leadership and petty quarrels. The dismantling and reconstitution of the self is not religious conversion merely, it is a concrete necessity for living intimately together with others. Nobody is a born co-operator; personality is not the determining factor, which also means that nobody is forever unfit for community. Personal revolution is indispensable for all. The old personality fitted and supported the old society; the new society requires another heart and soul. Co-operators are not born, they are reborn. This rebirth, however, does not mean the extinguishing of personality by a collective mass. It is only the cleavages of egoism which go by the board; individual humour, gifts, and idiosyncrasies can then find free expression in the harmony of the whole. The same thing holds true for the aspect of community living which is sometimes called, inappropriately, government. At any rate, there are constant decisions to be made, situations to be adjusted to. The usage in this sort of communal life is not paternalistic authoritarianism, and not the democratic rule of the majority over the minority, but something resembling the Quaker 'sense of the meeting.' All the members discuss the matter and out of the discussion the answer gradually arises. The body finds a solution which the separate members would have been incapable of finding. The gathering is more than the sum of its parts. That is true of any organism: the life of the body is a mysterious, superadded thing, but the thing that makes all the difference. And if the body is to receive life and nourishment every member must be limber and in good tone. Every individual must carry an energetic responsibility for the whole.

It is ironic that visitors from a world under the tyranny of propaganda, fashion, competition, and public opinion, sensing the uniqueness of such a unity, and realising that human nature as usually known is incapable of sustained unselfishness and free agreement, assume that all these people are under some sinister compulsion to conformity. The suspicion is understandable enough. Where else are unity and freedom anything but separate areas of life? But in communal life they can coincide because some other strength is at work here besides human strength. It is a strength given by God on a hand-to-mouth basis, so to speak, to those who have subjected themselves to his law, and nobody and no group can have a permanent title to it. But when it is asked for, with the commitment of complete single-mindedness, it is given again and again, and sustains daily life. And that is not metaphor, it is reality.

Other and worse suspicions have been directed against such societies. As a result, their members have been persecuted, expelled, robbed, tortured and killed in all ages by church, state and neighbours, who were convinced that in converting the heretic by force, they were doing God a favour. No particular historical climate has been outstandingly lenient to them.

For such a group, by its very existence, is an offence to conventional life, whatever the current fashion in politics may be. It is in the world but not of the world and has a life fed by other springs. It refuses to be assimilated by state, church, or popular passions. Abstaining from politics, it quietly lives out a demonstration that there is a way for men—and for all men—to live together in complete love and peace. Its obligation to the world is to maintain the purity and power, the 'salt' of this life, and to hold it up for all to see and come to who are really ready for this way. Unlike the crusaders of the Christian past and the military liberators of to-day, it has never believed that anyone can be forced to be happy. It has no use for mass conversion by the sword or by propaganda and pressuring. No matter how few come to it, they must come in freedom. Otherwise the cause is not served, it is damaged for the sake of quantitative success.

But the energetic spreading of the good news to individual watchers and seekers has always been characteristic of these groups in their most vigorous periods. This fresh recruiting, this combat and controversy with 'things as they are' is indispensable for keeping the community itself flexible and lively. Otherwise a sectarian legalism tends to creep in and bury the spirit in cult. Such a community must reach out beyond itself, and live for the highest of all purposes, for the vision—for the certainty of a time when men and society and even nature itself will be reborn to unity and freedom.

THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF CHRISTIANS

FRANZ DRESSLER

'The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of all class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, and carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.'

With these words begins the Communist Manifesto written by Marx and Engels in the year 1847. The thunder of mighty historical catastrophies sounds from them, something of the sound of the trumpet of judgment.

At that time only the working masses paid attention. Just those who particularly should have listened, the Christians, observed absolutely nothing of the fact that something mighty was under way. Christianity at that time had passed through the revivalist movement and begun its missionary activity and works of love. Thereby it remained completely oblivious to the fact that during this time the industrialization of Europe was in progress, which on the one hand created 'real Babylonian towers of capitalism and militarism' and on the other hand gathered abnormally increasing masses of the proletariat into the great centres of industry.

It is shattering to see how Christianity passed by unaware of the mightiest upheaval in the sphere of economic and social life. Certainly a few felt that something must happen here, that it was just the Christians who ought to rise up against the oppression of men by mammonism; but they remained isolated. The court chaplain, Stoecker, attended socialist meetings, Naumann uttered a challenge and warning, and von Bodelschwingh attacked the problem actively. But it all remained just private undertakings by these men.* The church itself was uninterested. The unhappy association between throne and altar, the complete bondage of the State-church to the State, hindered it from taking an attitude in accord with the gospel, so that the Evangelical High Consistory actually approved the law of 1878 against the German socialists, against the 'extremely dangerous activities' of the Social Democrats. So the Christians, instead of supporting the people, supported the rulers, instead of the poor, the rich, instead of the weak,

* These names will be unfamiliar to most English readers, but the names of men who played a similar role may come to mind, such as those of Charles Kingsley and F. D. Maurice, one of the founders of the Christian Socialist Movement, 1848-1854, or somewhat later, of H. Price Hughes, founder of *The Methodist Times*.

CHRISTIANS
FRANZ DREIER
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the mighty, as has so often been the case. The working people saw that plainly. In their eyes Christianity stood in the service of bourgeois society; for Christianity represented the existing order of things as inviolable, accepted historically-conditioned forms such as capitalism as the unchangeable order. In the eyes of the socialist working-class it stood completely on the side of those who, in the words of Karl Marx, 'conceived the capitalist order as an absolute and final form of economic society, instead of a passing phase of development.' So the working masses turned away, misunderstood and embittered; yes, they had to turn against this Christianity, which was not only a conservative, but a reactionary power and protector of all the ruling and possessing classes; against this God, who wanted to preserve the existing order, against this Christ of the mighty and great.

In this struggle, science offered itself to socialism as a weapon. Natural science, which at that time was on its much-extolled march to victory, became for socialists the bearer of all truth. With this outlook there was no room for any kind of Christian thought. The contention between Socialism and Christianity, which should have led all Christian circles to defend the just claims of the proletariat, gave rise to a schism.

This happened once before in history, in the year 1525, the year of the great Peasants' Revolt. The peasants, who at that time represented the people, bore on their banner the Peasants' Clog as a sign of their social demands, and beside it a picture of the crucified Redeemer as a symbol of the religious basis of their demands. In Martin Luther's bible they had found the gospel of the freedom and brotherhood of all the children of God. Must they not draw the practical consequences for political and social life? So they approached the one who had their whole love and trust, Martin Luther. In his hand rested, humanly speaking, not only social emancipation but really the cause of Christ for the West. We know what happened. Luther turned his fellow brothers away coldly and without understanding. When in consequence those who were disappointed turned to fighting and excesses, he hurled his writings against the peasants and called on the nobles to beat down the rebels like mad dogs. This they did, and terrible bloodshed poured over the land at the word of a Christian.

Centuries later Christians stood before the same question; and again they failed. Have we then not observed anything of the fact, that not only the world, but God himself was asking the question? With the socialist movement he was knocking on our door and we did not hear him and kept it shut. 'His own received him not,' (John 1, 11) for they were much too keenly concerned with themselves and too little moved by the hidden need of the time. What might it not have meant, if at that time Christianity, shaken by socialist criticism, had recognised the terrible poverty, emptiness and dryness of their own

proclamation and deed, and repented for it? Through this, the message of the Bible for all men would have been revealed anew to us Christians, and we should have learnt and understood that God wants social justice.

Jesus Christ brings the kingdom of God, the rule of God, into the world. The kingdom of God is community among men in whom God rules unconditionally. God is love; therefore the kingdom of God is a kingdom of love, the community of those who, reconciled to God through Christ, allow their whole life and action to be determined by love. Therefore, love to God and love to one's neighbour—not the one without the other—is the content of the Law, yes, the basic law of the kingdom of God (Matt. 22, 39). As far as Jesus is concerned 'Kingdom of God' means unconditional love, in brotherhood and solidarity, which has its peak in mutual service and in bearing the guilt of others. Possession, which leads to the suppression of the rights of others, is sin to him. His life-work is not social reform, but redemption and the establishment of the kingdom of God, and that means the rulership of God in this world. Those who follow him live a life of active service for their fellows. And such a life is what God wills.

Jesus Christ was an example to his disciples of the love which binds all members one to another. The primitive churches were for a long time real life communities where each supported the other in health and sickness. In A.D. 140 Aristides could still write in defending his faith: 'The Christians have buried the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ in their hearts and observe them in expectation of the future world. Whoever has, shares with him who has nothing. If they see a stranger, they take him under their roof and rejoice in him as in a real brother: for they are called brothers, not according to the flesh, but according to the soul. If someone among them is poor and needy, and they have no food to spare, they fast for two or three days to supplement the food of the needy. So they faithfully observe the laws of Christ by living a holy and just life, as God commanded them, thanking him always for food and drink and all other gifts.'

In the Holy Scriptures lie the mainsprings of an order for mankind which effects a transformation of outer things from within. The world shall conform to the will of the living, holy and merciful God, for it belongs to him. Faith in God—the message of mutual responsibility and service of love one to another—excludes for all time mammonism, egoism, exploitation and oppression of men. That is the social justice of the Bible for which we too have to strive. It is about this we are asked, we who call ourselves after the name of the Lord Jesus. It is just we who are warned that the service of God means the service of men, and the love of God means the love of men. *We* have to give an answer, we alone, an answer which at the same time means responsibility.

Can we still justify ourselves by saying that the New Testament points the way to the salvation of the soul alone; or that social conditions have their 'own laws' and that therefore the religious point of view does not apply to them? Dare we still be satisfied to rejoice over the forgiveness of our sins and leading others to the saviour of sinners but otherwise to allow social conditions to go on as they will, as God's affair—or the devil's? Dare we, in exalting the inner life, really forget 'the spiritless brutality of outer conditions,' in thinking of heaven forget the demands of earth, in serving God forget the service of men? Can we still withdraw ourselves from our social responsibility? There are Christians enough who look towards heaven, but zealously hold fast to earthly goods; who speak of love and brotherhood, but allow their fellow men to perish; who confess themselves to God the Father in heaven, but leave the earth to the will of men.

We must recognise afresh the living God and his kingdom and allow these to hold sway; we must take God 'seriously.' If we really take God in earnest, then we shall take man with his human, earthly demands in earnest; we shall take him seriously from God's point of view. As Hans Lutz in *Protestantism and Socialism* says, 'In Jesus Christ God entered into our humanity. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ means taking man seriously in his earthly existence, and gives us the right to speak of man as the centre of God's thoughts. The word of God is a human word. The order of God is human order. Inhuman order is not God's order. God is concerned with man in his order. God has bound himself to man in Jesus Christ. 'The Word became flesh' is not only an unusual, dogmatic sentence, but means a full recognition which compels us to take man—the real man in his human and earthly existence—seriously. God's friendship to man is abundantly clear in Jesus Christ. Only in taking man absolutely in earnest do we take God completely in earnest. Karl Marx took man in his sordid existence quite seriously. The church believed it was taking God quite seriously but did not take the wretched existence of man sufficiently in earnest. *Now which of the two really took God seriously?*'

We have to answer this last and decisive question, we Christians of to-day. The face of the earth is certainly changed, as are the faces of its children, but unchanged in these faces is to be read the hunger for justice and brotherhood. We have to give an answer here and now, by lovingly helping and serving in the world, or rather, in the midst of the world, as people who are not only conscious of their social responsibility but practise it in daily life.

Quotation from *Christianity and Industrial Problems* (Report of the Archbishops' Committee, S.P.C.K., 1919): 'On the fifty years that laid the foundations of modern England, the influence of the Church as a witness to social righteousness was, it is hardly an exaggeration to say, almost negligible.'

THE PROBLEM OF FEAR AND ITS SOLUTION

OSCAR PFISTER

Within the crowd, fear can be repelled only at the expense of the personality which, in the sphere of the crowd-will, undergoes a very considerable loss in thought, feeling and volition, and partially also in religious and moral consciousness. . . .

The question therefore arises whether there might not be a human organization on the one hand warding off fear so far as society can do this, and on the other hand guaranteeing personal liberty and the rise of individualism, and thus preventing a sense of slavery from arising in the member of the community. This hypothetical form of crowdless co-existence would have to be sufficiently strong to form a firm bond between the individuals by giving each the necessary security, and to enable each to use his abilities in the best possible way for the advantage of the community or even of mankind as a whole, thus fulfilling the justifiable demands of individualism and (in its widest sense) of socialism.

This form of communal existence I call a community, and I define it as an organization bound together by a formative idea; it endeavours jointly to overcome the fear and distress arising from isolation, horde formation, and crowd formation and to produce positive values; in this process it endeavours to preserve personal thought, feeling, volition, freedom and decision in the ethical and religious spheres, and to allow the individual a share in government.

Within a community unity is preserved not by oppression, force, and threats, but by free resolve. It must be directed towards the members' love and not towards ambition, power or mammonism. It must not impose a simple, ascetic way of life, because this might involve the formation of neuroses; it must instead promote the utilization of human impulses in the cause of a full moral development or of a full devotion to God and to fellow members; for otherwise neuroses might result from neglect and greater evils might come in their train. The dominant idea must foster an ethical system doing justice to the demands of individual and social hygiene, overcoming egoism by fraternal love, preventing an over-emphasis of material and sensuous goods by stressing ideal endeavours and joys giving pleasure to the mind, maintaining a powerful sense of duty towards fellow-men and, by opening the way to sublimations, creating potentialities of happiness possessing a maximum power to attract and to satisfy.

This article has been taken from the book *Christianity and Fear* by Oscar Pfister, translated by W. H. Johnston and published by George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.

Among the members of a community, love of the formative idea, of the totality and hence of the fellow members, must constitute the supreme law. The motto 'One for all and all for one' is an excellent prescription for the prevention and alleviation of fear. The individual must know that he is secure in the protection of the community so far as a human agency can give security, and he must readily give it his own protection and active support, however great the sacrifice. Every educationist knows that genuine love is more efficacious both dynamically and with regard to quality than the rod; fear and dread are great wasters of energy.

The prosperity of the whole, in the community as elsewhere, depends greatly on the leader. But the leading force is primarily spiritual, and hence the leader never attains the same significance as in a mob or a society. Supreme authority belongs to the formative idea or, in the Christian communities, to the spiritual power which reveals the formative idea as the expression of its will and watches over its realization; God or Christ as the embodiment of the spiritual power's love and grace come first; the executive organs ordained by God, like the scriptures, churches, sacraments and the rest follow at a long distance. Fear of the earthly leader of a lay community ceases to equal or to exceed love, and the converse now takes place. His power is not virtually unlimited, as in the crowd; he is merely the executor of God's or the community's will through whom he obtains his power and to whom he remains responsible. The individuals do not transfer their personal powers and duties to the leader or leaders; the leader does not think for them, but merely executes the community's will, and this is the reason why the individuals obey him even though personally they think that different instructions would have been better. By suggestions and by warnings which he is entitled to give by virtue of his superior knowledge, he may put the community greatly in his debt; but he must never 'depersonalize' the individual. On the contrary, it will be his particular care to strengthen individual personalities.

The crowd went far to strangle personality, while an unrestrained individualism gave free course to egoistic arbitrariness at the expense of the weaker, and thus intensified the fear of life as much as a despotic leader does; the community on the contrary aims at producing the most perfect possible personality and finds it only in those individuals who have developed their own justifiable peculiarities to the best of their abilities, have subordinated themselves in love to their community and have placed the whole above themselves. Such a community champions individualism while retaining a social attitude and organization. . . .

Within the community the tension between freedom and authority is resolved because community is reciprocal responsibility. The more

unrestrainedly freedom grows into a resolve to accept responsibility for others and for the totality, the less is the State's obligation to intervene with its own compulsions, with legalistically rigid standards and with bureaucratic ponderousness. . . .

A religious community derives power and unity from a spiritual magnitude which fills its soul, not as an idea but as a supreme reality which offers and elicits love, forms a fraternal bond, inspires to deeds of moral greatness and provides the gifts of blissful strength and certainty and thus substitutes for bonds the highest personal freedom and unity. These are strong enough to raise the individual above the severest fear and to overcome it.

If a community of this kind can be founded it provides the best possible means for overcoming pathogenic fear and for preventing the formation of the symptoms of compulsion neuroses. It is the best possible means for preventing the damming of impulses and strangulation of the conscience; for it does not restrict the desire for action beyond the demands of good order and the claims of the neighbour: it puts an end to the dread of a leader and of the crowd as well as of loneliness. It gives each man his rights and where it must impose renunciations it offers wide potentialities of love; it offers each a share in the conduct of the whole. It grants what according to Goethe is the highest bliss of human kind, personality, but it does so within a unity permeated with love. It does not impose the ambivalent father-relationship, as is the case in crowds; its characteristic relationship is rather that of a harmonious family. The leader of a crowd was a substitute for a *father*; the community is derived from a *family* where the parents combine strictness with kindness and a positive value is attributed to brothers and sisters.

The production of strong, fearless personalities united in a powerful community, not by compulsion but through love freely acknowledging an authority—this is certainly a grandiose ideal for the combating of fear; moreover it represents a brilliantly inspired method for permitting its beneficiaries to achieve lofty spiritual values productive of the utmost happiness, the whole being based on secure economic foundations.

Does it follow that a firmly organized community based on personality and free from crowd formation must be regarded as Utopian? . . . history shows that gratifying approximations to the ideal mentioned have in fact occurred and have for centuries remained in force. Their number has not been large nor their extension great, and their preservation consistently made high claims on the members' sense of responsibility. . . .

It is no accident that hitherto the larger and more enduring communities have grouped themselves around a faith.

THE JESUS HOMES IN CHINA E. C. H. ARNOLD

The following account of the Jesus Homes in China (I) by our member E. C. H. Arnold was first published in America in the periodical, *Co-operative Living*, Vol. iv, No. 2, Winter 1952-53. The report has been confirmed and augmented by information obtained in London, and extracts from the original article are reprinted here. Following the account, we are also printing the translation of a letter (II) taken from a Chinese book, *A Visit to the Jesus Homes*, by Wang Shih Peng, Rural Work Secretary of the National Christian Council of China. Whilst this letter contains a criticism of the book it also clearly reveals the spirit of the Jesus Homes.

I

Over the past few years various American and European magazines have carried news of a religious community movement in present-day China. The movement, known as *Yehsu Chia-t'ing*, the Jesus Family or Jesus Home, is said to count among its followers several thousand Chinese—intellectuals, miners, peasants and artisans—who live in some hundred rural communities and hold all their goods in common. They adhere to the principle of non-violence and their inspiration for this way of life is said to come from the practices of the Early Christian Church, as recorded in the New Testament. The information about *Yehsu Chia-t'ing* on which this article is based was obtained from two bulletins circulated by the American Missionary Research Library, Occasional Bulletin No. 11 (October 23, 1950), and Occasional Bulletin No. 13 (December 15, 1950). This information was verified by verbal reports made to the author of this article by Miss Lucy M. Burt who, as a lecturer at Yenching University for many years, was in personal contact with the movement and its founder, Ching T'ien Ying.

Ching T'ien Ying, the founder of the movement, grew up as a Buddhist. Under the influence of an American missionary, he became a Christian and took up the study of the New Testament. He became convinced that Western Christianity, closely bound up with capitalism and imperialism, was incompatible with the spirit of Jesus and the Early Christian Church. In 1922 Ching founded a consumers' co-operative known as 'The Saints Society.' He and his most intimate friends became more and more convinced that this was not enough. They felt that the followers of Christ should become completely united, sharing all their possessions, and producing as well as consuming goods in common. A small group of ten or twelve members of the original co-operative enterprise started on the venture of community life by renting a building and a plot of land of a third of an acre at Ma Chuang near Taian. They produced silk, and started weaving cotton. Their example was emulated by many other Chinese co-operators, and the community grew. Other settlements were established in quick

succession in different rural areas of the Shantung province, and soon the movement spread all over northern China and Manchuria.

Whilst still a Buddhist, Ching T'ien Ying had strong feelings against wealth and property. When, after his conversion, he began travelling through rural China as a wandering Christian missionary, he discarded all traces of Western influence, using the garb of a simple Chinese peasant. He refused to accept a salary as a missionary, relying entirely on hospitality and gifts from sympathisers.

Those who know him compare Ching T'ien Ying to Francis of Assisi and George Fox. He possesses profound mystical qualities, and although he is not a good speaker he impresses his listeners by his utter sincerity and devotion, a strong emotional appeal, and a complete lack of self-seeking and ambition. He separated from his wife, who decided to remain loyal to Buddhist tradition, but he felt a strong sense of guilt about leaving her. In deep humility he went back for a time to his wife and her family, to which she had returned after he had left her, as he felt unable to continue his missionary work under the pressure of his disturbed conscience. After a time he was able to induce his wife and her family to join him in his new venture of voluntary poverty and Christian community life.

Ching T'ien Ying is of frail physique. He suffered from tuberculosis, and it was during this vital period of severe illness that he struggled with the idea of a total commitment to the early Christian way of life. He is possessed by a powerful urge to win people for the way of community and has a great love for the poor, the sick and the delinquent, especially those addicted to drugs and alcohol. The ecstatic nature of the religious experience prevalent among members of the movement goes back to the great influence of Ching T'ien Ying in the communities. His missionary zeal is unbounded. He is said to have gone without food and shelter for days in his search for people who would listen to the call to a brotherly way of life.

The missionary, Nora Dillenbeck, who converted Ching T'ien Ying to Christianity, herself became so impressed by the movement that she joined it in 1937. As an American, accustomed to a high standard of living, she was unable to stand the physical privation which the movement demands from its members and died, soon after joining it, in 1938. The members of the communities still hold her in high esteem for the extreme measure of her sacrifice.

The name *Yehsu Chia-t'ing* (Jesus Family) derives from the fact that joining the group implies severing all former ties and becoming a member of the new, the Jesus Family. This radical step, which breaks with ancient and venerated traditions of Chinese family cohesion and continuity, is sanctioned by the words of Jesus: 'Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? . . . Whosoever shall do the will of my Father

which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' The new member renounces all personal possessions and the incentive of the profit motive for the rest of his life. He even drops his surname and identifies himself with the new family, which is not based on blood relationship but on the common will to serve the cause of brotherhood.

All members of the group do practical work, for the most part farming, and live a most frugal and simple life. Family life is maintained, although in most cases no provision is made for separate family dwellings, the few rooms available as sleeping quarters for married people being reserved for the newly wed. The children are regarded as belonging to the whole group, and are cared for in communal educational establishments. Young people often get training outside the community. Visitors have been impressed by the happiness of the children as well as by their healthy and clean appearance.

The Jesus Family movement is inspired by a great missionary zeal. Members are sent out in groups of two, three or four, without money and with only the minimum of clothing and personal necessities. They travel from village to village and establish new rural communities wherever they find disciples for their message.

Ma Chuang, the mother community, is the centre of the *Yehsu Chia-t'ing* movement. Here, members of the one hundred or more settlements, scattered all over the northern part of China, meet every year for an inter-group conference, which is a time of great rejoicing, profound spiritual experience, and important decisions.

Ma Chuang was founded as a separate village community in 1927, a very brave and hazardous undertaking at a time of intense internal warfare, constant marauding, and the subsequent Japanese invasion of Shantung. Today, it comprises five hundred souls, men, women and children. Originally founded as a silkworm farm, its land consists of only twenty-eight acres. Thus the community is unable to produce more than a third of its grain requirements, but it raises enough vegetables to enable the group to sell a surplus. In order to increase income the group started a small vermicelli factory, selling the whole output for income. Members are also engaged in weaving cotton, iron work, carpentry, building, shoemaking, needlework, education, medical work, household duties and administration. Each department is under the leadership of a responsible head.

The small *Ma Chuang* hospital consists of two buildings surrounded by mulberry bushes and flower beds. Here, a small, efficient staff of doctors and nurses, using the best modern medical and pharmaceutical methods, looks after the medical needs not only of the members of the Jesus Family but also of a large local community.

A large building in the centre of the village serves as a dining room and as a meeting hall for the religious meetings and business gatherings

of the community. There are a number of dwellings and other buildings for the education of the children, such as a baby house, a nursery and a school. Several members are well trained teachers.

The day begins early, at four o'clock in the summer and at five in the winter. The community meets for religious exercises, and starts work at eight. The first communal meal is taken at ten, preceded by a devotional period. After this, work is done in the various departments until four in the afternoon, when the second communal meal is taken. There is another devotional meeting before the day ends.

Meals are extremely simple, the morning meal consisting of vegetable stew, the afternoon meal of steamed bread only. Special provision is made, however, to give a more substantial diet to the children and expectant and nursing mothers as well as to the old, sick and ailing. The vegetarian diet is discarded only on special occasions, such as weddings, when pork is eaten as a special treat for the community.

The members of *Yehsu Chia-t'ing* make use of scientific knowledge and technology in their farming and their industrial activities as well as in their medical work. Some of them are even noted for great technical skill and a gift at improvisation and invention of small gadgets to meet their particular needs. Work is not over-specialized, although some skills, such as teaching and medicine, are used in their particular fields. Children also learn to work early in life.

For the members of the Jesus Family there is no division between the spiritual and the secular. This shows itself in various practical ways. There is, for instance, no special chapel. The dining room serves for the religious meetings.

The Family follows the example of the Early Christian Church, of which it is said in *Acts* II, 44-45: 'And all that believed were together, and had all things in common.'

Voluntary poverty is a practice which the members adopt readily. Work is regarded as a creative, joyful experience of fellowship and as the best way of expressing the urge which inspires all members: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength': and 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'

Spiritual life is intense, and personal and corporate worship borders on the ecstatic. The phenomena experienced by members of the Jesus Family in this respect are similar to those recorded of the early Church and the early Quakers, Shakers and other groups: prophetic visions, speaking in tongues, and conditions of trance. The impact of the early Christian writings on the members of the group is of extraordinary power and spontaneous directness. It is felt strongly that our materialistic age is drawing to its close and that apocalyptic

catastrophes are impending. Hence the irresistible urge to live now in full accordance with the supreme command of love.

At the beginning of the movement there were some difficulties. The groups had become prosperous through economic co-operation, thrift, the joining of well-to-do members, and substantial gifts from sympathisers. It appears that their general economic level was higher than that of the surrounding peasant population. As a consequence they were regarded as belonging to the upper classes, and under the influence of 'Western Imperialism.' The antagonism was overcome by extending the principles of voluntary poverty, and by dispersal into smaller communal units, of about thirty to fifty members each. The existing groups disposed of all communal property in excess of minimum needs by distributing funds to the poor. People with substantial means, on joining, were encouraged to sell their goods and to distribute the proceeds to the poor, the community accepting only as much additional property as was needed at the moment for further expansion of existing group farms, or for the establishment of new settlements.

The effect of the dispersal was a considerable increase in members. As the bigger units were broken up, the members travelled, poor like early Franciscans, through towns and villages, starting new settlements wherever they sent. This explains the fact that the exact number of settlements and their total membership can only be estimated as distances of new settlements from the original centre at Ma Chuang are considerable. No records are kept, and contact between groups is largely personal, through travelling members.

The fact that the Jesus Family and similar groups have arisen in widely different parts of the world, in America and Asia, in Africa and Europe, and have sprung up spontaneously and without visible connection with each other, seems to indicate that the tensions and catastrophes of our contemporary world are accompanied by a growing realisation that a positive solution can be found for personal, social and economic problems. Community living on a basis of voluntary co-operation seems to be the answer to the challenge of a disintegrating world. Seen in this light, community movements like the *Yehsu Chia-t'ing*, however small and unimportant they may be as yet, appear not as isolated phenomena, but as signs of an emerging order.

II

Translation of a letter, slightly shortened, from one of the leaders of the Jesus Homes to Wang Shih Peng of the National Christian Council of China.

My dearly beloved brother in the Lord—After I read in the newspaper your article about our Home, I felt compelled to write to you but have delayed to do so until now. It comes as a great surprise to me that you anticipate to publish a book, *A Visit to the Jesus Home*.

I am greatly puzzled as to how you can write upon the Home. Your visit was so quick—such a rush—like a galloping horse which surely could only have seen the flaws. You were in the Home not more than three days. How can you gather enough material for a book? My own limited judgment is that no ordinary man could do such a thing. The writing of a book from such a short visit causes me to be surprised and to feel not a little worried. For whatever you write there will be so much more that can never be written.

In the depths of my heart I know you really love this Home, and also your purpose in writing is to help the other churches. You have written of how great and good it is, and how relevant for the present age. This to me is the expression of the love of vainglory. The Lord at the beginning gave this—that we should love the 'hidden taste' and not be known by others.

In fact, we have lots of shortcomings in our knowledge and in what we do. We really have nothing to boast of. All the critical articles about the Home which I have seen in magazines in former days have been written by those who do not understand the true facts of the Jesus Home. We felt happy then with the despisings and criticisms against us, because we never realised such a small group as our Home would arouse such opposition from others. To tell you the truth, we felt much happier about the criticisms than we do about your book of goodwill. After I read your articles, an unspeakable pain filled my heart. I intended to stop you!—but I was afraid to hurt you because your intentions were good. Therefore, I let you do as you desired, believing that when you had written these few articles spontaneously, you would cease to write further. In writing this book you have now gone beyond my expectations.

I am deeply concerned. You only stayed here a few days. It is impossible for you to write it well. Even I myself, who have been in the Home for more than ten years, would find the task impossible.

How can you describe perfectly the 'undiscovered'—the 'flavour' of the Home—the 'hidden flavour' of Christ? You *must* define the 'flavour' of the Home. If you can describe it all, then you are one of my own dear precious brothers in the Lord. I ask you to stop . . .

Dear brother, we have regarded you as a very precious member of the Lord. Therefore we write sincerely all that is in our hearts.

We long that the love of the Lord who gave his life for us—*that love*—be perfected in you—and that it will accomplish his will through you.

COMMUNITY GROUPS IN ENGLAND—SOME OBSERVATIONS & IMPRESSIONS

LESLIE STUBBINGS

The war years gave a considerable, though largely artificial, stimulus to community ventures sponsored by very various groups of those who had renounced participation in violence. It was natural enough that a dissident minority in a nation totally committed to war should gather into groups and cells for material as well as moral support and witness. Some of these experiments came to birth as an outcome of expediency rather than of any very deep conviction. It is not surprising that so many were short lived and that others faded out once the pressure of war conditions relaxed.

Nevertheless, it was a period in which some of the essentials of a living community—a group of people committed to one another—became more clearly defined. If there were many groups that fell by the wayside, it was at least possible to understand why they fell.

The reasons were many. Sometimes a group disintegrated through a large lack of experience, practical skill and deep rooted apprehension of the spiritual resources demanded by the task. It became evident how dangerously simple it could be to prepare a manifesto: how painfully difficult to make it come alive.

But it is necessary for the purposes of any attempted survey to define the scope and purpose of community—so widely and variously is that term interpreted.

For the most part, the community pattern in Great Britain has developed less as an end in itself than as a practical means to carrying out some particular form of community project or service. The pattern has varied correspondingly with the character of the work undertaken—and this work has covered a wide field.

Some groups have found it laid upon them to develop a new relationship with the soil: others to provide relief in an emergency: others to investigate social problems from the human angle: others to provide a school for children or a home for the old—whether of this country or another. Others again have been constituted as a training ground for those committed to a task of evangelism: a place of reconditioning for missionaries on furlough or for teachers and social workers at home.

Still others have become a vital cell-group in an urban housing estate or a rural village, and around them have taken shape a new fellowship and a sense of integration.

All of these and many besides have had common roots. In their life and work they have sought to interpret fellowship, sharing and service. For the most part, they have been adventures of faith, living hard and possessing no material security.

On their outer fringe have been devotional groups loosely linked in a quest of a deepened spiritual experience but committed to no common way of life.

The economic structure of all these groups has been as varied as their social pattern. Some have adopted the principle of the 'common pool': some have run on a basis of small personal allowances; some on agreed 'wages.' But in none has money become an objective or gain an incentive. That would be a denial of the principle of community.

Our world suffers from a condition of arrested development in all but material advance. Few of us are adult and most of us are frankly self-seeking, self-regarding and quarrelsome children. We are prepared often enough to act decently and even generously where our vital interests are not concerned. Beyond that most of us revert to the cave man. Disciplines imposed *from outside* with or without our consent, may save us from ourselves but they will leave us still children. We grow up only as our disciplines are imposed from within.

It is a function of voluntary community to make adult men and women, emancipated from preoccupation with self. In a world of lawlessness, indiscipline and self-seeking, it attempts to witness to those values by which alone men can *live*. In so far as it succeeds in any measure, it builds a slender but indestructible 'bridge into the future.'

Those groups that survive the disintegrating stresses that can attack them, both from within and from without, mark a growth in experience and a victory of the spirit which few who have never adventured into the community way of living can fully comprehend. In so doing, they have clarified in embryo some of the things that we have all to understand if we are to escape the domination of totalitarian philosophies. The place of leadership in a free community of peoples is one of these. The place of personal responsibility in the life of a group is another.

Each member of such a community is called to carry his share of the load according to the strength and wisdom given to him—to do less is to become a parasite. But the broadest shoulders and the wisest hearts belong to the leaders; they are the bearers upon whom the heavy end of the burden is laid. 'He that would be greatest among you, let him be least of all and servant of all.' This is the lesson of leadership and personal responsibility that learns and teaches. In the light of the ideological struggle that has split mankind into opposing camps, it is a lesson with peculiar significance for this moment of history. For to-day we face in a special sense the compulsions of destiny. We are called as men and as nations to choose whom we will serve.

During the past decade it has become more plain, even to the unreflective, that we are confronted starkly enough by the choice between the service that is perfect freedom and the service rooted in the

coercions of fear. Amongst social workers at home and missionaries overseas, the age-old truth is being rediscovered. You can help people, meet their needs and redeem their circumstances only in so far as you are ready to identify yourself with them. It is not enough to give your substances: you must give yourself. That was the pattern of the Incarnation.

'All real life is meeting' and those who have once looked life in the face dare not turn from it. 'I sat where they sat' was the simple testimony of the prophet. It is as easy as that to reach people and as hard. Always it becomes necessary to share with those you would serve, for small and everyday things can so easily grow into a barrier against understanding and comradeship.

During the last few years we have heard much of the Welfare State, and indeed the term covers much of real value that must be welcomed by men of goodwill. But there are perils also. It becomes plain enough that 'though I give all my goods to feed the poor and have not love,'—though I may have achieved a certain justice, I may have produced a tidy social pattern, I may have redressed a faulty balance, there may yet be lacking the one thing needful to abundant life.

In an era when size and speed have been exalted to a kind of cult, some at least are pausing to ask 'to what end?' To them may come the realization that the way of all creation is the way of the tiny seed, sown in secret and begotten in love; the living organism that grows and reaches out *because* it is alive.

It is this dying into life—the condition of all fruitfulness—that is the condition of community. From this way of life, however expressed, however unselfconscious, however unheeded, grows the prototype of that tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

The way of community, like the path of the mystic, is never an easy way. It abounds in perils and pitfalls as many have found to their sorrow. Self-seeking and self-regard, denied in one shape, will always be rationalizing itself in a score of subtle disguises.

The hope of the community way is the hope that lies beyond despair; the ultimate despair of the natural man brought face to face with himself. But there is no hope beside.

And the future of all that is so loosely covered by this word 'community?' Who can say: nor does it matter.

Our world is in travail and over it, a shadow that threatens to blot out the sun, hangs the smoking plume of man's latest and most suicidal ingenuity. But however desperately we may work to our own undoing, however deeply our world may sink into chaos, beyond lies the promise of life made whole.

FRIENDLY CROSSWAYS—EASTER 1953

ALAN STEVENSON

At the invitation of Leslie and Winifred Barrett, thirty people met at Friendly Crossways Farm last Easter to discuss the challenge of community life and questions arising from such a challenge. The hosts had invited their friends and six members of the Bruderhof to their house, and all gathered on the terrace where the talks took place in the beautiful spring sunshine.

One married couple who attended had returned recently from a stay at the Primavera Bruderhofe in South America and were able to speak about the communities at first hand. A farmer came over a thousand miles to be at the conference having been challenged by descriptions of the communal way of life for many years without meeting anyone who shared his views. A young social worker whose two years in the United States Army had convinced him that he must find a radically different way of life was also present. His search for a different way had led him to the slums of New Haven where he was sharing the lives of drunkards and social outcasts, many of them coloured people. A neighbouring doctor and his wife were there too.

There was no pre-arranged agenda and so the group participants raised various questions which they felt should be touched upon and discussed, such as, 'If a person wishes to live a Christian life, can he live it as an individual (or in his own family) or must he live in community?' 'What pattern of community living can be developed that will most encourage and foster the growth of brotherly love and spiritual development in the greater community (*i.e.* the surrounding neighbourhood)?' Jim Warren was concerned with the relationship of the Christian to the State.

After supper, Jeanette Warren began the evening session by describing an experience in Primavera which she had never had before—that of sitting together with the Brotherhood, asking questions, and experiencing how the group were not putting forth their ideas and arguing about them, but, together with her, were searching for truth and the will of God. Then she went on to describe the integration of community and family life which was especially illustrated in times of emergency. As an example she told of how, when her little son was scalded, there was immediate help available—her husband was fetched from work—nurses were at hand—her other child was taken off and cared for—a wagon was prepared for both parents to go down to the hospital, and so on.

After this a number of questions were raised and discussed freely. For instance, it was asked, 'Would communal life be possible in America,

surrounded by opulence? What basis is needed to begin a community?' It was generally felt that the basis should not be one of religious dogma but one of religious experience.

During the Sunday morning discussions, which followed a short period of silent meeting together, questions arose about a vital relationship to the world, alleviating suffering and 'retreating' from the world. Here Jeanette Warren said, 'We should try to understand and feel what really is our deepest fulfilment in life, and also what *is* God's Will for mankind. My deepest longing is to do something for children in rags, for negroes and others. I have tried in various ways and have talked very much without getting to the roots of the evil. I have felt that the Bruderhof type of living *is* getting to the roots—the fruits are peace, unity and justice. Although this need not be at the Bruderhof, yet it does *happen* at the Bruderhof.'

To begin the final session on Sunday afternoon, Lois Booth wanted to discuss the practical steps involved in beginning a community here in the United States. Jim Warren thought the practical steps would take care of themselves as long as there was a clear direction, that such essential things as the open door, mission, education, and the peace witness were kept in mind and that one considered that the commitment was an absolute one. Bob and Pat Westervelt thought it would be more honest to try to live a life of brotherhood in Paraguay than just to talk about it in North America.

At four o'clock the conference closed, although talks and discussions went on until late at night and the following day. The doctor and his wife, a young married couple, and the social worker from the slums, all decided to visit Primavera as soon as possible. The farmer returned home to fetch his wife and two children to Philadelphia so that his wife might hear something of the Bruderhof at first hand, and two other families felt they should combine households—not as a beginning in community but as a time of common searching.

So Easter came to an end and we all felt what a really wonderful thing it had been that thirty people from such different circles could meet together as strangers and seek so earnestly after the truth, and that some were even moved to take a practical step towards a life of brotherhood, convinced that only in this way could they make a worthwhile contribution to the solution of the problems which burden people today. I personally felt that the conference at Friendly Crossways Farm one of the most remarkable things I have experienced in North America.

FORUM

Extracts from Letters

TO THE EDITORS OF THE BRUDERHOF QUARTERLY, THE PLOUGH—In the 1953 Spring number of your periodical I found a review of the Friends' World Conference. The writer, Llewelyn Harries, says that he and his wife, as one-time members of the Society of Friends, attended the Conference as 'fellow-travellers' and gives us his impressions.

It seems to me that there is an unclarity in the report, particularly in the criticism of the new Quaker Groups in Africa, Asia and some European countries. In the last paragraph but two, the writer associates himself with the reproach of an American Friend that these Friends had no understanding for the radical witness of George Fox and the early Quakers which Elton Trueblood brought before the Conference so passionately. On the other hand, in the last paragraph but three and also in the last paragraph, Quakerism is accused of withdrawing too much into a mystical position and of not being prepared to face the consequences of the Christian message in practical life.

But at the Conference the newer Quaker groups in Asia and Europe made a very particular stand for the unity of all life, for the unity of faith *and* life, without wishing the one to be neglected for the other. When a young Swedish Friend represented that the only proclamation of the message of Jesus was practical service for others, he meant to say with this that, through the centuries, Christianity had lost its value and strength through a proclamation without deed.

The small membership, the rejection of birth-right membership by the European and Asiatic groups, seems to prove that the conditions of acceptance into the Society are not made too easy.—Would you kindly draw the writer's attention to these remarks?

With good wishes for your work,

Berlin, 9th May 1953.

MARGARETHE LACHMUND.

[Llewelyn Harries, writes: The American Friend, mentioned in Margarethe Lachmund's letter, did not mean to imply that newer members in Africa and Asia, as well as in some European countries, are not in earnest in seeking for a life which places an equal emphasis on faith and the practical life. This Friend's concern, as I understood it, was whether the newer members were being given the necessary help and guidance to enable them to come to a real understanding of the essence of Quakerism as represented in George Fox's day. The question can be put in this way: Is there in the Society that clear and radical representation of 'Primitive Christianity' which early Friends stood for? Have the newer members the opportunity of fully grasping all that membership of the Christian Church implies?]

Separation from the World?

Dear Alan Stevenson and Leonard Pavitt,—We have read some of your literature and were for the most part favourably impressed with what we learned of your community life. The consensus of opinion between us *at this time* is that we cannot justify withdrawal from a corrupt society—even on the consideration that such a withdrawal might plant the seed of a new and better civilization.

'Is the doing of God's will only for our spare time? Is the building of the new order not something great enough to demand absolute devotion?' This is the question of the book reviewer in the copy of *THE PLOUGH* we have from you (July 1938). We feel that the answer to this is *Yes* (for the latter question) and we are drawn toward the concrete expression you and your brothers and sisters are making of your affirmative answer. However, we question whether yours is the only answer (and we confess to be still somewhat in doubt). The sources of this question are several: we wonder whether the Church should sever itself spatially as well as morally from the world, or whether it can do this and remain the Church. This has happened to a serious extent in the Paraguay community. But it has also happened to the community in England. Attempts to keep up communication do not solve the problem—it is deeper than that. Our query here is somewhat in the spirit of Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Order of brothers who felt the demand to bring monasticism out of the cloister, to work and suffer in the world, to minister to the sick, the lame, the halt and the blind (in both the literal and metaphorical senses)—just as Christ had done.

We would put it in this way in our question: Can the Church as a community of believers preserve the Peace of God to itself and not take upon itself the suffering *in the world* of the people who have not this peace? Is it not necessary to struggle in the world, though this may disturb our peace and shake our faith many times over? We are sure that you have experienced much disturbance and shaking of faith in your life in community. However, you have 'reduced the risk,' so to speak, and simplified the task, and we wonder whether you have not done this at a price?

These are not rhetorical questions. What you are trying to actualise we feel should be actualised. We realise the difficulties, perhaps the impossibility, of the approach which *we* are inclined to follow, and we appreciate the power of the answer which the way you have chosen offers for these difficulties. We would like to have your response to our question . . . and we want to thank you for bringing us the news of your community.

U.S.A.

Sincerely,

BILL and GLORIA GNATZ.

Marjorie Hindley replies

Dear Bill and Gloria Gnatz,—We were very glad to receive from Alan and Leonard a copy of your letter to them. We should like to try to answer you through the medium of *THE PLOUGH* because we believe your questions are the questions of many whose consciences are disturbed at this time, and they were indeed very often our own questions before we found our way here.

In the first place, have you considered fully what the Church really is and what is the essential message of Christianity? If, together with an avowed atheist, you were to spend your life ministering to the sick, the halt and the blind, what would you have to offer them more than he? If the sick also wish to follow Christ, what will you tell them? Will you suggest they join one of the churches you already know and with which, presumably, you are dissatisfied? Will you advise them to remain where they are in poverty and suffering, while you, able-bodied, pass on to help the next? Or would you ask them to join with you perhaps, to share everything you have, cost what it may, and together face the world? If the latter, and if, in addition, you come to recognise that each of us in his own strength is sick, halt or blind, and that it is only when we are filled with the saving power of God's Spirit we are able to help anyone at all—then in actual fact you are already part of the community of the Church; not in Paraguay, not in Wheathill, but in Chicago. As your doors open to children, to the aged and needy, and to those who 'with God must work for daily bread,' perhaps you will look around for a means of livelihood, and from those who have united with you out of sacrificial love that each may share the sufferings and joys of the other, a practical community will arise. It is this community, this fellowship, this Church, utterly dependent upon God and going forth in the strength of his love, that will send out disciples and missionaries to gather a people together.

Of course, the Church does not have to 'sever itself spatially from the world.' Perhaps you could come to visit us at Wheathill or in Paraguay, before making up your minds that this is what we are doing. Certainly the Church cannot 'preserve the peace of God to itself,' but unless the Church cuts itself off from all evil and injustice it will not be granted that peace: the salt will have lost its savour.

Finally, what *we* are doing is not so important for you as listening to the voice within your own hearts and having faith in your own inner experience. Leave what you see to be wrong, do what you know to be right and God will lead you to those who would be your brothers.

In friendship, for the Wheathill Bruderhof,
MARJORIE HINDLEY.

From an American Student

There is a pattern in my living . . . it is clear to me, as the pattern in the face of a sunflower . . . layer on layer, fitting together in precision, drawing in also the darkened and the mildewed kernels, and expanding outward to form a whole. Personalities, experiences, ideas, all seem to build from one another, to interlap and fit together; and it is not I who constructs.

I cannot lay bare all the intricate weavings of this design to you, but I want to show you some of the steps that brought me, after much searching, to the Bruderhof.

They call America the 'Land of the Golden Promise.' It is the nation of the trillion dollar economy, the eight-hour day, the subsidised farmer, the pre-fabricated house, the chlorodented tooth-paste. But underneath the magazine-covers and the commencement speeches, there are hatreds and prejudices, the self-righteous rich and the conniving poor; people repeating golden rules and living with dollar signs in their eyes, reading big books and using big words and talking big talk and saying nothing. I saw this, and I knew there were things that were not right.

What does one do when one is eighteen and there are worlds to change? I had to find the niche that I could fill, the niche that was *right* all the way to the innermost part of me. And so I began experimenting.

Freshman year out of college, ambitions, enthusiasms, and a summer ahead! My pattern brought me to the slums of Chicago, and a huge brick settlement house, teaching, entertaining, recreating, disciplining, loving . . . But at night I would turn back into the clean and modern and comfortable house, and the children would go home to the flats and the fighting and the filth. I would lock the door.

Maybe the church was the answer! I tried youth-camp counselling the next summer, and I did other work, teaching and canvassing and visiting and collecting. For one hour a week I talked love and brotherhood and kindness to my ten-year-olds, and they went out to their detective comics and their tommy guns—and I couldn't live those concepts myself.

Let's legislate away all evils! We'll give them better housing and aid to education and laws which say none can discriminate against them. We'll send wheat to India and technicians to Africa, we'll give of our sovereignty and all will be solved! Politics were exciting: join a party, write some letters, spread literature, campaign for the man, vote, lobby . . . big lights, lots of thrill . . . and petty politics, party politics, compromise, compromise, compromise . . .

Again I tried social work. They called me 'Miss Gale' and I was their probation officer; they came to see me once every two weeks. I investigated them and analysed them and categorised them. I helped

them buy dresses and get dentists' appointments, talked to their teachers and reflected their feelings, just as I'd learned to do in guidance classes. But I was educated and I sat behind a desk and I was the 'Law.' What they needed—well, what *was* it?

On the back-log of these experiences during these two years, I was thinking a great deal. Out of all my desperate attempts to change and mould other people, two concepts began to make themselves clear: no beneficiary with a degree in one hand and a psychology book in the other can come down to *give* a change to society. The change must come from within the group itself, motivated by people who identify and live within the culture, who understand and are accepted by it. On the other hand, to help a group to raise itself one must go beyond empathising and being accepted, to being an individual of such strength and depth that his simple existence becomes the inspiration for the movement upward. To be in the world and not of the world—it is a fine, fine wire.

And because I could not walk that wire myself, I began to reject the methods and attempts of others. I rejected social work and social workers as a bunch of falsely altruistic 'plasters in the dike.' I rejected church work and ministers and anyone who talked religion, and I termed them self-righteous hypocrites. Politicians appeared rotten to the core, compromisers of character.

But slowly, above these negations, positives began to form. I had to find words which could give meaning to my life, or I had to find life which could give meaning to my words. Much reading, discussing, meditating, brought me to a new concept of religious faith. I became a Quaker. I began to find new inner expressions of myself that needed to come to the surface, to be lived. But old moulds still pressed around me.

Turning to myself, I began to understand *what* I was looking for: and I knew that the Johnnies of the Chicago street corners, and the Sams of the eight-o'clock shift, and the Janes behind the lunch-counters are looking each for the same thing: they need to be *people*, developed in totalness, physically, mentally, and spiritually. They need to give of their talents and abilities, in a spirit of love and selflessness and responsibility towards the whole of society. And for this the psychology of society itself must change to the very core from one of competition and greed to one of co-operation and love. The new recreation centre, the housing legislation and the enlarged police force are all essential to the maintaining of the good now present in our society, but not answers to the problem—the problem of building whole human beings.

It seemed to me that to change the core of our society from one of competition to one of co-operation, the economic system in itself had to change. The essence of our psychology seems to be the advance of self, too often at the sacrifice of others.

One day last April, I was given the opportunity to go to France. Yes! I'd go! I'd experience the life of the co-operative community movement taking place in France. This must be my answer.

But this is not the end of my story. The communities as I lived in and experienced them for five months in France were *not* my answer. For I discovered that though they were making good steps they had not reached the total man. Spreading themselves thin between a capitalistic culture and a communitarian centre, the psychology of the members carried on in old patterns. They were concerned with themselves; how much money they were earning, what they were gaining. Materialism had not diminished. Full responsibility for a community tended to slide to the shoulders of a minority. And they no longer believed that they carried a promise for society as a whole. Their goal was gone, and their purposes were once more self-centred.

As I analysed the community movement, I came to the realisation that an economic change *in itself* was insufficient. The change of psychology did not necessarily rise out of the economic change. The total man I was interested in did not evolve from the process alone. My 'answer' dissolved.

Was I asking too much from man, from society? On a second wind, I went back to the French communities, and I found there much of value beneath the first disillusionments. As I grew in understanding of the French working-class, living in its bottle-neck, cut off from progress in any form, material, cultural, educational—cut off even from the church through the identification of the church with the bourgeoisie, the intelligensia, the capitalistic segments of the population—as I lived within this walled-in strata, I could see new purpose and meaning for the communities. I saw libraries and community health services and camps for the children; I attended classes and lectures and craft guilds; I felt the free atmosphere within their factories; and I realised that a whole new area of life was being opened up for these workers, compressed as they were on the bottom of a wicked social stratification. These communities had not given me my complete answer, but they were *good*.

So I left France with a smile in my heart, and as a sort of tack-on tail, I hopped across to England to visit a community I'd heard about. I'd read a letter Jim Driver had written, and I'd found an article in an American magazine. My college pal was interested and we decided to go. After all, we *did* want to see the sights of London . . . Seed by seed, the sunflower takes shape . . . So I came in the wind and the snow and the ice of a winter night to the Bruderhof.

And it was my answer. Love was being *lived*. I never did see the sights of London.

ANNE GALE.

THE NEWS OF THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

At the time of writing this news report, we still have a very lively memory of the days of Whitsun, when we considered again how at the first Pentecost men from many lands were gathered together at one place in Jerusalem; and how they were shaken up by what happened and faced with the question of what they should do. The reports say that these men felt challenged to turn round, and, through repentance and baptism, take to a life of full community. As it says in the *Didache* (the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles): 'If you have community in eternal things, then how much more should you have it in temporal things.' Life at the Bruderhof is to be understood only in this context, since here the same spirit of full community is at work as there at that time; it has happened again that men of different tongues are gathered together to one Church-community. Living in community and spreading the news in the world go together.

In this number we want to give an account of the journeys we have undertaken, and in the next number a fuller report of what is taking place at home. Of course it must be said that it is difficult to get to know the life of a community only through the reports of those who are travelling around. That is why we long so much to have places in many countries, where the life we have been shown can be represented through practical work imbued with the Spirit. At present, people in North America who are specially interested in the Bruderhof are invited to Paraguay, and those in Europe to England, but the number of these people who can afford such a journey is limited. So we are seriously faced with the question of whether a small Bruderhof should not be founded, at least in North America. This would also be desirable on the continent of Europe, particularly for friends in Germany, Austria and Holland, and also for those in Switzerland, who will be visited during the coming weeks by one of our Swiss brothers. In order to consider this plan, we want to ask all our friends on the Continent if they can help us by pointing to any place with accommodation for fifteen to twenty people, including the possibility of work for them. We should be prepared to take over such a place for a few months in the year if it could be offered us for a limited time only.

Our Work in North America. During the past few years, our brothers from Paraguay have travelled regularly in North America, and, in spite of the great distance, just as close a contact has been established between friends in North America and Primavera as between friends on the Continent and Wheathill. During the past five years people from the U.S.A. have visited the Bruderhoefer in Paraguay. Some of these have joined the community, and amongst them is Grace

Rhoads who is known to our readers through her letter in the last number of THE PLOUGH.

All journeys in North America give the same picture; among people of various ages and different social and religious backgrounds there is evidence of a feeling of discontent with the present world situation. A sense of disillusionment with things as they are has led a number of people to a genuine search for new spiritual values, a search which may lead to a radically different approach to life. The article about a conference at Friendly Crossways, p. 26, describes some of the people who met our members in the U.S.A. and gives an indication of the sort of questions that are being asked.

Stimulating meetings were experienced at Pendle Hill, a Quaker centre near Philadelphia, at Koinonia, a Christian community in Georgia, at Kingwood Community, a pacifist fellowship in New Jersey on a definitely religious basis, and at Tanguy Homesteads, a housing co-operative near West Chester, Pa. There were earnest discussions with members of Macedonia, a co-operative community in Georgia, and with young Jews who had experienced the Israeli Kibbutzim and Kvutzas.

In August, 1952, our members also took part in a retreat held under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Here it was felt clearly that the pacifist movement in the U.S.A. is standing at the crossroads and is facing the question of a more radical interpretation of the principle of peace as a way of life. Some pacifists believe this should lead to full community. During the discussions the early Christian example was often quoted by men like A. J. Muste, the general secretary of the American F.O.R., who called pacifists to a more revolutionary spirit, a concentration of energies, a readiness to suffer and to stand firmly for peace, also in the economic sphere, even if this meant failure and persecution.

This year six of our members travelled to various parts of the U.S.A.—Heinrich and Annemarie Arnold, Alan Stevenson, Leonard Pavitt and Jim and Ricia Bernard. The first four have been working in the Eastern States where they spoke at various meetings. Jim and Ricia Bernard travelled across the continent to California. This was the first time that our message had been taken to any of the Western States, and it was a great stimulation to find such lively interest. Numerous attempts at a communal form of living have been made in California, but the breaking up of many groups, due to the weakness of human nature, has made people recognize that such a way of living is possible only when the members of the group are completely dedicated to the cause, and when the basis is an unshakable one.

Our Work in Holland. As we announced in the first number, we are now including a short account of the journey to Holland made by

our members, Gerrit and Cor Fros. They were able to undertake this journey at the end of last year, shortly before Cor's death and since then a number of Dutch people have come to the Wheathill Bruderhof, and others are asking to visit in the coming months.

Gerrit and Cor returned to their native land on 10th September, 1952, after fifteen years absence abroad. The brotherhood at Primavera and Wheathill had given them the task of visiting those friends with whom they had renewed contact since the end of the last war, and of bringing the challenge of community to new people.

As they knew the country very well from former times, they noticed everywhere sad traces of the war, although they could see that much work had been done to clear away debris and rebuild the ruins. They found not only ruined houses but also many deeply injured hearts, where hate burned stronger than love. Their general impression was that people in Holland had become somewhat cold and indifferent, and they felt this although they experienced many exceptions. They were received very warmly by all whom they visited, and found open ears and receptive hearts. The members of the movements, *Kerk und Vrede* (Church and Peace), *Derde Weg* (The Way), and *Bellamy*, gave them a particularly warm welcome and showed much understanding for what they had to say. This could also be said of the Mennonite and other Free Church circles, and of the schools of Rien de Carpentier and Kees Boeke—an old friend of the Bruderhof. Gerrit and Cor experienced the same as our members who are travelling in other countries; they found an echo only in the hearts of those who believe that something other than life in ordinary society is necessary. Nevertheless, they were able to report about our life and work to numerous groups.

The most frequent question asked was: Is it not possible, or even better, for a Christian to remain in the midst of the world, to witness to Christianity where he is and so reach many more people than would be possible from the retreat of a community? (This particular question is dealt with in the reply to Bill and Gloria Gnatz' letter in the FORUM of this number, p. 30). Many people were very disquieted but could not make up their minds what they should do. Particularly the young people expected some action and seemed somewhat indifferent to the spoken word.

There is doubtless a great longing amongst the members of the churches to experience the Church in the early Christian sense of 'Community Church,' in contrast to the institutions of today. Amongst other things, this shows itself in the increase of relief work within the churches themselves, and also in a movement which aims at the active participation of lay members in meetings for worship.

Our Work in Germany. At the beginning of the year, Hans Zumppe travelled in different parts of Western Germany and to Berlin for two

months. He visited those friends who have long looked forward to meeting someone from the Bruderhof. Here and there, in Essen and Stuttgart for example, he spoke at small meetings and also had the opportunity of reporting about our communities to the Quaker circle in Berlin. His stay in this city was important as various friends from East Germany were able to meet him there. One of these spoke of the wish to found a Bruderhof in the East Zone, and proposed to approach the authorities about it. Everywhere he went, Hans Zumpe met people eager to hear news about the Bruderhof communities. Perhaps it is too much to speak of a community movement such as we experienced after the first world war, or as is apparent in North America today; perhaps certain experiences have made people hesitant about any kind of community; and yet our friends from Christian circles see clearly that there is no such thing as isolated, individualistic Christianity, and that the highest command of love must lead to a life of complete brotherliness. Those who hold idealistic views also wish that a state of true freedom and justice might be established.

Among friends of the Youth Movement old memories were awakened, and many expressed a genuine gladness that our community has survived the confusion of the past decades and maintains the same direction as it did more than thirty years ago. The suggestion was made that all Bruderhof friends might meet once a year for a conference. We have been thinking of having such a conference at the Wheathill Bruderhof at Whitsun, 1954, a gathering which, no doubt, many of our German friends would attend. For those who cannot afford such a journey we have to consider if we could come together for a series of meetings, or a holiday week, somewhere in Germany during the summer of 1954. We should be grateful if our friends would tell us whether they would welcome this, so that we can make plans. We are thinking of a gathering of those who in some way have been challenged by our witness, and who have followed the life of the Bruderhof with close interest for many years.

Hans Zumpe's journey to Germany also led to a new situation in the question of compensation for the Rhoenbruderhof, and we hope soon to be able to give a final report of the whole matter. He also visited the Ministry of the Exterior at Bonn and found great understanding for the work of our schools in Paraguay. We particularly need more teachers in Primavera and, with the help of the Ministry, the possibility exists for one or two teachers to help in our schools there. As, in any case, a previous knowledge of our community is desirable, to avoid later disappointment, we want to inform friends in Germany that we are prepared to invite teachers who are interested to visit the Wheathill Bruderhof in England first. Then, after a few weeks of getting to know each other, we should see whether a collaboration

in the schools in Primavera would come into question. Although accommodation is limited at Wheathill and at present we have a full house, nevertheless, we should give such enquiries priority so that the communities in Paraguay might get the help they need as soon as possible. The young people from Wheathill are planning a tramping holiday in Germany from the 17th-30th of August. They hope to visit Kassel, the Rhoen, and the Rhineland, and to meet other young people and youth camps. Two of our girls, at present training at the Froebel-seminar, Kassel, will join the group from there.

These journeys have shown us again that there are people everywhere who are inwardly disturbed and who face the question of a new order of life. This can also be said of South America. Owing to lack of space we cannot report fully about events there, but would like to mention that, following the visit of Peter Mathis to Buenos Aires, several friends from this city want to visit the communities in Paraguay in the near future.

BOOK REVIEW

CHRISTIANITY AND FEAR. A study in History and in the Psychology and Hygiene* of Religion by OSCAR PFISTER, translated by W. H. JOHNSTON, 589 pp., Allen & Unwin. 30s.

This book was originally published in the German language at Zurich in the year 1944. The English edition was brought out in this country in 1948, but because the book is addressed to a limited circle of readers it has remained unknown to many people.

Oscar Pfister, a pastor in Zurich, had been impressed in his earlier years by the psycho-analysis of Sigmund Freud. As he says in his preface he saw 'that the conditions and evolutionary laws which lead to the outbreak of religious and of non-religious hallucinations are the same.' He was able to combine analytical study with pastoral work and in his book he gives us the results of these thirty-six years of study and research. The first part of the book deals with the 'Theory of Fear'; the second part is an historical study of 'The Solution and Formation of Fear in the History of Judaeo-Christian Religion,' and, finally, the third part presents 'The Hygiene of Religion, the Fundamental Solution of the Problem of Fear through Christianity.'

The starting point of all, the writer says, is in 1 John 4, 18: 'There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.' Love is the centre of all things for Jesus. Pfister asks why love recedes so far behind dogma,

*The translator's note to the English edition states that the word hygiene 'appears to be used in a special sense approximating to, but not identical with, therapy.'

rites and institutions in the history of Christianity. How was it possible that the religion of love could lead to the most cruel and pitiless religious wars, persecution of heretics and witch-hunting? Pfister's concern is 'the restoration of love and its elevation to the dominant factor in life.' The writer devotes one chapter of his book to 'The Repulsion of Fear through a Community having no Crowd Element,' and this seems so important to us that we decided to reprint some passages in this number of THE PLOUGH.

We found two things especially important: firstly, that Pfister declares that the actual solution of the problem of fear can be given in the true community where a way is found against all destructive repression and morbid suppression and where all powers of body and soul are applied to a positive and creative task. Is it not one danger of psycho-analysis that when complexes and the damming-up of life-energy are disclosed this disclosure is not followed by a real redemption? Is there not a further danger that the individual remains self-concerned; and is not the surrender to the task the redemption from our self-centredness? Must not a practical way be shown so that all gifts and powers can achieve their full development? Is there not a danger today of analysing everything—men as well as the whole of our culture—so that the vision of the wholeness of life has been lost and no way out is found? It is significant that a psycho-analyst such as Pfister found himself compelled to point to the necessity of community when he sought the best way to conquer fear.

Secondly, it is important for us that the writer sees clearly, as in a vision, that there is a solution for the problems which arise for people who have become estranged from community. Such people, disappointed with much that professed to be community during past decades, are now anxious lest community should inevitably strangle personality and are afraid it can only be achieved through threats and force. In answer to such fears it can be affirmed from experience that true community has unusual potentialities for the development of each individual. It produces many more personalities than is commonly thought—also more than one would believe possible under the ordinary conditions of life where the individual cannot develop freely but is oppressed. The more variety of such personalities, the more gifts and powers available, the better for the whole community. It may best be compared to an orchestra where each has to play a particular part—a part that may not be omitted. When one surrenders one's life to the service of the community one certainly does not see the development of one's personality as the highest goal. It is much more a case of losing one's life with the promise of finding it again in a deeper sense.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The second number begins with an extract written by Leo Tolstoi to the American, Ernest H. Crosby, in 1896. We are reminded in this excerpt that men are called to be 'God's labourers,' and, as such, have quite definite tasks to fulfil. The next article has been written by a young American, Jere Bruner, who was a student of Sorokin for several years. In an impersonal world man searches for a *thou* to respond to him in personal terms—the *Thou* of the living God, the Power behind the universe. His search for this 'Power that is Person' led the writer to identify himself with the community in Paraguay. The contribution of Franz Dressler, a Baptist minister in East Berlin, is taken from a booklet which he published in the East Zone of Germany, and presents the challenge of radical socialism to Christianity. We are grateful to Messrs George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., for permission to reprint the article, 'The Problem of Fear and its Solution,' from Oscar Pfister's book *Christianity and Fear*. The book is also reviewed in this issue.

Three reports are included, the first being written by Leslie Stubbings who, for a number of years, was secretary of the Community Service Committee in England. It is hoped that the activities of this co-ordinating committee may be revived, and a fresh beginning has been made with the publication of the *Community Broadsheet*. The second report on the 'Jesus Homes' in China by E. C. H. Arnold is republished here by arrangement with Henrik F. Infield, editor of the American periodical *Co-operative Living*, as the community life of this group of Chinese Christians will probably be unknown to most of our readers. On the other side of the world, one of our brothers, Alan Stevenson, reports about an Easter Conference at Friendly Crossways in North America. We are glad to publish the letter by Bill and Gloria Gnatz in *The Forum*, together with a reply from one of our members, as this question of 'withdrawal from the world' is one which often concerns our guests.

This time the Bruderhof News deals almost exclusively with journeys made by our brothers and sisters. Unfortunately, there is insufficient room to give a full report about the new beginning in Uruguay, so that this must be done in a later issue. The contribution of the American student, Anne Gale, who visited us at Wheathill, is included because we find it important as a living expression of the search, by many young Americans to-day, for a true way of life.

In the first number it was mentioned that the duplicated News-letter, *The Open Door*, circulated in North America from our community in Paraguay, would in future be incorporated in THE PLOUGH. After further consideration it has been decided to continue with this News-letter, which is intended to reach a wider circle than is possible at present with THE PLOUGH.

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