

Com. in Par. 15 Nov 90

Community in Paraguay

A Visit to the Bruderhof

By Bob and Shirley Wagoner
Illustrations by Leslie Holland

CONTENTS

Foreword		ix
Preface	xiii	
1 From Campus to Canal Zone	1	
2 Over the Andes	18	
3 Paraguay at Last	29	
4 Primavera	45	
5 Anabaptist Backdrop	56	
6 Inner Basis	66	
7 Working Together	83	
8 Mealtimes and Meetings	98	
9 Children in Community	111	
10 A Conference	127	
11 Other Special Occasions	132	
12 Reflection and Retrospect	147	
Afterword		159
Bibliographical Endnotes	168	
Glossary and Names	170	
Authors and Illustrator	172	

PREFACE

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Bruderhof's finding a refuge on the Paraguayan estancia of Primavera during World War II. The world is still facing war and rumor of war. Though nearly forty years have passed us by, the Wagoners' report radiates a timely hope for an answer that "takes away the occasion for war."

Previously, we have been able to write only in briefest summary of the Primavera decades. This report will surely warm the hearts of all who experienced that period of our history. To those with no experience of it, we hope to give a glimpse and at least some understanding of that time.

The Editors
January 15, 1991

FOREWORD

This is a charming and winsome story of the six month visit of Bob and Shirley Wagoner to the three Bruderhofs in Paraguay, known collectively as Primavera ("springtime" in Spanish). The Wagoners lived in the Primavera Bruderhofs in 1953 while on leave from theological studies at Bethany Theological Seminary in Chicago. Struggling with the key question--What is the nature of the Church and how does it become fleshed out in concrete daily living?--the Wagoners decided to visit Primavera and immerse themselves in the daily life of the community. Their quest was also propelled by a sense of disenchantment with their experience in the institutional church. In their affiliation with the Church of the Brethren they were disturbed by the gap between its present-day practice and the unwavering commitment to radical discipleship by early Brethren and other Anabaptist leaders. Were the stories they had heard about the Bruderhof true? What was it really like to live in a community setting among others who willingly denied self for the sake of the Kingdom of Christ? They set out to discover the answers to these and many other questions.

Their account is sometimes written in a diary-like fashion and other times organized around key themes and issues such as child rearing, work, and worship. The style is readable. The story of their visit is hard to put down. They describe all facets of their sojourn in vivid and well-crafted detail. But more importantly they clearly state their own questions and reservations and share their emotional reactions as well. This is not a heavy analytical study. Rather it gives voice to a genuine search--a personal journey with all the surprises and emotional responses.

This indeed is one of the strengths of their account. It is not a cold academic study of Primavera nor is it a defense of Bruderhof life by members of the community. It is rather an open and honest account of the Wagoners' personal voyage with its joys and frustrations, anxieties and delights. In this way the Wagoners have served all of us well who stand outside the Bruderhof because they lead us inside for a candid and honest visit.

Throughout the narrative the Wagoners keep the basic theological questions in focus as they partake in the nitty-gritty of community life--what is the nature of the church, what does the church look like when disciples renounce self and utterly commit themselves to the way of Jesus? Is it possible to realize the vision of the early church today in concrete human communities in the modern world? This is the genius of the Wagoner account--the profound theological questions are placed alongside the practical experience of living in a real community day after day throughout their visit. This integration of the fundamental spiritual questions with daily community life in a real setting animates the book.

At first glance this appears to be a pleasant historical description of the three Primavera Bruderhofs in 1953. Such pertinent description would certainly be important in its own right for those interested in history. But it is much more. For it lays bare the fundamental issue that faces the modern world today as it prepares to greet the twenty-first century. What is the proper fit and balance between the individual and the society? Many social scientists worry that individualism has gone to seed and that, indeed, greed and self pursuit--so characteristic of the "me" generation of the 1980s--threaten to undermine the western social order.

The Wagoners in this fascinating account of their pilgrimage show us how the Bruderhof has struggled with this fundamental spiritual question of the modern age. They describe how the rejection of individualism does not mean loss of individuality. Moreover, they show how the renunciation of selfish desire and the commitment to live in community provide the wellspring that feeds the deep reservoirs of human satisfaction. By addressing these issues with observations flowing from the life of Primavera, the Wagoners have spoken not as historians but

as prophets.

As you will discover, Bob and Shirley Wagoner were deeply touched by their six-month visit. Join them on their trip. You will be touched and moved as well.

1

From Campus to Canal Zone

I first heard of the Bruderhof during the last few months of my senior year at Manchester, a Church of the Brethren College in Indiana. A few friends had met and talked with two traveling brothers of the Bruderhof at a conference on war and peace and returned to campus full of enthusiasm over what they had heard about the Bruderhof. My reaction to their report was my usual one, "Nonsense! A bunch of utopian crackpots!" And with that I dismissed the whole business from my mind.

It turned out, however, that my friends had extended a definite invitation to the two brothers to visit Manchester in the course of their travels. Not long afterward, one of them arrived at the college in an ancient, rattling Buick. I saw the fellow going about the campus, but I was still quite uninterested. Later on that day I learned that one of my favorite professors was having him at her home for tea and had invited any interested students to come and meet with him. At this point I decided that if this fellow was worth the attention of my professor, then perhaps I ought at least to go and listen, if for no other reason than to find out what sort of foolishness it was.

Full of skepticism, I went, drank tea, and listened. As I listened to the brother talk, I was impressed almost immediately by his simple, straightforward way of speaking. Something about his very evident sincerity made it plain that I had been unjust in my offhand dismissal of the Bruderhof. Still, I was far from being convinced. This sort of community experiment had started and failed--by the dozen. Historically almost no community effort had ever succeeded beyond a few struggling years. What gave this particular group the audacity to think they could succeed where all others had failed?

As the evening wore on, I certainly did not feel that the brother's manner of speaking and method of presentation was very evangelistic in the common sense of the term. After giving a brief account of the Bruderhof's beginnings, he let the discussion take a more or less question-and-answer form. He answered all the questions quietly and simply, sometimes with even a little reticence. He didn't seem to be trying very hard to convince anyone. And he freely admitted that in many ways the life could be improved. Neither did he seem to be offering a blanket invitation for everyone to come and visit, although he did make it clear that any visitors would be welcome.

His words had a certain force to them, partly because of their clarity and honesty, but due more, I think, to the fact that he was not just telling another idle theory or discussing some new abstract notion of social reform. He was in actual fact representing a people who really lived what they believed. My interest was finally caught when I began to get an intimation of the real, driving motive of Bruderhof life. I began to realize that there was something more than human involved here, even though the brother said little or nothing about it.

I made no comment to the brother that night, but wondered idly as I walked back to the dormitory how difficult it would be to see this thing in action. Spring came and with it graduation from college. Shirley and I were married shortly afterward, and I told her of what I had heard. She was not very enthusiastic at first, but at least she was curious. The next fall during my first year at Bethany Seminary, we wrote some cautious letters to Paraguay and to the community's mailing address in Philadelphia, expressing interest and requesting more information. They responded, some traveling brothers came to visit us on several occasions, and we found ourselves thinking more and more in terms of a visit to the Paraguayan Bruderhof.

During this time of decision I was quite thoroughly immersed in my first year of seminary work. I had not come to Bethany with a very clear sense of calling, and for a while there were

some doubts in my mind as to the wisdom of embarking upon a ministerial career. But the autumn quarter had not progressed very far until I was quite caught up in my studies and enjoying all the classes a great deal. Viewed as a whole, the year turned out to be probably the most intellectually stimulating and creative period in my life.

The study of history, ethics, and the New Testament brought me to a new realization of the dynamic element in the Christian gospel and its vital relationship to mankind. But as a result of my studies a number of problems arose, and they all seemed to revolve around the more central question, "What is the Christian life?" This was not pursued very far until I found myself also asking, "What is the nature of the Church?" All in all, it seemed that the more I examined the New Testament teachings and their logical conclusions, the greater was the gulf between the life required there and the kind of life I and others like me were living.

A long-standing concern for the Church of the Brethren also began to come to the fore. There seemed to be a noticeable gap as I compared the present-day condition of the church with the original first principles that gave rise to the Anabaptist movement and later the Dunkers (Church of the Brethren). For instance, it seemed to me that there is much more stress now on getting people--children--into the membership rather than serious concern for making a mature, adult decision. Neither, in my acquaintance with the church, did I see much more than spotty evidence of a close-knit fellowship in Christ where members had a high, personal regard for each other, practiced the discipline of loving admonition, and felt bound together in a brotherhood of mutual assistance. The present emphasis on the external development of church buildings and the liturgical type of worship also seemed to me to be out of keeping with this original, moving Spirit. Perhaps the thing that disturbed me most of all was the fact that about eighty percent of young Brethren men did military service during World War II and did not take a conscientious objector position. This seemed to me to be an inescapable judgment on the condition of the church.

But all these were dim considerations, and I was not sure of my own conviction on any point. In fact, the more I surveyed Christian history and the more thoroughly I investigated human nature, the more pessimistic I became. While it seemed like the New Testament message required some kind of "communism of love" among believers, to use Ernst Troeltsch's term, I did not see how it was possible. I was on the verge of accepting human divisiveness as normative and believing that an individual could only do his solitary best in compromise with the evils around him.

However, during this period of consideration, Shirley and I learned more and more about the Bruderhof and its way of life, and it seemed to be a living refutation of my more pessimistic conclusions. They claimed they were actually living together in a fully disciplined Christian brotherhood. I was skeptical still, but their openness and sincerity convinced me that it warranted looking into. This conviction became more firmly settled in our minds as the winter quarter moved on, and by spring it was clear to us that we should make a visit to the Bruderhof in Paraguay. While Shirley had not had my initial interest in the Bruderhof, she did come to share my concern as we began searching together for the meaning of the Christian life for us.

There was also, without doubt, a certain element of adventure involved in our decision: the lure of travel to South America was a considerable one. In fact, as we surveyed the whole matter, it occurred to us that while we were going to spend a good-sized sum to get there in any event, we should spend it in such a way as to get the most for it. Why not get in as much travel experience as possible at the same time? Finally, we decided to travel to Paraguay via Mexico and Central America and use cheap surface transportation wherever we could. We made it a rule to use air transportation only when no other way seemed feasible.

For months in advance of our departure date we were busy gathering information and

calculating our chances. Enough data was accumulated in this process to start a travel bureau. Our job was doubly complicated because travel agencies did not have the information we needed. Only one out of two thousand tourists, we were told, ever traveled the way we were planning!

The last few weeks were hectic, crammed with last-minute attention to studies and the remaining travel preparations. We pushed off at last at midnight of June 1, 1953, driving a brand-new Chevrolet to be delivered in San Antonio, Texas. Our wanderings through the States, Central America, and half of South America to visit the Bruderhof in Paraguay is best told with excerpts from our cards and letters home that summer.

McPherson, Kansas, June 3, 1953.

The car is running beautifully. Dick and Cosette Wareham and her mother fed us and revived our spirits after a long, hot drive. We'll be leaving McPherson this morning, driving through Kansas and Oklahoma all the way to San Antonio--about seven hundred miles.

We'll take a bus from San Antonio to Laredo. Our hope is to leave Laredo Thursday, but we'll not break our necks trying to make it. We enjoyed the first part of our drive yesterday--meandered along at 35 m.p.h., taking in the scenery. But after five hundred miles we had to hurry a little to get here.

San Antonio, Texas, June 4.

Arrived in good order--never a bit of trouble with the car. Total mileage since Chicago 1,460. It was a terribly hot drive most of the way, but Texas has been fairly pleasant.

We are leaving shortly by Greyhound to Laredo to make connections with Transportes del Norte and drive on straight through to Mexico City.

Mexico City, June 6.

We arrived last night around 8:30, safe and sound but very tired. Since our last card to you from San Antonio, we have been on the road day and night. They were good buses--from San Antonio to Monterrey we had air conditioning. From Monterrey on we didn't need air conditioning because the air was cooler in the mountains.

We were on Mexican Rt. 85 nearly all the way to Ciudad Victoria and traveled across hot, dusty, and terribly windy plains. From there on to a little way outside Mexico City we were in mountains. It is nearly the longest mountain trip Bob ever had. It was very wonderful--we were so high it was like flying in an airplane. On occasion we were looking down on the tops of lesser mountains. The road was very often on the edge of a sheer precipice. There were many times we could look thousands of feet straight down out of our window. The driver was careful, though, and there was never any real danger, but we had a new realization of how tenuous life is.

The whole ride from San Antonio to Mexico City cost us \$14.49 each. And we found later on that if we had waited a little and bought the rest of our tickets at Monterrey we could have saved four dollars each.

The people in Mexico are very interesting. The extremes seem obvious: on one hand you will find the fine, cultured Spaniard in a powder-blue Cadillac, and on the other the dirty, ragged, wretchedly poor Indian peasants--the latter short and undernourished, with a serious, stolid look on their faces that shows how hard they work. We saw many children no bigger than eight- or nine-year olds struggling up and down mountain roads, barefoot, carrying heavy loads of firewood on their backs. Between the two extremes are the average Mexicans, as I would call them, swarthy, of average height, and generally good-natured.

We plan to leave Mexico City on the 10th, early in the morning. Must quit now, see the city, and get some breakfast. Adios!

P.S. Everybody is very accommodating. Ask any question and people smile and say, "Si, Si!"

Mexico City and Tehuantepec, June 8.

Miles covered between Chicago and Tehuantepec--3,779.

It's been less than a week since we took leave of you, but it seems much longer. We've entered a new world almost, and the language barrier, though not insuperable, certainly emphasizes the fact. The strangest thing is that here in Mexico City there is a large Spanish population--distinct from the Indian and mixture of Indian and Spanish (Mexican). This Spanish population looks very Caucasian; many are blonde or brunette although most have brown eyes. The Spanish women are very attractive--many of them are beautiful. Indians are very much in evidence--not only in the native markets but in the most fashionable parts of town and especially in the shopping district. A barefoot or sandal-clad Indian woman, with her rebozo (shawl) and child wrapped in it, is a common sight.

June 11.

We get home in good time at night, but after walking so much all day, we don't feel like doing a thing but going to bed.

We left Mexico City on June 10 at 7:30 a.m. by bus for Oaxaca. We had a beautiful ride the first part of the way: as we climbed out of the Valley of Mexico, the two famous volcanoes, glistening with a solid sheet of snow, came into view--Ixtaccihuatl, the "sleeping maiden," and Popocatepetl. We went around "Ixty" on the road to Puebla until we reached a view where "Popo" was in front of it. Then the symmetrical cone shape of Popo was clearly evident.

We soon descended from this valley, although Popo remained in sight for some time. As we went farther south, the road wound through dry mountains and in and out of more fertile valleys. We saw much organ-pipe and candelabra cactus. The two are very similar, though the former is single-stemmed and the latter branching. However, it was never as arid as in northern Mexico or in the area just north of Mexico City.

We spent a full and interesting day near Oaxaca. First we drove to the ruins of Mitla, 28 miles south of Oaxaca. Here the Zapotec Indians built their capital city after the Mixtecs drove them out of Monte Alban. The cultures of both are said to have flourished at least two thousand years ago, maybe up to four thousand years ago. At any rate they long antedated the Mayan and Aztec civilizations.

The Zapotecs were outstanding architects; the walls of these ruins were decorated with stone mosaics and carvings done in similar geometrical designs, no two exactly alike. They had to bring all their stones for these buildings 6 miles through the mountains. Some of the pieces are 20 feet long, and 4 feet square and weigh 26 tons! They had lavishly used a red color on the walls made from the cochineal beetle. There is little left of the city, however, since the Spanish conquistadors who discovered it desecrated its temples. They built a church on top of one of the old temples, and parts of both buildings can still be seen clearly. The Spanish made a practice of doing this. In Cholula, near Puebla, there are 365 churches. The ancient Aztecs had built a pagan temple for each day of the year, and the Spanish conquerors--anxious to destroy the old religion--built a Catholic church on top of every Aztec temple.

We then went down to the little museum at Mitla, which is owned by an American who has lived here five years. He was quite an interesting person--the "retired colonel" type, with quite a bit of bluff and bluster but with real sincerity and interest in his work. In his opinion, the Zapotecs are the best example of early civilization. They seemed to have lived for a thousand years without war and, unlike most other Mexican tribes, they never made human sacrifices.

They had an extensive written system of laws that was unique in its humane treatment of slaves: a person who mistreated a slave was subject to the death penalty. A slave might marry whomever he wished and could own property. By contrast the Aztecs who built the Pyramids of the Sun and Moon near Mexico City, based their culture and religion on human sacrifice to their deities. This necessarily kept them always at war with the neighboring tribes in order to obtain victims.

After seeing Mitla, we drove to Monte Alban, trying to outdistance the rain closing in on us, but not quite making it. Between showers we managed to see the city--built by the peaceful and cultured Zapotecs and occupied by them until the Mixtecs, a warrior tribe, drove them out. The city, situated on the top of a mountain, was quite large. Only a small portion of the ruins is now excavated, due to a lack of funds. With odd-shaped mounds on every hill, we felt like digging right in!

As the Mixtecs were not very good architects, they left most of the buildings intact and made few additions. However, they were excellent craftsmen and jewelers and added many stone carvings to decorate their courts. One court is called the Court of the Dancers because it was surrounded by stone slabs on each of which a figure was carved, apparently a dancer. We were struck by the resemblance of several figures to Egyptian pictures--and by the likeness of others to Oriental dancers.

We went back to the hotel for dinner about 3 p.m., which seems to be the usual dinner hour here, followed by a light supper late in the evening. Speaking of food, we are really enjoying the fresh pineapple--much better than we buy in the States--and the limes that are served instead of lemons as garnish. They are especially good with tea. We are also getting spoiled on beefsteak--mostly fillet--which seems to be very reasonable and abundant. We are avoiding the more highly seasoned Mexican food, as our sampling so far has not found it very satisfactory.

You will be interested in the way coffee is served in the more provincial places. They pour hot milk into a glass until it is nearly full and then pour from a bottle of thick, cold coffee into the milk. In the better places they have the coffee hot too, but they still pour the milk in first.

We went to the main church in Oaxaca, St. Dominic's, which is decorated inside with a lavish use of gold leaf. We have never seen any building more extravagantly decorated. Our guide, though a sincere Catholic, thought it wasn't right that most of the money given to the church went for decorations.

We also saw the leading weaving and pottery factories of the city. You couldn't call them factories in the American sense of the term; they were more like home industries with hired help. We could scarcely resist the beautiful things they had for sale.

June 12.

We left Oaxaca, taking first class seats on a bus to Tehuantepec. We find that the farther south we go, the less a first-class bus has to commend itself. This one was much like a school bus but had slightly better seats. Tehuantepec is a colorful town. There are only two Americans living here, as contrasted with five hundred in Oaxaca, so you see it's quite provincial. The women's costumes are very pretty. They wear a long, full, gathered skirt of bright-colored print material--often with a wide border of white pleated organdy or lace around the bottom. The blouse is extremely colorful. It is tight across the shoulders and loose at the waist and worn outside the skirt. The fiesta dress is of the same style, but usually with a black background and bright-colored embroidery on both blouse and skirt. This always has the ruffle around the skirt and a special headdress with a similar ruffle.

The women here seem to be very aggressive. Our first hint of this, other than what we had read, was when a Tehuana woman on the bus from Oaxaca spoke first to us. In the rest of Mexico the women had been rather retiring and difficult to talk to at all. Actually--and this will interest

the sociologists among our friends--the Tehuana Indians in this area have arranged themselves into a matriarchal society. This does not seem to be rigid, but the general attitude that "mama rules" apparently prevails. You see almost no men in the markets. All the major responsibilities and work in the family are woman's domain. Even the rickety buses bringing people to and from town are filled almost entirely with women. As far as we know this is not characteristic of the rest of Mexico.

The Tehuana women are known the world over for their calm and dignified beauty. The older women are stout and heavy--real matriarchs, but even they have a certain stately dignity about them that commands respect. Part of this is due, I think, to their remarkably good posture, for they carry everything on their heads.

In general our trip has been very pleasant, although there is no doubt in our minds that we are traveling the hard way. Mexico is very mountainous, and bus travel over poor roads can be very tiring. And the farther south we go the more reckless the local bus drivers become. But we have found the people to be kind and anxious to help confused Americans. In Mexico City, for instance, we did not dare stand very long on a street corner, or someone would hurry up to us and offer to give directions.

Another remarkable thing about Mexico is its architecture, which is very modern and up-to-date--much more so than in the United States. This may sound surprising, but it is true, especially in Mexico City. New buildings in trim, neat, modernistic lines are everywhere. It is difficult to go to any point in Mexico City and not be confronted with some very remarkably designed building. The best example of this is the brand new University City outside of Mexico City. The architecture there is simply out of this world. The library is windowless and completely covered on all four sides by vast mosaic murals by Diego Rivera--magnificent! It is beyond my ability to describe it.

Tehuantepec, June 12, 1953.

Left Oaxaca this morning at 8, arrived in Tehuantepec at about 2 p.m. Most uncomfortable ride yet. Extremely mountainous. Bus was the type used as school buses in the United States--imagine slowly inching up huge mountains shrouded in clouds and then roaring down the other side at a terrific rate. All the time the road is twisting, turning--not a straight stretch in fifty yards--and on curves only a few whitewashed stones between the bus and eternity! The driver was pretty careful, though.

Very hot and stuffy here in Tehuantepec--our bus went first to Salina Cruz. Got our first glimpse of the Pacific. We think we will take a bus from here to Tuxtla Gutierrez and then fly from there to Tapachula to cross the border. We'll probably leave here on the 14th. This hotel at Tehuantepec is reported to be the last good one on the Isthmus until Panama.

Malacatan, Guatemala, June 15.

We celebrated our first wedding anniversary in a most unusual manner. We left Tehuantepec yesterday at 6 a.m. for Tuxtla Gutierrez by second-class bus; that is, people got on with their live chickens and turkeys to go to market. After what seemed an interminably long, hot, jolting ride over more mountains (I've never seen so many mountains, and I understand we haven't seen anything yet) we arrived in Tuxtla late in the afternoon and found we were too late to catch a plane to Tapachula. We looked up a hotel--a good one to our surprise--and prepared to stay overnight.

We took a long walk in the afternoon to the city park, where they had a museum (a few stuffed mountain lions and birds) and a zoo (a few worried monkeys). Nearly half the town was there. It is a local custom on Sunday afternoons for the older folks to come out and chat, for the

younger caballeros and señoritas to come out and exchange embarrassed glances, and for the children to splash around in a wading pool. We got to talking with a few children and soon had half a dozen around us. Shirley got to practice her shaky Spanish a little. We went to a band concert in the town square that evening--just like any midwestern town.

This morning we got on an airplane at 10:20 and arrived in Tapachula at 11:20--140 miles in an hour. That was quite a change from the way we had been traveling. It was the first trip I (Bob) had ever taken by plane, and we enjoyed it. A car took us from Tapachula to the border--Talisman. We got there just as siesta began so we had to kill a few hours. At 2 p.m. we crossed the border without incident but found it was too late to get a bus for Quezaltenango because the afternoon rain starts at 3 p.m., so our taxi took us to Malacatan--a few miles on into Guatemala--where we are staying tonight. The place is not really a hotel but a home where the folks take in a few guests. They are very nice. They were concerned that we had a good evening meal. The room where I'm writing is very plain--whitewashed board walls with only a curtain between us and the kitchen, a mirror on the wall and a basin on the stand--like some farm homes I've been in.

This is really tropical country--banana trees everywhere. We bought a bunch of five bananas today for less than half a cent. Coffee bushes are very common, as are coconut palms, fan-like palm trees, thick vegetation, parrots, colorful birds, and rain--lots of it.

But we leave all this tropical country behind us tomorrow. At 6 a.m. we take another second-class bus for Quezaltenango in the highlands, which is definitely not tropical. We've been warned to have jackets and coats up there--very mountainous country ahead.

The road we will take--unpaved, half-gravel, half-dirt, full of holes--via San Marcos, is supposed to present some of the most breathtaking scenery in the world. In 11 miles it climbs some 4,775 feet, reaching a height of some 10,000 feet above sea level.

The Indians are direct descendants of the ancient Mayans and look like the sculptured faces we saw in some ruined temples. Many of the ancient cults still exist, and their pagan practices are kept--right on the steps in front of the Catholic churches!

San Salvador, El Salvador, June 24.

The bus ride from Malacatan to Quezaltenango was the most horrible bus ride I ever expect to have in my life. Except for a few miles on both sides of Quezaltenango and Guatemala City, the country of Guatemala has virtually no paved roads. They are gravel and dirt, and in the mountains they are the most twisting, turning, contortion-bound roads I have ever seen. Try to remember the worst back-country road you ever saw in Missouri, and you'll have a pretty good picture--ugh!

Not only that, but the only buses we could get were second-class buses--cramped, crowded school buses. It was impossible for Shirley to sit straight. It was a much-used, battered, and beaten old bus with a dyspeptic motor that threatened to conk out at every stop--and there were many, many stops: one for practically every Indian on the road. The motor, by the way, did finally quit--right in the middle of the mountains. I don't know how many thousands of feet up--where the clouds were anyway. It was a long hour and a half before it could be persuaded to return to service again.

The only seats we could get were over the rear wheels, and the bus had absolutely no springs. So it went, the most jolting, jarring ride this side of a pogo stick. And for comedy there was a chicken pecking at our feet half the way! I must stop. I can't bear to revive any more of the memory.

We have been comfortably cool most of the time since we left the States, and downright cold the rest of the time. Most people don't realize that a large portion of Mexico and Central

America is in the mountains--many thousands of feet up. Except for the areas around Tehuantepec and Tapachula, both low coastal plains where it is hot and humid, we have spent most of our time in the highlands. Mexico got quite warm during the day--a comfortable dry heat--and the nights were cool, requiring jackets and blankets. But Guatemala, where the rainy season is in full swing, was always overcast with clouds and fog and mist. We almost never saw the tops of the mountains, and we shivered! My impressions of Guatemala, with its horrible roads and chilly climate, are rather unenthusiastic.

We did, however, see in Guatemala the most spectacular sight I ever expect to see. In Quezaltenango we got a good, comfortable bus with springs and cushioned seats that took us along the road toward Guatemala City. About halfway between the two cities we got off and took another jolting ride north-east to a little town called Chichicastenango where the famed Santo Tomas Church is located. We got there in time for market day--Thursday.

The market itself was fascinating, with the whole square crammed with Indians in their attractive, multi-colored costumes, selling everything imaginable. Each village has its own distinctive design in curious zigzag patterns for the women's blouses, all handwoven.

The people are very small. The average man was no taller than myself, and all the women without exception were much shorter than I am. Shirley towered over them all like an Aryan giant. Their short stature, by the way, is not due to any nutritional deficiency. One museum we visited pointed out that their diet is better than that of the average European. That's the way they are, I guess, like the Pygmies.

But the most amazing sight was at the church, which faced right onto the market square. Remember in a past letter we said it was the policy of the Spaniards to build churches atop pagan temples in order to stamp out the old culture? The same policy was followed in Guatemala, in Chichicastenango. But the remarkable thing is that the old pagan religion persists to this day--some four hundred years later--right on the church steps! At the height of the day the church steps were crowded with some fifteen to thirty men swinging their tin censers back and forth and chanting pagan prayers in their thick, guttural Indian dialect. And at the base of the steps there is a crude altar where bigger bundles of incense are burnt and more pagan prayers are chanted. There were times when the clouds of incense were so thick that we couldn't see the door at the top of the steps. Another practice we saw was the pouring out of libations of alcohol on the steps, accompanied by more incense and prayers.

Inside the church things weren't much different. There were flower-petal and herb offerings scattered all around. And dozens of small candles were set on the stone floor in neat little rows by the Indians while they said more prayers. What they prayed to I don't know. They often crossed themselves and looked adoringly at statues of the saints and at the crucifix, and they kissed the various altars very often. Whether it was Christian or pagan or both, I don't know. I have a suspicion they don't know either.

Besides all this there was a black stone idol on a hilltop outside the city that is much visited by the Indians. We climbed up that hill and saw an old stiff-legged Indian go through his ceremonies before the idol. I could not see any fundamental difference between the rites carried out on the hill-top and the ones at the church.

A common practice, we found, was for an Indian to go first to the church steps and swing his censer around for awhile then go inside the church and perform some ritual with lighted candles. And then lastly, he would climb the hill and go through a ritual before the idol. In a world as shaky and undependable as this one you can't afford to take any chances, I guess.

On Friday we jolted our way back to the main road in another bus. Honestly, I think I spent as much time off the seat as I did on it! We caught another bus then and rode in comparative comfort on to Guatemala City. We estimate that Guatemala City is probably as big a

town as Fort Wayne, Indiana. There wasn't a whole lot to see there, not nearly as interesting as Mexico City. Guatemala is supposed to be an entirely Indian country, and yet we saw very few native-dressed Indians in the city. Most of the city population is European or mixed Indian-European.

Monday morning we got into a station wagon (very comfortable) and rode to San Salvador, El Salvador. El Salvador, we discovered with delight, affords the luxury of good paved roads. (We stood up and sang the Doxology right on the spot!) The only catch is that El Salvador is such a tiny country that our luxury will be short-lived.

Since both of us have had a few digestive disagreements with local food, we were definitely in a mood for a good American meal when we got here. We looked up an American-managed boarding house, the Casa Clark; it was very comfortable and the food was good, but definitely out of our price range. We feel it was worthwhile, though, because we are regaining some lost pounds and resting up for the push south.

El Salvador is definitely not a tourist country. I haven't seen a native-dressed Indian here yet. The only thing to see is volcanoes, and we don't have enough money to take a closeup look. The country is densely populated and is at a considerably lower altitude. The big industries are coffee and bananas, and they are all over the place.

Friday morning, June 26, at 4:00 we leave in another station wagon for Managua, Nicaragua. Our route will take us through the southernmost tip of Honduras. When we cross the border into Nicaragua, we'll be straight south of Chicago. The address we gave you for mailing in Guatemala City turned out to be non-existent. What used to be a hotel is now the Bureau of Sanitation!

Don't feel bad if you can't find some of these towns on the map. Very often we can't find the town we're in on the map.

We plan on leaving Managua by train on Monday, June 29, for Granada. Tuesday morning we're supposed to get a boat from Granada to the other end of the lake. It is highly probable that we will fly the rest of the way to Panama.

By the way, before we left the States we heard all kinds of things about Guatemala being communist. Maybe the government is, but we didn't hear anything about it. We saw a few big government posters about land reform, but aside from that everything else we saw was violently anti-communist. Posters around the city and all the newspapers we could find were either anti-communist or indifferent. The people behaved like people anywhere else in Central America. It remains, though, that El Salvador keeps three thousand soldiers stationed close to the border because she distrusts Guatemala's condescending "liberation" policy toward her neighbors.

Costa Rica, July 4.

Greetings from the tropics. In a few minutes we will board our plane for Panama, and the first leg of our journey will be over. It has been rough in spots, but we have learned a lot too. We are sorry to report that we did not journey on any dugout canoes or donkeys. Time was too short or we would have. We did, however, have the equivalent of a slow boat to China while crossing Lake Nicaragua. Slowest boat I've ever seen.

The prayers of our friends must be bearing us up. We have had very few, if any, difficulties. We are eager for news of home.

Cristobal, Canal Zone, July 8 (card).

In about an hour we will board the "Reina del Pacifico" and begin our slow journey through the canal. It takes eight hours on the average to go through. We took our bags on and looked around. It's a very nice ship--that is, first- and second-class accommodations are. Third

class is confined to the very front, very little deck space, and minute rooms with two bunks and space to turn around in. We are very fortunate that we have a porthole. Thank goodness it's only for five days.

We have had a grand time in the Canal Zone, staying with an old school friend of Shirley's and her husband. We've seen everything and been shopping--lots of oriental stuff for sale here, very reasonable.

We have now come 5,708 miles from Chicago. We've been hearing all sorts of pirate tales about Henry Morgan, who operated here. It's very exciting to think about.

Love and kisses,
Bob and Shirley\

2

Over the Andes

Lima, Peru, July 14, 1953.

We arrived here Sunday morning, July 12, after a very pleasant ocean voyage. No, we did not get the least bit seasick. The sea was very calm--only a gentle, rolling motion. Our ship, so far as we could determine, is one of the larger ships running a regular schedule through the Panama Canal. It was huge--the biggest boat Bob has ever seen. It makes a regular run from England to Valparaiso (Chile) and back in two months. It was very fast, as you can see from the time it took from Panama to Peru. It left Cristobal late, at 3 p.m., and we were finally clear of the locks and into the Pacific by midnight. On the afternoon of Friday the 10th, we were off La Libertad, Ecuador, which is the port city for Guayaquil and Quito. After a few hours there, we were off again and steamed into Callao, Peru, at 6 a.m. on the 12th. We hardly had time to get used to the boat.

As you remember, our accommodations were third class, and we were a little fearful as to what they might be like. It wasn't bad at all. Our cabin was very small, with room for bunk beds, a washstand, and a closet. It was comfortable, even if a bit snug. The food wasn't especially good, but it wasn't bad either. There was plenty of it, and everything was clean. We've had lots worse on this trip. The other third class passengers were really a motley crew! There was a good-sized group of Franciscan monks and nuns returning from a pilgrimage to Rome and Palestine. The largest single group was a number of German immigrants to Peru. Besides that there were a few French travelers, some British, and a group of Latin Americans. They were an amazing bunch. At one time I stood on the deck and heard different groups of people conversing in English, Spanish, French, and German!

Since the ship was British, class distinctions and English propriety prevailed. That is, first-, second-, and third-class passengers were carefully separated from each other, and furthermore, we were required to keep strictly to our areas. Third class was restricted to the main deck forward of the bridge. That part of the boat pitches the most. But it wasn't bad--at least we got to see everything first. And going through the canal it was a definite advantage.

The locks operate on the same principle as the ones on the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, but on a much grander scale. They are a superb job of engineering that must be seen to be appreciated. In three steps a ship has to be lifted eighty-four feet above sea level, and then let down again.

As we approached the locks, a gigantic red arrow pointed to which of the two sets of locks we were to enter. After carefully maneuvering the ship into place, the crew threw out lines to six electric locomotives (three on each side) that moved on rails alongside the canal and guided the ship through. After the ship was in place and the gates closed, it took only ten minutes to fill the lock and lift the ship, and that was a whale of a lot of water! Then the gates were opened and we moved on to the next one. We did this three times on entering the canal and then reversed the procedure on leaving it. We saw other ships going the other direction--British, Scandinavian, German, and Japanese. It was very funny when we passed the Japanese ship. We were going up and they down, and everyone on deck was busy taking pictures from every conceivable vantage point--standing on the railing, in the crow's nest, on the cargo booms--

everywhere. And while we were busy taking pictures of the Japanese ship, they were just as busy taking pictures of us.

By the time we got through the first locks on the Caribbean side (Gatun Locks), it was dark. As we proceeded through the canal, we saw that the channel was well-marked--a string of red lights on one side and green on the other. While the water of man-made Gatun Lake spreads over a large area, the actual navigable channel is only wide enough for two large ships.

Since the canal turns and twists about a good bit, it is necessary to have targets at night at which the pilot directs the ship so as to guide it safely through. These targets were very ingeniously arranged. They consisted usually of about three green lights set at a turn in the canal. Seen at some distance, they look as if they were directly above one another on some sort of post; actually, they are very far apart, on the tops or sides of different hills. But they were so situated that when lined up, one directly above the other in a perfect vertical line, the pilot knew he was exactly in the center of the canal--a very clever arrangement. There must have been a dozen or so of these targets to guide the ships through.

It was a lot of fun going through the canal, and it was sure funny to see people hanging all over the ship, wherever they could get a toe-hold, taking pictures like mad and gibbering excitedly in their native tongue. We did it too.

After we got to Callao and went through the usual agony of waiting at the customs house, arguing, and beating off various and sundry human parasites (my estimation of the natural goodness of man has fallen to a new low!), we took a taxi to Lima and found a very nice place to stay, the Pension Suiza (Swiss Hostel). Why she calls it Swiss I don't know. The old lady that runs it is a Croatian, from Yugoslavia. She speaks Spanish, a little English, and German too. With the three languages we managed to get along.

It is winter here in Lima. From May to November it is very cool--like autumn in the Midwest--and continuously overcast with dull, grey, low-hanging clouds. But it never rains: the cold Humbolt Current from the Antarctic prevents that. Consequently, it is extremely dry. The area around Lima is like a desert. Absolutely nothing grows, not even a cactus, except in irrigated places. I've never seen anything so dry and cold. Boy, have we been shivering!--especially after having left hot and humid Panama.

We leave Lima today, July 15, by car for Cuzco, Peru, via the coastal highway, and should arrive the evening of the 16th. Then we leave either the 20th or the 22d from Cuzco by train for Puno on Lake Titicaca. There we will connect with a lake steamer for Guaqui, Bolivia, where we immediately catch a train for La Paz. After a few days we plan to catch a through train for Buenos Aires, Argentina. It is a four-day train ride through the Andes, and we should be in Buenos Aires by the 26th at the earliest and the 31st at the latest.

La Paz, Bolivia, July 26, 1953.

Our trip from Lima to La Paz has been quite eventful in spots. I think you know we planned to take a car from Lima to Cuzco. Well, that proved to be quite a trip. The car itself was a nice new Ford V-8. We had full confidence in its ability to get us there and started out on paved road at a good clip, following the coastal highway south to Arequipa. We have never seen such desolate country. The hills were absolutely barren, drier by far than the Mojave Desert. The desolation was broken only by occasional oases where a river or a stream had broken out of the rock walls of the Andes and escaped to the Pacific. Most of the Andes and the northern part of South America drain into the Amazon, whose source is four thousand miles from its mouth.

We were quite impressed by the carefulness of the driver. Even when we were still on

paved road, he took it very easy on the bumps. After we turned off the coastal highway on the way to Puquio, he took the utmost care on the dirt highway.

We started out about 6 p.m. on Wednesday the 15th of July, driving for some hours along the coast. We began climbing as soon as we turned east and at dawn were already very high, and in wild enough country to see vicuña. Vicuña, relatives to the llama and the alpaca, have comparatively short hair and are quite wild. The Indians have never succeeded in domesticating them. They are now protected in Peru, and we saw hundreds of them on the high plains or altiplanos of the Andes. These graceful creatures were especially numerous near the many little lakes found on this part of the altiplano. On one occasion we stopped for a while, and Bob got out to try for a closer picture of them. They are very curious creatures and would stand still watching Bob approach. When he got close enough to make them uneasy, they would sound little notes of warning like birds calling to each other in flight. He never got within fifty yards of them before they would take off. Oddly, after they considered themselves at a safe distance, they would turn and approach him slowly, evidently drawn by curiosity but keeping always a safe distance between themselves and Bob.

Our journey continued on the altiplano with occasional snowcapped peaks towering over the plains. We didn't realize how high we were until we got out of the car and found that the least physical exertion caused dizziness, weakness, spots before the eyes, and even nausea. The men developed terrific headaches that continued until we descended from the altiplano.

At about 1 p.m. we began having trouble with the car, and finally, at 1:30, it would go no further. We managed to get it off the road a ways and prepared to wait for the bus that makes the run twice a week. We had already passed it some six hours previously, although it had an eight- or nine-hour start on us from Lima!

We waited and waited. We sat down on a rock and sang, "Here we sit like birds in the wilderness," and for once it was true. We were four to five hours out of Pucquio and at least ten hours from Ibanca, the next town of any size. And it was the highest part of our trip. Our only neighbors were a family of primitive Quechua-speaking Indians and their large herd of llamas. As long as the sun was out, we were comfortable in its warmth, although many little streams and trickles of water were still frozen. But when the sun began to sink behind the mountain, our hopes that the bus would come on (instead of spending the night at Pucquio) began to sink as well. We got out all our jackets, coats, and blankets and prepared to hole in for the night inside the car. We had dozed for awhile when we awoke to see lights coming down the way we had come. The driver went out to flag it down. He returned shortly, saying it was an old truck, and we would do better to wait for the bus the next morning. However, he had scarcely returned to the car when the vehicle passed by and we could see the bus clearly. But it was too late--we were too far from the road to stop it. We spent a cold, absolutely miserable night. There were only two in the back seat, and they didn't do so badly, but in the front seat we were even more crowded than cold.

It was a long, long night, but somehow it passed, and the sky brightened and the sunshine began to creep down the mountain opposite us. We had intended to wait until it reached the car before getting out, but after thirty to forty tantalizing minutes of watching the warmth crawl down the hill, we could wait no longer and decided to walk up to meet it. By that time we had become somewhat accustomed to the altitude and could walk quite a way with no more effect than a wildly beating heart, though we had to go slowly all the same.

We spent the morning sitting and sleeping in the sun and even got sunburned. Finally at 11:45 the first eastbound vehicle, a truck, came down on the way to Cuzco. He was heavily loaded, but our driver talked him into taking us along. He consistently refused all other passengers on the way so we considered ourselves lucky. They were very kind and offered Bob

and me the seats up front with the driver, while the rest climbed on the back. We learned later that one of the other passengers was a Peruvian millionaire whose family owned four cattle haciendas and several silver mines. He was going to Ibanca to get some cattle to sell in Chile. When we asked why he didn't fly to Cuzco and take a car back, we were told that he was afraid of the road between Cuzco and Ibanca!

We followed the altiplano for a couple of hours more, approaching the snowy peaks, the sierra nevada. Then we descended abruptly to a deep, deep canyon where the altitude was only seven thousand feet. The climate is always moderate, never very hot, never very cold. We followed this lovely, well-populated canyon for hours, savoring the smells of the eucalyptus trees and the yellow blooms of what I used to call witch broom in California. Finally after dark, we ascended one or two thousand feet to Ibanca, reaching it about 10:30 p.m.

Ibanca has a very nice tourist hotel operated by the government at reasonable rates. We spent the night there, or part of it, as we had to be ready to leave at 5 a.m. The next part of our trip was quite spectacular. We began climbing immediately, winding back and forth above Ibanca. As the town grew smaller, snowy peaks appeared--in fact the very ones we had approached from the altiplano, except we were now on the other side. We climbed for hours until we seemed almost on a level with the snows, and were getting tired of the same view. At last we reached the top of the ridge. On the other side, instead of more altiplano, lay ridge after ridge of razorbacked mountains, many of them nevas or snow peaks, including Solcantay, a cone-shaped, ice-sheathed peak (only recently conquered by climbers), which we were to see much closer as the day progressed. Between each ridge lay deep gorges and narrow canyons. Below us lay a small, fertile valley which soon narrowed into a deep canyon. We descended quickly to the valley, passed through it, and were soon following the canyon along a stream which had carved it out. For hours we followed the stream as it wound through canyon after canyon, widening into brief valleys, and narrowing again.

We were certainly impressed by the effort it must have cost to put even a narrow dirt road through that rugged territory. In many places it was carved out of solid rock; in others it was built up from below by stone walls. We have seen no mountain country in North or Central America that even begins to approach the difficulties and dangers this part of the Andes presents to road builders. In many places we saw crosses alongside the road and were told that fatal accidents had occurred in those places. However, in the most dangerous parts, while following these gorges and canyons with rock walls on one side and sheer precipices on the other, we saw no crosses and were told that accidents seldom occurred there.

Finally we entered the little valley of a tributary to the main stream and began to climb again. We followed the valley for some time, then began in earnest to climb a ridge overlooking the valley. Again the nevas appeared, notably Solcantay, now fairly close and very imposing. We could appreciate the difficulties involved in scaling its icy walls.

When we reached the top of the ridge, a great, high valley spread out before us, inhabited and fertile. However, because of the altitude and the dry season (now in full swing) its appearance was not green. Even when there is plenty of water, the vegetation is more yellow than green, except in the lower valleys. Only the most distant mountains seem purple; most of them are a monotonous brown, though a few of the lower ones are greenish. In spite of the apparent dryness of the vegetation, the animals are all fat, not half-starved as in Mexico.

We drove clear across this valley, up over a low ridge, and down into a smaller valley, with the city of Cuzco huddled into the folds of the hills nearest us and spilling out onto the plain. High above the city on the hills opposite us, dominating the city, are the words, "Viva Peru, B.I.9." "B.I.9" refers to the infantry battalion that crawled up the side of the mountain and erased the communist slogan previously written there. Across a little ravine from the road the

remains of the great Inca fortress of Sacsahuaman are visible. One of the last Inca rulers had it built to assure safety from the jungle tribes that sometimes entered the highlands through the Urubamba River Valley. After this fort was built, they never dared attack again.

Several years after the original Spanish conquest, during an Indian uprising, this same fort was the scene of a Spanish victory. Indians by the thousands besieged the city, which was held by a few hundred Spaniards. The Spanish knew they couldn't survive unless they took the fort, so they did--at great cost to themselves but far greater to the Indians.

We never had much use for the Spanish conquistadors because of the way they destroyed every bit of Indian culture they could--melting down all the Inca gold pieces, destroying the temples, and building Spanish churches on top of them, a practice typical from Guatemala south. However, from our experiences with the road between Lima and Cuzco, we were profoundly impressed with all they had to go through just to reach Cuzco, let alone conquer it, especially since they were few against many.... To think that the Incas had a system of runners to send messages from Cuzco to Quito, Ecuador, in twenty days seems almost incredible when you see the kind of country they traversed.

Sunday morning we took an excursion to Pisac, an Indian village in a pleasant little river valley twenty miles from Cuzco. The steep sides of the valley are covered with the old Incaic stone-walled terraces that were once irrigated and cultivated. On a cliff high above the village towers the ruins of another Inca fort built as a refuge in case of attack. The market in Pisac, the tourist attraction, was interesting but not nearly as much as the one in Chichicastenango, Guatemala. Our principal activity was photographing the variety of native Indian costumes, especially the various headgear.

That afternoon we went up to the fortress of Sacsahuaman, above the city of Cuzco. Our guide booklet says it took thousands of Indians working many decades to finish it. It was built with a cliff at its back and three separate walls around the rest--not straight, but serrated so as to give the defenders of the fort crossfire on their enemies. These walls were--the lower one still is--twenty feet high, constructed of large stones, some weighing many tons, all fitted perfectly together without mortar so that a needle cannot be inserted between them.

Monday we spent wandering around Cuzco, inspecting the many remaining walls built by the Incas before the Spanish conquest and later under the direction of the conquistadors. Much of Sacsahuaman was torn down so that the stones could be used again in the city.

Tuesday we went out to Machu Picchu, the most important historical site near Cuzco. It is about 150 miles round-trip and is the last Inca outpost on the Urubamba River leading toward the jungle. It is at a very pleasant altitude, about 7,500 feet. Some say it was the last in a series of fortresses designed to protect Cuzco from jungle tribes, but Hiram Bingham, its discoverer, believes otherwise: he thinks it was the site of the earliest beginnings of the Inca civilization and was then forgotten after their empire was established, only to be returned to as a last refuge when the Spaniards came. It seems true that they had some hidden refuge from the Spaniards, from which they descended on them in attack. Though their attacks were unsuccessful, their hiding place was never discovered. Certainly the city of Machu Picchu seems too expensive to be only a fortress, especially a farthest outpost. The other Inca fortresses in the winding valley become progressively smaller as the distance from Cuzco increases, but this one is large, containing clean dwelling places, temples, and an extensive terrace. It defies description but was a most impressive sight, firmly entrenched as it was on a narrow ridge, thousands of feet above the river, whose valley is far too narrow to permit the building of a city on its floodplain.

To us the most remarkable thing about the Incas was their organizational abilities. They seemed almost another Rome in their ability to conquer and incorporate neighboring tribes until their empire reached from north of Quito, Ecuador, far down into the highlands of Chile and

Argentina, encompassing all of Peru and Bolivia. It seems to have been a happy empire. While the rulers were despots, they were benevolent despots and acted in most things for the good of the people. Every detail of life was organized, even the marriages of their girls. However, they never developed the arch in buildings, nor the democracy of Rome's senate.

We have enjoyed La Paz in spite of the cold here. As you may know, it is the highest capital in the world, higher than Lhasa, Tibet and well over twelve thousand feet above sea level. It really doesn't go much below freezing, and the sun shines practically all day long every day, but since the houses aren't heated you never get really warm unless you bake yourself in the sun at midday. The snowcapped peaks of Illimani, towering twenty-one thousand feet above sea level, dominate the city from every angle. It is inspiring to be within constant view of such eternal beauty.

Bolivia has the lowest cost of living of any country we've been in yet. The official exchange rate is 190 bolivianos to the dollar, but the free exchange, obtainable everywhere but in the banks, is about 650. We are paying about \$1.70 a day for room and meals for two with excellent food; a filet mignon costs about \$.27 and is delicious; taxi fare is about \$.14, shoe shines \$0.015, and movie tickets about \$.06. We were tempted by some gorgeous vicuña wool blankets we saw here for about \$13 but didn't know what we'd do with one.

We are not going to Buenos Aires as we originally planned. They've been having a cold wave down there, and we've not been really warm since we left Panama. We're also tired of traveling and are about ready to settle down for awhile and thought we'd save some money by going straight to Asunción. We leave La Paz by train on the 28th and expect to arrive at Jujuy in Argentina the next evening. The morning of the 30th we take another train, arriving at Formosa, a town down the river a ways from Asunción, sometime on Friday the 31st. From there we take a river boat to Asunción, arriving anywhere from the 1st to the 3d, depending on how long we have to wait for it.

July 27, La Paz, Bolivia.

The winters in the Andes are nothing like Chicago's. The sun shines practically all the time, but there's a creeping chill around every corner and in every shadow, and when it gets in your bones, you never get warm--even when you're being sunburned!

We have seen some of the most beautiful and awesome scenery in the world. The Andes are higher than the Canadian Rockies: they defy description, but we hope a few of our pictures may give something of the idea. How the Incas managed to build an empire back in here, I'll never understand.

Here's a good illustration of the Latin American mind: We have been hearing rumors of an impending revolution here in Bolivia ever since we got here. The other day we asked somebody about it. His answer: "Oh no, not today: mañana (tomorrow)." Everything is mañana, even their revolutions! We're not much worried about it; nobody else takes it seriously either.

3

Paraguay at Last

Our trip had been a real adventure, and we enjoyed it a great deal. I doubt if we shall ever again have an experience comparable to it. But it was also a difficult journey in many places. Except for the distance between Panama and Peru, which was covered in an ocean steamer, nearly all of our southbound journey was done bouncing along the mountainous backbone of the western hemisphere. When we finally reached the great plains (the Chaco area) of northern Argentina, both of us had seen enough mountains to satisfy our appetite for a long time. By then some of the thrill of travel had worn off, and only one thought was uppermost in our minds: to get to the Bruderhof as soon as possible.

Finally, on Sunday night, August 2, after two months and some 10,000 road miles, we pulled into Asunción, the capital of Paraguay, in--of all things!--a rowboat. Our welcome was a warm one. A letter written the day after our arrival tells of our reception there:

Around 7 p.m. last night, after joggling along in a two-wheeled horse cart for about a mile and then coming down the Rio Pilcomayo and up the Paraguay River for about five miles in a rowboat, we finally arrived in Asunción, Paraguay. After submitting to the usual harassment of the local customs official, we piled into a taxi and set out to find the Bruderhof House here in the city. We bounced along some half-paved streets for a while and finally pulled up in front of a rather dark-looking doorway. A little uncertainly, we got out and pushed the doorbell. Almost immediately the door was thrown open by a pleasant-faced, blue-eyed man with a short yellow beard. Right away his face lighted up, and he said, "Ah! the Wagoners!" Behind him there were other men (some bearded and some not) and women and boys and girls. All--about a dozen--shook our hands and welcomed us.

We were led in, and after more greetings we all sat down to a rather plain meal of tea and sandwiches. They had been looking for us, it seems, for some time. Thinking we were going to Buenos Aires as we had originally planned, they had already made arrangements there for us and purchased airplane tickets from B.A. to Asunción. We hope those tickets can be redeemed without too much trouble. They were least expecting us the way we finally arrived--by rowboat, on Sunday night.

They had a room all prepared for us, so after two months we slept soundly, knowing that at last we were in sight of our destination.

The day after our arrival was taken up with clearing our papers, purchasing a few personal items that we would need, and arranging for boat passage up the river to the community. The folks at Asunción House were extremely helpful to us and took care of practically all the details that needed attention. This seemed a little strange to us at first because we had been accustomed to looking out for ourselves entirely for two months, and now we were suddenly in the care of others. We certainly appreciated the change. We found, too, that some sort of friendly assistance is almost a necessity for foreigners in Paraguay. Latin American countries seem especially fond of official red tape--documents, visas, permits, and so on--but Paraguay carried it to the point of absurdity. That, plus characteristic corruption and laxity in government, plus the omnipresent attitude of mañana, could reduce the average untutored visitor to nervous shreds if

he were left to his own devices.

Making travel arrangements is one of the important tasks of the Bruderhof House in Asunción. Besides the coming and going of visitors, there are often brotherhood members traveling to and from the Bruderhofs in England and Uruguay. Members on mission journeys to the United States and other countries must also be seen to by the people in Asunción.

In short, the task of those stationed at Bruderhof House in Asunción may be defined as maintaining contact and communication between the larger community in Paraguay and the rest of the world. There is daily shortwave radio contact between those in Asunción and the larger community, and hardly a fortnight passes but someone takes the overnight boat trip up or down the Paraguay River. Quite often airplane flights are made from Asunción to Primavera, and these too must be arranged by those at Bruderhof House. The flight can be made in about twenty minutes and costs about twenty-five dollars. This mode of travel is often utilized by visitors and elderly people who wish to avoid the rigorous two-day trip by boat and truck, which is the only other alternative. Also, in case the hospital facilities at Primavera are not adequate for some unusual illness, an airplane may be chartered to bring the person to the well-established medical facilities in Asunción.

Material goods not produced in Primavera are purchased in Asunción and shipped up the river. Goods produced in the community are sent down to Asunción for sale or shipment to some other point. A simple but attractive shop is maintained in conjunction with the house in Asunción for the sale of the beautiful wood-turned articles that are made in the community. The demand for these tropical hardwood articles such as bowls, candlesticks, and lamps is so great that they cannot keep their shop in Asunción adequately supplied. Their work is well known all over the city and has won several prizes at Paraguayan industrial shows. They have found, by the way, that their best customers are the North Americans who are in Paraguay as tourists or attached to the consulate there. People with European backgrounds are their next best customers. Part of the beauty of their wood-turned work lies in its simplicity and unity of design: the community does not feel they should produce anything that is not in harmony with or representative of their life. To keep this unity, the shapes and designs are determined not only by those who work in the turning shop but by the whole brotherhood as well. In insisting on this simplicity, they have sacrificed a large share of the native Paraguayan market. Most native Paraguayans--being influenced almost entirely by Spanish-Roman Catholic culture--like things decorated with gaudy ornamentation. When some article is occasionally purchased by a Paraguayan, his feeling is to paint or decorate it.

The many tasks needing attention in Asunción usually require a minimum staff of four to six persons. There is a steward or business manager to oversee the general functioning of the house and keep the books in order. One man is needed to act as purchasing agent for the various commodities needed in Primavera, and one man is in charge of the wood turnery. Besides these three men, a woman is needed to act as housemother and see to the preparation of meals and washing of clothes. She is usually the wife of one of the above-mentioned men. Quite commonly one or two youths in their teens may also be sent to Asunción to act as helpers--running errands and the like. This gives them more direct contact with the "outside world" and is, at the same time, a help to the older folks at the house.

Every now and then the brotherhood may send someone to Asunción on the slightest of pretexts or no pretext at all, just to give them a vacation for a week or so. Persons needing specialized medical attention and observation, but not hospitalization, occasionally stay at the house too.

Besides these there is almost always a handful of young people in their late teens in Asunción attending school, studying, or taking a technical training. Since the Bruderhof schools

in Primavera only go to the ninth grade in formal education, any youth who wishes further education must come to Asunción. Not all live at the Bruderhof House, however. Some study or work in distant parts of the sprawling city, coming to the house on weekends only, or dropping in irregularly.

In spite of many long talks with two of the traveling brothers in the United States, we were not at all sure in our minds as to what we would find when we arrived at the Bruderhof in Paraguay. Our most serious doubts centered around the question of how thoroughly Christian the basis of the community was. When we read the various printed materials published and distributed by the Bruderhof, there seemed to be no doubt about the answer. Nearly every page gave evidence that their life was motivated by a Christian impulse. To be sure, we were not always certain how to interpret this motivation; still, it seemed to find its roots in a basically Christian philosophy. And when we listened to the brothers describe their manner of living and how they met problems, we saw no contradiction to this impression.

Doubt arose, however, when we began to press them about the inner nature of their life and on various articles of belief. They appeared reluctant to answer at times, and in some instances downright evasive. And when we did get answers to these questions, they were often given in terms somewhat vague to us. We were puzzled by this and told them so. They answered that they felt such questions to be of an "inner" nature, and that they ordinarily did not discuss them much outside the context of their community life. They preferred to have people come and see their life and then try to understand its inner basis. Their experience was, they said, that commonly used religious terms either have lost much of their meaning for the average person or are interpreted in so many different ways that confusion and misunderstanding result. Therefore, they avoided using them and preferred to be judged by the fruits of their life.

Their explanation was plausible enough, but we still remained disturbed. On the one hand they admitted--when pressed hard--to such Christian practices as baptism, Sunday morning meetings for worship, and Love Feasts (Lord's Suppers) at Easter time. On the other hand they would not use conventional religious terminology and spoke to us more of "community" and a new order of brotherhood than of the Christian life and the Church.

As a result, we were not sure of what to expect. There was enough assurance to warrant our taking the trip but enough doubt to cause me to wonder sometimes if the warning of some of my elders was not right--that we were going off on a wild goose chase with a group of utopian escapists. I half expected to find either a collection of extraordinarily pious and saintly people or a bunch of wild-eyed revolutionaries bent on remaking the world.

We were not, consequently, quite prepared for what we did find. Although we did not draw any conclusive picture from our very brief stay at Bruderhof House, we were impressed by the warm and helpful friendliness shown us. I began to see that perhaps they were neither of the extremes I had imagined but were instead very average and very human in feeling, attitude, and everyday behavior. We were made to feel very much at home with them during our few days there, but we were anxious to move on and get acquainted with the community proper.

We left Asunción late in the afternoon of August 4 on a small launch for Puerto Rosario, up the River Paraguay some forty miles as the crow flies. Actually, since the river twists about like a snake with a stomachache, the distance is nearer a hundred miles. We were accompanied by a fourteen-year-old girl who had been in Asunción for medical treatment and the community purchasing agent, Harry Magee. Harry was sent along to accompany us as far as Rosario in order to assure our safe arrival. We found his quiet humor delightful, and we had a lot of fun getting our first German lesson from him.

Since the trip was an overnight one, we spent the night sleeping on hard, narrow cots in

the one cabin on the launch. We arrived at Rosario shortly after the sun rose and found that the "port" was really not much of a port at all; the launch pulled up against the mud, and we clambered out--bag and baggage--over a sagging plank to the river bank. Very shortly the community "lorry" (an ancient British army truck) came and hauled us off to the little storehouse at Rosario owned by the Bruderhof. Walter Braun, another Bruderhof member, was there and had breakfast waiting for us. He was extremely friendly and talkative and was the beekeeper for the community. We soon discovered, too, that he was a very learned man, despite his vigorous protestations to the contrary. He had studied theology quite extensively in Europe. In fact he is the personal friend of some of the "big names" in theological studies; Bultmann, Brunner, and Martin Buber are old friends to him. Not only that, but he knows nearly a dozen languages. Besides English, Spanish, German, and the native Indian language, he also knows Hebrew, Greek, and Sanskrit. Quite a remarkable man! So while waiting for the lorry to be loaded up, we ate breakfast and had our second German lesson. ("Was ist das?" "Das ist ein Tisch.")

Finally, when it was nearly noon, we started off for the community. In many of our letters home we complained extensively of the bumpy, rutted roads we had to endure, and those complaints were more than justified. But this truck ride from Rosario to the Bruderhof beat everything! As we have long since exhausted our vocabulary in describing various other spine-dislocating portions of our trip, we are at a loss to know how to picture this last leg for you. Suffice it to say that the distance is about thirty-five miles, and it took us around four hours to make it. And it is not an uncommon occurrence, they told us, for the truck to get stuck overnight in a mud hole. We grimly endured it, though, and it wasn't so very long until the driver--a friendly young fellow named Christoph Boller--said that around the bend we would get our first glimpse of the Loma Hoby Bruderhof. After so many miles and so many weeks, you can imagine the tingle of expectation that ran through us. The larger settlement of the Bruderhof (Bruderhof means "the place where brothers live") is divided into three village centers or "hofs" of about 250 people each, all located within a few miles of each other. The other two hofs are called Isla Margarita and Ibaté.

Sure enough, as we jounced around the last bend we saw in the distance several long, low buildings, surrounded by trees. As we came closer we saw other buildings, and the hospital and sawmill were pointed out to us.

Since we were to stay at the most distant (and newest) hof, Ibaté, we were only to stop at Loma long enough to deliver some medicines for the hospital. But it wasn't as easy as that. From all directions folks came to greet us and shake our hands. They called us by name and were very warm in their greetings; most of them spoke English. The few that spoke only German clasped our hands and said, "Very nice!" over and over. But they all knew our names and were expecting us. We finally tore ourselves away and jolted on through subtropical forest to Isla Margarita. The same thing happened here; our very first impression was the extraordinary friendliness of the Bruderhof folks. After some much-appreciated refreshments we moved on again.

It was dusk when we came down the road to Ibaté, but as we came in sight of it, we beheld an unforgettable scene. Gathered in a wide semicircle on the central area in front of the dining room, we saw the entire population of the hof--men, women, and children--waiting to greet us. We were flabbergasted. As we got down from the truck they all began to sing "Kein Schöner Land in dieser Zeit," a German folk song, a Bruderhof translation of which follows.

Earth has no fairer countryside
Than this our land, so great and wide,
Where now we gather in linden's shadow
At eventide.

So many times we've gathered round,
 A joyful circle on this ground,
 Together singing. Our songs went ringing
 The valley round.

May we still here, in this loved place,
 A thousand times meet face to face!
 May by God's leading this gift be given
 Through His great grace.

Brothers, you know what makes us one:
 For us shines bright another Sun.
 In Him we're living, for Him we're striving,
 The Church at one.

So, brothers, now we say good night.
 The Lord keeps watch from Heaven's height.
 In His great goodness He will protect us
 Till morning light.¹

As the song finished, we were besieged by everyone--and I mean everyone--as they shook our hands and extended a warm welcome to us. After we met them all, including a host of shy, tow-headed children, we were treated to more refreshments and had a nice chat with Grace Rhoads, an American Quaker who has come to stay; a former British schoolteacher who has been a member for twelve years; Doris Greaves, an American girl here to visit; and a young American, Duffy Black, who is going to join the Bruderhof. Very shortly we were led off through the darkness to our room. We were located at the end of a building about fifty or sixty feet long. A family of six, John and Nancy Winter's, lived at the other end, and the library was located in the middle.

While most buildings are made of wood and mud-adobe with a thatched roof, ours was all wood with manufactured fiber roofing. The room was about nine by twelve feet and had two large shutter windows. The bed was a wooden frame with raw-hide crosspieces and a tick covering stuffed with banana leaves and wood shavings. The floor is made of a red clay that is found two or three feet below ground level. When properly prepared, it is exceptionally hard and durable. An electric light that could be turned on from 6 to 10 p.m. hung from the ceiling. A small table, a bench, a little stool, and a rack of shelves completed the furnishings. We had hot and cold running water--that is, we ran after both!--and there was a little house out back with the Information Please Almanac for leisurely reading.

Great pains had been taken to prepare the room for our arrival. Grapefruit and oranges lined the shelf above the table; and sugar, tea, coffee, lard and other necessities were supplied on the other shelves. The walls were decorated with pictures drawn by the school children in precious crayon (very scarce down here). These depicted scenes of the Bruderhof and various parts of our journey as they had heard it. One picture even showed us coming the last leg into Asunción in a rowboat. Flowers were in a little glass on the table; green bamboo shoots were placed on the walls and over the windows and doorways.

We sat down on the bed and heaved a sigh of relief that came from the very bottom of our souls. At last we had arrived--and were we glad! After many thousands of miles (we had long since lost count of the exact number) the Wandering Wagoners had ceased their wandering. We

didn't have long to glory in our new-found home, however, because very shortly a bell began ringing to summon us to supper, and we trudged off through the darkness to the dining hall.

As it turned out, we arrived at the Bruderhof at something of a painful moment. The previous day Maria Chatterton, a little girl who had been suffering from an incurable kidney condition, died at the hospital in Loma. Therefore, our first meal at the Bruderhof was a kind of memorial meal for the little girl and was rather quiet and solemn. Ordinarily when visitors arrive, they are asked to tell a little during the meal about themselves, their trip, and why they came. But because of the tragic circumstances this was postponed, and while we ate in silence, various persons spoke of the little girl, her life, and her last days with them.

We were immediately impressed at this first meal by the strong, deep current of love and unity that bound the brothers and sisters together. It is exceptionally difficult to describe this since the words we would normally use have been drained by the world of their powerful meaning. It was quite apparent that the loss of the little girl was felt by everyone--by the community as a whole. They did not act as if it were someone else's child and they were sorry and sympathetic; rather, it was their own personal loss. We began to see that evening, and are seeing more clearly every day we are here, the true meaning of agape--Christian love.

A German hymn was sung at the beginning of the meal and an English one based on Psalm 23, "The God of love my Shepherd is," at the close. With a new appreciation of these words lingering in our minds, we went out and found our way back to our room.

We were told to sleep as late as we liked, but wishing to get in the swing of things as soon as possible, we were up with the first bell at 6 a.m. and had breakfast with our neighbors at the other end of the building. We spent the beginning of the morning unpacking and getting settled in our new home. Later on we had a guided tour of the hof--a new dwelling house was being constructed. We saw the school, baby house, toddler room, and kindergarten; the kitchen, bakery and laundry; the homemade power plant, cow stall, garden, and finally the sewing room. Around 9 or 9:30 we had a "second breakfast." This may seem a little unnecessary, but we had not been here long before we found it a very practical necessity. The long morning plus the hard work make it a welcome feature indeed.

At 12:15 the bell called us to dinner, and while the others ate, I told about our trip and why we came. Both of the common meals are eaten more or less in silence while announcements are made, letters or books are read aloud, or visitors tell about themselves. The next day Shirley told about herself and some of the more interesting details of our trip. The rest of the day we had free to rest, finish unpacking, and get better acquainted. So we did.

We could have had another day or so to rest, but we wanted to immerse ourselves in the life of the community as soon as possible and were very curious to know what kind of work we would be doing. We knew from discussions with the brothers traveling in the United States that it was the practice of the Bruderhof to put all newcomers and guests to work at some sort of manual labor for at least several months. (This may last for about a year or be more or less permanent, depending on the individual's gifts and the needs of the community. There is no particular rule on the matter, and each situation is considered individually.)

On the previous day, while being shown the different work departments, we had been asked whether we had any particular work skills or preferences. As far as I knew, I didn't have any manual skills to speak of, so I indicated that I would be happy to do whatever was needed. They took me at my word. After breakfast the next morning around seven the brother in charge of the farm work came to tell me that I was to work in his department. I soon found myself doing something I had never done before in my life--shoveling and hauling manure! Our stay had not lengthened into very many weeks before I had done a great many other things I had never dreamed of doing: I planted cucumbers and watermelons and peanuts, set out tomato plants,

harvested bananas with a machete, planted corn with a hand machine, cleared burnt-over land for later planting, and even spent some time stumbling along behind a plough and disc. There were also ditches to be dug for water pipes, chicken fences to be put up, and firewood to be brought in.

The three most common and necessary tools in Paraguay are the hoe, the axe, and the machete. Indispensable, they are often the only tools the native Paraguayan farmer has to work with. These tools find extensive use in the farm work at the Bruderhof also. I developed quite an intimate acquaintance with the hoe and machete, but I could never boast of skill with the axe. Some native Paraguayans can perform phenomenal achievements with the axe. Given a reasonably straight log, they can hew out an amazingly even eight-inch square beam, six to eight feet long, seemingly without much effort at all.

In the main I found my work on the farm to be tough going, and I was not totally unacquainted with hard work either, having previously spent several summers in warehouses, loading and unloading trucks and railroad boxcars. Still, being born and raised in a big city and having spent nearly all of my life in school, I was not exactly prepared for the rigors of heavy physical labor in a tropical climate. Everyone was careful, though, to see that I got used to it gradually. While digging water-pipe ditches on a particularly hot day, for example, I was often sent to get everyone a drink. It was made clear that I was not expected to work beyond my own capacity, and that I should gauge myself accordingly--I didn't have to compete to prove my worth as a person. This was more difficult to adjust to than one might think. I doubt, really, if I ever did manage to become free of the urge toward competitive striving. Of course, everyone is expected to put forth his best efforts on a job, but the tendency to evaluate one's achievements by comparing them with another's is discouraged. This was a new experience for me to be trusted and accepted for what I was and not for how I rated alongside others.

The work, nevertheless, is hard for everyone at the Bruderhof. The energy-sapping climate, the primitive conditions, and the lack of an adequate labor force make things quite difficult. While the Bruderhof probably has more laborsaving devices than its neighbors, the fact remains that a large part of nearly every job requires generous amounts of sweat and plain elbow grease. Some of the most common and everyday things--drills, wire, cement, colored thread, etc.--either cannot be obtained at all in Paraguay or can only be gotten after long and sustained effort. For instance, it took twelve years to get a few lengths of water pipe. The scarcity of tools and materials makes the already tough job of wresting a living from that difficult land a real struggle at times. Things are improving, but the strain of the early years has left its mark on many Bruderhof folks. There is no doubt in my mind, however, that they would all do it again if necessary, even if the cost were twice as great in terms of repeated physical exhaustion, bodies wrecked by illness, and lives sacrificed. This made a considerable impression on me--especially after spending the whole day under the hot sun hacking away at waist-high weeds!

I usually made full use of the midday rest hour by dropping off to a sound sleep, and still the end of the day found me about at the end of my rope. For the first time in my life I voluntarily abandoned my night-owl habits and could almost always be found oblivious to the world by the time the electricity was turned off at 10.

Just being alive in this country takes a good bit of energy. The land is very flat, and though severe frosts occasionally sweep up from the south, the temperature is predominantly hot--very hot. The period when we arrived was supposed to be late winter or early spring. August was considered equivalent to February in North America. For us, however, it was more like May or June.

The worst thing about the climate at that time of year was the hot, searing winds that come roaring out of the north. They came with terrific force and made life very uncomfortable as we tried to go about our work. The native Paraguayans call them "the winds that drive men mad."

And indeed, being continually buffeted about by these hot air blasts is quite a drain on one's energy and is so unnerving that the Paraguayan government is said to be very lenient in punishing crimes committed when the hot winds are blowing. Fortunately this windy period does not last more than a few weeks to a month at the most.

When it came to deciding about Shirley's work there was a little more to choose from than in my case. Besides having a certain amount of skill in most domestic tasks, she was also a trained schoolteacher. We had hoped that she might work in the school, for a little time at least, and thereby learn more of the Bruderhof attitude toward education and children. But we soon found that the chances for this were pretty slim. The language difficulty--plus the understandable fact that guests were seldom asked to do such work, plus other factors--didn't allow for much hope. So while I went to work in the garden, Shirley started to work in the sewing room. She experienced some of the same difficulties that I did at first. She too, felt that she had to "make good" and show herself to be competent in comparison with others. It took, she said, a little time until she relaxed and allowed herself to be accepted solely for what she was. It is not easy all at one stroke to abandon a front, an idealized conception of one's self that has been carefully built and re-built over the years. It could be said that a person never does completely drop his or her own self-concept, but when one is constantly in the midst of a fellowship that very realistically appraises a person's liabilities and abilities, it is difficult for one to get a very exaggerated notion about oneself either way.

Only a few weeks passed, however, before something came up that was to change Shirley's place in the work of the community. Because of the intense missionary consciousness of the Bruderhof, they found it necessary to send a man and his wife, both teachers in the school, on an extended journey to the West Coast of the U.S. This would leave them painfully shorthanded in the school, since competent teachers were at a premium.

The obvious solution would have been to ask Shirley to teach straightaway, but it was not quite so simple as that. The Bruderhof feels very strongly that anyone working with the children must be in unity with them as to the basic principles that underlie the community. If this were not true of a person, no matter how well-trained she might be, they definitely would not ask her to teach. Further, they feel that those who work with the children should have a definite gift in that direction. Again, if it became evident that a person did not have this gift, she would not be asked to teach.

It soon became clear, though, even in the relatively short time we had been here, that there was a great deal of basic unity between us and the Bruderhof, even though we did not plan to stay. So last week we were invited to come before the Bruderschaft (brotherhood or members' meeting) and explain more fully our personal convictions and reasons for coming. Then it was that we were asked if Shirley might like to teach in the school. We were immensely pleased, since it would afford a wonderful opportunity for us to gain a better understanding of the children's community.

There were several conditions and drawbacks to this arrangement that needed to be carefully considered, however. It meant, first of all, that we had to agree to stay at least until the Christmas holidays so that the school term would not be interrupted. Since our own plans coincided in general with this date, it was no obstacle. But it also meant that we would have to stay at the Ibaté hof during our entire visit. This was something of a drawback, but since the hofs are pretty much alike and frequent visits to the other hofs were not unlikely, it was not a serious one. The most difficult consideration was over language difficulties. Even though most of the community is trilingual--speaking English, German, and Spanish--the language of the children is German. Most of them understand English, but up to now the language used in the school has been German. But more and more of the families are English-speaking, so they had been

considering changing the base language from German to English.

Shirley's entry into the school precipitated that change. She studied German like a beaver, but whether the change-over could be made gracefully remained to be seen. Some difficulties were anticipated for a while at least.

Our first few weeks at the Bruderhof could best be summed up by what we wrote home at the time:

Their warm friendliness to us, the serenity of spirit that commands their lives, and the living bond of love that holds them together--all this, in spite of the universal frailty and divisiveness of human nature--has made a deep impression on us. It certainly would not be possible for them to live as they do without a wholehearted Christian commitment. And in this they are totally unlike any group we have ever seen before.

It was a remarkable experience, far exceeding our expectations. We found the folks there delightfully human, yet they were witnessing to something more than human. Our concern as to how "Christian" the Bruderhof was vanished almost overnight.

4

Primavera

After we had been in Primavera for a few weeks, we began to settle into the routine of the life there somewhat and saw it more from the inside. It is important that this should happen to a visitor, otherwise there would be the tendency for a person only briefly visiting the Bruderhof to come away with a more or less superficial understanding. It is necessary that one be with them long enough to experience the deep joys as well as the commonplaces and drudgeries. To see only one of these aspects of their life would be a distortion of it. The most common error, I imagine, would be for a visitor to be thrilled by the unity and brotherhood found at the Bruderhof and go away with ecstatic reports of a new utopia. But some might be impressed only by the sacrifices and difficulties, and go away overwhelmed by the hardships. Both elements are present, but neither is true without the other in balance. I suppose I was more inclined to the latter distortion than the former. The totality of the commitment that I saw to be necessary tended to color nearly everything I saw about their life.

Some visitors become aware of these two sides of the life very quickly, but the brothers have found that this usually takes a longer time--a matter of months at least. That is why they prefer to have visitors stay a goodly time if at all possible. While they would be happy to have a visitor for only a weekend, they feel it would ideally be much better if he were able to stay a whole year.

We saw the wisdom in this after some of the newness of our own experience began to wear off and it became apparent that life at the Bruderhof was in many respects like human existence anywhere. It was certainly no utopia in any sense of the word; that notion should be dispelled entirely. The work was hard, there were disagreements and even occasional personality clashes, and the children could be as naughty there as anywhere. In a word, we found them to be heir to all the usual human frailties. Their uniqueness was not in this but rather that in the common spirit of love among them they have a way of meeting these weaknesses and overcoming them. The longer we were there, the more we saw how necessary to their way of life a complete receptivity to this spirit was.

When a visitor first arrives at the Bruderhof, he spends a lot of time asking questions and being questioned. And this is the way it should be. Those first few weeks we hardly ever spent a breakfast time or teatime in our own room. People were so very interested in getting to know us that we were invited out on nearly every possible occasion. And they feel that guests should have every opportunity to ask questions and come to a closer understanding of the life. In fact, so much attention was given to guests that I almost felt at times as though they overdid it.

The fact that we were staying at Ibaté, however, made the getting-acquainted process much shorter and easier than if we had stayed at either of the other two hofs. Ibaté has only about 170 people as compared with about 250 on each of the other hofs, and we soon knew nearly everyone's first name. Last names, incidentally, are not used very much at the Bruderhof, and as a consequence, I didn't learn very many of them. Though we thought at first that staying at one hof for four of the five months of our visit would be a drawback, we soon came to feel that a substantial stay at one hof was very worthwhile. Not only did we get to know one group of people quite well, but we also came to feel more of an integral part of the community because we

were assuming a certain responsibility for the work. In other words, we came to feel at home. Instead of getting a broad, extensive view of the Bruderhof we came away with a deeper and more intensive sampling.

Shirley's work in the school began slowly. She started getting acquainted with the children during the "orange holidays"--a much-anticipated period of a few weeks in August when the children are out of school to harvest the sweet oranges. She sometimes went on walks with them, read stories, and assisted during children's meals. Gradually she came to spend less and less time in the sewing room and more time with the children. On one occasion Shirley and I and another couple took the first and second classes on an overnight trip to the river on the southern boundary of Primavera. A house has been built there in a very pleasant spot to accommodate youth excursions, newlyweds, and other vacationers. We had a delightful time splashing about and rowing up and down the river. I must say, though, that the children exhausted me more thoroughly on that little trip than any work had up to that point!

Finally, by the first week in September, when classes resumed, Shirley spent all her mornings teaching, with three afternoons a week preparing. The other three afternoons she helped in the laundry or sewing room. Her main responsibility was a class of fifteen first and second graders. But she also taught elementary Spanish four times a week to the third, fourth, and fifth graders and was in charge of the girls' physical education period in the morning. On other occasions she helped during the afternoon period--a time of recreation, arts and crafts, and the like.

Both Shirley and the children went through a period of adjustment in which they tried each other out, and there were some difficult moments, but finally they came into a working relationship with each other. For her the experience of teaching in a wholly new atmosphere and under entirely different attitudes was a rewarding one. I have no doubt that the experience expanded her abilities as a teacher.

About this time there was also a change in my work. Because of the increase of the dairy work at Ibaté, another person was needed to help, and I was asked to fill in. From then on I spent mornings in the garden and afternoons in the cow stall. This was another job I had never dreamed of doing.

I wasn't put to milking--that would have been much too hard on the cows and the men in the cow stall, not to mention myself. My job was to get the cows in from the corral, feed them, and prepare them for milking. The occupational hazards nearly made a nervous wreck out of me my first afternoon there--I was kicked at least a half dozen times! I actually didn't mind being kicked so much; it was the uncertainty of not knowing which beast was going to do it that wore me down. I caught on to the job fairly soon, though, and managed to survive my stay in the cow stall with nothing worse than a few scratches.

I will confess, however, that after the initial shock wore off, I still did not find the prevailing bovine moods there congenial to my own. I don't believe I ever encountered any animals quite as obdurate and unpredictable as those Paraguayan cows. They were even more unmanageable at times than pigs. In making these comments I do not in any way mean to slight the phenomenal achievements the brothers have made in their dairy work: despite overwhelming obstacles they have brought about miracles. In 1945, for example, they estimated that it would take twenty milk cows to produce forty liters of milk daily. Late in 1953 about thirty-seven cows at Ibaté reached a yield of some three hundred liters daily.

Since the close of the American Point Four Experimental Station last year, they have the only dairy with systematic feeding, milking, and pasturing in Paraguay. Nearly all other milk production in Paraguay is done on a hit-and-miss basis by lassoing a half-wild cow and tying her to a fence post. By alternately putting the calf on and off and milking in between, one might be

lucky enough to come away with one or two quarts of milk. The Bruderhof, on the other hand, has succeeded in pushing their herd average up to approximately eight liters a day per cow. According to American and European standards this is nothing special, but in Paraguay--considering the unfavorable climate, the wild cows, and frontier conditions--it is astonishing. Even more amazing is the fact that they are continuing regularly to push the average higher and higher. A real turning point in the dairy work was reached while we were there: enough butter was made for everyone to receive a small supply every week. Prior to that it had been a luxury reserved for the sick and elderly. In this connection it is interesting to note that they have managed to bring the butterfat content of their milk to a higher percentage than that of the average European or American milk herd.

The pioneering work the Bruderhof has done in their dairy work will be of undoubted benefit to the rest of the country. They work as closely as possible with the Paraguayan government and various Pan-American and United Nations agencies. The brothers have come to feel this may be an area they can specialize in profitably. Looking toward the future, they are already expanding the size of their buildings, experimenting with new feeds and grasses, and converting new land to pasture. Several milking machines are expected to arrive in the next few months. A few of the young men, now studying agricultural and dairy methods in Asunción and Montevideo, will presently add a more extensive technical background to the hard-won practical knowledge already acquired by trial and error.

Granting all this--and I was genuinely impressed by their achievements in this area--I still could not strike up any lasting affection for those temperamental cows. Neither I nor the animals were very sorry when I finally took my leave of them the first of December. Despite my tremendous lack of enthusiasm for the job, it was nevertheless a good experience for me. I learned a good bit, not only about cows, but about myself and the extent of my own self-discipline.

As we were there longer, we began to accustom ourselves to the climate and to appreciate the variety and abundance of wildlife. The climate is similar in some ways to southern California, but as Paraguay is nearer the tropics it is a little hotter as well as much more humid. It also lacks the ocean breezes, although in winter, or during and following a storm, the south wind is fresh and cool. The hot north wind is really the prevailing wind, except in winter. We came after a long drought and some rather bad frosts at the end of the winter season. The drought was broken shortly after we came, and with the rains came spring. Wild flowers were abundant, and there were hundreds of varieties. After it grew hotter, many of them disappeared, but some remained all year. Fall, winter, and spring are the main growing seasons as midsummer is too hot for much to grow.

There are abundant forms of insect life--extraordinary butterflies, praying mantises, mosquitoes, and flies--with several most annoying stinging varieties, such as tiny gnats. There are also many forms of animal life, though they are less frequently seen: deer, monkeys, armadillos, alligators, and huge toads nearly as big as your foot and much thicker. We were told that tapirs, wildcats, jaguars and other large cats are occasionally seen, plus many varieties of snakes. Bird life is especially abundant, from several varieties of hummingbirds to the ostrich-like rheas. Many families of birds exist there that are not known in North America, besides the many species similar to ours.

The altitude is very low and the terrain gently rolling. The higher parts are forested and the lower parts are campos, open and often swampy meadows. The two types of vegetation do not overlap; even the soil is different. Of course there are rozadas, spaces of cleared woodland, in the higher, fertile land, which are used for farming as the campos are not arable. All the hofs are on the higher land with rozadas nearby.

Both Shirley and I celebrated our birthdays while we were at the Bruderhof: mine the last of August and Shirley's toward the end of November. They were wonderful times for both of us. I don't think either of us ever had so much fuss made over our birthdays before. They celebrate on two days--on the birthday itself and on the Sunday closest to the birthday as Sunday is a family day. For the Sunday celebration we were invited to breakfast with Tante Käthe, one of the older women of the community. It happened that my birthday and that of her son, Hermann (at the Bruderhof House in Asunción), were on the same day. Since her son was absent, we went to celebrate with her. She spoke mostly German, but she knew enough English that we were able to understand each other. We had a very pleasant visit with her and partook of a European-style breakfast consisting of tea, bread spread with lard and honey, and eggs in little wooden egg cups. She then presented me with gifts from the community--a beautiful wooden fruit bowl made in the turnery (filled with candy) and a blue and white sash that Paraguayan men wrap around their waists. Then she lighted my red birthday candle. Good candles were very scarce, so this was special too. About this time a paper shade, made and decorated by the children for the electric light in our room, and a pretty bunch of white flowers were brought in by a little girl. I felt quite overwhelmed, but this was only the beginning.

During the household meeting later that morning the servant of the Word, Heinrich Arnold, called attention to my birthday (much to my embarrassment!) and expressed the hope that it would be a time of spiritual rebirth for me as well as a happy celebration. After the meeting Heini gave me a copy of Peter Rideman's Confession of Faith, which I was very happy to receive.

Knowing that I love to ride, Shirley had arranged for us to go on an all-day horseback ride with Leonard Pavitt, one of the traveling brothers we had come to know and like very much in the United States. We had a very wonderful day seeing some of the more distant parts of Primavera. When we got back in the evening, a little surprise party had been planned with a huge cake, complete with frosting and decorations.

The next morning--Monday and my real birthday--when I was hardly awake and not even quite dressed, I heard bare feet running down the walk toward our room, and the next moment Ian and Stella, two children from next door, came bursting in with bunches of flowers in their hands and wishes for a happy birthday. Even though still befogged by sleep, I managed to reciprocate properly, and they went away with their hands full of bonbons. I spent a good portion of the rest of the day shaking hands and thanking all the well-wishers who came to me, and at noon in the dining hall they sang birthday songs in both English and German. It is customary for newcomers--if they haven't already done so--to tell their life story in the dining hall on their birthday. But fortunately, because other pressing business intervened, I managed to escape that ordeal. In the main, the observance of Shirley's birthday was very similar to mine, except that being so close to the Advent season it tended to become merged with that general occasion.

On the morning of Shirley's birthday we had breakfast with Emmy Arnold (affectionately called "Mama" by everyone), the wife of the founder of the movement. She is one of the most spiritually profound persons I have ever met, and even though she is getting well along in years now (sixty-nine), she is amazingly alert and youthful. We had a number of previous teatime chats with her, but our talk on this particular morning was especially significant. We came away knowing that we had been challenged to the utmost. Among the many nice things Shirley received as presents were several of the published writings of Eberhard Arnold, a pair of sandals made by the cobbler at Ibaté, a set of wooden candlesticks made in the turnery, and six prints of scenes at the Bruderhof in Paraguay.

Not long after Shirley's birthday our stay at Ibaté drew to a close. The end of the school year was near, and Shirley and all the other teachers were busy making out their final reports and

discussing them with the brotherhood in a series of evening meetings. With the commencement of the Christmas holidays in the second week in December, we were free to spend the remainder of our time visiting the other two hofs. We had made occasional visits earlier to Loma Hoby and Isla Margarita on Sundays and at other times, but we did not feel that we had a very good acquaintance with their people and setup.

During this final month of our stay at Primavera we spent first about eight days at Loma, then an equal time at Isla, before returning to Ibaté for the Christmas week and to take leave. We must confess that we were not much help in the work this last month--we had such a limited time at Loma and Isla we weren't able to familiarize ourselves with our jobs very well, and we were in considerable demand as guests.

From our point of view, nevertheless, this last month was very beneficial. We not only got a wider acquaintance with other work departments but also received a better understanding of the Bruderhof communities as a whole. While at Loma I worked around the shop and sawmill, and at Isla I worked with the building troop in constructing the new dining hall there. At my request I even got to spend a few days in the bookbinding shop helping with some of the Christmas work. Shirley spent her time in the laundry and the sewing room. At that time most of the work in the latter department was Christmas work--making new clothes for gifts. She also spent a part of her time in the painting room putting the finishing touches on toys for the children.

The people at Loma and Isla were as anxious to know us as those at Ibaté. As a result, we were kept talking a good share of the time. On both hofs we used up at least three mealtimes and several evening meetings telling about ourselves, our backgrounds, and why we came. They were especially anxious to know more about the Dunkers (Church of the Brethren), particularly its origins. This put me somewhat on the spot, not ever having had a course in Brethren history. I had, however, just taken the course in Brethren doctrine the previous spring, and I discovered that they had a copy of Rufus Bowman's The Church of the Brethren and War in their library, so I was not entirely without information.

They did, of course, already know a little about the Brethren since the Brethren had assisted them financially in the initial construction of the hospital. And their traveling brothers had occasional contacts and had sent back reports. Among others, they have talked with such Brethren as W. Harold Row, F. E. Mallot, George Weybright, and John Eberley. As a result of a visit made about two years ago by two brothers to the Brethren Service Center at New Windsor, Maryland, a large shipment of clothing arrived in Primavera from the Brethren Service Committee while we were there. There were large sacks of shoes, boxes of blankets, and a large number of bales of clothing--some of it brand-new. These were much appreciated gifts, particularly the children's things. Since we are the only Brethren who have been there to date, their gratitude came especially in our direction, and we would like to pass this gratitude on to every Dunker who happens to read this book. The gift itself meant much to them, but in its coming from another brotherhood with which they feel a certain kinship of spirit, it had a double significance.

To my telling about the history of the Brethren there seemed to be a definite attitude of openness and fellowship. They feel a real kinship to the Brethren, most especially in the peace position and the area of service. The hope was expressed to me several times that a closer relationship might be established between themselves and the Church of the Brethren, but they have difficulty in understanding their insistence on triune immersion as the form of baptism. On the other hand, they don't feel it is worth arguing much about either. Neither do they understand the rigid Brethren position on smoking and drinking while neglecting attention to more weighty matters, such as paying war taxes. Smoking is not a moral issue at the Bruderhof, and it is not

uncommon for grape wine and a kind of beer to be made available at special occasions such as Christmas or weddings, although not in very large quantities. It would be unthinkable for someone to drink to excess or get drunk.

When I told of the Dunker practice of footwashing, they were much impressed. They found it to be a very meaningful symbol; it seemed to speak to their condition. Given their freedom to adopt new meaningful symbols and to reject those that have lost their meaning, I would not be too surprised to some day learn that the brothers were washing feet at their Love Feast (Lord's Supper).

We concluded our series of talks and meetings at Loma and Isla by reading some of the letters we had received from our friends. Though most of the letters were sharply critical of the Bruderhof, they were very happy to hear them and get a glimpse of the reactions of our friends. They feel it very necessary to keep in touch with young people outside the Bruderhof and to know their criticisms and hopes. Some even tried to remember names and came later with personal greetings to take back with us.

Our last evening at Loma was spent in a quiet talk together in a household meeting. We told our impressions of the Bruderhof, how we felt about our stay, and discussed various possibilities for the future. Finally the servant asked if we had a particular song we would like to close the evening with. We sang together the German equivalent of "We've a story to tell to the nations," and then everyone filed past and gave us the hand of fellowship in parting.

Substantially the same things happened at Isla Margarita except that our last evening was combined with a special meeting to welcome an American who arrived as we were leaving. And again at the end of the evening, each one present came to grip our hands and bid us farewell.

We returned to Ibaté for Christmas and to take final leave of our friends there. It was a time of mingled pleasure and pain for us. On the one hand there was the great joy in seeing anew, in the atmosphere of a loving brotherhood, the meaning of Christ's advent on earth. The whole meaning of Christmas took on a more real, concrete character at the Bruderhof than I had ever recognized. On the other hand, we knew that directly behind these joyous events was the curtain that was to draw our stay at the Bruderhof to a close.

We were quite naturally anxious to return home again and tell our friends what we had seen, but it also meant breaking off an association that had come to mean far more than we had anticipated. Considering the fact that we were only there five months, there was much that had transpired and that we had shared. We had come to them in a time of sorrow, when they had lost little Maria, and we felt suffering again as the young lad Peter Böning lay slowly dying at the Wheathill Bruderhof in England. We were with them at a significant moment in their plans for outreach and mission: decisions to make a new beginning in North America and to seek closer unity with the Kingwood and Macedonia communities. We were present when new members were taken into their brotherhood and a new baby was brought before the church. We participated in the happy celebration of a marriage and saw more deeply the relationship between Christ and his Church. We felt the air of expectancy with the beginning of the Advent season and later walked with them down the road to view the angels, Mary and Joseph, and the baby Jesus in a stable.

One does not share these things with a people and come away untouched. Something living had been created, and this is what we said on our last evening at Ibaté. We knew--as a result--that our lives could never be the same again.

The morning of December 28 came quickly, and very soon we were again standing out in front of the dining hall and the whole household was gathered. Once more we heard them singing, only this time it was Christmas songs--among them "Tochter Zion" and "Zu Bethlehem geboren." The latter was to ring in our ears for weeks afterwards. One last silent hand to

everyone and we were rolling off down the road, waving until we were out of sight.

The next few days were spent en route to Asunción and in clearing our papers there. At 11:00 a.m., January 3, we boarded the airplane in Asunción. At 4:30 p.m., January 4, we stepped off the airplane in Chicago--a return flight well under two days as against our trip down of two months!

5

Anabaptist Backdrop

The Hutterian Brethren stem originally from the Swiss Brethren, the oldest of the Anabaptist branches. This particular group began in the Tirolean Alps and was unique in its attitude of nonviolence, refusal to pay war taxes, and insistence upon community of goods as exemplified by the apostles and the early church. The initial leadership of Georg Blaurock and Jacob Wiedemann brought these communal Anabaptists into existence, but the real direction and organization passed to Jacob Hutter after Blaurock was martyred and Wiedemann had failed, unable to cope with the vigorous new movement.

Hutter guided many of these people out from under the fierce persecution in the Tirol to Moravia; once there, he brought order and discipline to the community, which increased very rapidly. Austerlitz was the center of the communal brotherhoods, but there were soon large numbers of households scattered all over Moravia. They were variously estimated to have numbered from seventeen to seventy thousand at this period of their greatest growth. They had a reputation for skilled craftsmanship and were consequently in great demand by the Moravian nobles to settle on their lands. Jacob Hutter was to lead the communal brotherhoods for only three years. He was captured in 1535 and the next year burned at the stake, but his name stuck with the brothers, and they were known as Hutterians from that point on. Following a severe period of ejection in the late 1540's enforced by King Ferdinand and his princes, there was a period of gathering and expansion known as the Golden Age of the Hutterians. This lasted from 1565 to 1592; from then on persecution and terror were almost continuous.

First the Thirty Years' War rolled over them and then the Turkish War. Though they managed to survive the destruction of both, the successive invasions and reigns of terror by the Germans, Turks, and Tartars was devastating for them, and their numbers dwindled to a mere fraction of former times. By 1700 the few remaining communities in Hungary and Transylvania had given up community of goods; the final blow was administered by the Roman Catholic Jesuits in a continued program of intense and unremitting persecution. Split up, disorganized, and demoralized, some of the brothers were captured; others submitted. Finally, on the promise of freedom from military service, a remnant moved to southern Russia where they remained until 1874 when general military conscription was introduced there. Again seeking a haven, they moved to North America, without government assurance that their religious faith with regard to war would be respected. By 1877 all of the Hutterian Brethren had emigrated to the United States. After World War I the Canadian government promised religious freedom and exemption from military service, whereupon many colonies were established in Canada.

In 1954 the Hutterian brothers number some 8,500 persons in the Western U.S. and Canada, and reside in some 90 Bruderhofs. But persecution has left its mark, for these old

Hutterians are withdrawn and isolated. Their great missionary spirit is dead, and they have developed an orthodoxy that identifies itself rigidly with certain forms of dress and patterns of behavior. They risk becoming dangerously ingrown, because there are only about 16 family names in a membership of 8,500.

The chaos and destruction following World War I produced a number of groups--among them the German Student Christian Movement--that sought an answer to the general nihilism and despair that prevailed everywhere. The vigorous German Student Christian Movement embraced many of these groups and exercised considerable influence among the youth in Germany at this time. Out of this atmosphere the Society of Brothers* had its earliest beginnings.

One of the leaders of the student movement was Eberhard Arnold, son of a family of considerable social standing in Germany. His father held the chair of Church History at the University of Breslau. Eberhard had wanted to be a doctor, but as a result of family pressure, he studied theology and philosophy at Breslau, Halle, and Erlangen and finally received his Ph.D. in 1909. It was during his early student days that Eberhard became acquainted with the Salvation Army and experienced a religious awakening. More and more he found his understanding of Jesus as the lover of the poor and oppressed conflicting with the class consciousness and social ambition of his family.

He later became closely associated with the German Student Christian Movement and worked as a speaker and organizer in its revivalist campaign. His growing knowledge of early church history, his sensitivity toward the working classes, and his concern over social injustices led him increasingly into conflict with the state church. Finally he broke with the church on the issues of infant baptism and social inequality and threw himself all the more vigorously into social work. It was at this same time (1909) that he was married to Emmy von Hollander. He served a short term in the medical corps during the First World War but was soon discharged because of ill health.

Eberhard went to Berlin in 1915 to be literary director of Die Furche-Verlag (a publishing house) and to edit Die Furche, its monthly. In this position he grew to have some prominence and reputation. As secretary of the German Christian Youth Movement, he was in considerable demand as a speaker and lecturer. More and more he came to feel in opposition to the war spirit. Increasingly the Sermon on the Mount became the determining influence on his thought. A group of students and friends began to gather around him with a feeling that some positive step toward a new movement should be taken. Very often groups of eighty to a hundred people would gather at the Arnold home for discussions, assured that the ethic of Jesus must be put into action. Finally a conference at Whitsun brought together about two hundred youth from all over Germany. Their concern was to make a complete break with the spirit that produced the World War and all the social injustice that had caused it and resulted from it. They felt that against these evils a decisive witness of human brotherhood needed to be made: private property and all its ramifications were felt to be inimical to the spirit of human brotherhood.

Out of these two hundred, seven adults and five children were ready to take the first radical step. Eberhard left his job with Die Furche, and in the summer of 1920 the tiny group gathered at the village of Sannerz to begin community living. At first many came to join this little group, but a crisis in 1922 over differences regarding faith and finances caused many to leave.

*The Bruderhof movement adopted the name Society of Brothers in England in 1939. After 1974, when the Bruderhof reunited with the Hutterites (the two movements had split in 1955), its official name became Hutterian Brethren.

Again there were only seven. This time, with renewed dedication and a sureness of their way of life, they began to build. From this point on the little community grew slowly but steadily on a much sounder spiritual basis.

The work of the community was largely in publishing and in caring for and educating underprivileged children. They began to put out a series of Christian source-books containing the original writings of men like Tertullian, St. Francis, Meister Eckhart, Kierkegaard, and Dostoyevsky. It wasn't long before Sannerz became too small, and in 1926 they managed to purchase a very poor and run-down farm, which they named the Rhön Bruderhof. A time of considerable expansion began. Many guests came and some stayed.

Eberhard had always had a great interest in the left wing of the Reformation. The community began studying the writings of early Quakers and Anabaptists. They came across the writings of the early Hutterians in the 16th century and were especially attracted to them. The more they studied them, the more they felt that the way of life as developed by the Hutterians was the life to which God called men. They had already been seeking a more ordered form for themselves, and the example offered by the early Hutterian brothers seemed to speak to their condition. They began to adopt many of their ideas and ways of doing things.

To their surprise they learned that a remnant of these old Hutterians still existed in North America. Previously they had supposed that the Hutterians had long ago been exterminated by persecution. In a personal conversation, Dr. Robert Friedmann, an Anabaptist scholar and Professor of History at Western Michigan College, told me that he had been the one to tell Eberhard of the existence of these people. In 1930 Eberhard journeyed to the United States and Canada to meet these old Hutterian brothers. He lived with them for about one year and became convinced of the rightness of their way of life. At the end of the year he was ordained by them a servant of the Word and was commissioned to head the new Bruderhof in Germany.

Upon Eberhard's return to Germany with the stimulus of this new relationship, a period of considerable growth followed, both spiritual and numerical. Guests from Switzerland, England, and Holland, as well as Germany came in larger numbers. But a black cloud hung over their work: National Socialism under Hitler was fast rising to power. As Hitler consolidated his power, restrictions were imposed on the Bruderhof. In 1933 the Gestapo closed the Bruderhof to the outside world. Their publishing work was stopped, and they were forbidden to sell any books. This was a serious economic hardship for the brothers--up to that time they had relied heavily on these sales as a major source of income. The farm on which they were living was much too poor to support them. The Nazis also forbade them to send out traveling brothers on missionary journeys and made it very difficult for visitors to come to them.

They were also aware that Nazi teachers would be sent to teach in their school. This was of course intolerable, so all the children, about twenty, were spirited out of Germany almost overnight to Switzerland. In 1934 the Alm Bruderhof was established in the principality of Liechtenstein with money contributed by friends; the children went there to stay. When it became clear that the Nazis would establish universal military service, the Rhön Bruderhof also sent their young men to Liechtenstein.

In 1935 Eberhard traveled to England, in part to make arrangements for starting a new hof in case they were forced out of Germany. When he returned, an operation was necessary for a broken leg that had never healed properly, after which--quite unexpectedly and tragically--he died on November 22, 1935.

Meanwhile life had become quite intolerable on the Rhön Bruderhof. Nevertheless, the community had decided to remain in Germany as a witness against Hitler's demonic regime. Finally however, in 1937 the Gestapo acted to dissolve the Rhön Bruderhof. Life there was interrupted with almost apocalyptic abruptness. Food was left on the table, laundry in the tubs.

Members were allowed to leave Germany with only a small bundle of clothing each. Three of the leaders of the community were imprisoned but later mysteriously released.

It was decided to build in England rather than in Liechtenstein because farming was impossible at that high altitude and the principality's government could not allow them to stay indefinitely. Although making a new beginning in England was not easy, they soon prospered there. They were able to have a large percentage of their number traveling throughout Britain and Scotland, and many people came to join them. They made farming and dairy work their principal occupation and initiated the publication of a quarterly journal, The Plough. Things went so well that a second Bruderhof was begun.

But in 1939 World War II broke out; England declared war on Germany. Public feeling soon ran high against the Bruderhof because not only were they largely German but pacifists as well. The government, however, was rather kindly disposed toward the Bruderhof, realizing that they were an economic asset. But the pressure of war hysteria soon became too great, and the government was forced to offer two alternatives: either they allow their German members to be interned or they leave the country. The Bruderhof felt that separation on national lines was contrary to their witness of brotherhood; it was especially necessary to demonstrate a life of unity and peace among members of warring nations.

They began searching for a place to go. They applied for admission to all the major nations in the western hemisphere. Neither the United States nor Canada, neither Mexico nor any other nation would admit them at that time. Only Paraguay, in central South America, would receive them. The fact that Paraguay had previously welcomed Mennonite refugees helped to pave the way for the coming of the Bruderhof. They were granted some of the same privileges-- primarily freedom of religion and exemption from military service. The two English communities, the Cotswold and Oaksey Bruderhofs, were therefore sold. The money received from their sale was just sufficient to cover the cost of the Atlantic crossing, the purchase of a ranch in Paraguay, and the initial costs of settlement.

By the summer of 1941 with the aid of the Mennonite Central Committee they were all transported across submarine-infested waters in six different groups. Three hundred and fifty adults and children had been safely transported thousands of miles across dangerous waters in wartime.

Upon arrival in the little inland country of Paraguay, they found nothing but virgin tropical forest and grassland on the twenty-thousand-acre estancia they had purchased. The first group had gone to the infamous Chaco area in the north, where most of the Mennonite colonies were located, but they decided against settling there for economic reasons. Their estancia (in the higher southern part, Alto Paraguay) was called "Primavera", which means "springtime" in Spanish.

The women and children of this first group stayed in the neighboring Mennonite colony of Friesland while the men hastily erected dwelling places for them. This beginning was very hard. They were not used to the subtropical climate in which they found themselves, and this caused many hardships for them. Everything had to be built from the woods and grassland. Providing the basic necessities of existence for 350 people, including 170 children, was an almost insuperable task under these conditions.

Paraguay today is an impossibly backward country. Conditions there can be likened in many respects to frontier life in North America of a hundred years ago. Good roads are almost nonexistent. Oxcart and riverboat are the country's main transportation facilities. The horse in Paraguay is equivalent to the automobile in the United States. Ironically enough, however, Asunción is jammed with the latest model cars, but there are hardly any roads outside the city on which to drive!

The country is about evenly divided into two parts by the Paraguay River. The northwestern part is known as the Gran Chaco, sometimes referred to as the "green hell," and is a little larger than the state of Nevada. It is flat, uninspiring country, covered with vast stretches of swamps, grasslands, and areas thickly overgrown with bush. The only inhabitants here are the native Guarani Indians and the more recently arrived Mennonites.

The southeastern half, Alto Paraguay, is also flat but not as unrelievedly so as the Chaco. About half is covered with hardwood forests and campos. Over ninety-five per cent of the population live on the east side of the river. They are almost entirely of mixed Indian and Spanish blood. Spanish is the official language, but outside of the larger cities the native Guarani language is universal. Spanish is poorly spoken, if at all.

The population numbers about 1.5 million as a result of two devastating and disastrous wars in their history, the last being with Bolivia. The poverty-stricken condition of the country is due to these wars, because there was a time, believe it or not, when Paraguay was one of the most wealthy and powerful nations in South America. As a result of the wars the women far outnumber the men. This fact, coupled with the loose hold the Roman Catholic Church has on the country, has contributed to the wide acceptance of common law marriage.

It was into this kind of situation that the Bruderhof people came to make their third new beginning in ten years. Almost with their bare hands they have shaped a community out of the wilderness. The food supply was insufficient, the housing terribly crowded and inadequate, and the subtropical climate--with all manner of strange insects and new diseases--hard on north European constitutions.

The need for a hospital was one of the first things they saw, so with contributions of a thousand dollars each from the Church of the Brethren, the Mennonites, and the Quakers, they set to work. The hospital has been a great boon for neighboring Paraguayans since there is no other medical facility in that area.

Nearly seven hundred Bruderhof people now live at Primavera on three separate hofs--Isla Margarita, Loma Hoby, and Ibaté. They are located about one-and-a-half to two miles apart in a triangular arrangement. The three hofs operate as separate units, yet they are one brotherhood.

Back in England some astonishing things had been happening. Three members, left behind to clear up business matters, were to follow the group to Paraguay. But they could not get away: friends and interested people kept coming to them even though the Bruderhof no longer officially existed, and it wasn't long until the three numbered nineteen! As a result three families were hurriedly sent back to England to help. A grade-C farm was purchased in the Wales-Midlands part of England and the Wheathill Bruderhof was begun. By late 1942 there were thirty-three persons, and soon the adjoining farm was purchased. Now the Wheathill Bruderhof consists of some two hundred persons, and the farms are at present rated as grade A farms.

In Paraguay the mission consciousness was not allowed to die. Even before they were well established in Primavera and long before their standard of living was at all comfortable, brothers were sent out to Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. As a result of these efforts a new Bruderhof, El Arado, was started near Montevideo, Uruguay, and it is now growing slowly but steadily. A house was also established in the capital of Paraguay, Asunción, to make their outside contacts easier.

As the war ended, the Bruderhof felt great concern for children who had suffered in Europe during the war years. Since it had been given them to live in peace, they wanted to help others to live in peace. So they began making arrangements to have 60 war orphans come to them, and--as their plans seemed to be looked on with favor--they even built a new hof to accommodate the children. But local authorities in Germany refused to permit the children to

leave. Eventually the Bruderhof brought over 114 displaced persons instead, who lived with them in Paraguay for a short time.

More recently, the Bruderhof began to revive some of its publishing work. A new series of The Plough was begun, and several important pamphlets were printed. In 1950 they published the first English translation of Peter Rideman's Rechenschaft or Confession of Faith, an important contribution in the field of Anabaptist literature.

As soon as wartime travel restrictions were removed, brothers were sent on travel to the United States. A wide response was found here by the brothers, particularly on the East Coast, and a Bruderhof is in the process of establishment in this country as a result. Two communities--Macedonia at Clarkesville, Georgia and Kingwood at Frenchtown, New Jersey--are, with a core of Bruderhof people, at present seeking ways to find full agreement on making a beginning here.

At this writing the Bruderhof communities number close to a thousand persons and include some nineteen or twenty different nationalities with over ninety family names. It should be remembered that there is no organized link between the "new" Bruderhof in Paraguay and the old Hutterians in North America. They do occasionally send visitors to one another, but their connection is only a spiritual one. The old Hutterians think the "new" Paraguayan group is too modern and worldly, and the brothers in Paraguay regard their North American brethren as too conservative and crystallized, and as having lost the dynamic sense of mission and outreach they once had. Bruderhof people do not reject the name "Hutterian" but prefer to be known simply as "Brothers."

6

Inner Basis

The ideological basis of the Bruderhof way of life can be stated simply and fairly briefly. The essence of it is this: they believe that it is God's will for all men to live together in peaceful, unselfish community with one another. That is, God desires that all barriers of privilege, property, class, caste, or race--all human distinctions--be erased in the sight of his love for mankind. Any sacrifice--and none can be too great--must be made to bring this about. Christ was the incarnation of this sacrificial love of God. The Cross, the outpouring of Christ's life, represents how far God has gone to bring men back to unity with him. Followers of Christ must demonstrate corporately what Christ did in person. But they cannot achieve this by their own strength. Only when they have completely renounced their own will and turned away from it can they receive the power of Christ's spirit. In sum, they must become the fully united body of Christ, showing the fruits of love both among themselves and in acts of redemptive outreach to all men.

The uniqueness of the Bruderhof position can probably best be found in the words "unity" and "community." These two words appear often in their teachings and writings. It is in their life together, completely committed to one another in Christ, that they find they are given strength and can give strength. The following words from the old Hutterians have meaning for the brothers today as well.

Christ desireth that all who believe in him through his word should be one, as the Father is in him, and he in the Father. Even so are the believers one in them, for there is naught that can be compared with unity, community, and being of one loving will, for one is manifold. For if ten or more are one and together, we are no longer one, but each becometh tenfold, and thou findest in ten one, and in one ten, and if the ten have an adversary that doth attack one of them, it is as though he had attacked ten.²

The Society of Brothers often relies on many of the old Hutterian teachings; they have a large collection of original manuscripts. In fact, if pressed hard for some statement of belief, the Bruderhof often points to Peter Rideman's Confession of Faith written in 1540-42. This book has been normative for the old Hutterians in the course of their history and the same could be said for the new movement, the Society of Brothers. Rideman used the Apostles' Creed to outline his account, and nearly every sentence is a scripture text or paraphrase. While they do not hold it as a final creedal document, it more or less remains the basic description of their theological position and explains a number of their beliefs and practices. It hangs loosely on them, though, and is not viewed as ultimately authoritative.

Eberhard Arnold took up many of these old Hutterian-Anabaptist themes and turned out an impressive body of literature that restates their position in vigorous, modern terms. In so doing he has left the indelible stamp of his character on the Society of Brothers. The community has tried very hard not to hold up Eberhard as the "founder" of their movement. They not only feel that the idolization of one person in such a manner is wrong, but they also sincerely believe that it is the spirit of God working through them as a community that is their real leadership. In other

words, they feel they have their marching orders from on high and not from men. Personalities like Eberhard's are recognized as having gifts of expression because they are open and receptive to the working of God's will in their lives and not by virtue of personal achievement. The depth and force of this quality is clearly evident in the large body of teachings he left behind him, which exercise a continuing influence on the community. These writings are often read or referred to, although they are not always identified as Eberhard's in an effort to play down his personality. And almost no edition of their quarterly magazine, The Plough, appears without some hitherto unpublished writing of his. In sum, one could say that his writings and teachings are accepted as expressive and representative of the attitudes of the brothers not because he wrote them, but because the experience of their life has shown them to be true.

For Bruderhof people the figure and person of Christ is central: he is the revelation of the true calling of man as well as the revelation of the true nature of God. "Community can come into being only where Christ Jesus comes to each one through his Spirit, touching and filling the inmost hearts of men. Men can remain in true community only where the life of Jesus, springing from this innermost experience, is lived anew."³

It is Christ's love that provides strength for their life. His sacrificial love as demonstrated on the cross compels them to live a life that gives up everything--a life in which love (without rights and without the will to possess) reigns supreme.

"This is why he died for us all; that no one might live for himself any longer; that all who have life, live for him who died and rose again for their sake. This means patient surrender. It means overcoming selfish life and self-interest and therefore private property too. This is possible only where the love of God moves and urges us all to live entirely for Christ."⁴

I never heard the topic of salvation discussed or very often mentioned while we were at the Bruderhof. It occurs in some of Eberhard Arnold's writings but never in a position of great prominence. One could say that the topic is so taken for granted as to be ignored. They do not live as they do to better insure their chances of salvation. They feel their life is the logical and inescapable outcome of accepting the fact that God has an intention for mankind and that man is living in death until he accepts that intention for himself. "We have to live in community--only by making a decisive attempt to live like this can it become clear how incapable of life unredeemed man is, and what a life-giving and community-building power God is."⁵

It follows, too, that the Bruderhof does not hold to the idea that an individual can have a true experience of Christ without its resulting in a changed way of life. Religious individualism either in the form of Pietism or existentialism they regard as false. No individual can have his own Savior all to himself; Christ's love and Spirit cannot be kept to oneself when truly experienced. It draws men toward one another and seeks always for a fuller and closer unity. As there is only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, so is there only one Spirit sent by Christ. Without complete openness and ready surrender to this Spirit, there can be no real community.

"If we make efforts to organize something similar artificially, it can only result in an ugly, lifeless caricature. There can be only one attitude toward the Living One: openness to the Spirit. Then, in those who are open and empty, he can bring about the same life as in the early Christians. This Spirit is joy in the Living One, joy in God as the only real life, and through him, joy in people, in all people, for they all have life from God. He urges us to reach out to people, to all people, so that it becomes a joy to live and work for one another. He is loving and creative."⁶

Oneness in faith and spirit must similarly produce oneness of obedience. There can be nothing half-hearted, nothing partial. "God wills the whole." If there is to be total community so must there be total obedience.

"It is not enough when many people who count themselves followers of Christ are willing to devote to the service of Jesus only those few hours which their middle-class profession or their business leaves free to them. As Jesus dedicated his whole life to service and as he sealed his service with a sacrificial death, so we too must leave all our vocations, give up our own business and earning of money in order to live for Christ and his Church alone.⁷

This is crucial, for it is on this point of totality of commitment that the uniqueness of the Bruderhof way of life arises. For them love to Christ has no meaning unless it results in a sincere and thoroughgoing effort to take his commandments seriously. They feel that the powers of death and evil have such an all-pervasive grip on the world that they can only be met by an equally all-embracing dedication to the God of life and love. Nothing can be reserved, not the smallest bit can be held back. Christ demands all. "Whoever does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple." If even the slightest thing is made exempt, it is a victory for evil because it denies the ultimate lordship and validity of Christ's claim over every aspect of life.

The root and source of the world's evil and man's sin is found by the Bruderhof people to lie in the assertion of human self-will against God's intention for mankind. There can be no community as long as each individual is struggling to consummate his own self-interest. A complete and decisive break must be made with all self-will: this is the meaning of repentance.

It is a matter of everything at once. It is a matter of God...Of a life that is death-in-life God wills a complete transformation to a truly vital life in the living God, in his life-giving Spirit. Ultimately what matters is that man from now on does not want man to count and reign but only God, as God and nothing but God--and never again himself.⁸

The first insight that repentance must bring is the knowledge that man was made for God's Spirit to have dominion over him. When man sees this as the true end to which he has been called, then it will become apparent how subtly and deeply he has succumbed to a covetous will and an unrighteous spirit. A feeling of pain and remorse comes with this realization and brings total revulsion for his past life.

These are the aspects of true repentance. One result is a complete change in the inmost life, in the attitude toward God, to whom the whole heart has now turned. Another is a complete revolution of feeling toward man, in that the penitent heart can never again want to have power over its fellow men. A third result is a new estimation of the self, for the truly repentant heart knows its limitations and can no more think highly of itself but humbly recognizes the gifts that have been lent it.

In conversion the human heart goes yet another step and determines to "turn utterly away from everything which has been recognized through repentance as detestable...all injustice, murder, lying, impurity, insincerity, and lifelessness; especially to turn the back on all piety or churchiness that has itself not utterly turned away from all these."⁹ The essential thing is that the human will voluntarily turns away from all judgments, standards, and conditions which place man in the center, and turns instead to God and his Christ, who revealed fully and completely the nature, the character, and will of God.

This does not mean the abolition of the self and the destruction of the will, but rather the conversion of the self and the turning of the will. Neither does it mean the withdrawal of freedom nor the crushing of individuality. But it does mean the end of license and the beginning of true freedom. The Bruderhof believes there is no freedom outside God's will for man; there is only slavery and bondage to the powers of darkness that work through the desires and lusts of the self. The real flowering of the individual can occur only when he breaks these stifling bonds and comes to unity with God's original intention for him.

One result of turning away from self-interest to new unity with God's will is the dropping of the distinction between "mine" and "thine." If we have held nothing back in surrendering our whole selves to God, what can there be between us?

The love of God does not acknowledge any boundaries or stop at any barriers. Therefore, Jesus does not stop in the face of property any more than He does in the face of theology, moralism, or the State. He saw into the heart of the rich young man whom he loved: "One thing you lack: sell all you have--give it to the poor and come! Go with me!" So it was a matter of course with Jesus that His band of followers did not take any personal possessions on their travels but kept a communal purse.¹⁰

The Bruderhof believes that all property belongs to God--indeed, all possessions, gifts, abilities, all energy, all life. These things have been given by God for all humankind to use. The man, therefore, who keeps something back for himself, who stakes out a plot of ground and says, "This is mine!" is a thief. He has taken something originally bestowed freely by God and claimed it as his own. The same holds true if a person uses his particular talents solely to advance his own interests. He has short-circuited a gift God intended for the well-being of all.

One could say that the Bruderhof strives for an atmosphere of complete non-possession. No one owns a thing or has a right to a thing--not even to food, clothing, or shelter. The all-controlling principle is love, which recognizes only the command to give. There is no such thing as pocket money, the right to a vacation, ownership of clothing, or possession of living quarters. Everyone must be ready to move without a murmur to smaller quarters or to another Bruderhof if necessary. The steward at Ibaté, for example, had to give up his office in order to make room for a young American visitor, and the optometrist had to relinquish his testing room to provide living quarters for us when we came.

It would be a mistake, therefore, in my opinion, to say that the distinctive feature of the Bruderhof is their practice of community of goods. First, the spirit of non-possession includes much more than material things: it asks for all the individual is or can become to the end of his life. Second, the attitude of having all things in common is a result, not a cause of their life. The distinctive thing is their totality of commitment; everything else results from that.

They know full well, however, that they fall short of their goal every day, and they definitely do not believe in perfectionism. Even though they have made the decisive commitment to full discipleship, they feel that each day brings new struggles to achieve this end. It is one of the most necessary aspects of their life that they constantly seek to help one another in this common fight against evil. No one of them, they feel, is strong enough to stand alone; but together, in the humility and discipline of Christian love, they have found that strength and power are given them. Many times I heard the thought expressed that their life would be impossible if this strength were not given them daily. An Advent teaching given by Philip Britts, a servant of the Word who died in 1949 of a Brazilian fungus disease, expresses their feeling of inadequacy:

A community based on human goodness would necessarily be exclusive, confined to

those of a certain human standard, and somewhere one would try to draw the line. But Christ came to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance, and such a community of sinners can only exist by the transforming power of the love of God.

The love of God coming down as the only redeeming power--as expressed in the manner of the birth of Christ in the stable with all its human poverty--was also taught by Christ throughout his ministry, and especially in the Sermon on the Mount....

So we remain human beings; as men and women we remain weak and imperfect, no better than anyone else. Any decisive change is the working of the Holy Spirit, the coming of the Christ child in our hearts. Our first calling, then, is to seek the kingdom of heaven, and the way is to seek what is the will of God for us and for this earth--not to try and pierce the cloud of unknowing by putting all practical things under the cloud of forgetfulness.¹¹

Being human, the Bruderhof people have difficulties, misunderstandings, and disagreements as do we all. They meet these problems with the principle and spirit expressed in Matthew 18. Every member is expected to be ready to receive and give admonition. Whenever one person has an issue with another, he is not to keep silent and carry it around with him and build up tension and resentment; but neither is he to speak with others about it, except possibly a servant of the Word. He is to go directly to the person in question to tell him about it and resolve the matter with him. This practice is absolutely essential to the ongoing life of the Bruderhof. If a problem arises between members, the resolution of that difficulty takes precedence over any other consideration. They feel that nothing else could have any meaning or significance if it did not rest on the full unity of all the members. No job, no undertaking whatsoever, is more important than eliminating barriers between persons. Their life together would have no meaning if they did not hold uncompromisingly to this attitude. It is so singularly important that one of the vows taken publicly by a person joining the community is the pledge to accept every reproof where it is justified, and to reprove others if it is felt that there is something within the community life which should be abolished or made clearer, or which would more fittingly bespeak the will of God.

If an issue between two persons cannot be settled, it is taken to the servant of the Word. And if the three of them cannot iron it out, it becomes a community problem and is taken to the brotherhood. In the course of their history most problems have yielded at this point so that recourse to more stringent forms of discipline has seldom been taken. Once a difficulty is settled it is never brought up or mentioned again. When real forgiveness occurs, the matter is forgotten. There is probably nothing else so severely disciplined as the loose talk that quickly deteriorates human relationships. If a person chances to drop an unkind remark about another, he is obliged to go to the other immediately without telling anyone else, tell him what he said, and seek to restore a brotherly relation between them.

They generally find, we gathered, that it is more difficult to give admonition than to receive it, although it is also hard to receive without becoming defensive. I don't think Shirley or I ever received an honest-to-goodness admonition while we were there, but we were spoken to rather plainly on a few occasions. The whole atmosphere of openness and frankness is one that requires a little adjusting to. They do not accept the masked motives and false fronts that self-centeredness gives rise to. The fight against the ego is thus a united community endeavor. For instance, when there is a job to be filled, the shortcomings of a person are fully discussed in their meetings. He may be dismissed from the room during the discussion, but he is always given a full report afterward. Even the servants of the Word are not exempt from admonition, and anyone in the group can admonish them, although it is generally done by other servants.

Perhaps the Bruderhof attitude on the matter of the self can best be summed up by pointing up the difference between individuality and individualism. Individuality, on the one hand, is encouraged as much as possible. That is, every effort within their means is used to bring forth and develop an individual's gifts, talents, and forms of personal expression. New possibilities for creative development are constantly being explored. At the same time there is always the clear recognition that all gifts come from God and are of equal value in his sight. This being true, such gifts should not be used for the enhancement of the individual, but to serve God and his Church.

The spirit of individualism, on the other hand, is attacked by the Bruderhof at every opportunity. They believe it is impossible for men to live in peace when everyone acts solely on the basis of consequences to himself alone. They would, I think, go so far as to say that there is almost no act that can be committed that does not affect one's brother. Consequently, they believe it is wrong for individuals to behave as if they did not live in a world where others must live too. Thus all important decisions at the Bruderhof are made in brotherhood meetings by unanimous decision. If everyone is not clear on a matter, they wait until unanimity comes. They definitely do not feel that efficiency is more important than unity.

Their concern for the place of the individual even determines the size of their villages, or hofs. They have found in the course of their life together that the ideal size for a household--men, women, children, visitors--is roughly between 150 and 250 persons. When a group is below 150 in number, it has seemed to them that individual differences tend to stick out too much. But if a household numbers much above 250, individual qualities tend to be submerged, and the deep personal relationships necessary for community are less possible.

It is not difficult to see where the Bruderhof's fight against the spirit of individualism and self-interest leads them. It sets them basically against the whole spirit of our age. It strikes against the very foundations of our political and economic systems and brings a sharp judgment on Christians who have "adjusted" themselves to an unjust social order.

In regard to government the Bruderhof feels that all men are first called by God to live in love and brotherhood. Those who heed this call shall live together under the absolute rule of love, which is the fulfillment of all laws. Those who resist or deny God's will must live under a relatively lower order--the order of laws and justice. In this sense, the Bruderhof recognizes that the state and government are ordained by God, as the apostle Paul says, but are under the wrath of God. God does not utterly forsake unrepentant men; therefore he gives them a government for protection. After all, the much over-glorified term "justice" means little more than the balancing of individual claims of self-interest.

There is no state without police force and the sword....That has been ordained by God in the unchristian world that evil might not take the upper hand....This is God's order for hell....God has also an order for the evil and the unjust--that we are not to forget. With regard to evil God must also be relative--for as long as evil exists....But now comes the absolutism of God in love. In the absolute sphere of love there is no active part taken in the force of the state....The Christian Church is the region of absolute love....A man leaves the region of love...only when he does evil.¹²

The state, however, is recognized by the Bruderhof as having a beneficent as well as a beastly character. When government fulfills the former function, they seek to cooperate as far as possible. But when it fulfills the latter, they declare their higher allegiance to God.

The Bruderhof does not find the principle of profit and competitive self-interest that

underlies capitalism to be consistent with the Sermon on the Mount. They interpret the pragmatic and materialistic standards that govern modern industrialism--and result in the domination of the machine and the mechanical process over human personality--as part of the evil spirit of our age. The unnatural, cramped, and extraordinarily impersonal life of the huge city is another result of the same soul-killing spirit. They see, too, that the openly avowed materialism and lust for power, which motivates secular communism, is the other even more diabolic side of the same coin.

The Bruderhof also feels that the churches that have compromised with this evil and reflect rather than fight it have made themselves liable to a most serious judgment by Christ: "One thing I have against you: That you have forsaken your first love." That is to say, love to Christ means obedience to his commandments. To fail to obey these commandments in their fullest and most penetrating sense is to fall away from one's first love--the love that must supersede any other consideration.

No one should resign himself, in quiet of soul and sanctimonious devotion, to such a depressing fact about his development. As long as we bear even the faintest spark of love to Jesus within us, it cannot leave us unmoved for a single instant even if he whom we love must bring the charge against us that we have left the first love. His call pierces our hearts: "Think, think, from whence thou hast fallen."¹³

I think it was this coldness--the almost total lack of challenge--in churches that brought many people to the Bruderhof in the first place. It would be dangerous and somewhat presumptive to generalize too heavily on the reasons for people's coming, but I did get the impression that the general lifelessness of the churches was responsible to some degree. We heard many stories of why people came--each one quite unique. Some arrived after a long spiritual pilgrimage, trying first this thing and then that, whereas others just happened to stumble onto the Bruderhof, having never even considered such a thing before. A few were brought as orphans in the early years; some came as curious weekend visitors and never went away. Others visited, went away, but returned after a number of years. A general characteristic evident in most was a certain sensitivity--a precondition to which the Bruderhof way of life was able to speak. Either they were already consciously seeking for a fuller expression of the Christian life, or when exposed to it, that desire was aroused in them.

Some came with hardly any religious background, others cynical and bitter about the hypocrisy they saw in the church. But there were also "children" of the church for whom the church no longer commanded allegiance. One significant group came in the early years from the German Student Christian Movement, seeking a positive answer to the destruction and chaos they had endured as a result of World War I. A sizeable number of pacifists and conscientious objectors came in England at the beginning of World War II, seeking a constructive answer to war and its causes. Most of the Americans who came during the last few years joined the Bruderhof because they felt the need for a more consistent and radical witness against the military economy and its ramifications.

Regardless of the initial compelling reasons for coming to the Bruderhof, they are living together today because they can do no other. They have found that "God is life. He is so boundlessly rich in life that his very nature is love. The life of God is the will for unity and community. The heart of his justice is the gathering love that brings together, unites, and has in common everything necessary to life."¹⁴ Their purpose is twofold: to exemplify Christ's spirit in their life together, to be a living, united body of Christ; and to show the world a better way, a

new order.

This latter concern--to show the world a better way--is of great importance to them. If this impelling love to all the world were not a vital part of their life, there would be a great danger of their falling into a satisfied pattern of living in which individual egotism would merely be replaced by group egotism. They are very aware of how easily they could fall into this deadening trap. The present fate of their spiritual ancestors, the old Hutterians, is always present to remind them of the danger.

They feel that the life of brotherhood is a life all should be told about and all should be called to. The work they do is not for themselves but to meet and answer the great inner and outer need of the world. No sacrifice is too great to make this outreach possible.

Their efforts to meet the outer need of men is seen in the work of the hospital at Loma Hoby. This last year they treated over eight thousand patients, eighty percent of them non-community members. Since nearly all Paraguayans are quite poor and government aid is very limited, the hospital is operated at a considerable loss each year and is a heavy drain on the strength of the community.

A plan for a children's village of 60 war orphans was to be a ministry to both outer and inner needs. There was great disappointment at the Bruderhof when this plan was not consummated, although it did result in 1949 in the coming of 10 orphan children to the Wheathill Bruderhof in England. Late in 1948, Primavera was finally able, with the aid of the International Refugee Organization and the Mennonite Central Committee, to bring over 114 particularly distressed displaced persons, who stayed for a time before settling elsewhere in Paraguay and neighboring countries. Since this happened at a time when the Bruderhof did not yet have adequate housing for themselves, extra houses had to be quickly thrown up, family quarters condensed, and the young men moved to such unlikely sleeping places as the brick works in order to make room for the displaced persons.

The great inner need of man, they feel, is to find his true nature--God's intention for him--in the kingdom of God. One purpose of the Bruderhof is to be a "beacon on a hill," to carry God's call for men to live in community, and to tell them that it is being done. They do not believe that the kingdom of which Jesus spoke is altogether postponed until the end of history. They believe Jesus intended men to live in the Kingdom now and to order their lives accordingly. But the Kingdom will not come in all its fullness until ushered in by Christ's return; this will be the end of history and the time of judgment. The life of the church community, therefore, is a realization of the Kingdom now and an intimation of what the Kingdom to come will be like; and their message is "Come and see." Every aspect of their life is bent toward carrying out this calling. Everyone must be ready at any time to leave their friends and families and go out to spread this message; and at the same time everyone else must be willing to work doubly hard to fill in the gaps left by those who are sent out.

The Bruderhof has always had many out on mission work. At present there are brothers traveling in Scotland and on the Continent. There are seven brothers and sisters traveling in the United States--a couple on the West Coast and five others in the eastern part of the country working to establish a new Bruderhof there.

Faith rather than common sense is the determining element in their outreach. When it becomes clear that a new task needs to be undertaken, they decide to do it first and count the cost later. When it became clear, for instance, that a new Bruderhof should be started in the United States and that the work in Uruguay needed to be expanded, it meant the loss of about a dozen people in Primavera. This is a serious blow in a country like Paraguay, where willing hands are so necessary, but nevertheless the decision was made and the people were sent out. Time and again a new project has been launched with no idea of where the money was to come from--and

it has always come.

They have a completely open door to all who wish to visit them; there is a happy and warm welcome for anyone who comes--rich or poor, high or low, young or old. While we were there, some well-to-do people from Buenos Aires came to visit at the same time that a penniless, destitute old man of seventy arrived. Both were received with equal warmth. Any guest is welcome to stay as long as he is sincerely seeking. One young man, an Italian, has been with them five years and still has not made a decision. A Paraguayan family worked for the Bruderhof and lived at Primavera for ten years before they united with the brotherhood. There is no requirement that any guest pay a cent, though he is expected to contribute to the work insofar as he is able. There is no pressure put on visitors to join, although they are urged to make known their questions and objections. The brothers try very hard not to let visitors go away with unanswered questions on their minds. But every essential step toward fuller unity--whether made by a youth who has grown up in the Bruderhof or by a visitor--must be arrived at freely by the individual himself. Anyone who feels in unity with the Bruderhof, for instance, may attend the Gemeindestunde (meeting of prayer) whether a member or not. But there is no invitation extended; the individual must appear before the brotherhood and ask if he may attend.

The same holds true when a person decides to join the full brotherhood. He must appear before the brotherhood and make a confession of his faith and ask to join. Then follows a period up to a year, possibly longer, in which he is on trial. The final commitment is usually made at Easter with the act of baptism. Anyone may become a member if he truly comes into full unity with the brothers, regardless of limitations or personality difficulties.

Obviously, such a policy of complete openness based on a life of faith does not make for economic stability. The Bruderhof has nearly always existed perilously near poverty. Their food is quite simple--especially for Americans--and their clothing is of the plainest type, usually abundant in patches. These conditions do not exist because they desire them so; they have no ascetic tendencies. They are constantly seeking to improve their living conditions and have had some remarkable results in that primitive country, even if many areas of their life are far from comfortable. They would like nothing better than to be in a sounder economic position but have found it impossible to do so here while following the leadings of the Spirit. If they were to give up their mission work, the outreach of the hospital, and other such ventures, they could be economically self-sufficient in a very short time. But they have found it necessary to accept help from other sources such as the American Friends Service Committee and Brethren Service. And it is common practice for them to solicit help from individuals and business organizations, especially for their hospital work. They are not embarrassed about this practice in the least bit; they feel that society as presently organized is wrong, and that its activities are essentially motivated by self-interest. Since their life is based on love and sharing, they feel that any assistance from outside sources is being taken from an unsound system and diverted into the work of love. They do not feel as though they were asking for themselves; they believe, rather, that they are asking for the cause of the Kingdom.

7

Working Together

The great joy of Bruderhof life is found in the togetherness of their approach to every aspect of human existence. Once entered into without reservation, it is not so much a discipline as it is the means for a new release of energy and creative abilities. They believe that man was made to be in communion with his fellowmen; anything which blocks or hinders that unity also thwarts the fullest development of the personality. It is only when the individual is freed from the restrictive demands of the ego that he can expand and pour out his creative resources. The truest self, in other words, is found not where self-interest is exalted, but rather where it is denied for the sake of others. This can only happen, of course, when all of life is in the dominion of the Spirit and under the rule of love.

Unless it comes from love, there is no work that a man can do with his whole soul--work which is full of spirit and penetrated with the heart's blood. And there is no love that does not get to work. Love is work: practical, strenuous work of muscle and mind, of heart and soul. And so the kingdom of love, this community kingdom of the church and of the rule of God, must be a kingdom of work.¹⁵

Bruderhof people thus find a deep-going satisfaction and gladness in their common belonging, in their labor together and with God. This is the essence of the common life: "... where all the senses are consecrated and all the tools dedicated, where everything physical becomes holy and all confirmation of oneself in manual labor a joy..."¹⁶ In this spirit all work has significance. No activity is without meaning or an end in itself. Often when I was given a job here, my "boss" would give me a detailed explanation of why it needed to be done and how it related to other aspects of community or farm work. Time was precious and the job could probably have been done with a few simple instructions, but the fact that I saw the job in its larger context and meaning made considerable difference in my attitude and approach to the work. And if I made any alternative suggestions, they were readily considered. I could not help comparing this attitude with that toward other work I had done, where I was told to do a job "because that's the way it's done."

The Bruderhof does not believe that purely pragmatic considerations should determine the nature and character of their work. They feel that industrial processes which subjugate the laboring man to a drive for efficiency and profit are wrong. They oppose the whole tendency of the factory system to depersonalize the worker in the soul-killing labor that he is required to do. And they have a special sympathy for the countless numbers of peoples who have been mercilessly exploited for their labor--whether the black in South African copper and diamond mines or the Mexican migrant laborer in the U.S. Such exploitation is largely the result of the profit system, the Bruderhof feels. Wherever a competitive order prevails, the weak will always be ground down to the bottom; this is evil at the very root and diametrically opposed to God's will for man.

But the Bruderhof is not opposed to technological progress--far from it:

Nothing of the mechanical and technical achievements brought to us by the last centuries and tens of centuries should be lost. For man has been placed here to rule this earth, to move the earth with his tools, and to give form and shape to the material of his work.¹⁷

But they do feel that any arrangement which subordinates man to a thing is degrading and brutalizing. Therefore, while machines in themselves may be amoral, how they are used, and to what purpose, is very much a moral consideration.

Most of the brothers feel that their way of life has an intimate relationship with the land, and although they won't be stiffly dogmatic about it, it does seem that this is a rather fundamental tenet. Man's life on the soil has an elemental, natural quality to it, and if he moves too far away from the land, he tends to lose the sense of awe and reverence for God's created world and becomes too impressed by his own powers and abilities. The culture of the cities, in their estimation, is a jaded, abnormal existence that does violence to human personality.

The Bruderhof would not, however, make the assertion that an agriculturally based community is the only one possible--not at all. In Germany they supported themselves in large measure through publishing, while in Paraguay an agricultural base was almost the only possibility. In making their beginning in the U.S., they are considering some small industry (possibly making children's toys) along with a renewal of their publishing work. But a good-sized vegetable garden is almost certain, whatever their work, for they feel they ought to have at least one foot on the land.

No one's work is valued more than another's at the Bruderhof. Each task is of equal importance--the schoolteacher has no higher standing than the cobbler. A person's special abilities and talents are regarded as gifts of God to be used for the good of all. One person cannot say, therefore, that his gifts are any better than another's, since they are all equal in God's sight. Pride in a job well done is stressed more than pride in personal achievement.

To many people this might seem to deaden initiative and make things too easy for slackers, the assumption being that human nature, without the motive of competition or other self-interest, will not stir itself to achievement. I must confess that I more or less believed this myself and expected to find some evidence of it at the Bruderhof. But I didn't: instead of finding an occasional brother who would have to be admonished for loafing, I found rather that some had to be cautioned to take it easy. I would not say that the former never happens, but the latter is more likely. One man in particular had a reputation for driving himself very hard. When he and his wife were selected to go to the U.S. on a mission journey it was necessary to hold a special brotherhood meeting for the purpose of formally admonishing him to work only so many hours and to have a nap each day.

In sum, Bruderhof people have discovered that to find life in the fullest sense they must lose it. In their own words, "to give one's powers and strength to serve the whole is to receive back life and to receive it more abundantly. True joy in life seeks life for the whole....Therefore, we must lose ourselves in work for the whole to find the fulfillment of life and the happiness that is love."¹⁸

At three every day, following the midday rest hour and teatime, the men gather to peel mandioca (the Paraguayan equivalent of the potato) and discuss problems pertaining to the work. This is called the Brüderrat or brothers' work council, the body that manages and directs the community work. The main income-producing work departments--dairy, farm, sawmills, turnery, and building crew--are responsible directly to the Brüderrat. This used to be done in evening brotherhood meetings, but it was found to be too cumbersome and often too technical for the sisters. Certainly all problems of a wider concern are taken up in the brotherhood meetings for

decision. Some work assignments are made in the Brüdererrat, although any major changes or appointments are made in the brotherhood meetings. Problems relative to one particular hof are handled in the Brüdererrat of that hof, while matters concerning all three hofs--such as the recent decision to purchase two new tractors and several milking machines--are dealt with in a communal Brüdererrat with all the men from the three hofs present.

At the head of the community is the servant of the Word. Since the whole life of the Bruderhof is a religious expression, and since spiritual and temporal matters are not thought of as being separate, the role of the servant is a correspondingly unified function. His responsibility includes nearly every aspect of the life. Problems of all sorts--personal and communal--come to his attention. He confers often with the steward, housemother, and work distributor on his own hof and holds regular meetings with the other servants to help coordinate the life of the three hofs. No servant has any higher authority than another. They are all of equal position. Most of the burden of answering the voluminous correspondence--as well as the questions of Bruderhof guests and visitors--falls on his shoulders. One of the servant's most important functions is to act as spokesman for the community, both within the brotherhood and to the rest of the world at large. He has the oversight of brotherhood meetings and leads in meetings for worship. However, he makes no important decisions on his own.

The name and function of the servant of the Word has been taken over by the Society of Brothers from the old Hutterian church. He is to be a servant in every sense of the term, a servant of the living Word as it finds expression in the life of the Christian community. The servant is usually an older man, selected by the brotherhood after a goodly number of tried-and-proven years in community life. He is often chosen because it has become evident that he has been given the ability to apprehend and express the common feelings of the brotherhood. The ability to discern problems and state them clearly is also an important quality for a servant. But most important, the servant must always be under the guidance of the Spirit and sensitive to its leadings. If this is not the case--if a servant allows self-centered concerns to take ascendancy in his life--then, even though he has been appointed for life, the brotherhood will remove him from his service. That this has actually happened on several occasions demonstrates that it is no empty tenet.

No one looks upon the servant as having these qualities of service by his own achievement. They are regarded as gifts of the Spirit of God working through the person of the servant. Therefore, there is no exaltation of the servant because it is believed that God, not the servant, is leading them.

It is generally felt that there ought to be two servants of the Word on each hof of 150 to 200 people, but it is not always possible. On the Ibaté hof, where we spent most of our time, the servant is Heinrich (Heini) Arnold, one of the three sons of Eberhard Arnold, the founder of the movement. He is about forty years old and has only recently (after a year's trial) been confirmed as a servant of the Word for life along with two other men. Previously he had been doing farm and agricultural work. Hans-Hermann, another son of Eberhard Arnold, is also a servant, although the oldest son is not. Other servants include an electrical engineer from Switzerland, a onetime tramp-preacher from England, a deserter from the French army, and a former Swiss schoolteacher. All men of wonderful spiritual depth and courage, they can be called "servants of the Word" in every sense of the term.

The steward or business manager keeps the financial accounts of the community in order. He is the only person at the Bruderhof who normally handles money. If there are non-members to be paid, it is the steward who does it. All purchasing and selling is done through him. He prepares periodic reports for the brotherhood in the course of its planning with him. Travel arrangements, bank matters, currency exchange, and mail all come within the range of the

steward's duties. If possible a steward is placed in charge of managing Bruderhof House in Asunción. In short, the steward is responsible for all business transactions between the Bruderhof and the rest of the world.

The storekeeper is in charge of foodstuffs at the Bruderhof. All kitchen staples are ordered and kept on hand by him. On Saturdays he dispenses such things as sugar, coffee, honey, lard and butter, syrup, soap, candles, and matches to the families for their use during the week.

The housemother takes care of all the household articles needed by the families. Such things as clothing, kitchen utensils, buckets, washpans, towels, sheets, blankets, and curtains are distributed by her. She also has a birthday list and sees to it that gifts and clothing are made ready in time. Much of the Christmas preparation is attended to by her. When guests and new people arrive, it is her responsibility that their living quarters are ready and their needs supplied. The housemother's sphere of activity includes most anything that needs the touch of a woman's hand.

The work distributor has one of the most trying jobs at the Bruderhof. It is his task to rotate and assign all the necessary chores and duties among the members of the household. There are two work distributors on each hof--a brother for the men's work and a sister for the women's. The work includes a great variety of tasks--preparing breakfast, washing dishes, cutting meat, serving the food, watching the children, attending to the generator, to name a few. Usually these duties are arranged in a more or less permanent schedule, but for one reason or another there are constant changes or substitutions to be made. On Sundays and other holidays special duty lists are necessary. I have included two of the special "service lists" that were posted on the dining hall door at Christmastime to give an idea of how these various chores are allocated. Shirley had kindergarten watch on Christmas Day, and I had cow stall duty the next morning. My regular duties included washing dishes after the Tuesday noon meal and scrubbing pots and pans on Thursday evenings.

Work distributors may also make temporary work assignments or other necessary shifts. If a department is shorthanded due to illness, or if a special job comes up, it is his or her task to find--somehow--the necessary manpower. Nearly all matters of scheduling or arrangement are handled by the work distributors together with the housemother, steward, and servant of the Word.

There is a sewing room on each hof where most of the clothes are made--nearly all the women's and children's--but the tailor helps with the men's trousers. At Ibaté there were seldom less than three women sewing and no more than six as the number of machines was limited; at the larger hofs, there were usually at least four or five. Most of the machines were treadles, but there were one or two electric machines at each hof that the older women used. The only drawback was that the electricity was seldom on during all the working hours.

Although clothes are made as needed during the year, the principal occasion for replacing clothing is one's birthday. At that time a list is made and given to the housemother of all the things needed by the individual. Mothers make out the list for their children, and wives for their husbands and themselves. The housemother gets the material together and sends it to the sewing room. The sisters would work hard all week in order to have everything ready before Sunday when birthdays were celebrated. To have birthdays celebrated during the week would have made it very difficult for the sewing room to have everything ready in time, so there was also a very practical reason for this tradition.

The communal laundry does the regular washing each week for everyone. Several sisters work there regularly--others help part-time--in a very necessary task. There is usually a man present to do the heavy work. Once a week, on Mondays, the schoolchildren can be seen with huge bundles of their family's dirty laundry, carrying it in a wagon or wheelbarrow. Babies' laundry, however, is brought every day.

Each morning the ancient machines keep turning out loads of freshly washed clothing--white things to be hung on lines or over bars outside and colored clothes inside the drying room which has slatted walls for free air circulation. Dresses and shirts are hung over bars or on hangers, which eliminates most ironing, as there are not enough workers to iron the clothes. If ironing is absolutely necessary, it must be done by individuals. Both electric and hot-coal irons are used.

In the afternoons, the dry clothes are taken down, folded, and distributed to the shelves, where each family and single person has an allotted place (each article of clothing is marked). Late in the afternoon the older children or adults stop by for their clean clothes. Often the bundle is placed in a wagon beside some little tot and pulled home.

The kitchen prepares all the meals for the community. Besides the two main meals for the adults, special food is cooked for the children, elderly people, and those who are sick. There are usually three to five women working regularly in addition to one man to do the heavier work.

One or two women on each hof generally spend a large portion of their time doing typing and secretarial work for the servants. At Ibaté and Isla Margarita there is one woman who acts as nurse. And of course, many of the women spend their time working in the children's departments and the school.

The hospital is located at Loma Hoby and necessitates a strong labor force, which has its effect on all the work departments of the hof. There are three fully accredited doctors at the hospital and one whose studies are not yet complete. They desperately need nurses. One nurse has recently arrived from England, and there are two hired nurses already, one from a neighboring Mennonite colony. There are also a trained laboratory technician and a pharmacist. Besides the professionally trained staff, there are over half a dozen others who help with the administration, the hospital kitchen, and other work. The hospital is quite well-equipped, all things considered. A laboratory, well-stocked pharmacy, operating room, and X-ray facilities enable the hospital to perform several hundred operations a year and treat thousands of outpatients, most of whom are Paraguayans. A new, especially built section provides the utmost in comfort for the new mothers. The joy of birth and the pain and sorrow of illness and death exercise a sobering influence on the life of the rest of the hof. Everyone on the hof is expected to share in the work of the hospital, especially during emergencies--keeping watches there and providing electricity at odd hours.

There is a garden crew on each of the three hofs although Ibaté specializes in agriculture. This crew is expected to provide fruits and vegetables for the community kitchen. Most of the work is done by hand tools, although they do have two old and somewhat inefficient tractors to assist in the work. The constant battle with the climate, locusts and other insects, and the prodigious growth of weeds make this work department one of the most exhausting at the Bruderhof. They grow many kinds of vegetables--corn, carrots, peas, beans, peanuts, lettuce, cabbage, tropical spinach, beets, onions, leeks, squash, cucumbers, and mandioca (a potato substitute, from which tapioca is made). Fruits grown there are bananas, papaya, grapes, bitter and sweet oranges, lemons, grapefruit, limes, and several varieties of melons. Sugarcane is also grown. They have not succeeded in growing wheat in that climate, though new varieties have recently been grown in southern Paraguay, and it is hoped that success will be obtained through continued experimenting.

There are cow stalls at each of the three hofs, although the burden of the dairy work is centered at Ibaté, where the dairy herds for Loma Hoby and Ibaté are combined. The combined herd at Ibaté numbers thirty-five to forty cows, the herd at Isla Margarita about twenty-five.

Range work consists of managing the herd of some three thousand beef cattle. Since most of the range is unfenced, with frontier-like conditions, the cattle tend to be very wild and difficult

to handle. The herd is not very large by Paraguayan-Argentine standards, but it suffices to provide the 650 Bruderhof people with meat. Weekly round-ups of portions of the herd occur for the purpose of branding and checking disease. Since it is another of the most physically demanding jobs at the Bruderhof, this job is done by the young men.

Other aspects of the farm work include the care of the pigs and poultry. Almost all of the pork is made into sausage or rendered into lard. The work with the chickens is expanding so fast they have not been able to build houses fast enough to keep up with increases in the flocks. They have had so much success in this area that the American experimental station in Paraguay has asked to buy from them. The slaughterhouse and tannery are under the direction of one young man who has learned butchering and leatherwork.

There is one bakery for all three hofs, located at Ibaté. Large shipments of wheat are bought every two or three years and ground into flour at a mill in Isla Margarita. Most of the bread is brown, although small quantities of white bread are made for the sick and the elderly. Cakes are made for birthdays and upon request for other special celebrations. Cookies are turned out periodically. There is an electric mixer, and the baker usually has a youth to help him.

The cobbler shop is also at Ibaté. Two or three men are kept busy repairing shoes and making sandals, besides doing other leather repair jobs. They do not as yet have sufficient equipment or labor to make the shoes for the community.

The forestry department is in the charge of one brother who has worked in the woods now for a number of years. Paraguayans are hired to do the actual cutting since they are much more adept. But it is the forestry brother's job to select the trees before they are cut and hauled to the sawmills.

There are two sawmills, the smaller at Loma Hoby and the larger at Isla Margarita, where the logs are sawed into usable pieces. Most of the lumber is needed for building projects at Primavera, but some is sold to a few of the larger South American cities.

In conjunction with the sawmills there are workshops, where all repairs and necessary mechanical improvisations are made. The few power-driven tools the Bruderhof has are driven by the same steam engine that provides power for the sawmill. There is a large wood-working shop at Isla Margarita, where the Bruderhof furniture and the children's toys are made.

The wood-turning shop is second only to the farm work as a source of income: this is where their well-known, beautiful wooden bowls, trays, egg cups, and candlesticks are made. The building crew is in charge of all construction work--dwelling houses, school houses, communal rooms, and work buildings. The sawmill and the brick works supply the building crew with materials. At present they are engaged in erecting a large new dining hall in Isla Margarita that will accommodate everyone from all three hofs for communal meetings. Buildings with clay floors, mud walls, and grass roofs are the easiest to put up, but they are experimenting with other types of roofing, such as shingles, manufactured fiber material, and tiles. The more substantial houses--those with brick floors, fireplaces, and shingle or tile roofs--are preferred, but some of the most elementary building materials such as plaster, cement, and glass are very difficult or impossible to obtain in Paraguay. The wood is extremely dense and hard to work with; it is necessary to drill a hole for every nail that is hammered in. Paraguayans are often hired to help in the building work, specially with grass roofs.

There is usually a man on each hof in charge of wagons and draft animals. Horses are used, but since the Paraguayan horses are quite small, it is necessary to use oxen for the heavier tasks.

Ordinarily one or two on each hof will assist the steward and the storekeeper with bookkeeping and office duties.

A former theological student is in charge of the library at Ibaté. It is a fairly well-stocked

library (better in German than in English) of some fifteen thousand volumes. The library is well used--and the librarian makes weekly trips to the other hofs for the purpose of delivering and collecting books. He is also in charge of the records and archives, where manuscripts and valuable historical materials are kept. Copies and originals of old Hutterian Anabaptist writings are entrusted to his care.

A book-binding and a print shop are maintained at Isla Margarita to repair books and to print and bind communally used books such as song books. Major publishing work, of course, is not done in Paraguay, but in England.

THE BRUDERHOF DAY

TIME			
WINTER	SUMMER		
4:45	3:45	Breakfast man (usually bachelor or older gets up.	youth)
6:00	5:00	First bell rings.	
6:15	5:15	Breakfast bell rings. Fathers or older breakfast.	children fetch
7:00	6:00	End-of-breakfast bell. Men leave for work after.	shortly
7:30	6:30	School whistle blows. Children assemble in	circle.
7:45	6:45	Bell calls younger children to departments. Women without heavy family responsibilities go to work. School circle ends, and First Period begins.	
8:30	7:30	Second Period begins.	
9:15	8:15	Third Period begins.	
WINTER	SUMMER		
9:30	8:30	Second-breakfast bell rings. Women not already at work go to work departments. (Every woman has at least one morning or two afternoons at home each week for household duties. Those with large families have more time. Often mothers like to keep a small child home with them during this time.)	
10:00	9:00	School recess and second breakfast.	

- 10:30 9:45 Fourth Period begins.
- 10:50 10:30 Fifth Period begins.
- 11:15 11:00 Sixth Period.
First, second, and third grades eat lunch.
Younger children eat and begin nap.
- 12:00 11:40 First bell for dinner.
Sixth Period ends.
First, second, and third grades go home
for midday rest.
- 12:15 12:00 Second bell for dinner.
- 12:45 12:30 Dinner ends. All go home for midday rest.
Time spent in sleeping, reading, writing--
quiet activities.
All children inside.
- 2:15 2:15 Snack bell. Men fetch tea.
- 3:00 3:00 Children to departments.
Schoolchildren to afternoon activities.
Women to work departments.
Men to Brüderrat, peel mandioca.
- WINTER SUMMER
- 8 3:30 3:30 Men to work departments.
- 5:00 5:00 Bell for younger children's dinner.
First through sixth or eighth grades eat,
except those whose turn it is to eat with
grown-ups.
- 5:30 5:30 Women take children home from departments.
- 6:00 6:00 Men home from work.
Family time--for washing children, bed-time
stories, singing, etc.
- 6:45 6:45 First supper bell rings.
Children put to bed.
- 7:15 7:15 Second supper bell rings.
- 8:00 8:00 Evening meeting (or free).

10:00 10:00 Lights out.

On Saturdays the workday ends at noon for most people. Most children spend the time at home: this is a time for hair-washing, baths, miscellaneous duties, or relaxation.

The schedule appears to be terribly exacting, and there is no doubt that the life is very full. There are, however, many exceptions, variations, and abridgements to the day's events as listed here. Evening meetings in particular are often changed, omitted, or rearranged in order to meet different needs.

There is always someone on duty in the children's departments during their daily rest periods. And in the evening, while the children are asleep and meetings are in progress, there are women on watch. Usually one sister has from three to four houses to keep an eye on.

8

Mealtimes and Meetings

The two main meals of the day, at noon and in the evening, are eaten at a common table. A first bell rings to summon everyone. When the second bell rings fifteen minutes later, all are supposed to be gathered in the dining hall. Men and women sit more or less apart, but this is not rigidly enforced. Shirley and I sat together nearly all the time we were at Ibaté and noticed others who did so occasionally. When the older schoolchildren eat with the adults, they sit together at separate tables with one or two grownups. A few moments of silence elapse after the second bell is rung, and then someone--anyone--starts a song. It can be almost any of the great number of songs they know: at noon often a nature or wandering song; in the evening generally a more serious song. Some of the songs we remember singing were "Danket dem Herrn" ("Thanks to the Lord"), "Pleasure it is to hear," "Wie ist doch die Erde so schön" ("How lovely the earth is"), "Der Mond ist aufgegangen" ("The moon has gently risen"), and "Auf, denn die Nacht wird kommen" ("Work, for the night is coming"). At Christmastime we sang German and English Christmas carols before and after the meals.

After the song there always followed a rather long and significant period of silence, after which the food servers would bring in the food and place it on the tables. The meals depended largely on what was in season, but there was always plenty of meat and mandioca. A vegetarian would have a hard time at the Bruderhof--they eat more meat than Americans do. The season for the sweet oranges had passed when we arrived, but there were still the bitter oranges, which grew wild in the forest and provided a refreshing drink and flavor for puddings. A bad frost, the worst in five years, had nipped all the bananas and killed the sugarcane, so there was a sugar shortage in Paraguay. We had plenty of lettuce, cabbage, and carrots, and as the season progressed, there were peas, onions, tropical spinach, sweet corn, string beans, and cucumbers. At Christmastime there were watermelons. There was some rice, plenty of brown bread, cake and cookies for special occasions, and cheese and sausage. The main dish was often a thick vegetable-and-meat soup with mandioca cut up in it, followed by a pudding eaten from metal plates with a large spoon. Forks were rarely used, and knives only for spreading lard or butter on one's bread. The meals were plain and simple, but adequate.

Meals were generally eaten in some degree of silence. Sometimes the meal was almost completely silent, but occasionally there was also a good bit of lively conversation.

In the main they feel that mealtimes should not be allowed to degenerate into a restaurant atmosphere with no regard for the deeper meaning of breaking bread together. They recognize that living so close together could easily lead to idle talk or gossip if conversation at table were indulged in too freely. But even more important is their concern that they should not lose sight of the sacramental character of the communal meal. For Bruderhof people, every meal has something of the meaning of a lovemeal--a festive meal of thanksgiving--and even of the Lord's Supper.

There should always be an attitude of thanksgiving, not so much that they are able to satisfy their hunger but more because God has granted them the sacrifice of plants and animals in order to live in unity with his will. It is not just another "reverence for life" philosophy; they see in this sacrificial unity the fundamental requirement for those who would be God's people--as

Christ sacrificed his life for the kingdom of God, so must they sacrifice theirs. In giving them the broken bread and wine, and in saying, "Take, eat, for this is my body...and drink for this is my blood," Christ showed the meaning of fullest unity with him. As life is sacrificed to provide the nourishment of bread and wine, so Christ sacrificed his life in order that all might have life in unity with God. In John 17:22-23 Jesus prayed, "The glory which thou hast given to me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me." This "oneness" is only attained by the complete surrender of the will and the self to Christ. Thus the communal meal among the brothers and sisters is a symbol of their sacrificial covenant with God and each other.

Admittedly, this high level of awareness is not always maintained at every meal, but it does remain a basic attitude that informs many aspects and impressions of their life. This is especially so during the Easter season which, we understand, is the climax of the year at the Bruderhof. The Easter Love Feast (Lord's Supper) is only approached after many weeks of self-examination and deep searching together. Shirley and I regretted very much that we were not able to experience this high occasion with them.

There is another reason, a practical one, for maintaining silence during the meals: this time is nearly always needed for reading articles of common interest. Letters, newspaper articles, and chapters from books are read aloud. At the noon meal (which is usually kept as short as possible in order that the people can take full advantage of the rest period) the things that are read are of a lighter but still informative nature, particularly for the children and the youth.

A good number of noon mealtimes were used to read from an excellent book on the life of the Mexican peons. Articles were read on other occasions about the riots in East Germany or the struggles of the blacks in South Africa. The day before we left, interestingly enough, a very good article on racial problems in Chicago was read from The Manchester Guardian, referring to some of the same tensions that have flared recently in the Bethany Seminary neighborhood. A series of essays on life in the United States as seen by a German writer was also particularly interesting. We had a delightful--and sometimes hilarious!--time at Ibaté for a number of weeks when chapters were read from Mark Twain's Life on the Mississippi. The evening mealtimes were generally more sober. Letters were often read from traveling brothers and from the other Bruderhofs in England and Uruguay or else portions from more serious books. Sometimes the evening meal was altogether silent. Usually on Thursday a news and political report was given, beginning during the evening meal and running on for thirty minutes to an hour afterwards. Local Spanish newspapers, Time magazine, The Manchester Guardian, and radio communiqués were relied on for these reports.

The mealtimes were often ended by the simple statement, "We'll close the meal now"--from the servant or one of the older men. Sometimes a period of silence was suggested and other times a song before the period of silence.

About four different types of meetings occur in the course of the Bruderhof life: the brotherhood meeting, the household meeting, the Gemeindestunde, and the guest meeting.

Though anyone may come and live at the Bruderhof, no one attends brotherhood meetings (where decisions affecting the life of the community are made) except members, those who have completely bound themselves "to God, to Christ, and to the brothers." I cannot, consequently, say much about these meetings, since I only attended one--when Shirley was asked to teach in the school. Shirley was at one other meeting to discuss and report on the children in her class. These meetings (two or three a week) nearly always take place in the evening following supper and usually last the whole evening, until 10 p.m. or later.

It is in these meetings that everything concerning the life of the community is discussed

and decided. The servant of the Word usually leads these meetings and may make suggestions, but the decisions themselves are all made by the brotherhood. When matters concern all three hofs, joint meetings of all three brotherhoods are held.

The household meeting and Gemeindestunde are the periods of worship. Besides the Sunday worship a similar meeting with the same pattern and character takes place during the week, usually on Wednesday evenings. Once in a great while there might be two others.

When there are visitors, meetings are often held with them to get to know them better and to discuss questions or problems they might have.

In addition, special meetings are held by the servant once a week with those who have definitely indicated their readiness and desire to become full members. These are called novice meetings and are designed to clear up any questions or barriers a person might have that prevent him or her from making a complete commitment.

Sunday is a family day at the Bruderhof. Except for the household meeting in the morning the day is left free for families to take walks, visit together, pursue some hobby, or simply take it easy. Sometimes a family will arrange to have a wagon and team of horses and go on an excursion for the day. One Sunday Shirley and I went with a family on one of these all-day trips to visit the neighboring Mennonite colony, Friesland. One man we knew made a practice of taking his children on long hikes into the forest. The most common practice was to stay home and relax with the children. The day usually ended with supper in the individual families. The rest of the evening was occupied with playing more or less quiet parlor games until bedtime. In the five months we were at the Bruderhof, Shirley and I never had a family supper by ourselves. Every Sunday we were invited to spend it with another family.

The families tend to be large: there were eleven children in the largest family in Primavera. In 1951 Dr. Fretz found an average of 4.7 children per family.¹⁹ Contrary to popular notions we found family life at the Bruderhof to be a very strong and living part of the community. The sanctity and unity of the family is by no means broken down. While it is probably true that the Bruderhof mother spends less time with her children than the average American mother, the father, I believe, has more time with his family. And compared to the working American mother, I believe the Bruderhof mother comes out ahead in time spent with her children. We spent a good bit of time with different families and feel quite emphatically that the integrity of the family spirit is as vital and alive among Bruderhof families as any American Christian families we know--perhaps even more so. The warm attachment of children to their parents was clearly evident in day-to-day happenings. The life in communal brotherhood exalts the significance of the family instead of detracting from it and relies upon the family relationship as a foundation and source of the wider unity of the church community.

The Bruderhof is always concerned that they do not fall into any hardened or unchangeable patterns. They do not reject the use of forms and symbols, but they do feel that when particular symbols lose their meaning, they should be dropped and not be perpetuated as dead forms. There was a time, for instance, when all the Bruderhof members wore a simple open ring on their finger. It signified their unity, and the fact that it was open indicated their desire to receive all mankind into unity with them. There came a time, however, when it no longer had meaning for newer members, so its use was discontinued. This attitude was exemplified during our visit when it was decided to make the customary beard optional and to choose a new style of dress. Their manner of dress never was rigidly uniform, but they nonetheless felt it was time to change from the old German peasant style that they had originally adopted as symbolic of their manner of living. The women used to wear an apron always--a sign of readiness to serve at any

time. But due to the heat in Paraguay and the prospect of a new beginning in North America, it was decided to adopt a new style, equally simple but more in harmony with the present situation.

This same attitude manifests itself in the Bruderhof feeling about worship. They seek constantly to keep themselves open to the working of the Spirit and endeavor to avoid any crystallized forms that would hamper the movement of the Spirit. Consequently, their meetings are more or less devoid of any particular order, so as to allow for freedom of expression. The Sunday morning household meeting rarely follows a definitely prescribed pattern, but a certain general sequence can often be noticed.

Each Sunday morning we were there, the bell in the center of the hof rang at 9 o'clock sharp, and very soon afterwards everyone was assembled in the communal dining room. Everyone, that is, except those who had necessary chores or duties to perform, such as caring for the children, milking, or preparing the noon meal. These duties were rotated amongst the members of the household so that everyone was able to attend a fairly equal number of meetings.

That the meetings are held in the dining room has a significance other than mere necessity. This lies in the conviction that religion pervades all of life and cannot be separate for an hour or so on Sunday morning. It is inconceivable, therefore, that a special building would be erected and decorated only for worship.

The tables were so arranged that we were seated facing each other, the women on one side and the men on the other. On the bench at one end by the door, those who needed whispered-Spanish translations sat beside a translator. Save for a few flowers on the tables there were no decorations in the room. When the sun was shining brightly, the shutters were open to let the fresh air and sunshine brighten the room.

The servant was usually the last to enter and would sit on a bench at the far end of the room with the translator. The servant usually spoke in his native tongue, English or German, and the translator rendered it in the other language. The servant would begin by suggesting a song suited to the theme of the morning and chosen from the great number of English and especially German songs known by the Bruderhof members.

The servant would then explain what the teaching was to be and sometimes give some background for it. His explanation was briefly translated and the reading began, also translated at intervals. The teaching might be anything that seemed to speak to the group at the time and that was in accord with the spirit of love and the values by which the group lives. During our visit they read from the writings of an Italian Catholic and were preparing to read the entire book of Matthew from the New Testament. On some occasions the teaching was written by the servant, particularly at special times, such as weddings and funerals. The reading was usually followed by an appropriate song that was often translated from the German if it were especially suitable and meaningful. The song or the reading was followed by a period of silence, out of which various persons in the group might be moved to speak--sharing thoughts or experiences, putting a special emphasis on what seemed important to them, or raising a concern or question. After a time the meeting was closed by another song, and we would go out, thoughtful, challenged, and somehow renewed. This is called a household meeting and everyone--guests, members, and older youth--was invited to attend. It rarely lasted less than an hour and on some occasions was more than two hours.

After a short pause the Gemeindestunde (time of prayer) generally followed the household meeting. This was similar in most respects to the household meeting, although the mood was somewhat different due to the complete dedication of all present. This was the only meeting in which an audible prayer was expressed. Only those who felt complete unity with the spirit of the community and with all those present could participate in this meeting for prayer. If

during the course of this meeting someone should find himself in disagreement or in an unloving spirit for whatever reason, it was felt that he should withdraw from the group immediately rather than break the unity of those gathered. This is at the core and the center of what binds the Bruderhof people together. It is the rock-bottom spiritual experience of a brotherhood existing together in the love of God.

One Sunday the household meeting was somewhat different from the usual. The occasion was the presentation to the community of a new, four- or five-week-old baby. Although he was the ninth child born to this family, he received as much attention as though he had been the first.

As we entered after the bell had called us together, we saw a small, square table in the center of the room, covered with a white cloth and edged with greens and small red flowers. A single, unlighted white candle stood on one side.

Heini, the servant, and the parents entered last. After a brief silence Heini said with a warm smile, "We have a special celebration today, the bringing of a child before the church. Let us begin by singing 'Morgenstern der finstren Nacht.'" Translated it begins:

Morning Star from night's dark shade,
Thou who makest all earth glad,
God's own Son, come within,
Come and lighten my heart's shrine,
Come and lighten my heart's shrine.²⁰

As the child was named Timothy, the parents had asked that passages be read from the first and second letters to Timothy to show why they had chosen that name. Large portions were read from both letters. Heini read from a German Bible, and the English translation was from Phillips' Letters to Young Churches.

We then sang from Sonnenlieder, the German songbook of the Bruderhof, "O, dass doch bald dein Feuer brennte."

O may Thy fire soon shine in glory,
Thou Love beyond man's measuring,
And all the world at last may know Thee,
That Thou art God and Lord and King!...

Bring into life, give fire and kindle,
Warm all the world with Thy clear light;
Show, Prince of Peace, to every people
Thy saving and victorious might.²¹

Meanwhile the parents had left to get the baby, and a member stood up to light the candle. Then we sang "Das Reich ist dein, Herr Jesu Christ."

Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord Christ,
The Kingdom of our prayer,
And shouldst Thou not with us abide,
We cannot onward fare.
O come to aid our feeble strength,
Let us Thy helpers be at length!
Deliver us from guilt and need,

And be to us our daily bread;
 In death and need,
 Be Thou our daily bread.

Thou kindest here in this poor world
 A fire great and bright,
 And o'er it all Thy heavenly power
 Keeps watch by day and night.
 It burns and glimmers here and there,
 In spite of wind and water's wear.
 Its embers stir that sparks may blow
 And e'en through us Thy fire may glow;
 Let sparks now blow
 That our cold hearts may glow.

Upon the Cross Thou, Lord, hast borne
 Thy brothers' need and sin
 And drawn them, through Thy bitter death,
 Into Thy new Kingdom.
 Thy holy urge for brotherhood
 Ever draws us near our Father, God.
 Thy Cross becomes the solemn sign
 To place my brother's hand in mine,
 And with him tread
 The path of brotherhood.²²

As we sang, the parents reentered and placed the child on the table with his head toward the candle. He was warmly wrapped in a hand-knitted blanket and lay very quietly, staring at the candle flame.

The placing of a child before the church community in the meeting symbolizes that the child is given by God to the parents, who in turn give him to the church of God for his care. Later on in the meeting the child was returned to the parents, symbolizing that he was entrusted especially to them for his upbringing. Heini then said:

When we behold a small child, we are reminded of how close God has come to man. We especially feel this in the childlikeness and innocence of the new birth, and really all children belong to God whatever their color and should only grow up in the love of God. We see this in a small child's innocence and simple trust. And then we see, too, how far away from Him we are with our doubts and fears....

So this little boy has been given the name of Timothy, and we have read out of the New Testament about Timothy this morning. We can only wish that in this little one will be awakened this steadfastness of faith that the letters speak of. And Paul says to Timothy, "Because you have this faith I now remind you to stir up that inner fire which God gave you at your ordination...." This word is ever and again directed to us, because grace is always given, and it is the question whether we can let this flame of faith be awakened in us. The more the work increases in this life, the more we need young people to decide to give their lives to God.

The important thing is that at all times in all men the love of God burns, and so we wish for Timothy here that he will hold high the banner of faith and remain faithful to what has been said. Jesus must become very big for us. How easily we take his words too lightly without inwardly being on fire, and if we want to go this way of brotherhood as the letters have said, we must feel this fire of faith burning in us so that we can give ourselves to this way. Jesus himself said we must become as little children, as trusting and loving as little children are.

We then sang "Kommt ein Kindlein auf die Welt" ("When a little child is born"). Following the song, Heini said, "We will be silent now and wait for God to speak to us." We waited, and the silence in the room was broken only by the sounds of the kitchen workers nearby preparing dinner, the birds singing outside, and the small noises of the child. Then the father spoke:

I believe parents everywhere feel that when a child is born to them, they have been given a holy thing and they naturally want to keep it that way and protect it. But we must remember that God gives each one freedom to make his own choice and decision. We cannot help wanting them to choose this way of life, though, because it is the best way and the greatest way we have found. Having said this, I remember the story of the prodigal son and how the father felt upon the return of his son to live and work with him....It is our hope that little Timothy will live according to what has been said this morning.

After a moment the mother said, "I would like us to sing the cradle song, especially for the words, 'Thy love is great, thy limbs are small...'" (a Christmas song about the baby Jesus). Heini nodded and then stood up and placed his hand on the child, saying quite simply to the parents, "We return the child to you for care and training."

Then as we began to sing he picked up the child with infinite care and tenderness and placed him in his mother's arms. We sang:

He smiles within his cradle,
A babe with face so bright.
It beams most like a mirror
Against a blaze of light:
This babe so burning bright.

This babe we now declare to you
Is Jesus Christ our Lord;
He brings both peace and heartiness
Haste, haste with one accord
To feast with Christ our Lord.

And who would rock the cradle
Wherein this Infant lies,
Must rock with easy motion
And watch with humble eyes.
Like Mary pure and wise.

O Jesus, dearest Babe of all
And dearest Babe of mine,
Thy love is great, Thy limbs are small:
O flood this heart of mine
With overflow from Thine.²³

Following this, a women's quartet sang a special song called "Gems of Day" expressing some of the same thoughts about Jesus as the above song.

Finally, we sang a German song that told of the common fight against war and wrong as one follows Jesus. Then, after a brief pause, we all gave our hand to Gerald and Nellie Dorrell in silent fellowship as we filed out into the morning.

Peter Rideman explains this presentation of a baby to the community as follows:

For we see that Christ did otherwise, for he did not baptize them [children], neither did he command his disciples to do so, wherefore ought they rightly to remain unbaptized until they attain to knowledge, as the covenant of the knowledge of God requireth. But what doeth he to them? He wisheth them what is good, taketh them in his arms and layeth his hands upon them. At that let us leave it, and not invent anything of ourselves. When they say he did in fact lay his hands upon them and that is indeed also a sacrament and sign of acceptance, wherefore one may well baptize them, we reply, if Christ received the children with the laying on of hands and thereby hath given us an example that we should also receive them into the Church through a sign, let us remain simply with what he hath shown us, that is, with the laying on of hands, and not introduce another sign such as baptism as it pleaseth us.²⁴

9

Children in Community*

The children's community is an important aspect of life at the Bruderhof. Family life and care of the children has always been an important part of the common life. Since the beginning of the community families have joined and new ones have been founded; many uncared-for children have been brought to them as well. The founding of a new family is a sacred thing in the union of husband and wife and also in the care and training of children.

Children must be led to strive for the good and fight what is wrong. Their hearts must be opened to the guidance of the Spirit, who alone can lead them to choose what is good. As it is believed that God calls all men to live in complete brotherhood, it is also believed that the children should be educated for community, for brotherhood, and for sharing on the deepest level. This can best be done in community by persons who demonstrate the love and brotherhood to which they are committed and who have a special gift for working with children. It is recognized, of course, that not all adults have an equal gift for guiding children--not even every mother is able to train her children as well as another might, no matter how committed she may be to a life of love.

These considerations, plus the need and desire for both parents to share as fully as possible in the communal work, lead them to place the children together for a good part of the day under the care and guidance of adults and young people who do have a special gift for guiding children.

A woman who has spent most of her life at the Bruderhof states the reasons this way:

It is the voluntary decision of each family to give up its children from the first weeks of their life to the education of the community. This is done from the deepest urge and desire that everything in our life may be communal, and that our little ones may also grow into the community life of the children. We experience in our joyous children that a blessing rests on this: it is not said without reason that education begins during the first days of life.²⁵

Babies are first brought to the baby house when they are about six weeks old. The mother begins to go back into the communal work at this time, although of course she still spends quite a bit of time with her baby. She goes to feed it during the working day (there are very few bottle babies among them) and may even have it home with her some of that time, depending on the health of both mother and child. Each situation is treated individually, of course.

At the baby house, babies are under the constant and loving care of sisters with a special gift for and knowledge of the care of tiny babies. In a sense they are never out of the "family" circle, for the mothers are never far away, and they receive just as loving care from the other sisters as they would from their own mothers. In a very real way, the whole community is the family circle--the larger family of all who live together in love. This encirclement of love certainly has its effect on each child in the strong feeling of security and the freedom to be

*Shirley Wagoner is the author of this chapter.

himself. The daily schedule at the baby house follows the usual schedule for a small baby--feeding every four hours, plenty of sleep, and times for play.

As the baby grows older and learns to crawl and walk, he moves from the baby house to the toddler house or Krabbelhaus. This comes at about the age of nine months, but varies greatly with individual children. Here toddlers are divided into at least two groups according to age. The groups are kept small because this is felt to be best for the development of children at this age. We often saw groups of three to five children on a walk with a sister or older girl.

Much of the necessary training of the young children is done in the children's departments, always in close cooperation with the parents. There too, they are given their principal meals, which are specially prepared in the communal kitchen and carried to the children's departments. The toddlers have a short nap in the morning and a long one in the afternoon before teatime. Otherwise, their time is spent largely in short walks and free play indoors or in the yard.

The children's departments seemed to me fairly well equipped. For the babies and smaller toddlers there are cribs and playpens. For walks with the toddlers there is a large cart which holds three or four. Those not riding are happy to push or pull. Each family has a wagon in which the smaller ones are brought to the departments. These and many wooden toys of various kinds are made at the workshop in Isla Margarita. Last Christmas much emphasis was placed on getting additional equipment for the children's departments. New toys were made and old ones rejuvenated. Also sandboxes, climbing frames, swings, and cars to ride appeared in the children's yards during the Christmas season.

At two to three years children leave the toddler house and enter the kindergarten, where they spend three years. Here they are divided into three groups according to age and maturity. The oldest is called the preschool and is equivalent to our American year of kindergarten. You might say that school really begins with this year of preschool, although in organization it is actually a part of the three years of kindergarten. Here the children learn the numbers to ten and the sounds of the various letters--a general readiness program. If the child is considered ready after a year of preschool, he continues to first grade and the regular school.

I cannot say much about the program of the kindergarten as I had no first-hand experience there, nor even the opportunity for very close observation. I do remember passing the kindergarten yard many times and seeing all of them together in a large circle, singing and listening to stories. Incidentally, they learn to sing extremely well for their age; most of the preschool children can carry a tune. Other times I would see them out on walks, talking together, or singing something appropriate to what they were seeing or thinking about. They seemed to have a song for every occasion. Sometimes I would see them playing, or drawing (indoors or in the yard); sometimes a single group would be around a table outside, drawing or talking. Usually the preschool group has their school readiness period in the morning and their lighter activities in the afternoon.

Following the usual year of preschool, children enter the first grade, thus graduating to the School Wood, a grove of trees where the school buildings are. The school day begins early, about half an hour after the men go to work: this means about 6:30 in the summer and about 7:30 in the winter. After the school whistle blows, the schoolchildren gather at the large circle of wooden benches at one side of the School Wood. This is their time of inner fellowship together. There may be some silence and usually a song, and then the children are dismissed to their classes. If a group discipline problem has arisen, it is usually handled here. In one instance, some of the older children had helped themselves to pieces of rubber that they had torn off an old apron in the laundry. This was brought up before all the children, the ethics involved were discussed, and all those with such pieces of rubber were asked to make themselves known, which they did.

They were then asked how they had obtained their piece, as some had been given pieces by the other children. This left three or four who had actually taken it without permission. They were asked to think about it during the day and how they could make their damage good. I believe the final decision, made later in the day, was that they should spend some time helping in the laundry.

Following the group circle, schoolchildren go to their classes. The older ones may have several teachers who come in for various subjects. Often the first period is divided in order that those teachers who are mothers with families can spend at least one period at home doing necessary housework. I usually had Spanish or girls' physical education at that time of the morning in order to free another teacher for housework. During that hour my regular class was having either German lessons or informal religious instruction called Morgenstunde. During the second and third periods I would return to my regular class, and we would settle down to reading and arithmetic, the hardest work of the day. At nine o'clock, the pause or recess would begin, lasting forty-five minutes. This was second breakfast time, and there was always something for the children, usually milk and bread with honey or syrup. Then we teachers would sit down at a table in the shade by one of the school buildings and have our second breakfast. Anything that needed to be discussed among us was usually spoken of at this time, quite informally, although occasionally there would be a special teachers' meeting in the afternoon to discuss some particular situation that could not be handled in the morning. For example, there was a special meeting before Christmas on playground needs that took a whole afternoon. Discussion of grades in the various classes also took quite a bit of time and was done in the afternoon.

After the morning pause, there were two more class periods for the first and second grades, after which they went to the dining room for lunch. Part of the time I helped with their lunch, which involved serving the food and helping them with table manners. We always sang a song before we ate--they never let me forget. Often I would read or tell them a story; other times we would eat more or less in silence. By the time the first bell rang for the grown-ups' dinner, the children were through eating and were supposed to go home to begin their midday rest.

The older schoolchildren had another class while the youngest ones ate lunch. I sometimes had Spanish again at this hour. Then the older ones would take turns eating with the grown-ups in the dining room--there was not room for all of them, and the others would help carry their food out to their schoolroom and eat there. After eating, they too went home for a midday rest.

Although the smaller children (up through kindergarten) remained in their departments for the midday rest after eating early, all were home at 2:15 to have tea with their families, from the oldest schoolchild or youth living at home to the tiniest baby.

At three o'clock the school whistle blows again, and once more the schoolchildren assemble in the School Wood in a circle, this time standing as their circle of benches has been usurped by the brothers in their daily Brüderrat or work council. For the older ones there is one period of either class or study just before supper. Otherwise, the children's afternoon is devoted to activities of all kinds: play, walks, work, sewing, woodworking, and crafts of various kinds. This activity time is called Hort, a descriptive German word covering everything the children do together outside of regular class work. There is no satisfactory English equivalent for this word. Hort continues until 5 o'clock, when most of the schoolchildren have their supper.

At present the schools go only through the ninth grade. While they were in Germany, the Bruderhof began training teachers in order to have a secondary school, but when they were evicted from Germany and had to begin anew, this plan had to be dropped, and they have never since had the working strength for a secondary school. They would like very much now to add a tenth year to the schools that would entitle the students to a Paraguayan graduation certificate,

giving those that continue their studies in Asunción a definite advantage. This tenth year would be taught completely in Spanish to better prepare them for continuing in Asunción where they must now repeat subject matter--due solely to their limitations in Spanish. However, there hasn't yet been strength enough to do this.

So far, I have tried to give an overall view of how the school runs each day, six days a week, and in addition to give brief descriptions of the various children's departments. In the schedule they follow there are some obvious differences from the schedules of public schools in the United States. But I cannot say that anything in the curriculum or methods, outwardly at least, was so very different from schools elsewhere--except perhaps with regard to limitations in equipment and supplies. The supplies and materials that most of our schools have in abundance are very hard to get in Paraguay. The curriculum is not designed to be child-centered like our progressive schools, and learning is not incidental. Grades are given at the end of the school year, arithmetic tables must be memorized, and teaching methods differ little from elsewhere. Subjects are pretty much the same as in American public schools: reading, arithmetic, social studies, writing, language, grammar, art, music, physical education, geography, and history.

One principal difference in subject matter is certainly the emphasis on languages. By the time the children leave the school, they know German and English well and have a good foundation for Spanish. This emphasis, of course, grows out of the fact that the community itself is bilingual, speaking English and German, and is situated in a Spanish-speaking country. Language is certainly the strength of the Bruderhof schools. At present, German is the principal language, and all subjects, except English and Spanish, are taught in German. Oral English begins in the first grade, and English reading begins in the third grade. English is continued as the second language until graduation. (When I taught, however, this was reversed, partly because of an urgent need for a teacher and partly because the change was inevitable, due to the recent increase of English-speaking families. My class will probably be continued in English after we leave.)

Spanish is begun in the third grade. At first it is taught orally for the most part, but a little easy reading is begun as well. The chief drawback is the lack of material with easy vocabulary. Much vocabulary and oral work is done in the next two years with more reading and writing.

In nine years of school at Primavera more is probably learned than in nine years here in the States, and even more would probably be if less time were needed for languages. By the end of the second grade, for example, the multiplication tables through ten are learned and the corresponding division studied, if not thoroughly learned. Here in Bellwood, Illinois, where I taught second grade last year, we only went to ten in addition and subtraction by the end of the year! Geography seems to be well learned, beginning with Primavera and working outward. Certainly, interest in this sometimes dull subject is aroused by the fact that so many countries are represented at the Bruderhof and that guests come from various countries by various routes.

A high level of world history is taught in the sixth and seventh grades. They consider history a particularly important subject but deplore the nationalistic slant it receives in most countries. This bias is definitely avoided. They feel it should not be taught as a succession of wars, but rather particular attention be given to the rise and fall of various religious and social movements. They hold a "remnant" view of history, believing that God's will has definitely been shown in history, not so much in established institutions as in small protest groups that have appeared from time to time.

As there were no eighth or ninth grades at Ibaté due to its small size, I can say nothing of the subject matter covered in those years. The oldest schoolchildren from Ibaté either live at one of the other hofs during the school week, coming home for the weekend, or go back and forth each day.

While the curriculum itself is not designed to be child-centered, the attitude that the educators take certainly values each child's total development far above subject matter. This is one of the most basic assumptions held and acted upon by Bruderhof teachers. While every effort is made to make each lesson interesting and meaningful, they don't hesitate to make the children stretch a little in order to grasp a new concept rather than to fit everything to the child's own felt needs.

Grades are given out only once--at the end of the school year. We questioned whether they should be necessary at all, and I am still not sure what is best. The teachers feel, I believe, that grades are a necessary incentive. This may very well be true, particularly in the informal, free atmosphere that prevails. An approach is taken toward the children that completely accepts the whole child for what he or she is and can be, recognizing that every gift is needed and has its place--whether for crafts, study, or chores. For example, the kitchen helper performs as important and necessary a function as the teacher and is as highly valued for her gifts. Thus, the inability to make good marks in school does not have the devastating effect on the status of the child that it so easily does in our public schools. This difference in basic assumptions places the whole question of grades on a different plane from the usual.

From yet another aspect, grades are not given by one teacher alone; rather, the teachers meet together to discuss every child, and every mark a child gets is agreed upon by all the teachers together. This minimizes the possibility of unfair marking and helps ensure that all grades are given in a spirit of love. A distinct contrast to this is noticed by those who continue their studies in Asunción, for they almost immediately run up against what they consider to be unfair grading.

Religious training is handled in two ways. First and most important, it is experienced every day in the life of the community, especially in the teachers' attitudes toward children and subject matter. Each subject is treated so as to relate it naturally to the deepest meaning in life. For example, stories are selected--or rejected (or edited)--on this basis. Many stories, though well-written, do not seem appropriate because of their content.

The second way in which religious training is treated is in regular classes during school hours. My first and second grades had their Morgenstunde two hours a week with Emmy Arnold, the wife of the founder. She usually told stories, often from the Bible, but sometimes from other sources. Sometimes they must have talked together about what was in their hearts. The children loved her and were usually very attentive. Heini Arnold, her son and the servant of the Word at Ibaté, took each of the two other classes two or three times a week. He especially took up the New Testament and remarked to us once what a good foundation Emmy always gave the children in the Old Testament for his teaching in the New. He also used other stories, talked with them at times, and now and then would take a particular theme, such as the early Christians, and spend several weeks on it.

They had an equivalent to a Sunday School for a time, but the children seemed to resist it. Rather than forcing it on them, it was dropped. Although some people we had talked to expressed dismay that there is no regular Sunday school--and we wondered about it ourselves for a time--I now feel, since children learn by imitation to a great extent, that the deep religious convictions they see expressed daily in life are much more significant for them than an hour or so in Sunday school or church each week. I feel this holds true not only for those many children in our society who must cope with conflicting values between Sunday school and the home; it is also true for those who grow up in a strong Christian home but daily see lesser ideals and compromises in the public schools, their playmates, and even, perhaps, in church and the home itself.

Eberhard Arnold, in writing about their approach to education as a whole, says:

In this approach to education Christ shines everywhere. He comes close to the child as the fulfillment of the religion of men of all ages, all cultures, and all continents. Thus the Bible is opened. Thus the prophets and apostles are seen in the focus--Christ--as the peak of possibility, as the revelation of the humanly impossible. So the apostolic way of discipleship--in its privilege-free, possessionless, and homeless love to God and to all men--is seen as the true human and super-human life. The special departments of religion, such as dogmatics and religious practice, are not learnt. But through the fact and working of the living God, all departments of life are seen to be religious. In Christ and his love, in his Kingdom and his Church the fulfillment of all religious feelings and expressions is seen as the goal of the whole of nature and history.²⁶

After leaving the school, the youth usually spend a year or more in the various work departments, in order to help them decide intelligently what they would like to train for or study. If they choose to continue their studies or to train for some skill, every effort is put forth to make it possible. For example, a number are now in Asunción--some studying to be teachers, others training in agriculture, one young man studying medicine. Four more are to go to Uruguay in addition to those already there, including one girl in nursing school. Several are studying in England; two more will be going to West Germany, where there are now two studying to be kindergarten teachers; and one boy is to be sent to the United States for study, the first to be sent there.

They feel that it is very important that all of the youth spend a time outside the Bruderhof before they decide whether or not to join the community. Pressure is never put on them to join. They are left to come to the decision quite freely and individually. For this reason it is felt essential that they have a further training of some kind so that they can feel free to leave if they do not find themselves called to this way of life. If a young person announces a desire to join before having a period outside, he or she is usually sent out anyway to have time to think it over before a final decision is made.

There are also continuation classes for those who remain in Primavera. Various subjects may be included in these evening and afternoon classes, such as literature, photography, agriculture, crafts, and especially a course called Weltanschauung on contemporary social movements and philosophy. The continuation classes seemed to be very well attended, although they tended to be somewhat irregular (at least at Ibaté) due to meetings or conflicting duties of the teacher. However, the teacher at Ibaté was also the steward and was very busy, so classes at the other hofs were probably more regular.

The youth are engaged in a great many activities together. They go on periodic excursions; do folk dancing, singing, and crafts; and engage in special projects for the community such as printing a series of songbooks. They approach their meetings with a broad worldview, and when visitors come they try to have special meetings with them. For instance, Bob happened to mention quite incidentally while speaking in the dining room, that he had studied group dynamics. As a result he was asked--much to his surprise--to come to a youth meeting and speak to them about it. A large portion of the youth meetings are usually spent in preparing and publishing a German-language youth paper called Primavera Jugendblätter.

The general health of the children at Primavera seemed to be good. Colds, flu, and various children's diseases occasionally make the rounds there, apparently the last not as frequently or prevalently as here in the winter seasons. While small children are chubby and round-cheeked, the schoolchildren and adolescents tend to be thin. We saw very few overweight schoolchildren or youth. Malaria does not exist in the colony, but hookworm must be continually

guarded against by wearing shoes for three days after a rain. This can be difficult to enforce in a warm climate! A head covering must be worn as protection against the burning sun, for sunstroke is not uncommon in this country if precautions are not taken. Each year the children are weighed, measured, and examined by the doctor as a regular checkup.

The Bruderhof belief that all men are called to live together in Christian community of course includes their children. Their aim, therefore, in bringing up their children, is to make them able and ready to live the life that God asks of them.

There are several ways they try to carry this out. Perhaps most important is that just as they try to live in peace and harmony with one another even so they aim to always treat their children in love and to surround them with an atmosphere of love. This is only possible if they themselves are deeply united in Christian love. Working together for this end means accepting reproof and admonition if needed. A servant who was formerly a teacher has the following to say about this approach to the children:

Anyone who has taught in a village or a town school knows that it is not what is learned during school lessons but the practical daily life that exercises the strongest influence on the hearts of children. Thus the education of children challenges us to form and shape life anew. We must live that to which we want to educate our children. We can only educate for peace when we live wholly for peace. We can only educate to brotherliness when we are brothers: to fellowship when we live in community. There is no more wonderful calling than the call to live and work with children in a community pervaded and filled by one spirit. In such a life, school instruction is but one part of education, which is very closely related to practical, daily work. To lead children in their fight for the Light--that is the most wonderful and at the same time the most responsible task.²⁷

Another aspect of this pervading atmosphere is that the child is valued for himself. He is made to feel secure in the larger family of the community just as he feels needed and loved in his own family circle--and family spirit seems very strong. However, possessive love is especially avoided as being not true love, but rather mere self-love. Real love must be given freely, seeking only the best for the child. The time spent by the child in his or her department during much of the day combats the unhealthy attitude of possessive love. They feel it is good for the child to be among his own age-mates, learning to share and participate in a healthy give-and-take relationship. Thus even the first child in a young family experiences from the beginning that he or she is never the focal point around which family life revolves, though certainly at all times surrounded by love and care, whether in the family circle or in the care of a sister or older girl.

That this unpossessive love is actual and given freely soon became evident to me in working with the children. They clearly felt free to be open and honest and to be themselves. They did not seem to feel compelled to make their outward behavior conform to standards imposed upon them regardless of their inner feelings. There were no goody-goodies among them. On the other hand of course, destructive behavior is not permitted. If appealed to in an inner way, they usually cooperated willingly.

The children had warm hearts; even the naughtier ones usually responded quickly to a loving call to better behavior. They were not complicated or neurotic, for they had the opportunity for a real childhood free from the emotional tangles I see in many of my pupils. I think this is possible only in the atmosphere of a selfless love that seeks not self-satisfaction but rather the good of the loved ones.

It is clearly recognized that growing up in community does not make a child automatically good. He still has to combat selfishness and egotism. The effort is continually made to help the children fight against evil in themselves and to help them choose what is good by appealing to their inner sensitivity and to the workings of the Spirit within them. Bruderhof children can be as willful and naughty as children anywhere. The difference lies in that they are more open to be appealed to through their inner sensitivity toward right and wrong. This is evident in their almost complete honesty.

Every effort is made to approach each child as an individual. It is recognized that each has his or her own gifts and abilities, own traits and quirks of character. Thus, in matters of discipline and character development--whether in crafts, school work, or elsewhere--no two children are treated exactly alike. They try to develop each child's gifts and individuality as much as possible, while at the same time discouraging self-centered individualism. Concerning this Eberhard Arnold writes,

We respect what is personal and characteristic in each child from the point of view of the super-personal; for this leads through the forming of the individual to community, which is above the individual, and so makes the individual of service to the whole. The special peculiarity of gift possessed by each child must be recognized and developed for his calling. This in essence always leads to whole-hearted, loving service to the community of all, and so to the unity of special individual qualities.²⁸

They believe that the children are a concern of the whole community, not only of the parents. Therefore, everyone tries to take a common attitude toward the children, and every member is responsible for their care and discipline. It is for this reason that new babies are presented to the community in a special Sunday morning meeting.

This belief is also demonstrated when the school reports are made. Each year the achievements of each child are measured and his progress discussed--first by all the teachers meeting together and later by the brotherhood as a whole--when a report is brought by the teacher about each child in her class. The purpose of the report is to give parents a good, overall picture of how the school year has progressed for each child and each class and to provide information for later discussions and decisions. This usually takes a full evening, for each child's total development is considered. The emphasis in the report is on character development and personal achievements in view of the child's abilities and limitations, rather than on actual subject matter learned. The latter is measured later on in detail by specific grades.

Sometime before the next school year begins, fuller consideration is given to each class, especially, I believe, with regard to those whose progress is slow. Here the brotherhood decides whether or not it seems best for a child to continue to the next grade. The brotherhood, including of course the parents, takes full responsibility for the decision rather than the teacher alone. Ample time is given to consideration of the children involved so that all may have a full understanding and be able to decide intelligently what is best for each child. And any other problems of the schoolchildren are taken up at this time. Sometimes weeks are spent discussing a particularly difficult class.

Still another example of this common responsibility is the meeting to decide about the work and post-secondary training of the youth, especially with regard to those to be sent out each year.

It can be seen clearly how closely parents and teachers work together for the welfare of the children. It goes far beyond the generalization of working for the children's good; on that

level many honest disagreements could arise, which might be difficult to solve without a deeper basis. The close working together here goes back to the roots of the life: the common bond of unity formed by each member's complete commitment to Christ, which does not allow solely personal considerations to enter in but calls forth a truly selfless love.

My own experience in the school at Ibaté was very challenging. The atmosphere of freedom in which the children lived was hard for me to adjust to. Just being the teacher and representing authority did not entitle me to automatic respect. My authority had to be won through the development of my relationship with the children.

I found my pupils often restless and inattentive, which was rather exasperating at times, but later on I learned to be glad that they felt free to express their true feelings--even in such ways--without repressing them. At least I knew they were honest. I also came to understand some of the reasons for this restlessness: the climate and the life outdoors. When they were not in school, they were almost constantly outdoors, shouting and playing actively. Consequently, it was hard for them to settle down quietly indoors. The rough, primitive nature of the surroundings had its effect on the children too. Primitive nature does not encourage gentleness. There seems to be a distinct difference between those who have recently come from Wheathill, the Bruderhof in England, and those who have grown up in Primavera.

My early teaching days were difficult and discouraging. I tried everything I knew from my previous experience in public schools, but nothing seemed to work. However, as I learned to appeal to their inner sensitivity to what was good--and to develop more sensitivity myself--our relationship deepened and improved. For example, I found that one irrepressible and often naughty first grader would invariably respond willingly to a loving and patient appeal to be good, but never to a scolding. Others needed strictness or much encouragement--both given in infinite patience. I learned more than ever before how individually children must be treated to be successful with them.

10

A Conference

We were at the Bruderhof during a momentous time in its history. Shortly after we arrived in August, there was held "the first world conference of the Bruderhof communities," as it was laughingly referred to. Among those present was a servant of the Word from England and several who were to be sent to augment the work of the new Bruderhof in Uruguay. The task of the conference was to decide upon the future program of outreach and mission to the world. The Bruderhof had felt for some time the need for a beginning in the United States, and the actual decision was made very shortly after we came. Over a period of weeks there were many long, communal brotherhood meetings extending far into the night before everything became clear. Finally, it was concluded by a large gathering of all three hofs, where we partook of a simple but tasty meal at outdoor tables. Afterward, their plans and thinking were summed up by one of the servants.

The decision for a new North American Bruderhof was made final by the selection of seven people to leave as soon as possible to begin that task. Hans-Hermann Arnold, his wife, Gertrud, and Gerd Wegner were the first to go. Gerd is a master of handicraft work, and his task is to find a suitable economic basis for the community. Hans-Hermann is the youngest of the three sons of Eberhard Arnold, the founder of the movement. The other two sons are Hardy Arnold, who edits The Plough, and Heini, who is the servant of the Word here at the Ibaté Bruderhof. Both Heini and Hans-Hermann have been but recently confirmed as servants of the Word, spiritual leaders of the community.

Further plans were made to expand the work in Uruguay, and in conjunction with the Wheathill Bruderhof it was decided to renew their work on the continent, especially with an eye toward re-establishing a Bruderhof in Germany. Simultaneously with the decision to make a new beginning in North America came the move toward unity with the Bruderhof in the Kingwood community, located in New Jersey, near Philadelphia. This little contemplative community of seven adults was seeking a closer relationship with the Bruderhof as a result of a series of visits made by traveling brothers. Francis Hall, more or less the spiritual leader of Kingwood, was sent as their representative. He was here until a few weeks after we arrived. He is a profound mystic and a clear, rational thinker. He accepts something of both Gerald Heard and Reinhold Niebuhr but is critical of both. He has been a secretary of the FOR in the East and seems now to be the spiritual leader at Kingwood. He was profoundly impressed by the life here at the Bruderhof, and after much searching, found himself in complete unity with it. He is now back at Kingwood, where the group seems to have caught much of his experience here and is now inclined toward complete unity with the Bruderhof. If this unity comes, it may make the beginning in the States much easier.

Fran wrote a number of fine letters back to his people at Kingwood, who were so impressed by the quality of his letters that they sent copies here. They are especially significant because they tell of rather moving events that occurred during his time here. One letter describes the farewell of the Hans Zumpes and the confirmation of three servants--important parts of the conference.

August 12, 1953

The Gemeindestunde on Sunday morning was to consider the responsibilities of the servant of the Word. Three of the six servants here--Heini, Hans-Hermann, and Roger--have been appointed temporarily (on trial). It has become clear to the brotherhood that they have the gift of service and are therefore to be confirmed. It is a heavy responsibility as it was described in the meeting. The appointments last as long as the individual is being led by the Spirit: if pride comes in or if he makes serious mistakes, he will be removed, and this has been done among them. This meeting was only preparation, not the confirmation.

Sunday evening was a farewell meeting for Hans Zumpe's family and others leaving tomorrow for Wheathill. Tables were spread on the lawn as there were many guests from the other two hofs. After the meal we carried benches indoors and arranged the dining room as an auditorium. There were recorder duets, quartets, an orchestra, a choral reading in German verse, a couple of individual poetry readings, and some selections from Bach by the choir. The last was definitely the best music I've heard here yet, and it was a joy to follow with the music as they sang. Then there was considerable time for people to speak. I spoke last--Hans had said as part of his word that he greatly hoped our groups would find unity.

On Tuesday (yesterday) Nils Wingard and I finished our first plumbing project and got the new water to the boiler. There was time for a shower and an early supper and then a dusty wagon ride to Isla. This was to be the farewell, worship, and confirmation Gemeindestunde combined.

Hans Meier conducted the service. The phrase "servants of the Word" means servants of the Logos, so Hans expounded the first verses of the Gospel of John--Bruce translated. It was a very strong Christology, and I found some philosophical questions creeping into my mind. I began to pray and to offer myself and my mind in sacrifice to God in Christ. There was a stirring of the Spirit in my heart, and quietly all questions were lifted, and I knew myself to be in full unity with the Brothers. We then had the prayer, in which we asked for the blessing of God's Spirit on the three new servants and on those going abroad. Everyone knelt with upraised arms while Hans Meier gave the prayer. There followed a simple ceremony. The three new servants stood together at one end of the hall and responded to questions asked them about their faith and their consecration. The four servants who confirmed them went to them. There was a final charge in which it was made clear that many who have held this position in the past have given their lives in martyrdom. Were they prepared to serve faithfully, even unto death? (This was a very living question, for word has reached us that the Jesus Family in China has been liquidated.) They all answered "yes" and then there was a laying on of hands, not as a magical act, but as a symbol of confirmation.

After a final hymn the three men and all who were leaving lined up, and everyone filed past to give them their hand in an expression of unity. (I also learned during the service that the traditional expression of salutation is "peace and unity.") I have experienced this giving of the hand so many times now that I fully understand its meaning on this occasion. I was standing with the men at the head of the line as the women went past and was able to watch the faces of each of these women. There came over me with great power the vision of the heroic lives of sacrifice these women have lived: for a few of them the crisis of 1922 at the beginning, for many the flight out of Germany, for most the critical passage to Paraguay and the hardships of the beginning here that did not end until 1949. Now they and the men are all throbbing with the power of the Spirit built up

in them, and I felt that power with intensity as we continued to sing and file past the line. I could give my hand with full unity and deep feeling. The younger ones who were leaving were struggling with tears (earlier they had given simple but moving testimonies of their joy in the life). But Hans Zumppe and Emy-Margret were full of smiles and again said that they wanted to see some of Kingwood in England and wanted us to be in full unity--I told them that this was no question to me. It was a real joy to take Heini's hand. I have a deep love for this man.

As I stood while the others were still passing, the powerful hymns of dedication still reverberating, I knew that I was a part of the great stream of Christian power that started at Pentecost and has come down through the ages, making ordinary people into giants. What a remarkable contrast this whole service had been, for instance, to the inauguration in Riverside Church of Pitt van Dusen as President of Union Theological Seminary. Here was a rough-hewn building constructed by their own hands, and here were folk with no flowing robes but clothing of their own make, and servants of the Word dressed in work clothes and with open collars--and here was the power of the Holy Spirit. My own mood during this was not one of ecstasy nor of excitement but of peace and quiet clarity. With a benediction we went out....

It was also at this conference time that the Bruderhof decided to make the beard an optional matter and to change their general style of dress. Most of the evening following the conference summary report was given over to quiet celebration. There was singing together and a choral rendition of some dramatic poems. After a choir of about twenty voices sang some beautiful Bach selections, time was given for anyone who cared to speak. The whole mood of the evening was focused outward. As I sat there in that simple grass-roofed hall and listened to various persons give voice to their concerns and hopes, I could not help but feel that the early church must have been born of the same Spirit.

11

Other Special Occasions

The cultural side of the Bruderhof life becomes particularly evident when celebrations and special events take place. Often one can hear flutes, violins, cellos, and the like in practice during the midday rest hour and in the evenings, but it is usually not until a wedding or some similar event that these quiescent talents come into full bloom. The Bruderhof people love to celebrate and certainly make the most of the occasions that present themselves.

The arrival of a new baby is marked by a special meeting when the baby is presented to the church community. As the joys of new life are shared in the community so are the sorrows that come with death. When we first arrived, the common loss at the time of little Maria Chatterton's death was deeply felt by everyone.

Later on in our stay word was received from England that a seventeen-year-old boy was slowly dying of cancer at the Wheathill Bruderhof. Most of the people in Primavera did not know the boy, yet we were amazed to see how much his suffering penetrated the life at Primavera. When after many weeks a cable finally brought news of his death, a lovemeal was held.

Another of Fran Hall's letters home told about the death of a little girl in the Loma Hoby hospital.

August 5, 1953

I shared in a community death yesterday. It has been a deep experience for me as well as for the others. Little Maria Chatterton was only five. Her parents brought her over from Wheathill while she was still a baby, and she contracted a kidney infection over two years ago. She has been hospitalized ever since, and there have been several crises. Everyone testifies to her courage and patience in all her trials--they were often painful. Apparently she had been showing some improvement these past few months and was being taken for short walks. There was, therefore, no warning when this last crisis arrived.

We had begun the day's work when a telephone message summoned all who could come to the hospital. Since we were working nearby, we were among the first to arrive, and we entered into prayer as the others gathered. We continued for some time, alternating silent prayer with hymns, and the group participating grew to a considerable size. Finally, Bruce told us that Maria had been seized with convulsions shortly before we were called but that these had quit now. He said that although we could not know what would happen, the doctors really felt there was little hope, and so we should give her into God's will and hold up her parents. Since there was no way of knowing how long the struggle would last, we should continue in prayer for a time, sing another hymn, and then go back to our work with Maria on our hearts. The Spirit was among us all this time, and it was a moving experience to share in it. What other hospital in the world has a whole village, indeed three villages, that it can call to prayer when death comes to one of its patients? The time for Maria had come, however, and when the news reached us at work an hour or so later, many spoke of it as a release from her trial.

No more bells were rung during the day, and the meals following were in silence as all were urged to meditate on the meaning of this event. A twenty-four-hour watch at

Maria's bedside was started, and all were free to visit her. We stopped work early, and I went to her room after cleanup. She was a lovely child even in her sleep. I stood in prayer for some time and was moved to meditate on the death of the ego and the rebirth of the spirit in us. It was impressed upon me that I have often spoken to the tendency for every little group of people in the States who are interested in community to start their own group because they don't quite agree with the forms or beliefs of others and that I would gladly follow someone else who was truly filled with the Spirit. Have I not found here a group of people who are more filled with the Spirit than any I have known before, and is it not a chance for my ego to come nearer its death by minimizing its questions and seeking only the Spirit of unity that binds and motivates these people? The answer that comes to me is "Yes." In the remaining weeks here I shall seek that Spirit with all my heart.

After the evening meal there was a gathering outside her hospital room. Many came from the other villages too, and it was good to see many of my new friends from Ibaté standing in the group. Again there was an alternation of silence and hymns. I am amazed at how many hymns these people know by heart, many of them strikingly lovely.

Breakfast was a bit early this morning, and people were gathering at the hospital by 7:00, the women dressed in black. The wagons had been lined up on the road, and at 7:30 the tiny, wooden coffin was carried from the hospital and placed among palm leaves on the head wagon. The mother and father were seated behind, and the rest who were going got into the wagons following. The burial ground or Friedhof (Place of Peace) is at Isla Margarita so our train of six wagons began its long journey through the forest. The people of Ibaté had already arrived, and a large group met our procession at the gate house. There all but the head wagon unloaded, and we went on foot to the center of the village.

The dining hall had been arranged as an auditorium and decorated with palm leaves and flowers. The casket was in the center; at the head and behind it stood a single, tall candle--the flame is a symbol of spirit and life for them and is frequently used. There were hymns and silence and then a message by Hans Zumpe, who joined in 1925 and who is taking his family back to Wheathill now. His wife is the oldest of the original Arnold family. He spoke of Maria and of the great facts of life and death. The words immortality and resurrection were often used, almost interchangeably. Death is seen by them as an enemy, and I remember Heini saying that anyone who had been with children and seen them fight against death could not believe that death was a beautiful thing. There are about twenty small graves in the Friedhof, so they have witnessed this struggle all too frequently. Any questions I may have about this attitude I hold in abeyance before a much greater experience than my own.

We walked in silence to the Friedhof. I almost cried when I saw Nicolaus Willim carrying a small bouquet. One of the men from Ibaté, he stutters badly in three languages and is not worth much in terms of work, but the loving sweetness that came out every time we met melted my heart and gave me a fondness for him. It makes me almost cry again as I see him in my imagination shuffling along, bent over, both hands holding those little flowers. Somehow he represents to me the whole atmosphere of loving concern that pervades this life. He with others placed flowers on the casket before it was lowered to rest. We all stood in silence as this was done.

Many of the brothers took turns as the earth was thrown in, until finally the little mound was covered with palm branches. It had been long since breakfast, so sandwiches and maté were ready at the dining room. There was some visiting, and then Tom and

Tony Potts and Hans-Hermann and I walked home. Lunch was in silence and work was quietly resumed in the afternoon.

Since Maria's parents live here in Loma, supper this evening was a lovemeal. The tables had cloths and there were green vines and branches around the room. While we ate, Bruce spoke of his own memories of Maria, and there followed a time of sharing. It gave a picture of a joyous child with a remarkable degree of creative acceptance. There were many stories that brought laughter. The parents were the last to speak. There followed hymns and silence, and then we all filed past the parents, taking their hands in that silent, deep clasp; a semi-circle formed outside and another hymn was begun and sung in parts. When all were out, we sang "Dona nobis pacem" and then separated.

Before I arrived here at Primavera, I had been told that each hof had its own character: Ibaté was the predominantly farming hof; Isla was the industrial hof, more like a town; and Loma was given its character by the hospital. This I have now seen here, and I can readily understand how the struggle of life against death is very real for the folk of this hof.

Emergencies, at all hours of the day, are not rare among them, so they stand ready at all times to respond as they are needed. It gives each a wonderful sense of security in the struggle with sickness and death and indeed, it gives a wonderful setting in which to die and be buried. This is surely the way it ought to be done. May God's blessing of love, courage, and devotion come ever more fully to these folk....

One very happy and meaningful event that we were able to share was a marriage. This is a cause for great celebration at the Bruderhof, and everyone outdoes himself for the occasion. Of course, a couple cannot be married by the Bruderhof unless they are both brotherhood members, and it would be considered impossible for a member to marry outside of the brotherhood. After first seeking the approval of the brotherhood, the couple then announces their engagement. Usually the blessing of the brotherhood is only a matter of form, but it does act as a check on hasty or ill-considered marriages. And in one instance, after a somewhat light-hearted couple had indicated their desire to marry, the young man was sent to Uruguay for a year to think it over. When he returned, they were married. We knew this couple--they have a little girl now--and they both seemed to think the action of the brotherhood was good for them.

An engagement celebration follows straightaway after the announcement, and it is a hilarious evening. Everyone comes who possibly can, and a long evening is spent in eating, singing, and whole-hearted fun together. Skits of all sorts were hurriedly worked up, usually lampooning the couple, poems were read poking fun at them, and a general good time was had. The evening was brought to a close by a less boisterous period during which songs specially relating to marriage were sung and more serious readings presented.

Between the engagement celebration and the actual solemnization of the marriage is a period of preparation, both for the couple and the community as a whole. At almost all the household meetings that took place in this period, special teachings were read concerning the meaning of marriage; its deepest and most profound implications were emphasized. I think nearly all New Testament passages on the subject were examined in the course of these meetings. One could say that the whole community was making itself ready for the coming marriage.

In these weeks the couple, too, went through a period of searching and reexamination of their intentions; extended talks with the servants and several meetings with the brotherhood were to lead toward a deeper understanding on their part of what they were embarking on. At least twice they were asked in the presence of the brotherhood if they were still certain of their love and firm in their resolve to become one. This very careful approach to marriage is not made to

hinder it. Rather, the Bruderhof feels that marriage and the family are so sacred and inviolable that it must be entered upon only with the most thoughtful consideration.

Long engagements are not the rule at the Bruderhof, and so the marriage date was set about six weeks after the engagement was announced. The time was especially shortened in this case since the woman was a young widow with four children and it was thought that it would be particularly good if the whole family could be together at Christmastime. The actual marriage celebration began the evening before the day of the ceremony and is called the Polterabend. Everyone from all three hofs gathered in or around the dining hall at Isla Margarita. The shutters all around the room were completely open so that it seemed as if the walls were only half their ordinary height. Benches were placed outside for all those who could not find room inside. There were people seated at both ends of the room; on one side stood a long table, covered with a white cloth, awaiting the guests of honor. A branched, wooden candlestick with two perfect white candles stood in the center of the table, and on each side of it was a glass of yellow chrysanthemums. The windows and doorways were decorated with freshly cut branches of green foliage and sprays of yellow blossoms.

As the couple entered and took their places we sang "Praise we the Lord who made all beauty." It is an exceptionally beautiful and appropriate song that was also sung at the engagement celebration. One of the servants stood to make some introductory remarks. He pointed out that the Advent season was near at hand, a time in which we all expect liberation for the whole world from its suffering and division:

Therefore, we can well regard this wedding as an introduction into this time, when we expect and ask for the Wedding Feast and the final union of all creation in the kingdom of God. In this sense our common rejoicing goes beyond the special event of this marriage.

The evening was filled with music and poetry. A group of five teen-age girls presented a series of German poems in praise of God for his glory in nature. This was followed by more songs and poems presented by the youth, individually and in groups. One poem was a song of love to Jesus, comparing love to him as a flame in one's heart that remains constant under all circumstances. A small speaking choir gave a German reading in praise to God as the source of love, unity, and peace. It went on to speak of God as the divider between good and evil, of faithful love between man and wife, of love between men as brothers, and finally ended with a prayer of surrender to God as the source of love. Sprinkled throughout the evening were several very finely given violin and string trios. Bach, Haydn, and other classical composers were represented among the selections that were played. All during this time the younger men--acting as food servers and dressed in open-collared white shirts with red flowers in a top buttonhole--were circulating among the people with trays of open-faced cheese and sausage sandwiches and English tea. At about the mid-point of the evening everyone sang "Schönster Herr Jesu" ("Fairest Lord Jesus"), and we found a new appreciation for that hymn in its original language and in that setting.

The climax of the evening was a Bach chorale based on the eighth chapter of Romans, sung by the choir from Loma Hoby and accompanied by three violins and a cello. Its theme was the great joy and freedom we have in Christ. This was superbly done and I doubt if I have ever heard better choral work anywhere. The evening was brought to an end then by the reading and presentation to the betrothed couple of a beautiful hand-printed scroll done by Emmy Arnold with a quotation from St. Augustine:

Christ has given us a new commandment,

that we should love one another as he has loved us.
 This love renews us, so that we become new men,
 singers of the new song.
 This love, my brothers, renews the peoples and
 creates and gathers from the whole of mankind.
 Which is spread over the globe,
 A new folk, the body of the new beloved,
 the bride of the only begotten son of God,
 of whom it is sung: who is it who stands up in a
 white garment.
 Wherefore doth she stride forth in a white garment?
 Why--because she is renewed!

We closed then by singing "Kommt und lasst uns Christum ehren" ("Come, give now to Christ all honor").

Come give now to Christ all honor,
 Heart and mind bend to His power;
 Sing with joy, make heard the hour,
 Sing ye folk of Christendom.

See what God in love has given,
 Life eternal, His Son risen,
 Who shall free us from our prison,
 Lifts from pain to heaven's joy.

Jacob's Star arisen bright,
 Fills the longing of our night,
 Breaks the Serpent in the fight,
 And destroys the kingdom of Hell.

Hallowed be that hour redeeming,
 When Thee in our hearts receiving,
 Praising Thee with lips believing,
 We confess Thee, Jesus Christ.

Radiant Child within the stall
 Thou, befriend and bring us all
 Therein where fair sounds enthrall--
 Angel hosts sing praising Thee.²⁹

Usually the Polterabend, like the engagement evening, is a time of gaiety and merry-making, but in this case a sobering influence was exercised by the recent death of the boy Peter at Wheathill, the proximity of the Advent season, and the fact that the couple was older and the bride a widow.

The next morning, Sunday, everyone gathered in the same room for the marriage ceremony. After we had waited awhile in silence, the couple could be seen coming down the path together, her arm in his. A simple wreath of flowers was about her head, and she was dressed in a

plain white dress with a finely tucked skirt. He had on a gray suit with an open-collared white shirt. They entered and took their places at one end of the room. Then the servant stood and announced the purpose of the meeting and extended a welcome to those of us who were guests. Following this we sang "Komm, reiner Geist" (Come, pure Spirit) from Sonnenlieder.

The marriage teaching was then presented in German and translated at intervals. It spoke of God's love bringing men together in the church in one spirit, one heart, and one soul. The comparison of the married state to the relationship of Christ and his church was dealt with quite extensively:

One man and one woman remain at one through a life-time of faithfulness, just as Christ is at one with the Church of expectation through all the centuries down to the present day and on into all the future. Husband and wife give themselves to each other; just as Christ gives himself to his Church and the Church submits and devotes itself to Christ. The husband's love for his wife should be like Christ's love for his Church, and the wife's love for her husband should be like the Church's love for Christ....

As the bride and bridegroom celebrate their wedding feast, he too will come to celebrate his wedding feast with all who have faith in him and love him. Just as marriage is a reflection of the Church in reality, the Church is a real reflection, a real sign pointing to the kingdom of God. It is not the kingdom of God itself, but it reveals the nature of the kingdom of God in love. It is the advance messenger of the kingdom of God, which will dawn and create a new earth³⁰

When the reading of the teaching was finished, the actual marriage questions were put to the couple. The first few questions asked if they were ready to accept each other freely as a gift from God and if their will was to help each other toward the good and hold faithfully to one another so long as they lived. The final question was of crucial significance. Both were asked if they were ready to place the vow of baptism--in which they had each pledged life-long faithfulness to Christ and to the community life that is born out of his Spirit--higher than their marriage, so that if one of them should become unfaithful and leave the way of Jesus, the other would be faithful. After the questions had been answered, all joined in one song after another as everyone filed past and gave their hand in fellowship.

A colorful wedding procession followed shortly, leading us to where the tables had been set in a large shady area surrounded by dwellings. Here a bountiful feast was spread. While the elements of the dinner were not very different from other meals, everything was especially well prepared, particularly a delicious pudding made from grape juice.

The program that ensued was specially planned for the children. Not only did they themselves present songs and little plays and pageants, but there was a special play done for them by the older youth. About this time the newly married couple slipped out to make their wedding journey down to the secluded river house where they spent a quiet two weeks. The day had been long and happy, but it finally drew to a close, and wagonloads of tired children and adults joggled off to their respective hofs in the evening dusk.

The Bruderhof begins to turn its attention toward Christmas far ahead of the season, in some instances even as early as the month of October. The workshops begin making children's toys, the sewing rooms start turning out special clothes, and Josef the baker commences the mammoth task of producing between thirty- and forty thousand cookies for the occasion! With the first week of Advent everything moved into high gear.

On the Saturday before Advent those of us in the farm work went out into the forest with axes and machetes and felled two great hardwood trees that come closest to an evergreen in the tropics. We stripped off the branches and carried them on wagons to the hof. A huge pile was made in front of the storehouse, and people came to fetch branches for decorating their homes and the children's departments. Several large wreaths were made to be hung in the communal and the children's dining rooms. The largest was for the communal dining room and was perhaps three feet in diameter. It had four candles on it, one to be lighted each week in Advent. After dinner that night, when the children were all in bed, everyone was up far into the night decorating and preparing for the next day. White tablecloths appeared, candles were made ready, and greens decorated every conceivable ledge and corner--all sorts of other details were attended to until everything looked quite festive.

The next day was marked by a communal breakfast, during which special selections were read concerning Advent and its meaning, and then we sang for the first time some Christmas and Advent songs. After the extended breakfast meeting, the rest of the day was free. In the evening we came together again. The Other Wise Man by Henry Van Dyke was read. It is an extremely well-written story and fitted the mood of the day perfectly.

From this time on all possible efforts were diverted into the preparations for Christmas. It was planned this Christmas to give special attention to providing new play equipment for the children's departments. All the shops and woodworking departments, even the building crew, began devoting their time to swings, rope ladders, one-seater "autos" with steering wheels that really steered, climbing frames, a kitchen play house (fully equipped with outdoor stove, pots, pans, dishes, etc.), rockers, huge building blocks, seesaws, and all sorts of smaller wooden toys.

Of course, people made individual gifts for each other too--for example, leather bags, belts, special sandals, scrapbooks, stockings and other knitted items, collections of poems, and song books. Besides all these there were also some manufactured things purchased in Asunción to be distributed as gifts, such as toilet articles and small buckets that were painted for sand pails and other toys.

Two or three evenings each week were set aside for Christmas work. On these nights little groups could be found all over the Bruderhof hammering, sanding, painting, sewing, gluing--and munching on cookies brought around by the storekeeper.

Other preparations were in full swing too. Choral groups were practicing Christmas music, and the youth groups were building stages and rehearsing German and English plays for the holidays. The youth especially like drama and have even attempted a few Shakespearean productions.

About the second Sunday in Advent St. Nicholas came to visit the Bruderhof children. His arrival was greatly anticipated because he was known to be the bearer of stern words and sweet things to eat. All that day rumors flew back and forth about having seen him here and there, and mothers and fathers solemnly recalled his phenomenal ability to know the weak points of all children. There was a definite air of expectancy, therefore, as the families had supper in the individual homes that night. Christmas and Advent songs filled the evening while they waited for Nicholas' visit. At last he could be heard on the way, his little bell tinkling as he went from house to house.

In he came finally, all bent over with age and dressed in a red costume. A long, white beard hung from his face, and his eyes sparkled in a remarkably youthful manner. The children sat in wide-eyed reverential awe. Not a muscle moved as he reviewed their sins--past and present: this one didn't like to wash her neck, and that one had a habit of talking in school. Nicholas' big record book did seem to have an astonishing amount of information considering that he only came around once a year. But benevolence triumphed over rectitude, and he was

soon handing out generous quantities of cookies and candy canes to all present. Then, with much creaking and groaning of old bones, Nicholas gathered together his book, his bag of sweets, and his bundle of still unused switches and left. The song "Niklaus ist ein guter Mann" followed him out as he tottered on, bell a-tinkle, to the next house.

Besides all the external preparations for Christmas, there were also "inner" preparations. In all the household meetings from the beginning of Advent on, the teachings centered around the meaning for mankind of Christ's coming on earth.

It was in the surrender of herself to God that Mary became the mother of Christ. It was in the acceptance of the incredible message of Gabriel that the great decisive event of history took place. And in our own daily lives, in our efforts to do right, that which is decisive takes place when we accept and live by, or surrender ourselves to, a strength which is not our own....

It is because human love cannot redeem man, or human goodwill or human saintliness, that Christ, the Son of God, came down to mankind. If man could have found his way back to God through his own love and righteousness, there would have been no need for God to be born as a human child on this earth. The prophets and the sages would have been enough. But the clearest and most wonderful message of the prophets is in their expectation of the Messiah, in their proclamation that something quite different must happen than all human striving. This something different was fulfilled in the coming of Christ and in the manner of his coming. This amazing difference is fulfilled in our own lives, when the Christ child is born in our hearts. This is not in an abstract experience of our emotions, but in a concrete acceptance of his Word and obedience to his will.³¹

The atmosphere of expectant waiting, of real readiness to accept God's revelation for them, seemed to prevail among the Bruderhof people especially during this time. This experience added a whole new dimension of depth and concreteness to my understanding of Christ's Advent on earth and brought a living, vital spirit into the Christmas story that I had never felt before.

Christmas Eve came at last, and after we had viewed the manger scene while Luke's narrative was read, we followed the angels back to the center of the hof and there dispersed to our homes. We were to spend the holidays with another family, and we soon found ourselves gathered with them in front of a table in their living room. It was piled high with all manner of gifts for everyone. After they were all examined, exclaimed over, and much appreciated, we all retired to the arbor at the side of the house to feast on cakes, cookies, fruit juices, and special Argentine cheese (delicious!). Later on there was visiting, story-telling, and singing far into the night.

The next morning everyone gathered to visit the children's departments one by one to see all the fine decorations and new equipment that had been made. The following days were filled with happy times as the children delightedly shimmied up and down the rope ladders and climbing frames and raced about in the new "autos." For the older people there was time for visiting, relaxation, and enjoyment of the plays the youth had prepared.

During these last few Christmas days, we often sang in the dining hall the four-part round "Nun sei uns willkommen, Herre Christ." Freely translated it means "Now Thou art welcome, Christ, to come and be Lord over all the Earth!" If it were possible to single out any one thing as being indicative of the character of the people at the Bruderhof, it would be this song, I believe. It typifies their attitude of complete surrender to Christ and their willingness to accept him as Lord over every part of their life, regardless of the cost.

12

Reflection and Retrospect

After the Wagoners' return, Merrill and Kathy Mow sent out the final number of their "Paraguayan Paragraphs," the newsletter that had covered the Wagoners' visit to the Bruderhof.

January 16, 1954

Dear Friends,

Bob and Shirley Wagoner are now back in the U.S., enrolled at Bethany and teaching in a suburban school, respectively.

A personal letter from Bob to Graydon Snyder, a student here at Bethany, was written near the end of their visit to the Bruderhof in Paraguay. Bob did not expect it to be sent in the newsletter, but the stencil was cut before they returned, and we are printing it much as it was written.

Merrill and Kathy Mow.

P.S. It may interest you to know that we are also planning to visit the Paraguayan Bruderhof, probably for a year or so. We are hoping to sail on an Argentine freighter sometime next fall. For our reasons--well, read on. It should be obvious. M & K.

[October 1953]

Dear Grady and Lois and all the saints,

Last Saturday (Oct. 24) I came home to our little room at one end of the library building after a particularly hard day's work putting up fences for a chicken run. It was hot, and I was tired and dripping with sweat as I came in. I glanced at the table expectantly and then looked at Shirley. She shook her head, "No, the mail came today, but there was nothing for us." I nodded rather dumbly and sat down. I really felt tired then.

We both sat there for quite a while, saying nothing. A more mournful scene would be hard to picture. At last we fell to discussing a subject we have covered at least a dozen times: considering our closer friends one by one as to how they would react to Bruderhof life. And then the inevitable question, "Why haven't they written?" More silence. I shrugged and said, "Perhaps we're much more on our own than we had thought..." Silence again and blank looks. I got up and went outside to play with our little kitten.

And then a miracle happened. Up the path came Duffy, a very genial fellow from the U.S., who is joining the Bruderhof and was a former student at Harvard, with a bunch of letters in his hand. "Guess what I've got!" he said and handed three of them to us--two from our folks and one from the Snyders! Halleluja!!

I can't tell you how much we appreciate your letter (and the other two from Grand Rapids). We often felt as if we had been groping in the dark toward you all this time and only now managed to make some sort of contact. Our experiences here in the Bruderhof have eclipsed the happenings of our journey.

We have been especially anxious to hear from you since you and the others had a good meeting with the couple from here. I'm sure they conveyed much more to you than a whole stack

of letters possibly could. The first report from them was read in the dining room last night. They also felt the meeting was particularly good and that possibly a new movement was stirring in the group. Judging from the silence and lack of letters, we're a bit skeptical but hope they are right. Were they?

Nevertheless, we were considerably disappointed that you did not take our suggestion very seriously to come and visit the Bruderhof. I must be frank though and say that in spite of our hopes I really didn't expect you to do so; I might not have recovered from the shock if you had written back saying you were coming. What with the lure of scholastic distinction, travel abroad, and the terrific pressure that Smucker & Co. was putting on you, it was quite plain to me before we left last spring what course you would follow. In your letter you said, "Since our return to Bethany, our plans for the future have taken an unexpected turn." Really, would it not have been more correct to say that they have taken the expected turn? And I cannot say that your plans do not evoke admiration (and perhaps a little envy?) from me. But even though dismayed, I will continue to press the argument.

I found one sentence in your letter relating to this matter particularly interesting. You said, "We feel somewhat called to the task--for what purpose is not clear." How a calling can be without purpose I don't understand. I beg you not to feel that I am over-critical and pious in saying this. It is my fight too. You and I are not so far apart that we cannot understand each other's motives. And what I continue to say in the rest of this letter is based, I trust, on an already deep level of friendship. The point is this--our experience here has been a tremendously revealing and humbling one. It has stripped the subtleties of our self-deceptions from us and has left us standing almost naked as it were before the pure and painfully clear light of the Gospel of Christ. The logic of what we have experienced is as inevitable as it is unwanted: we are a long, long way from being Christians. What I had thought were "callings" and noble Christian motives were merely mean little efforts on my part to somehow accommodate the radical, life-demanding call of Christ to my own comfortable ambitions.

The New Testament has become a completely new book for me since we have been here. All of last year's study under Faw (and this is not intended to be criticism) never led me to really see what the message of Christ is and to grapple with it. It is an unheard-of, staggering, demanding thing. I never really understood what repentance meant before. I knew it meant "to turn upside down," but it never really sank in until I saw it. To give everything--down to the last drop of one's energy, to the last second of one's time--had never really occurred to me. Now I begin to see what Paul meant when he used the term "a slave in Christ." And a faint glimmer of the meaning of John 12:24-26, "...unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies..." begins to come to light. Here is the real "offense" of the Gospel. It is incomprehensible in the totality of its demands. It asks that not only all of one's possessions be given back to God and his Church but also all of one's talents and gifts--yes, even one's freedom. In a word, the completely committed Christian must die to himself and be born again in Christ. What an insane request! In a culture that prides itself on being the embodiment of the dignity and sacredness of the individual through various schemes of self-improvement, self-realization, and self-fulfillment, it is scandalous to the point of being utterly ridiculous to ask such things. It is no wonder that down through history only a tiny remnant has ever taken on the full burden of the gospel and tried to actually live it. But the choice is nevertheless there for all of us: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve...No man can serve two masters."

The question of self and of individual development is probably one of the most common questions that guests and visitors bring up. I think the Bruderhof attitude on this matter can best be summed up by pointing out the distinction between individuality and individualism. Individuality, on the one hand, is encouraged as much as possible. That is, every effort within

their means is used to bring out and develop an individual's gifts, talents, and forms of personal expression. But this is always done with the clear recognition in mind that all gifts come from God, are of equal value in his sight, and should be used not to enhance the individual but to serve God and his Church.

The spirit of individualism, on the other hand, is viewed by members of the Bruderhof as being close to the root of most of man's difficulties. They believe it is impossible for men to live in peace when everyone acts solely on the basis of future consequences to himself. Individualism is the spirit of our age. It is the spirit of Mammon. It lies at the base of our political and economic system and forms the whole foundation for the order of modern society. The much-overglorified term "justice" is little more than the balancing of individual claims of self-interest.

This spirit of individualism is also obvious in contemporary religious attitudes; the great stress on mysticism and individual salvation divorced of ethical consequences is evidence of it. In theological terms, it is seen as the colossal emphasis on the kerygma of the Gospel to the almost total exclusion of the didache. In philosophical terms it reflects the rise of existentialism. The Bruderhof cannot see how the preaching of the gospel can possibly be separated from the practice of it. For them, preaching without living has no meaning and may actually do more harm than good. For them, Matt. 7:21-27 is impossible to explain away: "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father..." The New Testament takes on a wholly different character when one sets out to actually live it.

Quite plainly, Grady, all the New Testament study in the world could never reveal to me what this life-experience has. I have read and studied the New Testament many times and am as familiar with its passages as you are, but it is the living Spirit that gives it life and meaning, and it is this preoccupation with the letter that deadens and eventually kills the Spirit.

I begin to see why Mark wrote so vigorously about the encounter with Christ and why he used words like "straightaway," "immediately," "astonished," and "amazed." It is the natural human reaction to something so demanding and compelling. And I used to think the description of Pentecost was symbolic but rather quaint. I begin to understand and have a new appreciation for it. Likewise, I have a new appreciation for Jacob's wrestling with God--that is exactly what we are doing.

Remember how indignantly and self-righteously we used to thunder our judgment against those who refuse to accept the Sermon on the Mount as an ethic for our time? . . . I wonder . . . on whom falls the greater judgment--those who reject the radical New Testament ethic outright as being impossible, or those of us who glibly accept it and then do nothing about it?

The Brethren are especially guilty of this, I feel. We have traditionally said that the New Testament is our rule of faith and practice, but there is less and less evidence of it. The "simple life" is pretty much a bygone thing. When I compare what I used to think was simple with what I have found down here, I am ashamed of myself. Really, the only New Testament example that Brethren follow very closely at all is their stand against war. And everyone jolly well knows that virtually eighty percent of the conscripted young men in the three peace churches did not take a conscientious objector position in the last war.... Well, I don't need to describe the fallen condition of the Brethren to you, I hope.

I have just finished re-reading the gospel of Matthew and have been amazed at the number of passages I either preferred to overlook or to water down. I would like to list some of them and ask you to study them again: Matt.6:24; 7:13-29; 8:21-22; 9:16-17; 10:34-42; 12:33-37; 13:44-46; 19:16-22; 21:42-43; 22:36-40; 23:1-12; 25:31-46. These are not all by any means, but they are some of the more pointed ones I ran across. Luke 14:25-35 is also difficult to overlook, and John 12:1-33 is a wonderful summary of it all. If you can study these passages, honestly accept them, and then come to anything but one inexorable conclusion, I'd like to know how you

do it.

Probably you have already made your plans rather definitely. In any event, I would not want to pressure you into coming down here. I would suggest though, that you examine your motives at rock bottom level and see where it leads you.

Before we left last spring, I had often considered the many things we could do with the money that we were going to spend; it was a temptation. I thought of all the many places open for graduate study; I thought of doing "respectable" traveling in Europe; yes, I even thought of how the same amount of money would purchase a shiny new car. But I can say with absolute truthfulness that we have no regrets since we've been here about bypassing those notions. It has been more than worth the investment. If we had only been here a week, it would have been worth it.

On the one hand, we feel this very strongly. On the other hand, we must confess that there are times when we wish we had never come. We don't say this because of the cost in terms of money, but because of the great burden of decision it is placing on us. Before we left, Merrill predicted rather gloomily that when we returned, I'd be different. I didn't see what he meant then, and I laughed at him. This does not mean that we've turned into glowing little saints overnight (aside from a suntan and some "chin spinach," I'm the same and as difficult to live with as ever). But it does mean that the standards by which we will evaluate the rest of our lives are totally different....So from this angle, too, count the cost of visiting the Bruderhof.

By now a good bit of the newness of our experience here has worn off, and we have settled down to find out what the ordinary day-to-day life is. Like human existence anywhere, it has its commonplaces and drudgeries. Here is certainly no utopia in any sense of the word. I should like to dispel that idea entirely. The work is hard, there are disagreements and personality clashes, and the children can be as naughty here as anywhere. But there is one tremendous difference between this and any other group of people I have ever seen: they have a common basis among them for meeting difficulties and overcoming them. The common basis is the Spirit of love, and "love overcometh all things." If this Spirit were not present among them, they would be nothing more than noisy gongs and clanging cymbals. I find the apostle Paul's choice of words more than apt when I think of all the empty forms and meaningless verbiage that would-be Christians satisfy themselves with nowadays.

You remember, Grady, before we left I had serious misgivings as to how thoroughly "Christian" the Bruderhof was. We now know why those doubts arose and see how wrong we were. It was because the Bruderhof people we talked to in the U.S. were very careful about the terminology they used when we questioned them. They found that conventional religious terminology had become so distorted and watered down that it had little meaning anymore. That is, people were so inoculated with a mild dose of Christianity that they were immune to the real thing. They found that many sincerely seeking people were completely disgusted with modern so-called Christianity and were repelled by the sentimental and wishy-washy terms because of their meaninglessness. Consequently, the Bruderhof decided to use ordinary religious terms as little as possible when dealing with interested persons. Neither will they allow themselves to be drawn into pointless theological arguments. Instead, they invite people to come and live with them and find out by experience what gives their life meaning and holds them together.

I had mixed feelings over your report that our couple did discuss the religious life of the community. On the one hand, I felt very happy about it because one cannot really understand the Bruderhof without recognizing its profound Christian roots. On the other hand, it concerned me considerably because regardless of how well they reported, it would be impossible for them to really communicate the Spirit to you. If they used anything like conventional terminology, you

would tend to associate what you heard with previous meanings and experiences and let it go at that. One sentence in your letter really disturbed me: "...we felt quite satisfied that the religious life was genuine and would answer our needs in many respects." Answer your needs? It would change your lives! That is, unless I have quite underestimated you two.

The life here can only be described; it cannot be communicated. It is something that must be experienced. The words that they used could not possibly mean to you there what they would here. That does not mean that it is utopian in any sense, but it does mean that it is a life based on totally different premises.

We had not been here long until it began to be quite clear to us what their motivating force is. The same stirring in men's hearts gave rise to the Brethren and the whole Anabaptist movement; it is the Spirit that moved George Fox, St. Francis of Assisi, and the Waldensians (the Poor Men of Lyons). And unquestionably it is the same compelling force that gave the primitive Christian Church its power and dynamism. It is the love of God calling together a people.

Indeed, on several occasions Shirley and I have almost felt as if we had been transported back through history and were watching the early church at work. Perhaps that sounds odd, but nevertheless, it seems to be the only comparison I can draw that will adequately convey what we have felt here. There is the same deep sense of mission that I had always believed the early church possessed, the same simplicity of spirit and poverty of material goods, and the same feeling of a real, existing brotherhood among them, coupled with a depth of social concern and outgoing love such as I have never seen before. I have been forcibly reminded of an observation--I read of it last year in a church history class--made by a Roman official about the early church. "These Christians," he exclaimed, "how they love each other!"

I'm afraid, though, it will be impossible for us to really communicate to you through words what we have experienced. It will require a certain receptivity of spirit on your part plus the understanding of a deeper level of friendship. If you and others are really seeking for a full vision of what God requires of men, then I'm sure you will understand, because I believe the Spirit of the true church is given whenever a few gather together to confess their inadequacy and wait for guidance.

And it is certain that this Spirit will not be given wherever there is self-sufficiency, pride, ambition, or any other form of egoism. I begin to see now why Niebuhr is so concerned with pride, as man's worst sin. Indeed it is, for it instantly cuts man off from God, and sunders him completely....

Bob

On returning to Bethany Theological Seminary in Chicago in February 1954, Bob wrote the following about his and Shirley's visit to the Bruderhof:

At this point the reader will undoubtedly wonder when I will begin answering the question, "Well, what does this mean for us?" I don't think I can answer that question very adequately yet, because I am not sure. I do feel, however, that the very fact that the Bruderhof is making its witness is a judgment on the condition of the church today, especially for those of us who refer to ourselves as members of the historic peace churches. The fact that these people have found it necessary to come together in a life of positive action--building a thoroughgoing brotherhood--says to me that the historic peace churches have in large measure abdicated their responsibility in this area. As Kermit Eby* and others have brought to our attention, we have

*Kermit Eby (1903-62). Minister, author, professor, and leader in the Church of the Brethren.

ceased to be in tension with society and are becoming more and more identified with it. The question arises, for instance, as to whether we can honestly claim the title of peace church when according to Don Royer "there are numerous Brethren congregations in which fifty to eighty percent of the members are engaged in work directly related to the war effort."³² This is not the place for an examination of the relation between the church and society, yet I feel very strongly that the presence of the Bruderhof in the world is a silent but nevertheless sharp rebuke to us. It is a reminder of where we came from. Either we accept the rebuke, it seems to me, and creatively re-examine our position or by default let the Bruderhof and other radical groups take up the Anabaptist tradition of the gathered "holy community" and carry it on.

On the whole I am not impressed with the usual criticisms I hear of the Bruderhof. Most of them appear to me superficial in quality and essentially emotional in origin. The first that always comes is the charge of "escapism." When one considers that they were forced to go to Paraguay and did not choose to do so, along with their great emphasis on missionary activity and outreach to all men, this charge loses most of its strength. If they were really withdrawing from the world, they would not bother to publish a magazine and neither would they feel it necessary to start new Bruderhofs in Uruguay, the United States, and Germany. The brothers answer this charge by pointing out that it is we who are escaping by insisting on our unyielding individualism even at the cost of piling up living corpses in mental hospitals and dead ones on battlefields. These are the terrible results, they feel, of the refusal to face the fact that God created us to live together.

There are hosts of other criticisms and objections that are sometimes raised. Some of the more important ones I have tried to meet in the report itself. It would be impossible for me to try to answer all of them, since each person seems to have his own particular questions. My own criticisms arise along two lines: first, their method of proclaiming the gospel and second, their attitude toward the Bible.

Firstly, probably because of my Brethren heritage, I found myself in disagreement with their policy of avoiding the use of religious terms when telling their message. I have to admit, however, that they are correct in maintaining that the usual religious expressions have lost their meaning for most people. But it seems foolish to me to abandon these terms, most of which are Biblical, because the world has drained them of their deep significance. A better strategy, I felt, would be to take these old terms and fill them full of the proper meaning that has been taken from them. It seemed to me that there might be considerable danger in continually shifting about in an effort to adapt oneself to a new idiom. The baby could easily go out with the bathwater.

I also noticed that they bear down much more heavily on the imperative side of the gospel than on the indicative. That is, they are much more concerned about what God requires of man than what he has already done for man. They do not completely ignore Christ's great work of salvation, but it certainly does not receive the same emphasis that is accorded to the ethical teachings. Both aspects of the gospel must be stressed, I think, in order to avoid a distortion of the Christian life and message. History has shown this overemphasis on ethics to be common among nearly all groups in the Anabaptist tradition. It needs especially to be guarded against because of the tendency to fall into pharisaism.

My second area of criticism concerns their attitude toward the Bible, and I suppose here again my Brethren background is largely responsible. While relying heavily on the Bible, especially the New Testament, they do not accept it as authoritatively as Brethren do. That is, they do not feel obliged to carry out every scriptural command, such as the holy kiss, footwashing, and anointing. Now on the one hand this attitude has saved them from a shallow Biblical literalism and has probably enabled them to come closer to the living Spirit of the Bible than perhaps most Brethren do. But on the other hand there seems to me to be some danger of

straying too far from the Christian's only reliable home base--the New Testament scriptures. I honestly do not believe that at present the Bruderhof has slipped into this error, although it is conceivable that an over-reliance on Hutterian tradition or a too heavy stress on the guidance of the Spirit could lead them far afield if a closer attachment to the Bible is not developed.

In the larger structure and mood of the Bruderhof life, however, there is no doubt in my mind that we saw there the fullest expression we have ever seen of the New Testament life. Even though other things have already moved in to becloud and dull our memories, this vision remains as a constant and unremitting challenge to us.

Looking back over our experience at the Bruderhof, I am now all the more convinced of the impossibility of trying to communicate what we encountered there. It is difficult to communicate an inner attitude or a personal relationship. It can perhaps be described or exhibited, but the actual bond of feeling--the vital and essential part of our experience--simply does not lend itself to words. I see now even more clearly that love has little meaning discussed in abstract terms. It must be demonstrated in living personality and become clothed in flesh before it has relevance to the human situation. This, of course, happened in Jesus Christ, and it made clear once and for all to what end we are called. No longer is it possible to dally about. "No man can serve two masters. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

This same incarnation of love can and does happen when persons do choose and accept Christ's lordship over their life. Their life then becomes at once a revelation and a command. It demonstrates what God can do with lives under his dominion, and it is an imperative summons to discipleship. This is what happened to us at the Bruderhof. We saw and were pulled. It spoke to our condition in an unforgettable manner.

AFTERWORD

In 1955 Milton Zimmerman, a young doctor, was assigned as a conscientious objector to war to the Primavera Hospital to fulfill his two years of alternative service under the United States Selective Service System. He was accompanied by his wife, Sandy; together they wrote the following letter home to their circle of Philadelphia Friends in May 1956. Written two years after the Fran Hall letters and the Wagoners' report, this letter is an obvious editorial addition to Community in Paraguay--the more so because it is "A Visit to the Bruderhof" by a third couple from a third, quite different background.

You asked us before we left to be sure to write you to let you know what we found in Paraguay and what we thought of it. We've been here six months, and most of you have only gotten a mimeo from us which had been written for all kinds of friends and family; so we want now to say much more on our new experience from a point of view we think will interest you much. Hopefully our impressions here will not sound like judgments.

The physical setup, climate, basis of livelihood, hospital work, etc. we've already described fully enough in our mimeo letter of December, so we won't say much more about it now. We'll get on to the people and the community.

The first thing that impressed us as we got off of the little plane that ferried us up from Asunción was the simplicity of their dress and manner. No lipstick and mostly homemade clothes. The next thing--their warmth and friendliness. Within the next fifteen minutes after getting out of the plane, we shook hands with about fifty people--all with broad smiles and many without any words added. It was nice not to have fifty people all ask how the trip was. Their friendliness as a group and as individuals has continued and deepened constantly; they're not a cold or reserved crowd by any stretch of the imagination. Their first lack of words at the landing strip that first afternoon, suitable only for that occasion, has never been seen since; they're all good talkers, and we've had lots to say in the intervening six months.

We remember one question of Joanna's: "Are they free enough as individuals to speak their minds, or are they all cowed by the demand for unity such that spontaneity is lost?" Yes, they're individuals, for the most part, who speak their minds freely, and though they have a care about their unity, they express themselves quite freely to us outsiders. For example, soon they're going to have a conference here of representatives from the Bruderhofs all over the world (there are eight now--three here at Primavera, one each in Uruguay, England, Germany, New York, and North Dakota) to discuss chiefly the future of the groups here in Paraguay--whether to stay or leave. Some are very much in favor of staying and some as much in favor of leaving, and many speak quite openly to us about how they feel--knowing that soon they'll have the difficult job of sitting down together to arrive at a solution in unity. We see that this is going to be a real test for them and wish them success in keeping unity and love between all groups. They are careful not to offend anyone in what they say on the matter, and one Sunday morning in a "household meeting" a full range of attitudes was expressed on this problem. They said all that they said, though, with love and understanding; we felt no antagonism in the midst of the opposing attitudes. Spontaneity is not lost but is usually confined to the service of love.

What about the inevitable frictions and misunderstandings? They follow Christ's injunction to make all things straight with their brother before coming to prayer together, and where two cannot reconcile their problems by themselves, they get a third brother. If that fails they take their problem before the brotherhood, all quite straight from Matthew 18:15. Those who have something against a brother are asked not to come to their prayer meeting, the Gemeindestunde, though all may come (even guests) to the general meeting for reading,

meditation, and spontaneous contributions called a "household meeting." So they have a good form for taking care of such problems, and they really are eager for all who attend the Gemeindestunde to have no doubts about their brothers.

Their simplicity of dress and manner reflects religious convictions, we suppose, but just as much it probably reflects their economic position. They're not wealthy enough to live anything else but a "simple life," and conditions in this socially and politically decadent country make anything other than a primitive life quite a chore. Hence the presence of records, record players, and electricity in all homes and libraries, machinery, two refrigerators, a few trucks, and a tractor means that the Society of Brothers lives in comparative luxury here despite the lack of any paved roads within eighty miles, the lack of screens against flies, and a few other things that still make life more difficult than it need be to be consistent with simplicity as we envision it. Their simplicity does not include austerity, though. Their choice of materials from which they make dresses for most of the women is anything but austere, but the continental taste for patterns for older women is definitely more conservative than the average American taste. Uniformity of clothing does not exist, and beards are worn by about half the men.

So we think that the Brothers are friendly, loving--and spontaneous. They are also very definitely Christian and interpret the Bible in much the same way we do. They're not all wrapped up in theology like the back of the Book of Common Prayer, and their discussions are not full of terms of disputed meaning, to us anyway. Their language in the meetings is direct and simple, and thus we think forceful.

How do they regard themselves? They make it quite plain in meetings again and again that membership in the brotherhood is no one-way ticket to heaven. The recurring theme of most of the sermons is that one must always, over and over, renounce his selfishness and turn again to God. They say frequently, too, that when we are out of God's power, we are nothing; that our strength is only in God, when we allow him to work through us. So, at least in the spoken ministry they are quite humble about themselves and the community. They do, though, feel so convinced that Christ has called his followers to full community, that they doubt whether all noncommunal people are genuine doers of God's will. We think this is a natural consequence of a deep conviction, however, and it reminds us of how we pacifists sometimes look at nonpacifists. Just how many ways to the kingdom of heaven are there if the gate is so narrow? And if we, or others, have a deep conviction, we necessarily think that its obverse is not the right way, and therefore "wrong." But to stop short of making a judgment of another person in the face of a real conviction is a hard but apparently necessary task. How well the Brothers succeed we're not really sure yet. They do judge each other and practice excommunication occasionally, but they point out that a community of people so close together like this cannot hang together without unity in nearly every sphere. Thus when someone changes his mind about the validity of community or of following Christ, he leaves or is asked to leave, but always by the rest of the community unanimously. Such maintenance of unity is new to us, but we think we can see its necessity in community.

These are some positive aspects of our view of the Bruderhof, but we also have some negative points.

First, is the lack of organization and efficiency. Right away we must say that as outsiders who are only beginning to appreciate the complexities of communal living, we probably make this criticism too easily and thus probably unfairly. Too often, though, in the distribution of work it is not made clear who is the responsible person, such as in the case of seeing that there are enough new trousers being made. Much of this disorganization is just plain oversight and thoughtlessness, and this is a form of lovelessness. True enough, no one is perfect, and there are too few organizers in the world at large anyway, so why should the Bruderhof have enough? We,

naive and new, think we can see how various changes could remedy some things, and in thinking of the possibility of a future Quaker community, we think we see how these pitfalls can be avoided. So this criticism, though often occurring to us, may not be valid, but we won't be convinced of it, we fear, until we have fallen into the very same holes ourselves.

Second, we sometimes think that the older Europeans have very fixed ideas on how things should be done, what foods are edible, how to raise children, and on life in general and are resistant to change. We've spoken this out from time to time and are always given examples of how they have changed on many things through the years and are still changing. It's probably true, so this criticism may be too harsh also, but we want to share our doubts with you.

Then there is their meetings. Whether it be the Gemeindestunde or the household meeting (upon our request we've been allowed to come to the Gemeindestunde, feeling basically in unity with them) there is always a reading at the beginning by one or two people, followed often by some opportunity for additional spontaneous ministry. These readings are usually too long, are often so comprehensive in scope, so complete and thorough, and occasionally repetitious, that there is almost nothing left to say in the following pause, except that perhaps the reading spoke to your condition. The readings are almost always very good, but there is no room for spontaneous or creative spoken ministry except rarely. One feels often that one would like to hear what a brother next you has to say on a given point, rather than what some person, regardless of abilities or insights, thought a century ago. To us it is hard to be always in the passive position like this. We feel the need to express a spoken witness as well as a "doing" witness. This criticism we don't think we'll qualify.

Next, the Brothers believe that Christ meant water baptism when he said to baptize men in his name, so to them this is a necessary requirement for entry into the "church" (their expression for the Bruderhof). We see nothing wrong or undesirable in water baptism, but we do not, like good Quakers perhaps, see it as essential or commanded by Christ. John the Baptist said that he baptized with water but that He who was to come would baptize with fire. This is the only baptism we seek. Would this point ever keep us from joining the Brothers? We doubt it, but we will talk of our relation with the Brothers later on. At the moment, we don't qualify this reservation about the Brothers either, though it's not a big one.

Next, Paraguay! As we said before, living in a country that is backward chiefly because of its corrupt government has its special problems. There are many things--basic things like lye and some common and cheap drugs--that one often cannot buy in Paraguay, and importation, when allowed, is a real headache. The duties also are extravagant, especially when one considers that there is no Paraguayan industry to protect in the first place. Then here there are very few guests or neighbors interested in this way of life, no stream of people questioning everything as at their other communities. There are very few opportunities for satisfactory further education or training for the children, and the general tenor of life in Paraguay, reflecting its terrible history of violence, plunder, revolution, and official corruption (all a bit worse than the worst of our American background), is a bit discouraging at times. We really admire the Brothers for what they have built up here in fifteen years from absolutely nothing, but we ourselves can't see putting our necks to the same yoke without a specific calling to Paraguay. This last item we just don't have. The local Paraguayan people are nice and could well continue to benefit from the help of this community as it has for fifteen years, but frankly, for us the job is too discouraging when the local government makes work, especially medical work, so difficult. The climate is not a significant handicap at all, and the mosquitoes and flies, persistent nuisance and danger though they are, could be controlled better.

We see on the other hand that many of the members here have already in their lifetime made two major moves with the community and some even more, first from the continent of

Europe to England and thence to Paraguay, each move a major readjustment. We haven't heard this expressed, but now after fifteen years they've made a pretty satisfactory adjustment to their situation, and we could well understand the reluctance of some to another big move, especially a voluntary one. But nevertheless, the Bruderhof here is an island of foreigners to the surrounding neighborhood, no matter how helpful. Very few people here speak the native language, Guarani, and only half or less can speak Spanish decently. So how can this community ever be of any really valid spiritual service to its neighbors with the language barrier still not removed after fifteen years? Only a handful of native Paraguayans have joined the community in all this time, small compared with what has happened in their communities in the United States and England. No, we don't see Paraguay, and accordingly we don't see our way clear to the Society of Brothers, as long as any doctor who comes to it might possibly be used in Paraguay for an indefinite period of time.

Lastly, children in the community. We see many young adults who've grown up in the community, and we are impressed with the fact that they are largely useful and strong members. But we are just beginning to understand more about the problems of the children of this community. We wonder if the children really have enough time with their parents. That's the chief question. The parents are really busy with "essential" work and meetings, but we wonder if things were organized better whether there wouldn't be more time for the essential work of playing with one's children much more often. This, however, remains an unanswered question for us and not yet a final criticism, as to whether the children are neglected in the rush. Spare time hardly exists here for playing with the children, or even for reading or letter-writing, things we think are extremely important. We who don't go to the two or more brotherhood meetings each week have even more of this spare time than the members.

So much for the Society of Brothers, at present. We might have more comments later on education, economy, and theological outlook.

But now what about the Society of Friends in general and you in particular? Most of you reading this letter have expressed interest in a fuller living of the gospel if not an interest in community. Now we have seen that community life is possible if based on a desire to follow Christ and overcome selfishness through faith. We think that Christ does call his followers to a more God-centered life than present day Quakerism leads. What do you think? Are you interested in starting a community within the framework of Quakerism? We think it is ripe for this new testimony, even though the sect may not endorse it as a body. Economic testimonies never are accepted quickly. (Remember that it took Philadelphia Quakerism seventy years to come to unity on the abolition of slavery.) We would like an answer from each of you, not a final commitment to community but whether or not you are challenged by this idea.

If we are joined by even one other person, we shall be encouraged. We would have many questions and problems to cope with. Where would the community be--city or country? Would we all work inside the community, or outside, or half-and-half? But such questions are to be answered later, we feel. The question now is, "Do we want to live in a full Christian community?" If the answer is yes, then together we may begin to determine the details.

Back to the Brothers again. Don't let all the negative thoughts listed above lead you to the conclusion that we are dissatisfied with what we find here. In the one important thing, the fact that this is a full community of goods and spirit in Christ, we are quite edified, and in the main the lesser details of life are pleasant enough. Furthermore, we look forward to learning a lot more about the brotherhood in the next eighteen months, no doubt adding to or changing our impressions of this letter to some extent.

We've mentioned our uncertainties and doubts about the Society of Brothers, but as you see the only criticisms we offer without qualifications are not big and unchangeable ones. If we

find no interest for community among Friends, then we think we might turn later to the Brothers. But we turn now to you and the rest of Quakerism because you are our friends and we would like to share a dedicated life with you. Much of our Christian faith that has led us to consider community in Christ we have received through Quakerism and through you, and we feel a strong tie with you, at least up to this point. How much further shall we go together?

Please write us your answers and questions. We want to try community. Do you?

With love,
Milton and Sandy

P.S. We've just read this letter to the brotherhood at a household meeting and want to include some main impressions.

Our chief impression of their reception of it is that they weren't antagonized or defensive. How many groups do we know of that could hear such a critical letter and not get defensive? This impresses us.

Their main thoughts were these: That as long as we hold any personal reservations or limitations or any sense of special personal calling (such as our feelings against staying in Paraguay indefinitely), we are not ready for community, neither theirs nor our own. That no sense of personal prerogative or decision above that of the community's is compatible with community life. On first appearance this sounds like a total loss of individuality for the sake of the community, but we think we can see that this is a gross overstatement of the real situation. They say, and we think we must agree, that if all the members are seeking for divine guidance and are really open to it, they will be led rightly. The essential point, though, is that all are open to God's guidance. Perhaps our thoughts on Paraguay as we've expressed them are too final and lack openness. Many of the Brothers, possibly a majority, feel much the same way we do about Paraguay, but they don't come to meetings with their minds "made up" beforehand. Nevertheless, their feelings will find expression in this forthcoming big meeting on the future of the Society of Brothers in Paraguay. So individuality isn't being thrown away, rather expressed with humility and openness. Perhaps most of us Quakers make too much of individuality. Certainly it would be worthless for us to consider community among ourselves if any of us come with fixed notions of a calling to city or country or weekend workcamps. If we really seek God's will for us as a group, as a community, and do so open to guidance, we will be led to a right decision. This takes faith, though, to believe in corporate divine guidance, but this is the core of Quakerism's message.

Secondly, the brotherhood felt that when we said they used the term "the church" for their brotherhood, we weren't being accurate. The term "Gemeinde" in German has no good one-word English translation. It's best expressed by the phrase "church community," and occasionally a translator doing on the spot translation in meetings gets sloppy and just says "church" or "the church" instead of "church community." So they deny that they feel that they are the church or only right church.

Thirdly, it was said that the only criticisms we made were on "practical" matters, and they therefore felt we were in considerable unity with them and that these same practical matters were much on the minds of the brotherhood as well.

So it was a most profitable exchange, we thought, and now we await your reactions and answers. M & S

Bibliographical Endnotes

[Most of the sources used by the authors in 1953 have since been published in English. More recent translations and editions have therefore been cited with the agreement of the authors.]

1. Songs of Light, Plough, 1977, 133.
2. from Point 61 of The Article Book (1577) of Peter Walpot, in Quarterly Review (Jan. 1957), 38. The Mennonite
3. Arnold, Eberhard, Love to Christ and Love to the Brothers, Plough, 1973, 1.
4. Ibid., 10.
5. _____, Why We Live in Community, Plough, 1976, 2,4.
6. Ibid., 9.
7. _____, Love to Christ and Love to the Brothers, Plough, 1973, 11.
8. _____ (1935), "Repentance, Conversion, and Faith," translation, EA 482. unpublished
9. Ibid.
10. _____, Why We Live in Community, Plough, 1976, 6.
11. Britts, Philip (December 1948), "Advent Gemeindestunde," manuscript, 8, 6. unpublished
12. Arnold, Eberhard (1934), "Christians and the State," The Plough (Spring 1940), 3.
13. _____, Love to Christ and Love to the Brothers, Plough, 1973, 13.
14. Ibid., 19.
15. _____ (1920), "Die Lebensgemeinschaft und die Zukunft der Arbeit," translation of unpublished manuscript, EA 20/21a. der Arbeit,"
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 18.
18. Ten Years of Community Living, Plough, 1952, 41.

19. Fretz, Joseph W., Pilgrims in Paraguay, Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1953.
20. Songs of Light, Plough, 1977, 80.
21. Ibid., 8.
22. Ibid., 14.
23. Songs of Light, Plough, 1977, 327. From The Oxford Book of permission of Oxford University Press. Carols, reprinted with
24. Peter Rideman, Confession of Faith, Hodder & Stoughton, Plough, 1950, 73-74.
25. Trümpi, Monika Elizabeth, "With Our Tiniest," Children in Community, Plough, 1939, 18.
26. Arnold, Eberhard, "Our Approach to Education," Ibid., 10.
27. Trümpi, Balthasar, "Concerning the Life of the Junior School," Ibid., 31.
28. Arnold, Eberhard, "Our Approach to Education," Ibid., 8.
29. Songs of Light, Plough, 1977, 265.
30. Translation, anonymous German marriage teaching, Primavera, Paraguay, November 22, 1953.
31. Britts, Philip (December 1948), "Advent Gemeindestunde," unpublished manuscript, 3, 5.
32. Royer, Don, "How Can We Pass on Our Basic Beliefs?" The Gospel Messenger February 27, 1954, 9 ff.

GLOSSARY AND NAMES

alzaprima Lever, fulcrum; in Paraguay, a two-wheeled, oxen-drawn contraption for lifting and transporting logs.

Alm Bruderhof (1934-38) Bruderhof begun near Triesen, Liechtenstein, to provide a refuge from the Nazis for the children of the Rhön Bruderhof and the men of military age.

Asunción House (1943-62) The Bruderhof's outpost in Asunción, Paraguay's capital city, which served students, travelers, and guests and functioned as a display and sales outlet for Primavera's turnery business.

Bruderhof House See Asunción House.

Bruderschaft Brotherhood; the decision-making body comprised of all Bruderhof members; also, the members' meeting for worship.

Brüdererrat Brothers' work council; Primavera's daily meeting for brothers to discuss and manage the men's work.

Cotswold Bruderhof (1936-41) The first English Bruderhof, begun in Wiltshire, England, as the result of outreach from the Alm and Rhön Bruderhofs to people in England interested in Christian community.

Dunkers Members of the Church of the Brethren, a branch of Anabaptism originating in Germany in 1714.

El-Arado (1953-60) Daughter Bruderhof of Primavera near Montevideo, Uruguay.

Friedhof Cemetery, burial ground; literally, "place of peace."

Gemeindestunde Prayer meeting; literally, "church hour."

hof Short for Bruderhof (when referring to a community); also, the central area of communal buildings.

Hort Any non-academic group activity at school (in the afternoon) or in the nursery: playtime, arts or crafts class, singing, indoor and outdoor games or sports, etc.

Ibaté (1946-61) The third of the three Bruderhof communities at Primavera, and the one with the largest dairy herd and agricultural operations.

Isla Margarita (1941-62) The original Bruderhof at Primavera, settled after the initial stay with the Mennonites in their colony at Friesland; the "industrial hof" housing a large saw mill, a flour mill, and the workshop of the wood-turnery business.

Loma Hoby (1942-1960) The second of the three Bruderhofs at Primavera and the location of the hospital.

lovemeal Special communal meal to celebrate a meaningful occasion or event.

Morgenstunde Period of informal religious instruction for the schoolchildren, held once or twice a week; generally a time for group reading and discussion of the Bible.

Oaksey Bruderhof (1938-40) The second English Bruderhof, begun to house members of the Alm and Rhön Bruderhofs after their expulsion from Nazi Germany; located a few miles from the Cotswold Bruderhof.

Polterabend The traditional German festivities celebrated on the evening before a wedding; at the Bruderhof, a festive gathering or mealtime usually accompanied by skits and choral or other musical presentations.

Primavera (1941-62) The collective name (Spanish for "springtime") of the three Paraguayan Bruderhofs; originally, the name of the estancia (ranch or estate) of 20,000 acres in the wilderness of Alto Paraguay bought by the Bruderhof in 1941.

Rhön Bruderhof (1927-37) Bruderhof near Neuhoef in Hesse, Germany, to which the members of Sannerz moved seven years after their beginning there; raided and eventually closed by the Gestapo.

rozada A cleared space of land used for livestock or crops.

Sannerz (1920-27) The first community of the Bruderhof movement, begun in the village of Sannerz near Schlüchtern in Hesse, Germany, under the leadership of Eberhard and Emmy Arnold and Emmy's sister Else von Hollander.

servant (of the Word) Pastor, minister; brother chosen by unanimous approval of all members of the Bruderhof to serve the community by caring for its inner and outer well-being. The term reflects the Hutterian belief that authentic leadership in Christian community should mean service.

Wheathill (1942-61) Bruderhof in Shropshire, England, begun to accommodate new English members after the Bruderhof's emigration to Paraguay.

witness brother Brother chosen by unanimous approval of all members of the Bruderhof to support the servant of the Word at his community.

About the Authors:

Bob and Shirley Wagoner are graduates of Manchester College, Indiana. During Bob's studies at Bethany Theological Seminary (1952-54), the Wagoners made their visit to the Bruderhof in Paraguay. Bob subsequently received a Ph.D. from Harvard University and has been Professor of Philosophy at Juniata College since 1965. Shirley received a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland in 1981 and was formerly a book editor for Silver, Burdett & Ginn but is now a reading specialist for the Montgomery County school system in Maryland. The Wagoners have two children and one grandchild and live in Huntingdon, PA.

About the Illustrator:

Born in West London in 1907 Leslie Holland studied at the Royal College of Art. In 1940 in Evesham, bearded and working as a market gardener, he was mistaken for a member of the Bruderhof for which he had been looking. In 1944 he joined the little group in Wheathill, Shropshire. He was with the Bruderhof in Paraguay from 1953 to 1960, and now lives in Wiltshire, England.

Most of the illustrations in this book are from original drawings and sketches done in Paraguay from 1953 to 1960, others from memory especially for this book. The illustrations for the first two chapters about the overland journey to Primavera, while typical of South America, are mainly from sketches Leslie did in Paraguay.

RELATED BRUDERHOF TITLES
Available from The Plough Publishing House
Catalog sent on request

Brothers Unite: An Account of the Uniting of Eberhard Arnold and the Rhön Bruderhof with the Hutterian Church,
edited by the Hutterian Brethren.

Children in Community,
edited by the Society of Brothers.

The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren Vol. I,
edited by the Hutterian Brethren.

Confession of Faith, (1540-42)
by Peter Rideman.

God's Revolution: the Witness of Eberhard Arnold,
edited by the Hutterian Society of Brothers and John H. Yoder.

Inner Land: A Guide into the Heart and Soul of the Bible,
by Eberhard Arnold.

Living Churches: the Essence of their Life
Vol. I, Love to Christ and Love to the Brothers,
Vol. II, The Meaning and Power of Prayer Life,
by Eberhard Arnold.

Salt and Light: Talks and Writings on the Sermon on the Mount,
by Eberhard Arnold.

Seeking for the Kingdom of God,
by Eberhard and Emmy Arnold.

Torches Rekindled: the Bruderhof's Struggle for Renewal,
by Merrill Mow.

Torches Together: the Beginning and Early Years of the Bruderhof Communities,
by Emmy Arnold.