THE WAYS AND POWER OF LOVE

Types, Factors, and Techniques of Moral Transformation

by

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Chapter Twenty-Two

Techniques of Contemporary Free Brotherhoods

I

The Society of Brothers

A third system of techniques of altruistic socialization is given by the educational systems of contemporary communal brotherhoods. Of these, the Society of Brothers in Paraguay, the Mennonite and the Hutterite brotherhoods are chosen here. In contrast to the multitude of short-lived, abortive, or miscarried experiments in total communal living,[1] the Mennonite and the Hutterite brotherhoods have existed for a few centuries. Because of varying social, cultural, geographic, and historic environments they have modified many secondary points of their organization during their historical existence. The essential characteristics of their way of life and organizations, however, have remained little changed. The comparatively long life of these brotherhoods testifies to the efficiency of the techniques they use for maintenance of the spirit of brotherhood in their communities. This vitality is the reason for selecting these brotherhoods for analysis of their methods of social, moral, and spiritual education. Of these, the Society of Brothers in Paraguay is singled out for the additional reasons of its heterogeneous composition and its recent establishment. If it succeeds in preserving brotherly relations among members of different races, nationalities, sexes, ages, religions, vocations, education, etc., this would show a real efficiency of its methods. The essentials of these methods are well outlined in the following statements of the Society of Brothers in Paraguay, Uruguay, and England.[2]

Community in Two Hemispheres. The Society of Brothers is a community group on an intentional and voluntary basis. Members hold all goods in common and work is done for the benefit of the whole group and for those who avail themselves of the help the community wishes to extend to all who are in physical or spiritual need.

The movement arose thirty-two years ago in Germany and now [1952] consists of some 850 members, men, women and children, of which number

650 live in Paraguay and 200 in England. A small group has recently been established in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Who are They? The Brothers are a new branch of the Hutterian movement, a community group which arose in the Sixteenth Century in Europe and has spiritual and historical connections with early Mennonites and the beginnings of Quakerism. In their golden age in Moravia, at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century, some 40,000 Hutterians lived in full community of work and goods. There are about 9,000 Hutterian descendants practicing community in some eighty "Bruderhoefe" (fraternal farms) in Canada, South Dakota, Montana and Mexico, now.

The settlements in England and South America, however, originated spontaneously from the modern world in an attempt to demonstrate that peaceful and creative community is possible today on the basis of the Early Christian way of life. The members of the Society of Brothers, on joining the group, surrender all their property and use their energies in the service of God and men for the rest of their lives without seeking a reward. Their guidance in practical conduct is the Sermon on the Mount, and they have found that the pattern of a new order of justice and love among men arises out of the free dedication of each individual, and of the group as a whole, to the need of their fellowmen, following the maxim: "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

They realize that voluntary poverty and simplicity, a harmonious and pure common life, with an open door for all, irrespective of nation, creed, race, age, sex or wealth, is the answer to the confused and frustrated condition of contemporary man, who faces the problem of spiritual and physical survival in a state of utter bewilderment. They know from experience that the need of modern man is as much spiritual as economic, as much emotional as physical, as much personal as social. Life is a whole, and its disintegration in apparently isolated spheres is one of the aspects of the present-day crisis. In the Early Church, where life was truly one, as all its multiple aspects were governed by one creative power, all the members were of one heart, one mind and one soul, and as a natural outcome of this spiritual, emotional and rational oneness, they held all their material possessions in common. In this way the germ cell of the new body socio-politic of mankind was created, which is still growing today and will eventually supersede the present order of decay and death.

The Society of Brothers does not attempt to copy the Early Christian example in an outward and mechanical way. It knows, however, that the same spirit, if allowed to govern men's life today, brings forth a community organism identical in its essential characteristics, if not in outward detail, with the Early Church at Jerusalem. These characteristics are fundamental principles without which no true community can survive or grow. They are unity of faith and action; love, embracing all and breaking down all barriers of property, class, race or creed; peace, as harmony and cooperation to the exclusion of injustice, violence and war; purity in human relationships, as faithfulness and creativeness in contrast to selfish indulgence, fear and mutual infliction of pain.

Origin and History. Arising out of the Continental social and religious movements of the early twenties of the present century, the community flourished in Germany . . . until the advent of National Socialism. Unwilling to compromise its deep convictions, the group emigrated to Liechtenstein . . . and England, during the years 1933–37. . . . A second move became necessary in 1940–41 owing to the war, as the community, then numbering some

350 members, was in danger of being broken up into its national components by the internment of its German members. The majority of the group moved to South America, where they were able to settle in Northern Paraguay. There, at Primavera, three communal villages were built up in the course of eleven years. . . .

A small group of three members left behind in England to wind up the affairs of the group, soon grew in numbers, and started afresh in 1942, when the Wheathill Bruderhof was founded, which now numbers some 200 people. The English and South American Bruderhoefe, although widely separated geographically, are settlements of people inspired by the same objectives: they work fully together, through a close contact for the common task and through the frequent exchange of members.

Opportunities in Paraguay. Primavera is situated south of the Equator. The total population of that area, in the neighborhood of 40,000, is mainly engaged in agriculture, cattle raising and lumbering. The rural population is very poor as a whole, and their health, education and general welfare have been badly neglected.

The work of the Society of Brothers arises from the character and needs of the geographical area in which they are placed. The basis of subsistence is cattle ranching, lumbering, wood industries and agriculture. A small hospital came into being as a result of the Brotherhood's counting three doctors, a bacteriologist, two pharmacists and several nurses among its members. Recognizing the great need and suffering prevalent in the neighborhood, they put their services at the disposal of the sick and ailing of the district, immediately upon arrival of the group from England in 1941. Several thousands of patients from outside the community are being treated every year. Paraguayans also avail themselves of the educational facilities which the community has to offer, and learn from the new agricultural methods introduced by the Brothers. Several families and individuals have joined the community from Paraguay, and a growing number of parents ask the Society to take their children into its schools. At a Nativity play written and produced by younger members of the community at Christmas, 1951, more than 250 neighbors came to experience the message of Christmas.

The People in the Communities. The members of the Society of Brothers are for the most part young, the average age of the adult members being between 35 and 45. More than 350 of the total membership of 650 are children under fifteen years of age. Most adults are married and they lead a harmonious family life. They come from many different nations and walks of life. The majority are English, German, Swiss and Dutch, with representatives from Sweden, Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Italy, Latvia, India, Spain, North America, Argentina and Paraguay. Formerly most of them were members of many Christian denominations and movements; some were atheists and agnostics, others Jews or members of other non-Christian groups. Today they are all united in one common, living faith. Most members came from big cities, a few from rural areas, having worked in industries and offices as workers or clerks. Among the group are former merchants, teachers, doctors, mechanics, builders, engineers, clergymen, lawyers and artists. Very few were farmers. Several are university graduates. Most had a good all-round education, some hardly any learning at all. Some were well-to-do or rich, others poor, the majority middle class. Now they all work together for one common aim; all differences of race, wealth or creed are completely abolished. The old and

the young, man and woman, intellectual and worker, Jew and Gentile, South American and European, have here found that they are fundamentally the same, that they all have to fight the same battle against selfishness and destructiveness within themselves. Helping one another in the fight for brotherhood, they find that they can be united spiritually and practically, acting as one body. This is their deepest joy and their greatest opportunity, and this they wish for all men alike.

Education. Most of the 350 children under fifteen and the 40 young people under twenty-one are children of the 90 families living in the communities in Paraguay. Some were orphans and children or young people entrusted to the care of the Brotherhood by outsiders. The education of the younger generation is one of the most important tasks of the Society of Brothers, and is regarded as the joint responsibility of all its members. Education is for and in community, the family unit being regarded as an organic and highly important part of the whole. The children live with their parents but join their respective age groups during the greater part of the day. The baby house, toddler house, kindergarten and school are important parts of every Bruderhof community. Breakfast and afternoon tea are taken in the families, whereas the bigger meals, dinner and supper, are taken in the communal dining room (each village has only one kitchen, as it has only one common purse, one communal storehouse, one laundry for all, etc.). Young people after leaving school are given an opportunity for training outside, which enables them, apart from the knowledge and skill acquired, to get to know other people and different ideas. They are thus encouraged to make an independent decision whether they want to join the community at the age of discretion, or live as other people do. Practically all of the young people choose the brotherly way of life. It is felt to be of great importance that the decision of the young people grown up in the community should be spontaneous and free.

Contact with the Outside World. In two South American cities, in Asunción (Paraguay) and Montevideo (Uruguay) the Brotherhood maintains houses where members live in community in an attempt to carry the message of brotherly life to people outside. These houses serve as centers for meetings and as a home for some of the young people from the communities as they train outside. They are also important economically, as most of the buying and selling activities of the Society are carried on through them, especially the one in Asunción. At regular intervals the community sends out members to other countries, mainly to Europe and North and South America, in order to make contact with other movements and seeking people, and to make the way of brotherly living more generally known through the medium of lectures and meetings. Circular letters, books, pamphlets and leaflets are published from time to time. The communities welcome guests and visitors for longer and shorter periods in Paraguay, Uruguay and England.

. . .

And You? The members of the Society of Brothers in South America and England feel that the message they wish to convey, by their lives rather than by fine-sounding words, has a bearing on the present world situation, and is directed to every individual striving to find a solution to the problems that beset men and women today. Community life in its fullest, creative sense, is possible. It is not restricted to any particular group of people, or to any special type. Any ordinary person can live it. You can do it yourself. The only condition is an unrestricted will and a complete dedication to this one object—

the full surrender of self. Community means freedom, freedom from fear, freedom from frustration, conflict, destructiveness, freedom from self. It alone is the true calling of man, the fulfillment of his deepest longing.

Additional details are given by Grace Rhoads, Jr., and by Eberhard C. H. Arnold.[3]

The Community.[4] It is understood that a guest takes an equal share in the work, of which there is plenty in a community of 600 persons established only ten years ago in the primitive conditions of sub-tropical ranch life in South America. It is remarkable what has been accomplished on a shoestring of capital in developing three villages, each with dairy, orchard and garden, one with the sawmill and wood-turnery, one with the hospital, and the third with the bakery and library. . . . One develops both some unused muscles and an admiration for the men and women who are able to do such hard work without most of the modern machinery which would be so helpful. The tiny hospital has profited greatly by a gift of a second-hand X-ray machine and is crowded with Paraguayans who come miles on horseback for treatment of hookworm, malaria, the South American equivalent of the dread Indian kala-azar, and other diseases, and who are beginning to bring their wives in numbers for pre-natal care and childbirth. . . . Shortage of labor and machines is one of the chief problems, but the hard work it involves produces a rare fellowship.

There are good times, too. Outings by the little river two miles away which reminds one of New Jersey's Rancocas Creek, celebrations of special events like engagements and the return of travellers, folk-dancing, singing, an orchestra, arts and crafts, and the walks which bring children into close contact with Nature, lighten the daily grind.

Youth takes a chief place in the community interest, as is natural when young people form half the population and a normal family has six to eight children. Lively, jolly children they are, too, cared for in baby house, toddler house, kindergarten and school through the day, joining their families at tea-time as well as breakfast, and having what one found to be an especially strong family feeling. At the two main meals the younger children eat separately in their age groups while the older ones join the adults in their common dinner and supper. Families live in apartments of one to four or possibly five rooms in long low buildings. Older children are apt to be learning a trade in another village or may be off to Asunción for their technical education in the year which it is expected young people will take in order to make up their minds whether to join the community.

Its Principles. The life of the group is governed by one guiding principle, that the individual must give up his will to God and be willing to follow His leadership for the community. Religion permeates all of life. No separate house is required for worship, for the "church" is the group of believers. Mealtimes are times when one attempts to realize the presence of God, as are the special meetings on Sunday and one week-day evening. At meals, after a song and a longish period of silence, some one generally reads from a book or the many letters which come from abroad. Meetings for business, held in the "Bruderschaft" or group of actual members, are somewhat like Friends' monthly meetings, with full consideration by the whole group and an opportunity for each to express his feeling of what is right. . . . One feels in

this community of sixteen nationalities the same desire to reach a "sense of the meeting" that Friends strive to put into practice.

The government of the community is definitely democratic. Certain individuals are chosen as "Servants of the Word," "Witness Brothers," "Stewards" and "Housemothers" to perform certain functions, but their recommendations are always subject to group decision, "in the Light," as Friends would call it. The functions of these representatives correspond roughly to those of elders, overseers and certain committees, except that there is much more to be decided and carried out jointly in a group which shares so completely.

One finds men and women who have come from very different backgrounds, social, racial, economic, educational and religious, living here as Brothers. Paraguayans have begun to join. All are on the same plane of importance. . . .

Certain rules have been formulated in the thirty years since the group was founded in Germany by Eberhard Arnold, young Student Christian Movement secretary, following the First World War. They form a minimum of basic common belief and practice felt to be essential for the right living of the community. One rule which is considered extremely important is that no one should speak evil about another; he promises to go direct to the person involved if he finds anything wrong, and he promises to accept reproof by another. There are certain vows to be taken on becoming a novice and on joining. One promises devotion to God and one promises to remain in the community even if husband or wife should leave, the vow to God being considered higher than the one to husband or wife. There are sacraments, purely symbolic, such as baptism on being received into membership, and the Lord's supper at Easter, after one has examined his conscience for possible wrong relationships, and tried to make all right. There are lovely simple ceremonies such as when a baby is presented to the community and at the time of the harvest Thanksgiving festival, in which candles on the tables and flowers around the room make an atmosphere of quiet joy.

Joy is evident in many occasions throughout the year, especially of course at Christmas when the Christmas story is acted out even in heat which bends candles. The faces of the adults generally show a serenity and happiness rare in ordinary life. They feel they have not withdrawn from the world but are called to a life of brotherhood, based on the Sermon on the Mount and the second chapter of Acts, which makes all members one of another. If they have had to go as far as Paraguay for sanctuary, God must have a reason for it. There is a constant sense of being sustained by the group. The belief is similar to early Quakerism in its emphasis on Jesus and the Eternal Light which guides men if they but give up their will to the leading of God.

The experience certainly leads one away from egotism and gives a new sense of belonging together in the company of believers. It has transformed people who came to the group in great need, mental, physical or spiritual, or who were proud or dictatorial. Of course it does not make men perfect. All are welcomed freely to share in the life.

One of the great things for me was to know that one was not looking out for oneself at the expense of others, as one feels to be the case in saving for old age when people are starving in the world. One knows also that there is a place and service for every one, no matter how old or feeble. It is remarkable, incidentally, how the older people have stood the hot climate and the hardships. For hardships there are, in crowded living, in lack of many physical comforts to which one is accustomed, in rather monotonous diet, in climate,

not to speak of the greater sacrifices of leaving family, friends and native country. The sacrifice of giving up property is usually felt to be minor. But all sacrifice seems to be forgotten in the joy of living a life of brotherhood, losing one's life rather than seeking to save it.

Family Organization.[5] Are integral community and family life compatible? Do they not mutually exclude one another, and, is it not a vain attempt to try to reconcile these two divergent patterns of life? In short, can only monks live in community?

Various ways have been tried to solve this dilemma. In Israel the Kibbutzim have put the education of the children almost completely into the hands of the group, although there exists a considerable variety of methods and degree in carrying out this principle. In many groups the children live away from their parents with the other children, the mother being completely free to work in one of the departments of the Kibbutz. The parents see their children daily, however, and maintain a warm parental relationship with them. This is one solution, unacceptable as it is to many. By this method the married woman of the Kibbutz is in a position to share fully in all the various activities of the group. She may, however, feel deprived of both the responsibility and the emotional satisfaction of motherhood, at least to some extent. It is important to note in this context that the Hutterian Bruderhofs, during their prime in Moravia and Slovakia in the 16th and early 17th centuries, had solved the problem of education in very much the same way.

The group farms of the Society of Brothers in England and Paraguay have worked out another solution: The family is regarded as an important unit of the larger Bruderhof organism. Whereas utimately the whole group is responsible for the education of the children and young people, this is carried out jointly by the parents and teachers (including sisters working in the baby house, toddler house and kindergarten). Frequently these who are in daily personal contact meet as a group, and find a common way of action in all educational matters. The smaller mealtimes, that is breakfast and an afternoon refreshment, are taken in the family circle, and the children share the same home with their parents. Yet during the daytime the children are cared for in their corresponding age groups. Since cooking, washing, sewing, as well as the education of the children is done communally rather than on a family household basis, the mother is able to be actively engaged in communal work, and is free to be a responsible member of the group. In the English and Paraguayan communities a careful system has been worked out in order to extend to each member an equal opportunity to attend meetings and mealtimes, which are considered important. In this way the mother of a family of six or eight children can be as active as the unmarried woman or bachelor in all the affairs of the group. This is important also for this reason, because the maturer judgment of older and more experienced members is thus available for the benefit of the whole group. The way in which this is done is quite simple: All members, men and women alike, have an average number of two evening chores per week, and therefore are able to attend meetings during the other evenings. The evening watches ["baby sitting"] during meetings are done in turns by all, and family dwellings are so grouped that only a very small number of women are required to look after the children during the evening. For Sundays when there is a morning meeting, and for special occasions like festivals, weddings, etc., a careful list is kept for both men and women by their respective coordinators so that burdens, responsibilities and joys are shared

equally by all. In this way the significance of family life is fully maintained, but it is subordinated to the higher and greater unit of the whole community. The women, also those with large families, are able to take an active part in the work as much as in the spiritual and cultural activities of the group. . . .

This solution, as described above, is of necessity only possible on the basis of a deep spiritual integration of all the members into one living organism. Only where there is full mutual trust and complete confidence can the individual, the family and the community serve one purpose in full harmonious coordination, without one part hampering or destroying the other. True community, therefore, means true individuality and true family life. As it is in this case, teacher and parents carry the responsibility for each child together, both being members of the same brotherhood in which they seek clarity and unity about all questions of life. Then there is no reason why it should not be a happy, active and creative young generation which is growing up, as children, not only of their own parents, but of the whole community.

The question of family life in community is a vital one. Unless it can be solved, unless the men, the women and the children as individuals, and the family as a whole find their rightful places as living cells in the whole body, each contributing fully to the benefit of the whole in full harmony and fulfillment of their true function – unless this true organic equilibrium has been found, no true community can survive as a creative challenge of a new order of life in the face of the disintegration of present-day society.

II

The Hutterites in the United States

Joseph W. Eaton, R. J. Weil, and B. Kaplan give additional knowledge about the moral and mental sanity of the Hutterite communities in the United States and about the instrumental factors of it.[6] Some excerpts from their work follow.

"More than one out of twenty in a mental hospital. . . . One out of every ten Americans is likely to suffer a serious mental difficulty which will incapacitate them during some part of their lives." These are the best available estimates of the toll now taken by that conglomerate of ills, lumped together in the catch-all phrase of "mental disease."

There is a general impression that the Hutterites have a considerable immunity from symptoms of personal and social disorganization. Severe mental illness, requiring hospitalization, suicide, crime, juvenile delinquency and divorce – these and other indicators of personal tension so common in the American society at large – seem exceedingly rare among the more than 8,500 adherents of this religious kinship group.

What is the basis for the Hutterite reputation for good mental health? Bertha W. Clark, who travelled among them in the 1920's claims that they are entirely free of crime and notes their general contentment with life.[7] Dr. Lee Emerson Deets, whose doctor's thesis at Columbia University dealt with the Hutterites, observed an almost utopian happiness and concluded that "Compared with our society, the Hutterite community is an island of certainty and security in a river of change." A report to the Manitoba legislature by the Manitoba Civil Liberties Association claims that the Hutterites do not "contribute to the over-crowding of our mental hospitals, since the mental

security derived from their system results in a complete absence of mental illness." Personal inquiry and correspondence with a large number of public officials as well as university professors who have made a systematic study of some aspect of Hutterite culture, strongly confirm the impression so well expressed by Miss Mary Waldner of the Freeman College (a Mennonite school in South Dakota close to one of the centers of Hutterite settlement): "Most observers credit them with remarkable mental health and usually credit it to the freedom from tension and conflict which they enjoy in their way of life."

Their reputation for possessing an unusual degree of peace of mind can also be traced back historically through many stages of the more than four-century-old religious sect. As early as 1669, we have a report by a Catholic novelist, Hans Jacob Christoph Grimmelshausen, about their community life. Their contentment attracted him greatly despite the "heretical opinions contrary to the general principles of the Christian Church," which he, as a devout Catholic, believed them to entertain. There was no anger, no jealousy, no vengeful spirit, no envy, no enmity, no concern about temporal things, no pride, no vanity, no gambling, no remorse; in a word, there was throughout and altogether a lovely harmony.

Nowhere in the literature can one find any significant dissent from this general picture. . . .

"No Hutterites in our hospitals," report Insane Asylum administrators in South Dakota, Montana, Manitoba, and Alberta. Outside of two patients, whom Hutterites brought in for short-term treatment in one of the Canadian provinces and five Hutterites who had some contact with a mental hygiene clinic, no record of institutional contact could be found since the immigration of the sect to North America.

A similar response was obtained from law-enforcement officers concerning crime and juvenile delinquency. . . .

Our investigation found that in the history of the sect since their coming into the United States, only one suicide, one divorce and two separations have occurred. There is no known case of parental abandonment of children and no incidence of arson, personal violence or attempted homicide. No sex crimes are known to have occurred although the Hutterites disclose knowledge of a few instances where their own strict sex mores have been violated during the present generation. These instances, to any reader of the Kinsey report, would hardly warrant the lifting of an eyebrow!

. . . Our study generally substantiates the Hutterite reputation for good personal and social adjustment, although it notes more exceptions to the trend than any superficial acquaintance with the sect would reveal.

Co-operation. Hutterite communities practice an unusual degree of co-operation sustained by strong common beliefs, values and a historical consciousness of identity. They hold all property in common. No wages are paid. Each person works to the best of his ability. He eats his meals in the community dining room, prepared by different women in rotation. If sick, the colony will look after him, sending him to specialists, such as the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, if local medical facilities do not seem adequate. In case of death, widows and dependents have no financial worries. The loss of a breadwinner never means the loss of bread. The Hutterite way of life provides social security from the womb to the tomb. The religious beliefs of the group assure their members a further guarantee for security beyond the tomb. It promises certain salvation to all who follow the precepts of their faith.

The co-operation also extends to the education of children. After the age

of two and a half, boys and girls attend a communal kindergarten, where they spend most of the day. Later, when they go to school, they also spend many of their waking hours in the company of one another, under supervision of a Hutterite religious teacher, who is responsible for much of their discipline outside of hours when the children attend public school. Since both mother and father work for the colony, at least part of each day, older siblings assume much of the care of their younger brothers and sisters. In general, Hutterites grow up within a stable and closely-knit group of age-mates. Their imagination and expectations are influenced considerably by other children, close to them in physical and mental development. . . .

The Hutterite family performs fewer functions than in the American society. Nevertheless, there is strong attachment to and identification with their families. Children are generally wanted. Birth-control practices are considered sinful; violations of this taboo are extremely rare. The community makes many provisions to share parental burdens when families grow large. Most children are born with the help of a Hutterite midwife. The husband and the mother, or another close female relative of the woman, are present during delivery. Most Hutterites prefer the security which these familiar people and surroundings give them to what they regard as the "coldly antiseptic" atmosphere of hospitals. However, in case of complications, a doctor will be called, and the mother may be delivered in a hospital with proper instruments. After birth, the community will provide enough help to a mother for eight weeks to relieve her of all responsibility except the care of her baby. If she already has a large family, a single female relative or some other woman will volunteer to help her with sewing, washing and the many other chores connected with running a home. The Hutterite culture considers childbearing and rearing among its most important functions. Children are genuinely wanted and grow up in a community which is carefully organized to help them and their parents in this process.

The colonies are governed in secular matters by an assembly of all men who have been baptized. Women have no formal vote. In religious matters, preachers usually are allowed to make the decisions. There also is a tendency to give greater responsibility to people as they grow old. While formally their system of government might be described as a democracy with patriarchal and theocratic trends, most actual group decisions are based on common consensus. Hutterites take care to keep their villages small enough so that people really know one another well. Controversial issues are rare because leaders know how their followers think. Decisions are not commonly made against the strong opposition of even a minority.

Hutterites have a great deal of freedom within their narrow path. There is no time clock to govern their work. Their pay is never docked if they want to take a day off to visit friends or see a doctor. But this freedom is purchased at, what must seem to many outsiders, considerable restrictions. These limits are self-imposed, by custom and religion. Most Hutterites are quite conscious of their limits and are brought up to believe that "too much individualism would destroy the solidarity and peace we need to live together like a flock of sheep," to quote one of their leaders. Individuals must consult the group before they do anything not sanctioned by time-honored custom. They all wear the same clothes, homemade by the women for their families from cloth bought for the whole village. They eat together in the communal dining room, with no special diets, except for those who are ill. All homes are furnished with standardized and simple equipment. Hutterites believe it to be

sinful to enjoy what they define as "worldly luxuries," such as radios, pleasure cars, fashionable clothing, jewelry and other material goods.

This puritan self-denial, however, is not coupled with a rejection of the technological developments of our age. For themselves, most Hutterites will forego running water in their homes; the old-fashioned wash basin will do. But for their chickens, they will construct the most modern coops, well designed for efficient egg-laying with running water close by. They will stock them with good breeds of hens as recommended by the Agricultural Experiment Station. Their machinery often is the most modern found in the neighborhood.

To the visitor they may appear to be a freak survival of sixteenth century peasant culture because of the way they dress, the ancient sermons they preach, the songs they sing and customs they adhere to. But in the economic realm they certainly keep up with what they call the "world." Their leaders also have considerable insight into current affairs, be they local, national or international. The Hutterites have become integrated in much of the American culture, but are trying hard to assimilate selectively. They use their religious beliefs as guides for deciding on modifications of their way of life in response to outside influences. The process can perhaps be described best as *controlled acculturation*. Only a stable community which has considerable control over its members through their allegiance and loyalty to its way of life, can make such a planned adjustment to conflicting ideas with which the community comes into contact. Although there are rumblings of deeper change, they have so far been successful in transmitting the essence of their way of life to the next generation.

Genetic Homogeneity. Hutterites are a predominantly youthful population. In 1949 over half (50.3%) were less than 15 years of age, against less than a third (32%) among the rural farm people of Alberta, South Dakota and Manitoba. The Hutterite birth rate is exceedingly high, 38.6 children per 1,000 people having been born to Hutterites in 1949, against 30.0 among all people in Montana or 22.1 among white rural people in the United States in general. Correspondingly, Hutterites have a low death rate; 5.3 people died for every 1,000 in 1949, against nearly 8 (7.96 among U.S. white rural people), or over 10 (10.1) among the U.S. general population. These unusual population statistics will require further checking, over a longer period of time, to make more certain of their validity. However, the phenomenal natural increase of the sect, almost entirely through natural increase, suggests that the high rate of births and low rate of deaths has been a continuous phenomenon ever since the people came to the U.S.A. There were about 300 of them in 1875 living in three colonies. Today in 1950 there are over 8,500 Hutterites living in 91 colonies, descendants from these original immigrants. (Converts, of which there are not many, are not included in these calculations.)

The Hutterites show considerable internal stability. It has been a common experience for minority groups in the U.S.A. to find themselves assimilating rapidly as they come into contact with the American way of life. Present-day Hutterites are the third to fifth generation of their people on this continent. They and their way of life have undergone many changes, but their group identity remains essentially intact. Few of their young people leave their colonies permanently. Some of the younger boys go away to "try the world." Most of them return. . . .

What makes the sect's experience even more significant is that their social

system has perpetuated itself for over 400 years, often in the face of terrible persecution (or perhaps because of it, too). They are no odd mutation of history. They originated around the year 1528 when a group of Tyrolese peasants, influenced by an Anabaptist preacher named Jacob Hutter, fled to Moravia to escape persecution. Hutter exhorted his followers to restore the simple truths of the Bible, as he saw them. Among the most outstanding differences with the established churches was his belief in the sinfulness of private property, the wickedness of the use of force under any circumstances, adult baptism, refusal to take oaths and the insistence on simplicity in living conditions. In 1536 Hutter was burned at the stake after terrible tortures. For over three centuries a band of faithful, sometimes diminishing in numbers close to extinction, were forced to flee many times – from Switzerland and Austria, to Moravia, Hungary, Rumania and finally to Russia. In Russia they lived for nearly a century under the liberal conditions offered such refugees by the czarina, Catherine the Great, who was anxious to build up the economic power of her country through the attraction of skilled laborers and farmers. In the 1870's the Hutterites moved to the United States when Czar Alexander II threatened to abrogate their privileges of maintaining their own schools and of exemption from military service.

In the annals of American experiments with co-operative living, the Hutterites stand out because of their capacity to maintain permanent co-operative farm communities. The Owenites, Brook Farm, Oneida and the Amana people, to mention only a few of the roughly 300 efforts to live communally, are today only of interest to historians. The Hutterites have grown and expanded in the face of competition for their young generation with the more powerful American culture.

The Hutterites do many things differently from the way most Americans would do them. However, they are closely and deeply influenced by the larger culture. Their children attend a public school in the colony usually taught by a non-Hutterite, as the sect does not encourage its own young people to get the necessary advanced education to qualify for school teaching. They have daily business and social contact with the "world." They are more literate and capable of speaking English than many of the minority groups in the United States and Canada. However, they keep going without the incentives we need to motivate our people. Wealth, personal power and artistic adornment are considered sinful objectives. They also get along without many of the negative social controls, like imprisonment, fines, threats of loss of livelihood or loss of life itself.

The order of their society is maintained through an internalized discipline of the conscience, re-enforced through a fear of external punishment and social disapproval. The Hutterites have certain freedoms we don't have; but also many restrictions which they themselves recognize as "very hard" to adhere to. But for the most part, they do.

Our search for clues to the cultural and environmental factors in mental health is complicated by Hutterite homogeneity through heredity and a long history of biological selection. The Hutterites may have acquired some genetic or somatic immunity against certain mental diseases, in which such factors play an important role. They are one of America's most inbred groups, because of their anxiety for centuries to marry only with their religious sect. There have been few converts within the last 75 years, during which there was a natural increase of over 2,800%, almost exclusively through in-group marriages. There are now only sixteen family names among the kinship Hut-

terites, with eight names predominating and accounting for a considerable proportion of the entire population. There also are folk beliefs among the Hutterites about the influence of heredity on personality. Some family strains are considered constitutionally healthy or weak by them. Some American doctors, who practice among them, express similar hunches. Our research team is therefore not overlooking the possible role of genetic and somatic factors in the mental health of these people, although short of a complete genetic survey, which technically and financially cannot be made within the framework of our present study, their influence can only be assessed qualitatively.

The American bookstores are full of well advertised guides to "perfect happiness." The covers and titles of the volumes are well designed to suggest: "Read me, I cost only $3.50, won't take more than a few hours of your time and won't involve you in any real change of your life pattern!" The study of the Hutterite culture strongly suggests that mental health and ill-healths are rooted much deeper in the very essence of our personal lives and civilization.[8]

III

Conclusions

The preceding descriptions of the Hutterite brotherhoods – in Paraguay as well as in the United States – bring out clearly the main factors of altruism emphasized in this study. First, each member of these brotherhoods is fully identified with Supreme Love and the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. The overwhelming majority call this supreme value "God," others – the freethinkers in the Paraguay community – call it Supreme Love or something similar. Second, the adults who join the brotherhood do so quite freely, by their own choice. Third, every member willingly surrenders his egos to the supreme value and the brotherhood. Fourth, all members have thus the common fund of the basic values of the brotherhood. Fifth, each member identifies himself or herself with the brotherhood community; through that he or she becomes free from all conflicting loyalties and group affiliations. Sixth, through the triple identifications – with the supreme love, with the basic common values, and with the brotherhood community – each member acquires: a) harmony of his egos, their sublimation to, and control of their conscious and unconscious drives by, the supreme value – God, Love, Self – with which the member identifies himself; b) harmony of the members with one another; and c) investment of their total personality in one community. Seventh, as a result of this triple "harmonization," the members are at peace with themselves, with one another, and with the world at large. Eighth, as a consequence of this, they free themselves to a considerable degree from endless worries about tomorrow, from the sense of insecurity, from gnawing ambitions, competitive antagonisms, loneliness, and ego-centered unhappiness. Ninth, reared in this atmosphere of love, the children freely grow into "fortunate altruists" and spontaneously perpetuate the brotherly way of life of their parents.

Tenth, the freedom to leave the community by those who for some reasons prefer the individualistic way of life serves as the safety valve for the community: through a free exodus or unhindered disaffiliation of the individualistic elements the brotherhood incessantly frees itself from the discordant members and maintains its brotherly unity.

In all these respects the basic principles of the brotherhood are similar to those of the monastic orders. Both of these types of organization incorporate in their structure and activity three basic principles of altruistic groups: ideological and behavorial identification of the group and of its members with the supreme value of love (called by different names); common fund of the basic values for all members; and the total affiliation of each member with the (monastic or brotherhood) community, with resulting surrender of his egos and affiliations to the supreme value of the community and the community itself.

This explains why the monastic and the "secular" communties of the Hutterite type have been comparatively long-living among many short-lived "communal groups" and why, on the other hand, an enormous majority of numerous "communal experiments" have quickly failed and disintegrated. If one carefully investigates the short-lived "brotherhoods" or "communistic experiments," one finds that these have lacked one or more of the basic conditions of altruistic group or membership. Either their members did not identify themselves with a supreme value of love and did not "sublimate" to it their egos and drives; or they have not surrendered their little egos and selfish interests to the supreme value and to the community, remaining "egotistic" and "individualistic"; or did not invest their whole personality into the community; or did not create a common fund of the basic values for all the members of the brotherhood. Being deficient in one or several of these properties, such communities could not acquire the intrapersonal integration of their members, the interpersonal harmony among their participants, and the strong unity of the community itself. These disharmonies and defects in their turn hindered the realization of most of the benefits of the true brotherhood: peace of mind, sense of security, joy of participation in a creative effort of the group; freedom from worries, ambitions and from inner anarchy of conflicting egos and drives. The communal enterprise of that sort has all the shortcomings of competitive individualistic groups, and of superficial collectivism, without the virtues of either. No wonder that such enterpises have been short-lived.

If a few of these lived longer, they did so only by becoming "coercive societies," bound together by the rude force exerted by their rulers. Such societies, exemplified by the U.S.S.R., have, of course, many altruistic threads in the interrelationships of their population; nevertheless in their main structure they are largely compulsory societies run by their rulers' coercion, pitiless punishment, coarse rewards, hate, and other semi-animal

forces. Such coercive groups are the very opposite of the free altruistic community. Without the cement of compulsion, all communal bodies devoid of the above conditions of altruistic communities are liable to disintegration. They either degenerate into a competitive association of individuals and cliques, each motivated by selfish utilitarian drives, or else into a "Communistic society" of prisoners, enclosed by coercive walls, fear of punishment, greed of reward, and by the egoistic lust for power of their rulers.