

Summer 1940

the plough



SUMMER 1940

Ruth. L. Bassell

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“THE PLOUGH, Towards the Coming Order” is a quarterly journal edited for the Society of Brothers by E. C. H. Arnold. With such a group behind it, THE PLOUGH is an instrument for uniting more closely those who are seeking here and now, both in the Bruderhof communities and outside them, to live by the standards of the Coming Order of justice, love and brotherhood. The Society of Brothers would be grateful if all who see the truth for which THE PLOUGH stands would do everything in their power to draw the attention of others to it. A leaflet telling of the aim of THE PLOUGH and the life of brotherhood behind it will be sent gladly to all whose names are sent to the Editor as likely to be interested.

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THE PLOUGH

Towards the Coming Order

Vol. III. No. 2.

Summer 1940

Our Pledge

Twenty years ago—Midsummer, 1920—a small group of people, deeply disquieted by the horror and injustice of the World War of 1914-18, set out from Berlin on the new venture of community living. They settled at the small village of Sannerz. They had only one aim: to fulfil the command—love God, and your neighbour as yourself. This was the beginning of what is now known as the Bruderhof. Ten years later Eberhard Arnold travelled to America, to unite, on behalf of the community, with the Brothers known as the Hutterians, who had practised community of goods and non-violence for four hundred years.

The year 1940 marks another important stage of historical importance for the brotherhood. We are in the midst of yet another World War. At this critical stage we, the members of the Society of Brothers, feel urged again to state our belief and to repeat our pledge of loyalty to the cause of brotherhood. We wish to declare in the most solemn way that we are firmly resolved to be loyal to the call of Christ which we have heard, and which we have tried up to the present sincerely to follow, come what may.

This call is the call of LOVE, the call of unity, the call of the Kingdom of God and its righteousness, so clearly expressed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount and in all the testimonies of the apostles to Christ, the Church and the Kingdom.

It is our avowed conviction that the common life, community in all spiritual and material things, is the true fruit of love, and as such the only solution of the need of the world. To it belongs the spreading of the good tidings of the coming Kingdom, and the call to repentance throughout the world.

We pledge ourselves again to this cause which demands our all, and we call all those who sincerely seek the way of love to unite with us at this dangerous hour of world need. The totalitarianism of force and destruction is only to be overcome by the giving of our lives to the absolute demand of love!

Whilst we are fully conscious of our shortcomings, we wish to declare our readiness to take upon ourselves all that the future may bring as the result of our determination to serve God and our neighbour. As pilgrims we stand ready, with our boots on our feet and our staffs in our hands, not tied to any earthly possessions or any particular geographical place, with no other loyalty than that to God and his Kingdom. We know that God will lead us and strengthen our weaknesses. We will follow him even through suffering and death if need be. Not that the bearers of the cause of God shall live is what matters, but that the light of God shall not be quenched. Therefore whatever happens—and who knows how many will fall victims to the spirit of destruction?—the CAUSE of brotherhood and justice shall not die: love and peace shall win!

We are firmly resolved, with the help of God, to serve this cause to the end, and in no wise to take part in the evils of war, of mammonism, and of the worship of man and the state—whether it means life or death, and wherever it may lead us.

August 1940.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES.

The Peace of God

War is the Karma of discord. It is the necessary consequence of the lack of community. It is the death-fruit of broken fellowship with God. It is the inevitable judgment over its own cause. Separation from the unity of God, the dividing up of life into hostile opposites, the injustice and disunity of men through property and selfishness—this is the cause of war."

The latest events have clearly established the truth of these words which Eberhard Arnold wrote in his book, *'The Peace of God'* (p. 45)*. You must read this book. It is of utmost importance for you in this time of supreme trial and confusion.

What is the root of war? How is it to be overcome? Where can we find clear guidance in history for our contemporary problems? What are we to do? How can we make our stand? These are questions which concern us all. This book tries to answer them.

It covers a wide field by showing the attitude to war of movements of the past and present, from the prophets of Israel right up to present-day "pacifism", showing clearly its virtues and failures. The book and its message is centred round Jesus and the Early Apostolic Church. It begins with a brief biography of Eberhard Arnold (1883-1935), the founder of the Bruderhof communities.

Eberhard Arnold saw clearly that war can only be understood and overcome if it is seen in relation to the whole of life, not as an isolated thing. War is not a matter of politicians and armies alone. This war has been called a "people's war". This is true, if only for the reason that the people, we all, are responsible for it. *Our* selfishness, whether individual or collective, is the cause of war—*our* sin its root.

What then is the remedy? How can we find true peace? That is no true peace when armies cease to fire, aeroplanes stop bombing and navies cease their work of destruction. As long as there is individual self-seeking, class hatred, social injustice—there is murder, and no peace. Neither is there peace in broken and childless marriages, which destroy the bodies and souls of men and women to-day.

This is the challenge of the little book: we must stand still and think. We must examine our lives and the motives of our actions. Are we prepared to sacrifice everything for the *only* true peace, the *peace of God*? Are we prepared here and now to live lives of LOVE, lives of JUSTICE and PURITY, lives of creative sacrifice to God and to one another?

"The judgment of war is to smash men and make them ready—that at last the longing to overcome the cause of death might rise up among them, that at last the longing for fellowship with God might let all else

* THE PEACE OF GOD, by Eberhard Arnold. Just published. 112 pp. Price 2s. paper cover. The Plough Publishing House, Ashton Keynes, Wilts.

be forgotten. *To get rid of war the root of sin must be exposed and destroyed.*" (p. 46).

Let us set to work now. Let us change our lives completely, and seek and find that community and fellowship with God and with one another which eradicates the root of war. Let us believe in the good news (so contaminated by false prophets) that this is the *essence* of Christ, that sin *is* overcome in him in the literal sense of "Go, and sin no more", of living lives of *perfect* love, peace and justice. This is the only true Church, the only true community, the only true peace, the peace which begins in the heart of men and women as an inner peace of harmony and joy, and from there establishes the outer peace of justice and brotherly love, overcoming exploitation and violence.

Do we hear and understand the challenge? Are we going to accept it? Will we give up our comfort, our middle-class securities, our selfish marriages, our hypocritical religion and "pacifism"? It is high time that we did. Soon it will be too late. There *is* an alternative: the unified Church of Christ, the life of community and justice. You know it.

But even if we accept the challenge, it is only the beginning—not the end. We must not and cannot withdraw from the need of our fellow men if we truly love. The Peace of God, the Community of God is *not* a "withdrawal from the world". (How often do we shirk the issue with this excuse?) Its character is that of a revolutionary and missionary way of life. "Go into the world and preach"—but first *live* and do what you are preaching! Then invite everyone to the joyful table of community.

One thing cannot then be avoided: suffering. Let us not be drawn away by the false optimism that *our* dedication, the surrender to God and one another, will change the world when *we* want it to. Spiritual pride and self-satisfaction is also a sin, and one of the greatest. Let us be honest. We shall be unsuccessful in the eyes of the world. We shall be despised, ridiculed, imprisoned—even killed. But the *light* is there. The victory is certain. Our loyalty is unbroken, for what we believe in is not our victory, but God's. We believe in Christ, who died the shameful death of a rioter and criminal—the King on the cross! Let this be our faith: "Though the mountains dissolve in volcanic eruption, though the hills are removed by appalling earthquakes, though the earth be shaken and rent, though the judgment of his mighty wrath destroy great powers, the love of the heart of God, as the rainbow of his perfection, never wavers. The sun of his heart sheds its rays over the destructive curtain of his thunderous wrath. The rainbow of peace in the clouds bridges the storm of his wrath. The League of Nations and world peace may founder. All treaties may be torn up. The ring of God's covenant does not break. The times of judgment come. They sink into the grave. Peace arises. It remains. It does not change. Peace is the final word of God. It is his heart. *The ultimate will of God is peace and remains peace.*" (p. 50-51.)

EBERHARD C. H. ARNOLD.

Why we Live in Community

To live in community, to work in community, and to uphold this common life as determinative of all we think and do is to us an unavoidable necessity. No desire, pains or efforts on our part have made us decide to go this way; but rather has certainty come upon us from the ultimate source of all obligations. This source of strength we confess to be in God. All life that he has created has being in community and its purpose is community. Therefore we, too, must live in community. Our common life has its basis in God, as the source of life, and is led constantly anew by him to tragic struggle and final victory. This way, this way of God's will for community, which leads us straight into the reality of working life with its fight for existence, and into all the difficulties of human character, is a way of deadly danger and of the most bitter suffering. Yet just this is our deepest joy: that we see clearly the tragedy of life, the terrific tension between death and life, this position between heaven and hell, and yet believe in the overwhelming strength of life, in the victorious power of love, in the triumph of truth, in that we believe in God.

This faith is no theory and no dogma, no system of thought or combination of words; it is no form of cult, it is no organization, but this faith is the receiving of God himself; it is the fact of being overwhelmed by him, and so it is the strength to go the way, the actual possibility of trusting again and again, where, looked at humanly, the basis of trust has been destroyed. This faith lets us see what is essential, what is immortally living, what one cannot see with the eyes and cannot grasp with the hands, although it is always there.

It sets one free from regarding men in the light of social conventions and human failings. It sees through all such masks of mammonistic, unclean and murderous human society as lying. Just as little, however, can it be deceived in the other direction, as though the really marked spitefulness and unreliability of human nature were its essential and ultimate character. It takes in all earnestness the fact that men, in their present nature, without God, are incapable of community. The changing moods of the disposition, the impulse to acquire the happiness of body and soul, strong mental currents of touchiness and ambition, the urge to have personal influence on men, human privileges of all kinds — these place a humanly insurmountable barrier in the way of actual and real community. Faith is not subject to the delusion of thinking that the acquisitive impulses and weaknesses of character, actual though they are, are the decisive things. They are of no significance in the face of the power of God and his all-conquering love. God is stronger than this reality. The community-creating energy of his Spirit overcomes all things. In this it becomes quite clear, that it is impossible for real

community to come into being; that the actual construction of life in common is out of the question for men, where faith in the power that is ultimate is lacking. All human efforts to trust again and again in the goodness that is actually in men in spite of these disagreeablenesses, or in the compulsion of the law, are bound to crash on the reality of evil. Only faith in the ultimate mystery of the Good, in God, is able to construct the community, which can alone be meant here. We must live in community for only in such a decisive attempt at living can it become quite clear how incapable of living the unrenewed man is, and what a life-giving and community-creating power God is.

We cannot forthwith throw in our lot with the political parties who, like us, want world peace, or the abolition of private property and the institution of all things in common, and wage their war in a way corresponding to the essential nature of these great societies. Like them we feel ourselves drawn and impelled towards all who suffer need, towards those who are without food and shelter, whose mental development has been stunted through slave labour. With them we stand on the side of those devoid of property, those robbed of their rights, the degraded: yet we stand and remain standing far from any class struggle which seeks by loveless means to harm the opposing groups and attacks the life of those who have sucked the blood of the proletariat. We reject the defensive war of the proletariat just as we reject the defensive war of the nation. In purely spiritual struggle, we stand together with all who fight for freedom and unity, world peace and social justice.

It follows from this state of affairs that we must live in community, for all revolutions, all idealistic societies seeking in some way to reform life, drive us anew to the recognition that faith in the Good, the will to community, can only be made vital through one thing: through a clear example in deed and through the word of Truth, both—deed and word—as one in God. We have only one means with which to confront the depravity of things to-day. This weapon of the Spirit is the constructive work of the community of love.

We know no sentimental love, no love without work. Just as little do we recognize a devotion and surrender in practical work, which does not daily show, and give expression to, the inspired relationship given by the Spirit to those engaged in the work. The love of work, the work of love—this is a matter of the Spirit. The Spirit's love is work.

Thus voluntary societies of working people, who want to have done with selfwill, with separate existence, with what is private, become signposts pointing to that ultimate unity of all men, which has its being in God's love, in the power of his coming Kingdom. The will that desires the reign of peace for all men and lives already in a relationship

in which peace reigns, the spirit of brotherly work, free from all covetousness, comes from God. Work as life and life as work: this is the fundamental character of the peace to be, which comes to us in Christ. Work as joy in activity for the whole and as joy in the living presence of the fellow-workers: such work alone makes it possible to live in community. Such joy is only possible where men live, even while engaged in the most sober and mundane work, in a consecrated relationship with Eternity; where men know they have dedicated everything, including their physical beings and material goods, to God's future.

We must live in community because God wills that we give a clear answer of faith to the hazy and indefinite longing of men to-day.

Decisive witness is borne by the Jewish prophets and Early Christianity to this spiritual love of the life based on faith. We confess Christ, the historical Jesus, and with him the whole message for which his disciples stood, the common life of the Early Christians. Therefore we take our stand as brothers to the brotherhoods of the enthusiastic communities which, moved by the Spirit, lived a common life as one sees in Early Christianity in the first century; in the crisis brought about in general Christianity by the prophetic movement of so-called Montanism in the second century; in the following centuries in the early movement towards monasticism; then in the revolutionary movements at the urge of justice and love associated with Arnold of Brescia; in the movement of the Waldensians; in the original wandering community of Francis of Assisi; in the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren; in the Brethren of the Common Life; in the Beguines and Beghards; especially in the early movement of the morally pure "Anabaptists" of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with their communism of brotherliness, their refusal of military service and their work as farmers and craftsmen in their Bruderhof communities; and as one sees in another way in the Quakers, and likewise in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Labadists, in Zinzendorf's Moravians and in other movements. We must live in community because we are driven to do so by the same Spirit as spoke through the prophets and in Early Christianity and has since then again and again led to community life.

We confess Jesus and Early Christianity. They cared for the outer man as well as for his inner need. Jesus helped towards life. Sick bodies were healed; men were raised, living, from the grave; devilish powers were driven from tortured bodies; to the poorest of the poor the message of joy was brought. This message means that the invisible Kingdom, that which is to be, is now near; that it is realized already in Christ and his Church, and that finally the earth will be won wholly for God.

God wills the *whole*. The love of God knows no frontiers and acknowledges no limits. Therefore Jesus makes no stop at theology, morality and the state, nor even at property. He saw into the heart of that rich young man whom he loved — "One thing thou lackest: sell all that thou hast, give it to the poor: and come, follow me!" To Jesus it was something obvious and to be taken for granted that in his wandering group there should be no personal property but a common purse. It was only the man to whom was committed the most hateful responsibility—in the closest connection with the mammonistic spirit of the men of this era—who brought about his own ruin through it. But betrayal and execution could not mean final defeat. The ardent experience of the Spirit which the Risen Christ imparted to his Church gave the power to carry on the community life of the wandering group on a greater scale. The first Church became a communal life of several thousand people, who had to be together because they were aglow with love. All the questions of life together had to find expression in a form consonant with a perfected unity of life. The Early Christians possessed nothing personal. They had simply everything in common. Those who had possessions were filled with the urge to give them away. No one had anything that did not belong completely to the community. But what the Church possessed was there for all men. As this generous love is never exclusive, the open door and the open heart was the essential characteristic of this circle of deeply moved people. For this reason in their strongest time they could reach all men. They won the love and trust of their fellow men — they, who through their life struggle had to draw upon themselves deadly hatred and primitive enmity. Their influence had to be so strong because they gave themselves, heart and soul, for all.

They lived in the Spirit. The Spirit is moving, blowing spirit. It is never a fixed form like iron or stone. It is inexpressibly more sensitive and delicate than the rigid edifices of human thought, or the hard, cold structure of a political or officially organized social form like a company. It is more sensitive than all the feelings of the soul, than all the powers of the human heart upon which men so often seek in vain to build something that will last. It is stronger and more irresistible than all these; it can be overwhelmed by no violence, however appalling: for it is depth itself. The thing on earth that lasts longest — so-called anorganic rock — is closest to the realm of death. The finer the organs of life are, the more they are endangered. In this world of death, all life must in the end — or that which man regards as the end — be killed, as Jesus in the end was killed. But even in falling his life asserts itself as love, as love without violence, as love without rights and without the will to possess. Thus Jesus now lives all the more strongly as the Risen Christ and as the Spirit, as the inner voice

and as the inner eye, as the life of love that leads to community.

The Early Church, also, only lit the way for men like a single and short-lived flash of light. But when its members were scattered and many of them were murdered, its Spirit and the witness of its life remained alive for ever. Throughout history, like a gift of God, the same living Spirit has produced similar forms. The witnesses were slain — the fathers died; but to the Spirit new children are born. Communities pass. The Church of God that gives them birth remains.

To try to produce similar forms artificially or by one's own efforts can only result in ugly, lifeless caricatures. There can be but one attitude towards what is living: the opening of oneself to the Spirit, that it may bring about in the open, empty heart the same life as it produced in the Early Christians. This Spirit is joy in all that is living, joy in God as the only real life, and through him joy in men, in all men who have life from God. This Spirit, as the urge towards men, drives us to all men, so that it becomes a joy to live for one another and to work for one another. It is loving and creative.

We must live in community, because the Spirit of joy and love drives us towards men, and makes us want to have them always with us. Community of life can only exist in this all-embracing Spirit, in its deepened spirituality, in its strengthened intensity of the capacity for life, in the terrific tensions it stirs up, in its devotion and surrender to the mightiest experience — the experience for which no man can ever, of himself, feel himself equal. In truth only the Spirit is equal to itself.

The vitalizing of one's powers which it effects is brought about by heating to the uttermost the very core — the spirit of community — so that it reaches white heat. This core, the spirit itself, must flame and burn until it sacrifices its life, and warmth and light are shed out to the farthest circumference.

Martyrdom by fire is the character of community life: the daily sacrifice of all one's powers and all one's rights; of all the demands that are commonly made of life and taken for granted as justified. In the symbol of fire the individual logs of wood are consumed that the glowing warmth of the common flame may be sent continually abroad.

The whole of life, in all the different forms in which it is to be found in nature, becomes a parable of that which is the cause of the ever new fellowship of the Kingdom. Just as air envelops us, just as in the open, we are immersed in the blowing wind, even so we need to be submerged in the moving Spirit that renews and unites all things. Just as water washes and cleanses us daily, we testify in the exalted symbol of immersion to cleansing from everything pertaining to death: the burial in water that takes place but once expresses the breach with all things as they are: the oath of deadly enmity to the evil life, within

and around us. And just as the raising once for all from the water proclaims in an exalted picture and with unforgettable certainty the resurrection, even so we experience constantly in nature, when at work in field and garden, the withering away of autumn and winter and the blossoming and fruit-bearing of spring and summer as a continually renewed living unity.

And just as we have to give expression to the most trivial of human needs, that for daily food, as a holy festival of fellowship and community, to be approached with reverence, so there is a final exaltation and concentration of this expression of community in the symbol of the common table: the meal of bread and wine: the witness to the acceptance of Christ within, the witness to the catastrophe of his death and to his return, the witness to his Church as unity of life.

And just as each day spent together engaged in communal work is a parable of the sowing of life and of harvesting, of the origin and the ultimate time of decision of the human race, even so is the animated body of each individual a parable of the dwelling of the Spirit in its creation. The human body must be kept immaculately pure as a vessel for the coming of God.

The symbol of the body consecrated to the Spirit reaches a unique peak in the unity of two in marriage, in the relationship of faithfulness of one man and one woman, in the family, as an important parable of the highest unity of the one Spirit with the one human race, of the unity of the one Christ with his one Church. The self-mastery of chastity, the hardened asceticism of the sexual life, becomes in the hallowed symbol of marriage liberating joy in the life of creation.

Just as in the body it is only through the constant sacrifice of new cells that the fellowship of the body is maintained, so also in the organism of the community-to-be it is only through heroic sacrifice that communal life can have being. Thus the educational community, as expressed in community of goods and community of work, is a compact of voluntary devotion, a compact of sacrifice, which fights and struggles to become the Church. In it justice does not consist in making and satisfying justified demands for the rights of man, but here justice is the very reverse: each is given the opportunity to expose and surrender himself to the uttermost for the incarnation of God, for the breaking in of the Kingdom in power. Justice consists not in hard demands upon others but in the joyous sacrifice of what is one's own. Ultimate reality here becomes activity, becomes voluntary action expressing itself as joy in work, as joy in people, as surrender and devotion to the whole. The Spirit brings gladness and the courage of sacrifice. Inspired joy becomes active love.

We love the body because it is a room dedicated to the Spirit. We love the sod because the Word of God's Spirit created it, and because

God himself calls the earth from its uncultivated natural state into the cultivation of the communal work of man. We love physical work and we love mental activity; we love the manifold wealth of all creative art, and we love research for all spiritual relationships in the whole human race, in its history and in its destiny of peace; we love work of muscle and hand, and we love handicraft in which mind guides fist; for we see in the interpenetration of hand and mind and mind and hand the secret of life and of communal living. In this way we recognize and do the will of God; for God as mind, as creative Spirit, has formed nature; God as mind, as redeeming Spirit, has entrusted the task and the inheritance of the earth to his sons and daughters that their garden might become his garden, and so the work of men becomes God's fellowship. We must live in community because the creative spirit of unity is at work upon us, the same spirit through which nature has been called to unity and through which the work of reclaiming the earth shall become community in God.

The parable of the body is just as little chance and haphazard as is the message that God will win the earth; that it will have peace and joy and justice. The human race will be an organism just as each single animated body consists of independent individual cells. This organism is already in being in the hidden Church. To confess the visible reality and unity of the invisible Church is at the same time to confess freedom in the Spirit and Church discipline through the Spirit. The more definitely a group is charged to go an independent way, the deeper must be its consciousness of unity and its consciousness of membership in the *una sancta*; the more urgently does it stand in need of the mutual service of the whole fellowship of believers, of the discipline and education of the ecumenical unanimity of the principles of faith and life of all who believe in the Church.

The individual unions, all the households, the individual farms or settlements, in so far as they are living, are independent cells in the great organism, just as are within them the different families and individuals. The key to this mystery is freedom of self-determination expressed in surrender and dedication to the whole, the freedom of the good will. The freedom in which alone the common life can have being is just as much opposed to mastery and control by the will of any human being as it is to want of principle and licence. When a community of people who are touched to the quick, believes in the Spirit, the freedom of the individuals consists of the free decision of the common will effected by the Spirit. Freedom, as the expression of the will of the Good within, means unity and unanimity; for the will of such a liberated man lives for the Kingdom of God's unity, for the whole human race. It is the most tense, vital energy.

This will stands as a fighting will in a world of death in which it must hold out against all the destructive powers of lying and impurity, against all the enslaving powers of capitalism and of military force. It is the will that fights against the spirit of murder, against all hostility, including the strife-inciting poison of the tongue; against wrong and injustice in the relationships of men, thus against the essence of hatred and death, against all that is anti-social in public life as well as in the most trivial private life. The call of freedom is the call to a campaign without a pause, to a war without leave of absence. Men who are so called are without intermission on the move. The need of the depressed and wronged, solidarity with the proletariat, the fight against evil in oneself and everywhere in the surrounding world demand the strongest will-power that is possible for men, the unfolding of all the powers that can be given to men. We must live in community because the fight of life against death demands compact and solid armies of inspired blood corpuscles for use wherever death threatens life.

This fight against all evil, against all that poisons or destroys community, is waged more strongly within community life itself than against the outside world, and most strongly of all within each individual. In the common life all softness and tenderness arising from weakness, is overcome by the glowing power of love. The Spirit of the Church takes up an attitude of war in each individual, and in the new man within him fights against his old Adam.

All income, everything in the way of payment or gifts which come to individuals, and all property whether great or small, is given over unconditionally to the common life by each member of the responsible circle. But not even the community household, as a closed group, regards itself as the possessor of its enterprises and inventories. On the contrary the community circle manages all its goods and possessions for the community of all, and therefore keeps the door open for all and demands undisturbed unanimity in one spirit for all decisions.

It is clear that this fight for freedom, for the unity and breadth of love, is carried on on all fronts with the most different weapons, that the work of community among men finds the most different ways, for the Spirit is rich. But there is certainty for all parts of the way to which one is called, and it is only when the task is absolutely certain that there is faithfulness, unwavering clarity—in the individuals as well—to the end. He who does not endure can have nothing entrusted to him. Only he who stands by the staff can bear the flag. Thus there is no great task among men without a specific, limited task.

The decisive thing is that this specific task, in particular, should lead only to Christ and really serve the whole, the Church, the coming Kingdom. Where a specific work seeks its own, it leads astray. But

the man, who in his special place and in accordance with his special gifts yet serves the whole, can well say, I belong to God and to life in community or to God and another special task. But before this human service can be divine service there must be clarity as to the smallness and the limited nature of the task in the light of the whole, so that the limited task—as in this case life in community—cannot be confused with the Church of Christ itself. Life in community, as discipleship of Christ, is a disciplinary fellowship, an educational fellowship, a preparing of men. The mystery of the Church is more and other than this; as the life of God it penetrates into the disciplinary fellowship as often as in the tragic tension the inexpressible longing of the state of openness and readiness, in which alone God wants to act and speak, is given. In such moments the educational fellowship can be commissioned by the invisible Church and receive certainty for a definite mission, to speak and act in the name of the Church—yet without confusing itself with the Church of God.

The Church in which we believe lives in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit in whom we believe bears the Church within it. This Spirit of the Church is that which animates the one humanity to be and all really living communities to-day. Not just any confederation of men, but only the Spirit-Church, which in the Holy Spirit is actually and really on earth, is the basis and element of all fellowship and unity. Just as every organism is unified by the consciousness of unity of the spirit animating and pervading it, even so is the believing community. The future unity of man, when only God will reign, is guaranteed by the Spirit. For this Spirit is the coming Leader and Lord himself. It is the only thing of the great future of love and unity upon which we can lay our hands even now. Faith in the Spirit is faith in the Church and faith in the Kingdom.

Thus in such a community life men will continually be confronted with the necessity to decide how and to what they are called, and whether they will follow the call. The *small* group of those who are obedient to God's call, tried in battle and continually sacrificing itself anew, will really hold firmly to the end to this life task as the common way shown it by God. It will be ready to sacrifice life itself for the common life. As a woman tears herself away from her parents, home and her career for the sake of marriage, as a man risks his life for wife and child, even so one must break with all else and give one's life when called to the way. The public testimony of voluntary communal work and community of goods, the witness of peace and love, has only meaning when the whole of life is devoted to it.

EBERHARD ARNOLD

From the Old Life to the New

The Wind of God

Twenty years ago this June, just at the time of the summer solstice, we and our children and a little community household left Berlin for a communal life. Some of our English friends, especially Quakers, experienced something of this break away from the old to the new life with us. After the terrible years of war, privation and revolution a wind of spring had made itself felt among German youth; indeed, one can say that sometimes it was a spring gale that swept through the whole land. And everything that was old and decayed had to give way before it. Many young people of all sections of the population—socialists, communists, Quaker friends and various groups of the Youth Movement (Freideutsche, Kronacher, Neuwerker, etc.) were challenged to live a different life.

Already in winter 1918-19 we had had "open evenings" in our large house in Berlin, to which often eighty to a hundred people came, and with them, after the hard years of war and revolution, we strove and struggled for a new life. There were academics and officers, proletarians and communists, socialists, members of the Youth Movement, young and old, pietists and religious socialists, members of the Student Christian Movement, artists and many others. Within us all there was a search, a great questioning. Practically no one could bear to hear Christian words any more, and in big public meetings one often heard; "Where was God in 1914?" We sought for new ways, for a new life, which would consist not only of words but of deeds. The story of Rachoff by a pastor from Saxony, a modern St. Francis in Russia, made the strongest impression upon us. Francis of Assisi spoke to us of a wandering life of Christian brotherhood. Tolstoi, Dostoievski and others showed us yet more fragments of true life.

Eberhard Arnold, as secretary of the Student Christian Movement and literary editor of the "Furche" publishing house, had been called to a student conference at Frauenberg in Marburg at Whitsun 1919. Here, through the reading of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) Christ appeared to all present with a force they had never before experienced. In a report of this conference that appeared in the "Furche", the magazine of the Student Christian Movement, Gerhard Jasper wrote, "Something of the direct, living presence of community came over us which can only arise from all experiencing the same pulsing presence and from the same longing for the divine, which though unuttered shone in the eyes of all. And Jesus spoke to these people. He spoke the words that have rung through the centuries and yet are found to be always new: he spoke here as he once spoke on a

mountain peak in Galilee. Why was it that many asked incredulously, 'Is that really the Sermon on the Mount, which we learnt at school and have so often heard preached as a law?' What could it be that made these words sound so utterly different from the litany to which we also had had to listen? The words were the same—yet it was truly not that "Sermon on the Mount" upon which theologians practise their compromising, exegetical art and scribes and scholars their rabbinical wisdom, based on law. We had really wanted to hear a "discussion on a Saying from the Sermon on the Mount". And behold! something happened that but seldom occurs: the Bible discussed *us*—drove us into the merciless logic of the *law of life*, which from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount took form as the picture of the new life-type that is *primaeval*, and has had being since God created men in his image and put the creative, awakening, imperative Word in their soul. Eberhard Arnold showed us the new man—simple, as humble discipleship of Jesus necessitates, and yet wonderful in a way that can only be brought about by the blessed certainty of God in Christ. And so his words let loose in some the jubilation of a longing set free from all doubt, and in others the opposition of a mode of life that had grown up in another atmosphere. . . . We felt in Eberhard Arnold's words that Jesus himself was seeking to win our souls, seeking that we might belong utterly to him, and that at long last we might now take love in earnest. The Sermon on the Mount became the touchstone of our life, testing if it were founded on Christ. We felt that this call to repentance and to faith was so impressive because it is included in the Sermon on the Mount, as Jesus' call to us. So we strove to the very uttermost." Walter Ehrenstein likewise writes of this conference in the "Furche": "I came to bring fire to the earth: what would I more than that it already burned!" said Jesus: that was Marburg—at least for me. It was as though I met Jesus for the first time in his unconditional greatness; his victorious stride, his compelling eyes. Not one of us will ever be able to forget the ruins of Frauenberg and the beech forest of Dammelberg. That was the beginning. There Jesus spoke to us. We felt his Spirit. His words had a new ring, showed a force hitherto unknown. We were concerned with the very depths. It was a matter of the Ultimate, the Absolute. We did not only hear, we knew, for it took root in us: it is the Spirit that maketh alive! And you know not whence he cometh and whither he goeth. He is there, and you really hear his voice. And his voice becomes in you the power of creative life which sweeps away all that is old with the force of the storm, tears you out of the inertia of your thinking and considering—into the eternal light. Thus hearing becomes pure joy, and joy again becomes an unconditional 'Thou shalt!'"

For us, who were not at Frauenberg but in Berlin and only sensed its

effect among us, this conference was in one way fundamental. The old revivalist, evangelical movement had failed in the war. Now we wanted to enter the new life. We felt like new-born children, knowing nothing of Christ and of Christianity, and we wanted to take our first steps. But that this faith, this inner "Thou shalt!", desired to be realized in deed was clear to us all. Joy over that which was new and expectation of that which was yet to come, yes, of the coming Kingdom filled us: the open door to the new Kingdom had become reality among us. The other conferences at Saarow in 1919, the discussions there with the former Imperial Chancellor, Michaelis, and other professors, the student conference at Oeynhausen with its discussions on "The State and the Church of Christ", as well as the conference at Tambach, in which other religious socialists from Switzerland as well as Neuwerk took part, the discussions with Karl Barth (who was then still young and quite different from now) moved us deeply and led us nearer and nearer the goal.

In the meantime the revolution continued. Machine-gun fire was heard in the streets of Berlin, the imperial castle had already been taken by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Lorries of soldiers with red flags went through the streets. The Kaiser had abdicated. A new government was to be elected at Zirkus Busch. In winter 1919-20 we met more and more often in our "open evenings".

Often members of the Youth Movement or proletariat came to us in groups and wanted to spend the night with us. Our door was never closed.

Facing the Breeze

We tried now more than ever to live our life in accordance with the new recognition of true freedom, brotherliness and justice. Our two maids were moved into our best rooms. We felt it was not right that those who helped us most should live in servants' quarters. Eberhard rose first every morning and cleaned the household's shoes. The whole neighbourhood enjoyed themselves at our expense. A division thus came about in the "Furche" publishing house and in the Student Christian Movement. Whereas one side led by Michaelis and others wanted to continue in the old way, we decided, with several more likewise moved, to go the new way that we had seen. Friedrich Siegmund Schultze had already begun something similar in the East End of Berlin: a social, working community to bring workers and students and others into closer contact. This year 1919-20 was one of great struggle and strife. Together with the great joy that inspired us to live for the new way were constant misunderstandings and much slander which robbed us of much of our time. At last we decided that we two, Eberhard and I, would turn our backs upon the

"Furche" publishing house and the Student Christian Movement and begin a new life. From different sides we got letters saying that the life of deed should now find expression in true community. An Early Christian Church should be called into being. And we should help in the work.

So at Whitsun 1920 we called our friends and any who were moved from all over Germany to a conference at Schluechtern. We had heard that there were people there who were considering a common life, such as the Early Christians lived. Some two hundred people met at Schluechtern; and the readiness, the devotion, the surrender, yes, the Holy Spirit to be felt among us will remain unforgettable to us all. Our experience then was just like the time before Pentecost, and I still like to think of that warm summer night when we made a circle round a fire, holding hands. The moon shone brightly through the glade. After a time of silence together, some one began to sing "There is on earth no land so fair" and all joined in. On the way home the last verse, "Brothers, you know what makes us one" was composed.

X This conference brought us into touch with friends of the new work, and we considered where we could find a place for the new settlement or community. One afternoon after the conference several friends visited the village of Sannerz together, where there was a large house to be let or sold, with a garden, meadow, fruit trees and some fields. So on the first fine day in May we set off on foot, via Herolz, Ahlersbach and then across country to Sannerz.

The village is about an hour's walk from Schluechtern, and lies in a charming hollow, surrounded by the Rhoen, Spessart and Vogelsberg hills. The style of the "villa", as the local peasants termed it, was not at all what we were seeking. We would much rather have had an old farmhouse. We had received a good impression of how the new life could look from the simplicity of style and dress of the Habertshof, a settlement which had been founded in August 1919, and which we had visited at Whitsun. An attempt to unite with these settlers, however, collapsed on two points—vegetarianism, which they demanded, and monogamy and purity, which we demanded.

Old ruins and strongholds as well as large houses had already been visited by us, but they were not to be got quickly. So nothing was left us but to try first of all to get a foothold in Sannerz. The landlord of the little local inn, "Zum Stern", made a contract with us to let us use his saddlery during the summer. It was a small building behind the inn and contained the saddler's work-shop proper, and two small rooms which were used in winter for storing apples. These three rooms the landlord was to get more or less in order. The large work-shop was to be a living room, and the two small rooms were to serve as bedrooms. That was the beginning in Sannerz.

The Venture of Brotherly Love

When we returned to Berlin the great work of packing began. We had to bring the furniture for the little rooms ourselves. As we did not want to spend any money and as Eberhard had very much to do, students and other friends helped us to do the necessary packing. Not a farthing was to be spent unnecessarily—everything belonged to the community to be. We sold the life insurance which we received from the "Furche" publishing house, and the latter promised to pay the next quarter's salary after our departure. The break took place quite suddenly. Eberhard, Emy and our youngest daughter, Monika, aged two, went first. Three days later we were followed by Suse Hungar, a Salvation Army officer, who had often been to our "open evenings", and our four other children, aged nine, seven, six and four. A fortnight later Else von Hollander followed. In August a girl who had often been in conflict with the police came from the slums of Berlin. We had got to know her and had made an application to the prison for juvenile delinquents to be allowed to take her to Sannerz. People came from all quarters in the following weeks, and our house was so over-run with guests that we often used to say: "Ten were invited and twenty have come. Add some water to the soup and bid them all welcome!" Each new arrival was a real celebration for us. Each was met by all at the station (half an hour's walk away) and brought home with great rejoicing. With guitars, violins and flutes, and in the evenings with home-made lanterns or torches, all who could creep or fly or run set off to the station. The new arrival was usually welcomed into a large ring and folk dances were danced. Then in a long jovial train we set off to Sannerz. Our children shared fully in all our life and experiences.

As one can gather, our house was of course far too small. We used barns of all kinds belonging to the peasants—it was summer—to house the guests. But bit by bit we sought to acquire the large house opposite—the so-called "villa". There was great rejoicing over each room we received, as a victory for the cause. The first thing to be accommodated there was the publishing house. With feverish haste one book after the other appeared that year. Every day one or more had to go to Schluechtern to the printing shop, and usually returned late at night.

Such joy held sway over us that we knew no weariness. The days were given to work and the evenings and nights to talks. The themes were mostly such as concerned our whole movement: freedom or restraint, peace and community, communistic settlement, the social task, Agape and Eros and the Youth Movement, the common guilt for the oppression of other human beings, as for example through the use of coal at the risk of the lives of the miners, mechanical factory work, etc. These

talks often lasted for hours. Finally a fire was usually kindled when the night was far advanced, and we sat round it and listened for the inner voice. Then it often happened that we felt the depths and absoluteness of the eternal so that we trembled before the invisible and the creative power of God, or as we then said before the hidden Christ, and none could utter a word. Then at last some one would get up and ask all to separate in silence. At other times from each heart there arose the same word or song, so that we took hands and went rhythmically round the fire in silence. I shall never forget how one Whitsun night we went round a fire on a hill, singing many songs, such as the song of the founder of the Herrnhuter Brudergemeinde, Zinzendorf, "Let your heart burn in flames of love to the Saviour", or fire songs or songs of the Spirit given us through Eberhard or Otto Salomon or others. These songs expressed exactly what was living in us all.

In autumn 1920 we had a meeting with several friends in the "villa", now known as Sannerz House. Altogether we were about twenty people. We sat round a table and Eberhard read us the first Epistle of John. Love burned in our hearts. Then some one said, "What is to prevent us keeping the Lord's Supper as a real and actual covenant?" A time of meditation and recollection was given us, and then we *all* came together and made the covenant of true loyalty for the task of common work and common life. Even those who had to go to the town came every morning at six o'clock, that all might be united at the same time in the Spirit. These morning hours will remain unforgettable. From them the community drew strength for the day, for work and struggle. All came and sat in silence in a circle on the floor of the publishing room. In winter we sat round the kitchen fire. No one came late. Only such as were not clear in the deepest things took no part in this meeting. Often we sat for half an hour in silence. At other times some one present expressed in words that which was living in us all. Thus we experienced community: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It was at this time that our life found expression in the song, "In holy waiting we're at home", which was sung by the whole household outside Else von Hollander's door on the morning of her birthday. The whole winter was for us a wonderful time of expectation of something coming, something striving to have being, and a great joy filled the whole house. John Stevens writes of our celebration of Christmas 1920, which was shared by guests: "In Frankfurt the cold had given place to a winter of the kind common in England, although the swollen Main was still in places strongly frozen from bank to bank. But it was a different world I entered when a few hours later I left the train at a little station among the hills. The frozen roads were covered with a layer of snow and sledging was in full swing. I was led by another guest to the little community I had promised to

visit. We loaded a large trunk, which he had brought with him, on the little sleigh, and I went quickly downhill in front while he held firmly behind. We were warm from our work when we climbed the opposite slope and soon reached our destination. My friends had invited me months previously to visit them, and at last I was there, just at the right time to share their Christmas festivity, a real German celebration. We went along a path leading uphill into a wood. It was already dark. Suddenly we saw lights in a pine plantation, and we joined a number who were standing round a small, snow-laden tree on which candles were burning. The children were utterly filled with the spirit of the gathering which was at once solemn and joyful. We sang "Still the night, holy the night" and other carols, and each held a candle in his hand. Sometimes a gust of wind blew out nearly all the candles and we lighted them again from the few still burning. Once all went out except two which our great-hearted couple lovingly shielded with their hands. But the light was not extinguished, and by it our leader, thinker and friend read us from the first chapter of John of the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Then he recounted in his inimitable way the story of the worldly and bloodthirsty crusader, who wanted to bring a candle that had been lighted at the holy sepulchre back to his home in Italy; how, after many adventures and interminable suffering, he was dying before reaching his goal with his precious burden, when a swallow flew down, caught fire at the holy flame and, dying, kindled the candle upon the altar, which the knight himself could not see. The children knew the story and from time to time the father stopped to ask them their thoughts. Then we set off home. For a long time we kindled the candles for each other as the little procession moved down the snow-covered path, but the wind blew in gusts and at last no more burnt".

Legende
von
Selma
Lagerlöf:
Die
Lichtflamme
am
Innenland
Seite
93.

With the year 1921 came the beginning of our little farm. The previous year the fields and meadows had been worked by the peasants, and they had taken the lion's share of the harvest. We, as town dwellers, began with only a theoretically qualified agriculturist whom we had met in the movement. In farming, especially, we made very many mistakes in the early years. There it was most clearly seen that there were no born farmers among us, and also that we did not seek out especially efficient workers, but took men of good will, no matter what their calling. In later years we had our young people and children trained. Also specialists of all kinds, especially farmers and gardeners who wanted to share the common life with us, joined. Our agriculturist came at the beginning of January. We took over two cows, several goats and pigs and thirty-five hens. The farm included a large orchard round the house and several meadows, as well as about ten acres of arable land. But, apart from a plough and a harrow, we had no

agricultural implements. It was a really hard beginning. Some of our women had to work the garden. Our new agriculturist planted a little forest of bean-props—but forgot to plant the beans. He let a peasant take away our hardly-earned manure, because it was in the way and spoilt the view. When milking he wore large horn-rimmed spectacles and composed verse. Our first attempt was a joke to the whole neighbourhood—How town dwellers farm the land! When the following year we had the best potatoes, they said, “Yes, there is a proverb: ‘The most stupid farmer gets the biggest potatoes!’” Apart from this our relationship with the peasants was good. They enjoyed the vivid, lively company. We were often invited to bring guitars, etc., and spent many enjoyable evenings with them, especially in autumn, at the time “Pflaumen-Mus” is made, and in winter. But from this neighbourhood only one peasant joined us with her child. *Kathrin Ebner mit Anne* Summer 1921 with its Whitsun conference at Sannerz was still strongly characterized by the new beginning. Strange figures came to us. “Hans in Luck”, with a flute, a violin made of tin and the most varied ocarinas, came to us then for the first time and was the most beloved of these strange figures. Like a real Hans in Luck he travelled about the country in a red waistcoat hung about with ocarinas, a pointed nightcap on his head, and a large shield on his back bearing the words “Hans in Luck”. When one heard him from afar playing his beautiful songs all the village children and all grown-ups ran to meet him—it was just like the Pied Piper of Hamelin—and there was great rejoicing. He took the children by the hand and played fairy-tale games with them. . . . But his message had also a more serious note. He said, “Why do we always say, ‘There *was* once upon a time’? Let us say, for example, ‘There *will be* once upon a time’! Why do we always talk of the past? Let us say, for example, ‘Eighty years before 2000’”. He lived in this way utterly and entirely in the future, in the expectation of a new spring for mankind, which he believed had already shown signs of dawning, a new “World Pentecost which would dawn after the cold mass murder”. Then there was another, the son of an Attorney-General, who had left his parents’ home to found a settlement in which men should live in caves and holes in the earth. He wanted to use in this settlement and its farm work no tools which were made by the sweated labour of others, by the oppression of the proletarians—especially no factory-made products. He wanted to loosen the soil with his hands and Stone Age tools such as are still to be seen in museums. He believed a settlement of value could only arise when it had gone through a time of chaos. Others came and accused us of not living enough in common, for we had community of goods, but not of women. Once a long train of girls and children dressed like flowers arrived. When we asked, “Where do you come from?” they answered, “From

the forest". "Where are you going to?" "To the forest: we are forest children".

But very earnest-minded people came, too: deep religious seekers, looking for a new country such as is described in wandering songs of the Youth Movement, like "Distant far beyond the mountains lies there not a country new?" and "There blooms in the forest a little flower, a flower of exquisite blue; and in quest of this precious flower we wander the whole world through. The forest trees rustle, the brook murmurs free, 'Whoe'er the flower of blue would win a Wandering Bird must be'".

Rocks and Shoals

Owing to the many visitors who flooded in upon us, the small firmly grounded circle, which consisted only of seven, was almost swamped, so that one often could not see what Sannerz stood for and what it was aiming at. Such people settled down among us, and this caused a real tension in our house. We often tried, in meetings lasting through the night, to come to rock bottom with regard to the purpose of Sannerz. After nearly a year of painful inner struggle, a year in which the spirit of unity was not in reality among us—indeed one can say that two purposes ran side by side—this disunity at last became clear to all. When Eberhard and I were in Holland with the children and Else von Hollander the other purpose which had taken foot among us became effective. The community which we had begun was built upon the foundation of faith in Christ and in the working of his Holy Spirit. We believed that everything had to become one whole: that life was not to be divided into religious life and economic life. We believed in the future of the Kingdom of God, and that our life and attitude to-day should be that at any moment the Kingdom of God might break in. The others believed in a human community in which each individual could have a different faith, so that faith and economic life had to be separate and could never be one. The great break away from the old to the new in which we had all believed in the years 1919-20 ended for them there. They believed that men must now enter into conditions as they are, though with new eyes, for it might be a long time before the Kingdom of God would come. Perhaps on only reading how different our attitude was, one cannot imagine what fights this cost. In Sannerz we were termed seducers, calling men to the Kingdom of God which, however, did not come. Our faith that faith and economic life should be one was interpreted as deception, for since we still had unpaid debts faith could not have become deed at Sannerz. In August 1922 we felt and said in a long night discussion that the two directions were utterly incompatible: that they were as different as fire and water. The greater part of our household declared that they

could not share this life and that they had to leave Sannerz. So there remained a small group—once more consisting of seven—who wanted, in spite of everything, to continue to go the way. As we often then sang: "Up, let us venture gaily—yes, venture daily! From ease and quiet turn away, that idle loll. 'Tis work we are desiring. Where Love our work's requiring we'll bear our stones, untiring, to build for all!" Thus in autumn 1922 we were very much alone. Nearly all had gone away. We had still some five children with us apart from our own, and now, with sad hearts but utterly convinced of the truth of the way, we began all over again. But the work of construction was very much slower than in the first years. There were still many guests among us, but fewer decided to live the common life, for all had in one way or another heard of the crisis. In spite of this we felt that God was with us and that he would not forsake us.

When Eberhard Arnold died in November 1935 there were eighty members of the brotherhood, ten novices and some fifty children, as well as several helpers. To-day, four and a half years after his death, at the two Bruderhof communities there are a hundred and forty-five members, twelve novices and a hundred and thirty children, as well as five young people. We have been through years of hardship. Our school was closed, and we went with our children in winter 1933-34 to Switzerland, high in the mountains, where we endured years of scarcity. Later our men of military age followed with their families, so that for a long time we were living in three communities, for through England's hospitality we found a kindly reception here in this country four years ago; and some two years ago we were all able to unite here once more. The new life brought hard struggles and privations with it. It is indeed true that life in common is a wonderful life, an answer to the problems of to-day and to the hostility and division among men, but the difficulties and struggles we have lived through in these twenty years force us to advise all who want to begin such a life: "Begin only if you have a real foundation, a basis of faith beneath your feet; but if this is the case, if with several friends you become united as to way and goal, then do not stop at discussion, but *act!*" Our door, also, is always open to any one who wishes to start such a life; open, no matter to what nation or class he may belong, whether he has worldly possessions or not. That is not the main thing for us, although we need worldly possessions badly since most people come to us without anything. But what we want, as the Hutterian Brothers (with whom we united in the year 1930) say, is not money and possessions, but sincere and devout hearts.

EMY ARNOLD.

CONCERNING THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

Our Testimony to the World

Owing to the growing intensity of the war, there has been much less opportunity for addressing meetings and visiting friends during the past few months. Apart from the caution exercised by many in these troublous times, this is mainly due to the curfew order imposed on our non-British members which makes travelling almost impossible.

At the same time we feel a growing urge to extend and intensify our witness as far as possible. One of the ways by which this can be done is the wider distribution of our literature. We therefore enclose with this issue of *THE PLOUGH* a list of past and recent books at reduced prices, and two small recent publications which we hope will find a wide interest among our readers. We appeal to you to help to your utmost to make our books and pamphlets and our magazine *THE PLOUGH* known among your friends, especially those who are concerned about present events and who are seeking for a new order of life.

The Witness in the West

At Easter it was decided at a meeting of the Society of Brothers to send some members across the Atlantic, as we felt a concern to extend the witness of community and peace and to renew and deepen our bond with the Hutterian communities. After long delay due to existing conditions, two of our members, Hans Meier and Guy Johnson, sailed for New York at the beginning of August. Hans Meier was recently appointed a servant of the Word and Guy Johnson a member of the council of the Society. Apart from the important visit to the Hutterians and the Mennonites (whose representative in London, Theodore Claasen, was a most welcome guest at the Bruderhof communities at the end of July) they will be especially glad to meet Julius Kupassek and his friends near Toronto. They are a small group of about twelve to fifteen Hungarians who began a true community life on the basis of the Early Church several years ago in British Columbia, and who have for some time now expressed their deep desire to be fully united with us. This community again provides us with a most remarkable instance of how the Spirit of God awakens people independently and spontaneously in different parts of the world to the same fundamental truth of community. This fills us with deep joy and gratitude.

Growth of the Communities

As a result to a large extent of recent journeys to the north of England (reported in *THE PLOUGH* III, 1, p. 19) a number of families and individual men and women have recently decided to join the communities at Oaksey and Ashton Keynes. That they should have entered upon such a venture in these critical days, when the communities are threatened by need and persecution as never before in recent history, is the best guarantee of the depth of their convictions. We only wish thousands would go this way. Our doors are open to all who, out of a deep conviction, decide to surrender themselves wholly to the way of loving brotherhood. One of our greatest friends abroad who cannot now come to this country for the duration of the war writes to us: "I wish I had joined the Bruderhof before now to take my share in your difficulties, instead of sitting here now—helpless and useless!" What about you?

United in Marriage

To the great joy of the whole community, we celebrated the following weddings on May 19th: Tom Paul and Cecilia Watson, Charles Headland and Hella Römer, August

Dyroff and Winifred Bridgwater, Sydney Hindley and Marjorie Badham; and on June 30th: Gerhard Wegner and Gertrud Braun, and Alan Stevenson and Nellie Fros. Complete victory over all class and national barriers cannot be more clearly shown than by these weddings, bringing as they do the unity of marriage to miner and schoolmistress, tramp and teacher among others; and uniting British with both German and Dutch members.

Growth of the Children's Community

From May to July the community shared the joy of birth with the following families: to Brian and Nancy Trapnell, a son Peter; to Christian and Sophie Löber, a son Joachim; to Willi and Lotte Klüver, a daughter Anna Elisabeth; to Herbert and Else Sorgius, a son Hans Jacob; to Will and Kathleen Marchant, a son Stephen.

War Difficulties

It makes us both happy and thankful that we are all still together. The threat of internment was looming over our heads, but seems now more remote. The only member, Winifred Dyroff, who was interned because she had become technically German by marriage without having had time to appear before a tribunal, was released after several weeks of anxiety for her, her husband and the community.

Recent events have served to create an atmosphere of suspicion and hatred which has also had its effects on the Bruderhof. A violent press campaign in the local newspapers, petitions sent to the Home Office asking for the prompt internment of all German members, unpleasant incidents with threats of violence, abusive slander and interference on the communities' premises, these and other things showed clearly how blindly infuriated and insensible people can become through the war. Representations made by the Society of Brothers to responsible quarters have, we are glad to announce, led for the time being to a complete cessation of these unpleasant disturbances. In this connection we should like to express our deep gratitude to both the Home Office and the War Office for their prompt action in putting an end to these indignities.

Questions in both Houses of Parliament

In connection with these difficulties, members of both Houses of Parliament urged the government to take action by interning our members "to allay the anxieties of the public and to protect the lives and property of the community". The government stated that they are "most anxious not to intern them. They work literally from dawn to dark, they produce a great deal of foodstuffs. . . . If they are interned they will cease to be a producing asset and become a drag on the country" (the Duke of Devonshire, House of Lords, June 12th, 1940). In the House of Commons, in connection with a question by Captain Graham as to "whether the whole community of the German Peace Bruderhof at Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire, has yet been interned?", Lady Astor intervened to ask "Is it not true that this is a community set up after the last war whose sole concern is Christianity, and that the members of it are a great asset to the country instead of a liability?" Mr. Peakes, speaking for the government, stated: "The community is making a valuable contribution to the production of food in this country during the war".

Economic Repercussions

All these difficulties have resulted in serious economic hardship for the Society of Brothers, especially through the loss of a valuable goodwill for the retail selling of milk, eggs and vegetables in Swindon. A great part of the community's income has thus been lost.

Yet we are determined to carry on as long as possible. Any help friends can give will be appreciated.

In the course of the last four years the wood-turnery of the Brothers of the Bruderhof communities has become known because of the beauty and the simplicity of each individually-made article. Made chiefly from fine English walnut, these articles can be seen in many homes and in the biggest shops.

We should like to ask you to purchase a turned article to help us in the present difficult times and as a permanent memento of your link with our communities. They make ideal gifts for all occasions and each piece is stamped with the mark, "Cotswold Brotherhood Handicrafts".

Prices range for bowls from 2/6d to 20/-, butter-dishes at 3/3d, 4/6d and 10/-, boxes at 6/-, breadboards and trays from 3/3d to 8/-, candlesticks at 2/-, 2/3d, 7/- and 14/6d.

Address orders to
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