

# **FOUNTAIN CREEK**

**A VISION FOR  
BRETHREN LIVING IN COMMUNITY**

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Dear Friends,

Along the banks of Mud Creek and Fountain Creek in Iroquois County, Illinois my father's ancestors found cheap farmground and a relief from the pressures, both financial and religious, of late 19th century Switzerland and South Germany.

German speaking farmers and craftsmen in wide brimmed black hats, they found prosperity and the freedom to practice their own particular brand of Anabaptist Christianity. We can only imagine how happy they must have been to find the freedom they sought in a new land.

As the years passed, their descendents found that hanging onto the faith in a land of prosperity presented its own difficulties. A disastrous series of church divisions over language, lifestyle, and doctrine marred the twentieth century history of the group.

Today the fragmented remains of the church of my 19th century ancestors struggles forward, but the fellowship I chose as an adult is that of the Old German Baptist Brethren. As I have grown to know, love, and appreciate our dear church, I fear the influence of that affluent society threatens her as well. I know that I am not alone in my concerns.

Travels and visiting among others have prompted the publication of this manuscript, titled "Fountain Creek" in memory of that beautiful location chosen by my ancestors as a home their community. This manuscript is notable, I believe, only in that rather than preaching new and radical experiment in living it urges only the adoption of old and well established practices. It is not anything of my own invention, but borrows from others.

I intend to circulate this document to build up the church, and have no schismatic or divisive intentions, although I suspect it will be somewhat controversial. If all I accomplish is discussion of how to improve things, that will be more than enough.

Love in Christ,

Michael Hari

# FOUNTAIN CREEK

## INTRODUCTION

*My father towered over me, a comforting presence as we walked hand-in-hand home from the garden in the spring of 1977. The sun was setting, turning the horizon red and orange as the darkness began to fall under the shadows of the great oaks and walnuts of my parents home in rural Central Illinois.*

*As all six year old boys do, I craved my father's company. As we walked home from our family sized garden, I asked him a question.*

*"How big a garden would we have to plant so that we could get all our food from it?" I asked him.*

*"Now that much more, we could certainly do it with the land we have," was his answer.*

*"Can we do it?" I asked hopefully. "That way you wouldn't have to go to work anymore, and you could stay home with us*

*in the daytime!”*

*He patiently explained that we had a mortgage on our home, and he had to work to pay the bills and provide our home.*

*As I grew up, I never lost the feeling I had that day that something is deeply wrong with a system or way of life that denies six year old boys the opportunity to walk and work with their fathers as they grow. Time with us boys was important to our father, but spending the daily work time together was impossible under the system we lived in.*

*As I grew older, I began to put away my childish dreams, only to have them reawakened by the births of my own children. Thinking of my children's present and future welfare started me on a spiritual and physical journey to provide for their welfare, and challenged the assumption in our society today that materialism and commercialism must necessarily remold the God-ordained structures of our families.*

*As we have moved from agricultural work to workshops and factories a meal around the family table begins to give way to the lunch box or cafe in too many homes. Long winter hours of Bible instruction and conversation between generations in the*

*family workplace are slipping away. Is there anything that can be done to reverse the trend and bring our fathers home to work with the children?*

*Yes, there is. The answer is not in some great social experiment. There is never any shortage of utopian dreamers with a plan to solve all men's problems, but we don't need something new. There are thousands of people who have the problems of our fracturing families licked, and they aren't doing it by experimentation. The answer is in well established patterns of community, and in resuming the practices of the past.*

*A few years ago, I was discussing Christian community with a brother who'd returned from Elmo Stoll's Cookeville, TN community. As we talked it became clear that while I had an interest in community, and various aspects of different communities I'd visited appealed to me--I didn't have a clear cut vision. The experiences of my family's' 2005-2006 trip through Mennonite colonies in Mexico and Central America together with opportunities to visit with residents of the Delano (TN), Rich Hill (Mo.), and Scottsville (KY) communities and earlier visits and research into full common purse communities*

such as Elmendorf (Hutterites, SD), the Amana Colonies (IA), the Oneidans, Bishop Hill, and others (both failures and successes) provided a clear vision of what was possible and desirable in a common purse Christian community.

H.L. Roush Sr. wrote in his 1969 book Henry and the Great Society, “One last sobering thought comes to mind as I conclude this section: being the creatures of habit that we are, what inheritance shall we pass on to our children? We are concerned about their education, and the material fortune we can leave them; but what about the legacy of a way of life? We do not seem to remember that as we walk our feet are creating upon the impressionable earth a path that, although we are long gone, our children will continue to follow without a thought or reason in regard to the rightness of it. The time to do something is now. Yesterday has been swallowed by the gulping mouth of time, and tomorrow is only an illusion. We must not continue to live this hectic life without some thought about the awful harvest we are reaping. Let us be sure as we march to its frantic cadence, that we are hearing the right drummer.”

*While living at Pine Hill and visiting Elmendorf, I heard the beat of a different drummer--and I don't want to go back to the old march anymore! But now I can hear the beat of that old march. It calls to me from the very fabric of the society to which I've returned.*

*I claim no originality in writing this little work. I'm only passing on what I've seen, and encouraging others to follow this well trod path. I'm not encouraging this for everyone. If this vision does not appeal to you, please disregard it! I'm not trying to argue that there is only one lifestyle that is appropriate for Christians. I'm only arguing that this is a good lifestyle.*

*There are three main components to the Fountain Creek concept. All three are borrowed from well established communities that you can visit today. The three components are the common purse, simple tools, and bread labor.*

# *The Common Purse*

AND THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE AND FELLOWSHIP, AND IN BREAKING OF BREAD, AND IN PRAYERS. AND FEAR CAME UPON EVERY SOUL: AND MANY WONDERS AND SIGNS WERE DONE BY THE APOSTLES. AND ALL THAT BELIEVED WERE TOGETHER, AND HAD ALL THINGS COMMON; AND SOLD THEIR POSSESSIONS AND GOODS, AND PARTED THEM TO ALL MEN, AS EVERY MAN HAD NEED. AND THEY, CONTINUING DAILY WITH ONE ACCORD IN THE TEMPLE, AND BREAKING BREAD FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE, DID EAT THEIR MEAT WITH GLADNESS AND SINGLENESS OF HEART. ACTS 2:42-46

NEITHER WAS THERE ANY AMONG THEM THAT LACKED: FOR AS MANY AS WERE POSSESSORS OF LANDS OR HOUSES SOLD THEM, AND BROUGHT THE PRICES OF THE THINGS THAT WERE SOLD, AND LAID THEM DOWN AT THE APOSTLES' FEET: AND DISTRIBUTION WAS MADE UNTO EVERY MAN ACCORDING AS HE HAD NEED. AND Joses, WHO BY THE APOSTLES WAS SURNAMED BARNABAS, (WHICH IS, BEING INTERPRETED, THE SON OF CONSOLATION,) A LEVITE, AND OF THE COUNTRY OF CYPRUS, HAVING LAND, SOLD IT, AND BROUGHT THE MONEY, AND LAID IT AT THE APOSTLES' FEET. ACTS 4:34-37

*The most well known practitioners of the common purse today are the Hutterites. In dozens of well ordered communities across the Western United States, Canada, and in the Bruderhof colonies of the East we can find Christian people living according to the description of the church of Jerusalem in the Second and Fourth chapters of Acts.*



*This is not the only way the early Christians lived. The Bible demonstrates clearly the church at Antioch was not living that way, and we have ample historical evidence to demonstrate that the common purse was not the rule for all in the early church. We can find that all Christians lived in the community of goods, but in some communities this took the form of sharing from each individual store, while in others such as Jerusalem converts were expected to keep their goods in a common stock.*

*There have been many efforts to establish a partial common purse. I am not aware of any that have been as successful as the Hutterite style full community of goods. Typically half-measures breed problems of their own.*

*The Hutterite common purse allows for remarkable savings by ending the needless purchase of items for each household that can easily be shared. It stands to reason that when we work together, we are more efficient.*

*By living in extremely geographically compact communities, Hutterites can share resources in ways that Christians living in other types of communities simply can not. For example,*

*laundry facilities and meal preparation can be shared. The whole community can gather with less effort, and the work of caring for the sick and aged can more easily be shared among households*

*Hutterite communities benefit from an economic principle called economy of scale. Economists define economy of scale as a reduction in cost per unit resulting from increased production, realized from operational efficiencies. As production increases, the cost of producing each additional unit falls. It was economy of scale that helped large manufacturers drive the small craftsmen of years gone by out of business. Hutterites are turning that principle to the advantage of the community by combining household functions, reducing the cost in labor to each household.*

*During the nineteenth century there were quite a number of utopian Christian or quasi-Christian communes. Typically, failures in the 19th century communes can be laid to the account of bad doctrine and un-Scriptural practices. Most of these communes were economically successful. The following account of the Bishop Hill commune (late 19th century Central Illinois, from an unpublished paper by Melissa White)*

*would be an accurate description of economic conditions in several of the communes of that era, and of the Hutterite colonies as well.*

**THERE WERE ADVANTAGES TO COLONY LIFE. THE PEOPLE WERE NOT OVERWORKED, AND EACH HELD A JOB AT WHICH HE WAS TALENTED. THE OLD AND THE ILL WERE CARED FOR. THE COLONISTS ENJOYED MORE COMFORT AND SECURITY THAN THEIR NEIGHBORS WHO STRUGGLED TO STAY WARM AND HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT. EVERYONE UNDER THE AGE OF FOURTEEN ATTENDED SCHOOL FOR SIX MONTHS DURING EACH YEAR.**

**THE COLONY WAS SUCCESSFUL IN MANY WAYS. THE SYSTEM OF WORK DIVISION ALLOWED FOR GREATER PRODUCTION THAN IF EACH PERSON HAD SEVERAL TASKS. . . .LETTERS TO RELATIVES WHO HAD REMAINED IN SWEDEN TOLD OF THE COLONY'S WEALTH AND THE HAPPINESS COLONISTS EXPERIENCED. MANY ENCOURAGED OTHERS TO JOIN THE COLONY.**

*The common purse provides an answer to a lot of otherwise divisive questions. For example, insurance is not an issue when no one owns anything of his own. When all cloth is obtained from the common store, only cloth deemed appropriate by the community is available for clothing. Living from a common purse in a geographically compact community effortlessly provides greater uniformity.*

*One problem is that the strict common purse often limits individual sharing. We cannot give what we do not have. Where is the charity when no one possesses anything of his own?*

*In some common purse communities pride in possessions is simply transferred from the individual families to the group as a whole. Factory style production and farming have dehumanizing tendencies.*

*The common purse is not the answer to every evil, but it is a Scriptural way to address many problems.*

## *Simple Tools*

*Living and working among the Mennonites of Pine Hill and Barton Creek colonies in Belize, we learned the lesson of simple tools.*

*In the early 1970's, a few Mennonite families from the Klein Gemeinde colony of Spanish Lookout, Belize and the Old Colony settlement at Shipyard, Belize became uncomfortable with the technological sophistication and materialism they saw creeping into their communities. They saw a lack of opportunity for the poor, a great and unbridgeable gap between the rich and the poor brethren.*

*The bishop of the Klein Gemeinde colony gave his departing members a piece of advice that has proved itself to this day. He cautioned them not to allow any motors of any kind into the colony, relating his concern that one machine leads to another resulting in an accelerating slide toward modernity and materialism.*

*Through many trials and tribulations, the members of those*

colonies held fast to that advice. Purchasing their land in common, they made it available to members at a very reasonable price--lending without interest as the Bible commands. The gap between rich and poor evaporated, and keeping strictly to a simple rule--no batteries, no electric, no motors, no pressurized gas--allowed them to resist the call of the modern world. Today it is not uncommon for members of the more modern churches to ask to borrow money from the "Barton Creekers." The "Barton Creekers" like to say, "If we can earn enough money farming with horses to buy a tractor, what do we need a tractor for?"

Working with horsepower, water power, and the power of the wind these Mennonites provide the necessities of daily life in abundance. Their simple rules provide a trouble-free application. There are no disputes over what machines to allow--sticking with natural power sources places its own limits on the situation. The Mennonites operate a sawmills, wood shops, cheese factories, farms, and foundries (making aluminum horse collars, door handles, and other useful things from scrap aluminum).

Incredibly, while they work slower than their technologically

*advanced neighbors, they find more time for the important things in life. Working with horses allows them to visit as they work in the fields, and to include their children in their work to a greater extent.*

*Power is produced at home, along with much of the raw material for their products. As a result little cash is expended, and what is earned can be saved.*

*The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated the total yearly cost of owning a car (for the average American car owner) at \$7,232 including gas and oil, insurance, maintenance and repair, licenses and parking, and finance charges. Converting the money into time, we can figure the average cost or savings in time for automobile ownership. The following quote from the Transportation Almanac estimates this cost:*

Another way to convert money into time is to figure out the average speed of a car after accounting for the time needed to earn money to pay for it. Based on a 7-mile one-way commute which is all we'll drive, our annual car costs are \$6248 (capital costs of \$5789/yr. plus operating costs of \$0.131/mile, or \$459). We'll figure a bicycle will cost us \$220/yr. (\$400 for a bike that lasts five years, \$200 in accessories for the same time period, and \$100/yr. for maintenance.) So our car costs less bicycle costs for a year are \$6028, which will take 431 hours to pay for. The time we spend actually driving will be 140 hours, assuming the

average speeds for urban autos at 25 mph (11). So adding the time spent driving plus the time spent earning the money to drive, we spend 571 hours to go 3500 miles. That's an effective speed of 6.1mph, slower than a bicycle.

*The automobile is not the only tool that tends to work against efficiency in spite of its speed. We observed at Pine Hill that in terms of getting work done, cutting trees and clearing brush by hand was cheaper and faster than using a chainsaw or bulldozer. I believe we were ahead of those who used more modern tools.*

*Another argument for limiting transportation technology is that in a horse and buggy community neighbors must depend on each other to get the work done, and the lack of motorized transportation requires members to stick close to home. As a result, we got work done at Pine Hill that would have been delayed due to unnecessary trips to town back in the States. Horse and buggy transportation forces us to schedule our trips and think about what it is we're doing. It's certainly possible to fritter away time uselessly by needless travel with horse and buggy, but with travel speed about 10% that of the automobile the number of places one can go to in a day is dramatically reduced. The temptation is therefore also reduced.*



*I remember my grandparents reminiscing about the days before the tractor came into their church and community. "When the tractor came in, it was every man for himself," my grandfather said. Every man for himself is exactly what we're trying to avoid at Fountain Creek.*

*At Pine Hill we made most of what we needed. If we broke a hammer handle, we didn't run into town for a new handle (let alone a new hammer as so many Americans do today). We found an appropriate piece of wood and went to work with simple tools. In less than an hour we were back at work, and hadn't spent any money. I don't think we could have made a trip in an automobile as fast as we could make a tool handle. If you haven't been raised around horses, the prospect of learning to drive and work with horses may seem intimidating to you. If this is the case, you should know that many of the men who started Pine Hill were not raised around horses either.*

*I don't want to give the impression either, that there is anything necessary or righteous about horse transportation in itself. In fact, there are probably thousands of people in horse and buggy groups whose possession of a horse and buggy is a practical millstone around their necks. Jesus didn't drive a*

*horse and buggy. He typically walked. When he rode, it was on a borrowed animal.*

*Today some of those who drive horse and buggy would be better off without one. A bicycle is typically cheaper and more practical. Walking still works fine, as long as we make the right choices in ordering the rest of our lifestyle to fit.*

*Unfortunately, in many communities, owning your own buggy becomes another case of “keeping up with the Joneses.” It’s a completely unquestioned assumption. It’s easy to answer questions and nagging doubts about materialism and an excessively high standard of living with a set of arbitrary rules. But how does a \$5,000 buggy and a fine Standardbred on a tiny lot with all feed purchased out square with true self-denial or simplicity of life?*

*Yet there remains a place for the horse and the wagon in Christian community. A family trip down a muddy road can be pretty unpleasant walking or on bicycles, and the winter wind is cold in the Midwest. After years of using tractors and loaders, I was amazed at the ease with which heavy logs can be “hopped” onto log wagons with the use of horses, even in muddy*

conditions that would render any tractor helpless. Anyone who has experienced the pleasure of plowing with a walking plow, compared with the jolting of a tiller or the headaches of the tractor, could hardly be convinced to do garden work without one. And as a critics of tractor agriculture have long observed, horses have foals--tractors only make smoke.

The primitive state of the Toledo, Belize economy and high tariffs and costs of transportation (essentially nothing is manufactured in Belize) also forced us to make do with homemade tools. This was often to our benefit. Hinges, feed scoops, hoes--all these things were commonly made right in the community. Usually quality was as good or better than manufactured goods in the States, and at a fraction of the expense.

Another challenge to American plain groups was evident the minute we arrived in Mexico. The problem American brethren are having is that we're being influenced excessively by the affluence and materialism of the worldly people among whom we live. We being content to live a little "lower" than our neighbors, who are without a doubt or exception the "highest" living people on earth. If we take a look at standards of living

around the world this becomes painfully obvious. The US per capita income in 2000 was \$35,802 (TIME Almanac, 2002). The world per capita income is \$9,300 (CIA Factbook, 2005). In 143 of the 232 countries of the world national per capita income is less than world per capita income. In 99 nations of the world per capita income is less than \$5,000 US per year.

In Central America, only 44% of the people have access to grid electricity. In the Caribbean it is even fewer. In north and central Africa burning wood is the primary source of power in the home. In Indonesia about 26% of households have grid electricity. About 1.6 billion people in the world today live without access to electrical power of any kind, including generators and other off grid production methods. It's easy for those living in North America to dismiss these figures as being peculiar facts from the fringe settlements of the world, but the fact is that the United States and Canada are the strange ones. The United States consumes about 40% of the world's oil (O.S. Geological Survey, 1998), but has only about 5% of the world's population. How close is our standard of living to our neighbors? When the Lord looks down on His people from heaven He does not see us in comparison to our closest neighbors. He sees all men, in all lands. He knows all of

history. And when He sees high living people, He knows them.

In his book Lost Arts, John Seymour documents the disappearing trades of days gone by. In this volume, one thing that jumps out at the modern viewer as we view the pages of pictures of men at work in all trades is the presence of their children by their sides. Boys stood by the fires of the charcoal maker, the ovens of the baker, the wheel of the potter or the workbench of the craftsmen learning the trade and lending a hand. The girls and women also often lent a hand in the work of the fields in addition to the timeless skills of the traditional household crafts. Today this is the exception rather than the rule in the industrialized world.

With facts like these it's easy to see how the Pine Hill Mennonites work with "slower" tools, and yet find more time for family and community. By limiting ourselves to simple tools we can more easily include our children and our neighbors in our daily work, just as the workers of years gone by did. This limitation also helps us to lay bare the lie that we can become truly self-sufficient as the "every man for himself" economy would have us believe.

## *Bread Labor*

FOR EVEN WHEN WE WERE WITH YOU, THIS WE COMMANDED YOU, THAT IF ANY WOULD NOT WORK, NEITHER SHOULD HE EAT. FOR WE HEAR THAT THERE ARE SOME WHICH WALK AMONG YOU DISORDERLY, WORKING NOT AT ALL, BUT ARE BUSYBODIES. NOW THEM THAT ARE SUCH WE COMMAND AND EXHORT BY OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THAT WITH QUIETNESS THEY WORK, AND EAT THEIR OWN BREAD. 2 THESS 3:10-12

IN THE SWEAT OF THY FACE SHALT THOU EAT BREAD . . . GENESIS 3:19

NEITHER DID WE EAT ANY MAN'S BREAD FOR NOUGHT; BUT WROUGHT WITH LABOUR AND TRAVAIL NIGHT AND DAY, THAT WE MIGHT NOT BE CHARGEABLE TO ANY OF YOU: 2 THESS 3:8

HE THAT TILLETH HIS LAND SHALL BE SATISFIED WITH BREAD . . . PROVERBS 12:11

*In 1883 the Russian Christian writer Tolstoy developed the concept of “bread labor” in his tract, “What is to be done?” Tolstoy believed that everyone should labor with his hands to produce his food. He believed that anyone who did not work*

*with his hands to produce useful things was, in effect, a thief. He based his idea on Bible and his own observations.*

*In March 1845 Henry David Thoreau went to live the shore of Walden Pond. He ended up living there for two years by himself in a 10' x 15' cabin built by he and his friends. Thoreau made the following determination regarding the amount of annual labor for his food and fuel:*

**FOR MORE THAN FIVE YEARS I  
MAINTAINED MYSELF THUS SOLELY BY THE  
LABOR OF MY HANDS, AND I FOUND, THAT BY  
WORKING ABOUT SIX WEEKS IN A YEAR, I  
COULD MEET ALL THE EXPENSES OF LIVING.  
THE WHOLE OF MY WINTERS, AS WELL AS  
MOST OF MY SUMMERS, I HAD FREE AND  
CLEAR FOR STUDY.**

*During the depths of the Great Depression, socialists Scott and Helen Nearing moved from New York City to a farm near Jamaica, Vermont. By adhering to the bread labor principle, they were able to divide their day into three blocks of four hours each. The first block was bread labor (obtaining food, shelter, clothing, etc.). The second was civic work (serving the community). The third was recreation, or study.*

*If we as Christians developed a similarly thrifty lifestyle to Thoreau and the Nearing's, couldn't we find things of much more value to do with our time than Thoreau's endless reading and Nearing's civic work and recreation? What kind of opportunity could we find to serve our neighbor?*

*We find in the Bible the following instruction:*

**BUT GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN. FOR WE BROUGHT NOTHING INTO *THIS* WORLD, AND *IT IS* CERTAIN WE CAN CARRY NOTHING OUT. AND HAVING FOOD AND RAIMENT LET US BE THEREWITH CONTENT. BUT THEY THAT WILL BE RICH FALL INTO TEMPTATION AND A SNARE, AND *INTO* MANY FOOLISH AND HURTFUL LUSTS, WHICH DROWN MEN IN DESTRUCTION AND PERDITION. FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL: WHICH WHILE SOME COVETED AFTER, THEY HAVE ERRED FROM THE FAITH, AND PIERCED THEMSELVES THROUGH WITH MANY SORROWS. 1 TIMOTHY 6:6-10**

*Thoreau determined that 6 weeks a year labor was enough to provide all his necessities. Scott and Helen Nearing worked a four hour workday and provided their necessities. The Bible tells us to be content with these.*

*Thoreau and the Nearing's were working essentially on their*



*own. By taking advantage of the economy of the common purse community, how little time could be devoted to necessities and how much to worthwhile labor on behalf of others?*

*The key to this is being content with our food, clothing, and necessary tools. If we can bring ourselves to the point where we can simply follow the path of contentedness and sufficiency outlined in the verses from Timothy above, we can become so much more useful to God's kingdom than when we are bound up in acquiring worldly goods.*

*The bread labor concept as I envision it embodies not only the Tolstoyan principle that we should labor with our hands, but the Scriptural principle that when we have enough to eat, and wear, and a place to live we stop laboring for ourselves. Everything over and above our needs for food, clothing, and shelter must be for others.*

## *Practical Considerations*

*Thoreau built his hut on Emerson's land. The Nearings bought their farm with the last of their New York City wages. The Pine Hill community is built upon Central American real estate, purchased at a cost of \$75 US an acre.*

*Land prices have risen and continue to rise dramatically. How can we afford to buy land for ourselves and our children when land prices are so high? What about the costs of health care?*

*Initially, brethren will live and work together in very simple conditions. Housing will be provided upon a small lot of land, and brethren will work together (at first likely outside the community) and possibly for wages (to be saved together). Eating together at a common table will provide additional savings. Working and saving will provide the money needed to purchase land. Could you imagine ten poor young brothers, sharing housing and working together? By keeping the money together, enough could quickly be saved to purchase land for all with no need to borrow money. This is the essence of the early Fountain Creek community concept.*

*From that point on, the colony will use the earnings of those workers to provide permanent housing in the form of a simple house and stable for each family, located in a geographically compact village similar to that of the Russian Mennonites of Belize. Brothers or sisters who feel called to celibacy, or who feel more comfortable in the first environment can continue to live and work in it. Later, the community also offers opportunities for individual charity in the form of enterprises undertaken solely for the purpose of gifts of money or goods to charity. The individual family may work together or in cooperation with other families for the purpose of generating income to be given to the colony as a whole, or to other deserving individuals or charities, in addition to “bread labor” work assigned by colony leadership.*

## Conclusion

So to sum up the Fountain Creek concept, it is a common purse village similar in layout and lifestyle to a horse and buggy Russian Mennonite colony. The land and buildings are paid for by the earnings of the workers, plus money from the sale of excess personal property. Workers continue to work in colony enterprises to raise food and pay for other expenses such as health care just as Hutterites do. I suggest that the colony businesses should provide a welcoming atmosphere for visitors and serve as a light to the world. For example, at the entrance to the colony, I envision a bookstore, fruit and vegetable stand, restaurant, horse-powered sawmill, and furniture shop. These businesses (built over time, of course) will provide a place for welcoming outsiders, without the problems of having offensive "tourists" roaming the housing areas as so many Amish communities must endure. In this way, we can accommodate visitors, interview seekers, and do our business without compromising our privacy.

This concept is a village, a place for Anabaptist believers to live in. It is a place for the church to live, not the church itself.

*There are plenty of splintered groups out there already, the last thing we need is another schism. While we would welcome guests of other fellowships, the community is built primarily for the purpose of providing a supportive environment for our own families to live in. If Antioch and Jerusalem broke bread together, we should be just as willing to break bread with those who don't share our notions of community and lifestyle. It should be remembered that a main purpose of the church is to preach the gospel, and not to insist on narrow applications on matters of lifestyle. If we have the liberty to choose where we live and who we share with there will be no problem with maintaining ties of brotherhood, in spite of the fact that there are brothers who may be at first uncomfortable with the idea.*

*Eberhard Arnold wrote:*

*“The human race has made stupendous technological progress, conquering time and space by means of automobiles and airplanes; but how many thousands of people are being killed by these very same means! There are amazing achievements in the big cities, yet most urban families die out in the third or fourth generation.*

*The most sinister powers of our civilization are the three mighty organizations--the State, the military, and the capitalist structure. These three organizations represent the highest achievement of the earth spirit. The tremendous edifice built up by a fallen creation is incredible. But it will end in death. How mighty is that power, how unquestioned its apparent worth!"*

*Let us ask ourselves today, are we ready for the fall and the death of the highest achievements of this fallen creation? Are we building something for ourselves that won't last for all time? Is our investment truly eternal? Or do we value our comfort zone, our possessions, and our comfortable home in this comfortable land more than the riches of Christ? Well, this is the concept. Will it result in something terrible, "church within a church?" Or perhaps no response at all? Will it bring a reexamination of our place and our calling in these last days? A new opportunity for service to others and a strengthening of family? What fruit it will bring forth is up to us!*

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