

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AMANA SOCIETY 1714-1900

[The unique value of this account of the Amana Society, or Community of True Inspiration, lies in the fact that it is written from the viewpoint and in the spirit of the Community by a highly respected member of the Society, Dr. Charles F. Noe. It may be regarded as the official history of the Society. Through the kindness of Dr. Noe, permission has been given to print the account in full and without editorial revision in the IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS.—*The Editor.*]

I

ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE INSPIRATIONISTS

The history of the Amana Society, or Community of True Inspiration, dates back to the year 1714 when J. F. Rock and E. L. Gruber made the first beginning in Hessa, Germany, not as a communistic society, but as a new religious sect, having for its creed the belief that God could now, as well as of old, inspire men to speak and declare His word and will, and thus act as messengers of divine teaching to the world.

These men soon had many followers, who had seen and felt the utter hollowness and formality of the then existing church, and who eagerly embraced the doctrine of Rock and Gruber, of a truer and purer religion, of a life after the teachings of Christ, and of a life of simple and conscientious christianity, with a high standard of virtue and morality, devoid of all that outward display and form, which made up the christianity of the majority of the people in those times.

J. F. Rock and J. A. Gruber, a son of E. L. Gruber, as well as a number of others, had the spirit and gift of revelation and inspiration, and they went about preaching and tes-

tifying as they were directed by the Lord, making extensive travels through Germany, Switzerland, Holland and other European countries, soon establishing many small congregations of followers of their faith. The most important of these were at Himbach, Schwarzenau, Birstein, Ronneburg, Neuwied, Liebloos, and others. Although many thus adopted their doctrine, Rock and Gruber did not make these journeys for the purpose of increasing the number of their followers, but only upon the direction of the Lord, for the sole purpose of leading humanity to a purer and truer christianity.

E. L. Gruber died in 1728, but the work was continued by Rock, who was now assisted by a number of others, who had consecrated their lives to the same work. The most notable of these were Jonas Wickmark, an attorney and a graduate of the University of Jena, Casper Löw, the brothers Gleim, Dr. J. P. Kämpf, a philosopher and physician of note, and Gottfried Neuman. The boldness with which these men attacked the time-honored custom of the church soon brought upon them the hatred of the clergy, who were not backward in denouncing them and their teachings as ungodly, and complaining to the government, asking for their imprisonment or banishment. Also many high and noble persons were turned against these preachers, for title and rank proved no barrier for these fearless men, when they felt called upon to testify against their godless and immoral life. All this soon aroused the displeasure of the various governments into which Germany was then divided, and in many places orders were issued for their fining and imprisonment. Many a time were these orders executed, and they had to go to prison or were put in the pillory, exposed to the derision and

contempt of the mob. Sometimes they were tied to the whipping-post and whipped; once at Zürich, they were publicly lashed through the streets out of town.

But the preachers were not the only sufferers; their followers also had to feel this persecution, as they would not bear arms, nor serve in war, and also persistently refused to make oath. This refusal they based on the passage in scripture, where Jesus says, Matt. 5, 34: "But I say unto you, swear not at all;" and Matt. 5, 37: "But let your communication be yea, yea: Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil."

Many governments prohibited all meetings of the Inspirationists, as they were called, and imposed heavy fines on those who still persisted in holding them. In spite of all this oppression the sect continued to grow, although many had to leave their native land, friends and all, in order to go to places where the authorities were more tolerant, and where they were allowed to serve God according to their chosen faith. The most liberal government was that of Hussia, where most of the emigrants flocked, and which on that account contained the largest congregations.

A great loss to their cause occurred in the year 1749 when J. F. Rock died; and with his death the gift of inspiration ceased. But his place was taken by others, who followed in his footsteps, and who ministered to the various communities, using for their basis the writings and testimonies of Rock and Gruber and also the Bible. The most prominent of the successors of Rock was P. G. Nagel, a man of education and a graduate of the University of Jena. He also, in conjunction with others, traveled much and continued the work

along the lines of the founders. Nagel died in 1779, and from that time on the decline of the society, which had really commenced with Rock's death, became more rapid, until at the beginning of the nineteenth century but few of the once large congregations remained; even these few had fallen back into the ways of the common world more or less, preferring an easy-going way to the trials and tribulations suffered by their fathers. This was due to some extent to the fact that inspiration had ceased to exist, but also to the general decline of religion in those years. The kings and rulers of the various countries were often engaged in wars, and political events diverted the thoughts of the people from religious matters; the chairs of the higher educational institutions were filled with men of rationalistic inclinations; the students were brought in contact with the liberal ideas of their teachers, and by them these were spread throughout the land.

II

THE REVIVAL OF 1817

The slow and gradual decline, described above, continued until the year 1817, when a new and greater period dawned for the society. The old workers had long ago foretold that the good work would not die out, that there would come a time when new teachers would arise and with new life and vigor proclaim the old doctrines. For years the prospects for the fulfillment of these prophecies had been dark and gloomy and many had commenced to doubt their truth. But the time had now arrived, the revival came, and with it new life and zeal was awakened.

The first step in the new movement occurred when M.

Kraussert of Strassburg was endowed with the gift of inspiration. He proclaimed God's deep sorrow over the decline and decay of the work, so nobly and faithfully commenced a hundred years before, calling on the few remaining faithful, to begin life anew, by embracing the doctrine of the new as well as of the old prophets, not only in words and form as heretofore, but also in spirit. Kraussert's inspirations were recognized by a number of the old members. Others did not accept them as godly, and were thus turned against the revival movement.

A few months later another person received the gift of inspiration. This was Barbara Heinemann, a poor peasant girl, born at Leitersweiler, Alsace, without culture and education. She never had the advantage of schooling, not even being able to read or write. She was earning her living as a servant, and had never paid much attention to religious matters, taking part in the various frivolities of the world, without thinking anything bad about them. One day she became engaged in deep meditation about her past life, and she became aware of her great unworthiness to be called a christian. From that time on she sought to inform herself of the requisites of a truly religious life; she went to church regularly, also asking the ministers and other people, whom she knew to be pious church members, how she could shape her life, so as to be more in conformity with the teachings of Christ. But there she met with poor success; most of them smiled at such religious inclinations at her age—the age at which the world lies before the youthful mind as having only joys and pleasures in store. This rebuke from the few, where she could hope for information upon the

subject so dear to her heart, left her in a sorrowful state of mind. She was longing for something better, but did not know where to find it.

At that time she had heard of people, who had separated themselves from the church and who held meetings after their own faith and belief. These, she heard, were called Pietists. She at once set about to become acquainted with them, and for that purpose visited a lady, whom she knew to be connected with this sect. After some hesitation she was admitted to their meetings, and thus became a member. It was in the house of one of these Pietists that she first met M. Kraussert, and at once felt that this man's inspirations were godly, and that she had at last found what she was longing for. She now accompanied Kraussert on his visits to several of the congregations of the Inspirationists, and shortly after she also received the remarkable gift possessed by Kraussert. She spoke with great power, using well chosen language although she never had any training in that line.

About the same time another young member, by the name of Christian Metz, of Ronneburg, received the same gift of inspiration, already possessed by Kraussert and B. Heinemann. These three then were the true founders and recognized leaders of what was called the New Community.

Kraussert soon fell back into the world, because he showed too much fear in proclaiming the word of God, and because he did not want to bear the persecutions which soon followed; therefore Christian Metz and Barbara Heinemann only remained. These two carried on the work in much the same way as Rock and Gruber had done before. The

mission-work and travels were largely performed by C. Metz, B. Heinemann staying at home or visiting other places only on special occasions.

C. Metz, usually in company with one or the other of the brethren from Ronneburg, now visited the various towns and places where remnants of the old inspiration community were known to exist, such as Schwarzenau, Himbach, Homburgshausen, Liebloos, Neuwied, and others. There he was variously received; some at once accepted him as a new teacher and prophet, coming as the fulfillment of the before mentioned prophecies; others were filled with grave doubts about the authenticity of his teachings, while still others, although but few, came out openly against him, branding him as an imposter, trying to imitate Rock and Gruber from selfish motives and for personal gain. Some of these doubters afterwards were convinced of their error, and were thereafter among the most active and ardent supporters of the Society of True Inspiration, as it was now called.

The society now became more and more united, until it finally found itself under a government similar to the one existing at the present day, except that there was no community of goods. The leaders were Christian Metz and Barbara Heinemann, and the word of God, made known through them, was the highest authority in all matters. In addition to this the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, as well as the Old Testament, formed their basis of faith. Elders were appointed in each of the various places, who had to look after the spiritual and temporal welfare of the members within their jurisdiction.

Community of goods had not yet been adopted. There

were rich and poor, educated and uneducated, professional men, merchants, manufacturers, artisans, farmers and laborers among the members of the society; but the wealthy and well-to-do were ever ready to help along their poor brethren. A fund was established, made up of the voluntary contributions and of legacies left by deceased members; out of this fund the needy could borrow without interest when it was deemed necessary by the elders.

But the society soon had to pass through the same persecutions and molestations experienced by their forefathers. Some of the clergymen caused C. Metz and B. Heinemann to be repeatedly arrested, and accused them of conspiracy against the church by drawing away their church members. Usually they were released in a short time as the charges could not be sustained against them.

Another source of endless trouble for the society were its schools. They had withdrawn their children from the public schools, preferring to instruct them privately by teachers selected from their own number, according to their faith in religious matters. Church and school were closely connected in those times; a large part of the curriculum of the schools consisted of religious instruction, which of course differed from the views of the society, and therefore they did not desire their children to be taught along two different lines.

This maintenance of separate schools the government would not permit, and fines were assessed against the parents of every child reported absent from school. These fines they willingly paid rather than sacrifice their principles.

This state of affairs continued for a number of years, the governmental molestations becoming more vexatious every year, especially at Schwarzenau, until it became apparent that it was only a question of time when the Inspirationists would have to renounce their faith and return to the fold of the church, or leave their homes and seek refuge where they could follow their religious customs unmolested.

This latter event finally came in the year 1826, when it was no longer possible for the co-members at Schwarzenau to live in peace according to their convictions; and now came the question of a future home for these exiles. This was finally solved in that the society leased a large estate at Marienborn, with commodious buildings and extensive farmlands, near Ronneburg, the home of the principal elders. Here all members were given opportunity to earn their living according to their calling or inclination, each one in turn paying a share of the rent. Thus was established the first refuge for those who preferred to leave everything behind, rather than to become traitors to their faith. Others came from various parts of the country, so that all the available room at Marienborn was soon occupied. Now it became clear, that the fulfillment of the prophecy by C. Metz, that the Lord would soon collect and gather in his faithful servants, was near. Still more were ready to leave their homes, and as there was no more land available at Marienborn, the society rented a number of buildings, erected and formerly occupied by the Herrnhuter Society, and called by them the Herrnhaag. These buildings were large with many rooms; and although not used for many years, they suited the purpose admirably, as they had been designed

and built for a purpose similar to the one for which they were now to be used.

This was in the year 1828. It was not long, before the new home was also filled, as many large congregations had moved there, especially from Edenkoben and Switzerland. In 1832 the society leased the old convent of Arnsburg, owned by the Count of Laubach. This was a large building with many halls and apartments, formerly occupied by monks, but now it had not been in use for a long time. In connection with it were large tracts of land and a flouring mill. All this was soon peopled by members of the society, for at this time Ronneburg, an old medieval castle and the home of the Inspirationists for over a hundred years, was abandoned, owing to difficulties with the owners.

The wealthier members tried to assist their poor associates as much as possible. They established woolen mills and knitting works in order to give employment to those not able or willing to follow some individual business or trade.

In addition to those now living in the three communities Marienborn, Herrnhag, and Arnsburg, (or Armenburg, as it was later called,) there were still many who had remained in their homes, being held there by their business or property, or because their governments were more tolerant. These kept in touch with the society, observing all its rules and requirements, and receiving occasional visits from the principal elders. In 1834 the society had again outgrown its quarters, and more room and land had to be acquired in order to provide a place of residence and means of living for the new members constantly coming to the society. For this purpose they obtained a leasehold on the convent of

Engelthal, about 13 miles from Armenburg, also owned by the Count of Laubach.

This place was also very old, surrounded by a large wall, in accordance with the customs of former centuries. Many of the dwellings first had to be repaired, in order to make them inhabitable. After involving a considerable amount of money and labor, it was finally ready for occupation, and the first members moved there in the fall of 1834, followed by many more in 1835.

The society now had apparently reached the quiet and peaceful life for which it had been striving for a score of years.

The spiritual management rested mainly in the hands of C. Metz, who was at that time the only one possessing the gift of inspiration, as Barbara Heinemann had in the meantime married George Landmann and soon after lost her spiritual power. C. Metz made regular calls at the various communities, assisting wherever the local elders needed counsel and advice. He also made a number of journeys to Switzerland, where several of the old Inspiration communities were still existing and from which many later came to the society.

He was an eloquent and forceful speaker with considerable executive ability. His spiritual testimonies were delivered in a sublimity and purity of language far beyond his ordinary abilities. He also wrote a large number of hymns, many of which are now read and sung in the meetings of the society. In the management, especially of business affairs, he was ably assisted by P. Mook, Wm. Møerschel, C. M. Winzenried, Jacob Døerr, F. Heinemann, G. Døeller, and a number of others.

Thus the affairs of the society were in a prosperous condition, but soon the old troubles commenced again. The government would not accept the affirmations of the members in place of an oath; but the members of the society could not be induced to swear. This controversy was revived every time some legal matter came up, putting them to much annoyance and expense. They explained the matter fully to the government, stating why they did not deem it consistent with their faith to swear. The government took the matter under advisement, but did not render a decision for a long time. Finally the matter was decided adversely to the society.

This proved to be an incident of most vital influence on the future of the society. Some time before the Lord had already revealed through his instrument C. Metz that He would lead them out of this land of adversity to one where they and their children could live in peace and liberty. No intimation had been given when this would happen, but the elders felt that the time had now arrived. So on July 25th, 1842, they held a conference at Armenburg to discuss the matter, but could not reach a satisfactory decision. A second conference was held at Engelthal on August 13th, in which the Lord directed through C. Metz that several members should go to America, the land of personal and religious liberty, to find a new and permanent home for the society.

III

REMOVAL TO AMERICA

The members selected for the journey to America were Christian Metz, G. A. Weber, Wm. Noe and G. Acker-

mann. These were given full power to act for all the members and to purchase land where they deemed best.

On the 5th of September, 1842, these men bid good bye to their relatives, friends, and comfortable homes, to go across the seas for a new land and home, where their trials would be ended and where they would be permitted to live according to their faith and convictions.

As far as Bremen they were accompanied by Wm. Møerschel. Dr. Weber's little son also accompanied them, as he was going with his father to America. After parting with Wm. Møerschel they sailed from Bremen on the 18th of September, and after a stormy voyage of thirty-eight days they arrived at New York where they at once proceeded to inform themselves in regard to any suitable tracts of land which might be for sale in that or the neighboring States. They became acquainted with a land agent, who offered them a large tract of land in Chatauqua County, N. Y. This they decided to visit, and so they left New York for Buffalo, traveling up the Hudson as far as Albany, and from there on the Erie Canal. At Buffalo they heard of another large tract of land, the Seneca Indian Reservation, near Buffalo, which was for sale, and which seemed more adapted to their purpose, being nearer to the markets and of easy access. So they decided to make a short stop at Buffalo, in order to drive out to this land and inspect it, before continuing on their journey. They were well pleased with the land, part of which was still covered with dense virgin forest, and part was under cultivation by the Indians, who still lived there.

They were inclined to make a purchase here, but decided

also to visit the Chatauqua land, and then take whichever suited them best. C. Metz and Wm. Noe were detailed to make the trip. They returned in a few days, stating that they were satisfied that the Indian land was the most suitable. So they entered into negotiations with the Ogden Land Co., the company which had purchased the reservation from the government. They finally purchased of one of the partners of the company 10,000 acres at \$10.50 per acre, the conveyance first to be accepted by all the partners of the company who lived in New York. After a long time of waiting they were notified that the other members of the company were not willing to make the sale on these terms; so new negotiations had to be commenced. They finally came to an agreement by which 5,000 acres were purchased at ten dollars per acre, and now the friends in Germany were notified that a purchase had been made and that a number of reliable men should come over to commence the new settlement.

But the society was sadly disappointed in the hope that everything would go smooth and peacefully now. Just as soon as the first company of the new settlers arrived from Europe and began preparations for the building of houses, the Indians, who were still on the reservation, commenced to show hostility. They did not want any white men on the land, which had been their's and their fathers' for ages. Many were in favor of repudiating the treaty by which they had sold their lands to the United States government. The society treated them kindly and tried to explain to them that the purchase was perfectly legal and that they were now the lawful owners of the land. Some of the Indians yielded

and left for the new reservation provided for them by the government, but some were stubborn and persistently refused to leave, and it was not until 1846, after the society had invoked the assistance of the authorities at Washington, that the last ones could be induced to leave for their new home.

At the time of the purchase of the land, the society had no intention to introduce communism into its organization. The original plan was to hold the land and houses in common, each member's contribution to the purchase money being secured by a proportionate share in the real estate and also drawing a reasonable rate of interest. This was soon found to be impracticable, and absolute communism was adopted, and today is one of the fundamental rules of the society.

During the years 1843 to 1846 some eight hundred people came over from Germany, and the land which had heretofore been the home of Indians, covered with virgin forests and untilled plains, soon presented a widely different appearance. The place of the old Indian huts and log houses was taken by roomy and substantial, though plain houses; the soil was broken and soon covered with waving grain; two woolen mills, a flouring mill, several stores, two tanneries, and a number of other manufactories were established to give employment to all according to their talent and inclination. The society now fully organized under the name of "Ebenezer Society," which title was used in all business transactions. The houses were not scattered over the entire territory, but were arranged in four villages called Nieder Ebenezer, Mittel Ebenezer, Ober Ebenezer and Neu Ebenezer, the prefixes meaning lower, middle, upper, and new

respectively. Each village had its store, its meeting house or place of worship, and its schools, and had its own local government consisting of a board of elders. As the population increased more land was purchased, but of course at a much higher price than it could have been bought at the time of the original purchase.

A number of people also joined the society from Canada, and as they owned some land there, the society decided to locate two more villages on it. One was at Caneborough, later changed to Kenneberg by the society, about forty-five miles northwest of Buffalo, and one near the Niagara river, twelve miles north of Buffalo, called Canada Ebenezer. These two Canadian villages were built on the same general plan as the others, each having a small store and some other business establishments, but their principal value to the society was in the valuable pine forests on the adjoining land. Later, during the time of emigration to the west, large quantities of lumber were cut there and shipped to the settlements in the United States to be sold or utilized for building purposes.

Thus the society increased and prospered until the year 1854, when its growth had become such that it became apparent that more land would have to be acquired. As all the available land in the neighborhood was held at a high price, the elders saw the advantage of going west and obtaining a tract of land large enough for all times. Another reason for the desire to obtain another location was the close proximity of the rapidly growing city of Buffalo, which had an injurious influence, especially on the younger members of the society, and it also interfered with the

quiet and secluded life of which the colonists were so desirous.

In September 1854, the Lord gave the command through C. Metz that four members should go west and find a new home for the society, and so C. Metz, C. M. Winzenreid, C. L. Mayer, and F. Weber were appointed for this purpose. They did not know where to go, but as Kansas was at that time the Mecca of the the homeseekers, they concluded to visit that territory, and if any suitable tract of land could be found to purchase it for their new home.

They spent about a month in Kansas, traveling in wagons with Indian guides, and endured many hardships, but they could not decide on any purchase. The only piece of land which seemed suitable was a part of the Delaware Indian Reservation, but the Indians declined to sell. So they decided to return to Ebenezer, much discouraged by the failure of their commission. But the plan of removal was not abandoned on account of this failure. In November a new committee, consisting of J. Wittmer and J. Beyer, were appointed to go to the new State of Iowa and inspect the large tracts of Government land still to be had there, after which they were to return and report to the other elders. They visited many places in Iowa, but the territory between Iowa City and Marengo seemed to them the most suitable for their purpose. They were especially well pleased with a wide valley about twenty miles west of Iowa City on both sides of the Iowa river. There were fertile rolling prairies, with bluffs and woodlands along the watercourses; they saw that the river could be utilized for furnishing water power for factories, and that the rich prairie soil was ready for the

plow and would not have to be cleared of heavy timber as had been the case in Ebenezer.

The committee returned and reported the conditions as they had found them, stating that in their opinion they had found a place well suited to their requirements. This was considered in a meeting of the board of trustees, and it was finally concluded to make the new settlement on the land so favorably reported on by Beyer and Wittmer. It was agreed that J. Beyer, C. M. Winzenreid, J. Wittmer and F. Heinemann should at once proceed to Iowa and purchase a tract of land of appropriate size. So they returned for this purpose to the locality already visited the year before. A number of farms were scattered over the territory, but there was still a considerable amount of government land to be had, and of this they purchased about 3,300 acres. They experienced considerable difficulty in getting possession of the scattered lots between the lands already purchased. Many of the farmers on hearing of their object demanded high prices; others lived in distant places and had to be visited in order to come to an agreement; but in spite of these difficulties they managed to obtain enough land to enable them to begin the sale of the Ebenezer land and commence the removal to Iowa.

The first village was laid out on a hill north of the Iowa river, eleven miles east of Marengo. It was called Amana, a name taken from the Bible and meaning "remain true." At first only small frame houses were built, but as more and more help came from the east the quarries on the land could be worked and stone buildings erected. In the following years several more villages were commenced at different

places on the territory: West Amana and South Amana in 1856, High Amana in 1857, and East Amana in 1860. Up to this time the nearest railroad station had been Iowa City, twenty miles distant, but now the Mississippi and Missouri R. R., later named C. R. I. & P., was completed as far as Homestead, a small town south of the society's territory. All goods from the east would now be unloaded there, and it would also form the shipping point for the neighboring farming population. The society saw the necessity of owning this railroad station, and so in 1861 the entire village of Homestead was bought and thus became the sixth of the villages of the society. In 1862 another village was founded two miles west of Amana and called Middle Amana.

The sale of the Ebenezer land was now almost completed, and the last of the remaining members came to Iowa on December 13th, 1864.

By that time the society had acquired about 26,000 acres of land, approximately the amount owned at the present time. In 1859 the society was incorporated as a religious and benevolent society under the name of "Amana Society." The purpose sought to be obtained by this organization as a religious society and community is best defined and set forth in Articles 1 and 2 as embodied in its constitution.

The following are the most important provisions of the constitution, Articles 1 and 2 being given in full:

Article 1. The foundation of our civil organization is and shall remain forever God, the Lord, and the faith, which He worked in us according to His free grace and mercy, and which is founded upon (1) the word of God as revealed in the Old and New Testament. (2) The testimony of Jesus through the spirit of prophecy. (3) the hidden spirit of grace and chastisement.

The purpose of our association as a religious Society is therefore no worldly or selfish one, but the purpose of the love of God in His vocation of grace received by us, to serve Him in the inward and outward bond of union, according to His laws and His requirements in our own consciences, and thus to work out the salvation of our souls, through the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ, in self-denial, in the obedience of our faith, and in the demonstration of our faithfulness in the inward and outward service of the Community, by the power of grace, which God presents us with.

And to fulfill this duty we do hereby covenant and promise collectively and each to the other by the acceptance and signing of this present constitution.

Article 2. In this bond of union tied by God amongst ourselves, it is our unanimous will and resolution, that the land purchased here and that may hereafter be purchased, shall be and remain a common estate and property, with all improvements thereupon and all appurtenances thereto as also with all the labor, cares, troubles and burdens, of which each member shall bear his allotted share with a willing heart.

And having obtained in pursuance of the act of the legislature of this State, Chapter 131 passed March 28, 1858, an incorporation as a religious society, it is hereby agreed on that the present and future titles to our common lands shall be conveyed to and vested in "The Amana Society" in the Township of Amana, as our corporate name by which we are known in law.

Article 3. Agriculture, manufactures and trades shall form the means of sustenance, and out of the income of these the expenses of the society shall be defrayed. If any surplus remains it shall be applied to improvements, to the erection of school and meeting-houses, care of the old and sick, the founding of a business and safety fund, and to benevolent purposes in general.

Article 4. The control and management of the society shall be vested in a board of 13 trustees, to be elected annually out of the number of elders. The trustees shall annually elect out of their num-

ber a President, Vice-President and Secretary, who shall have full power to sign all public and legal documents in the name of the society.

Article 5. Every member is in duty bound to give his or her personal and real property to the trustees for the common fund, at the time of joining the society. For such payments each member is entitled to a credit thereof on the books of the society, and to a receipt signed by the president and secretary, and is secured by the pledge of the common property of the society.

Article 6. Each member is entitled to free board and dwelling, to support and care in old age, sickness and infirmity and to an annual sum of maintenance, the amount of which is to be fixed by the trustees. The members release all claims for wages, interest and any share in the income and of the estate of the society separate from the common stock.

Article 7. All children and minors after the death of their parents and relatives shall be orphans under the special guardianship of the trustees during their minority. Any credits, if not disposed of by will, or any debts left by the parents are to be assumed by the children. Credits of members dying intestate without leaving lawful heirs shall revert to the society.

Article 8. Members leaving the society either by their own choice or by expulsion, shall receive back the amount paid into the common fund without any interest or allowance for services during the time of their membership.

From the above will be seen that communism is not practiced for temporal or pecuniary purposes or as an experiment to solve great social problems, but is subservient to the great work, and one of the means, better and more ably to perform the inward and outward duties required of man to lead a true and christian life as commanded by God in His word in the Old and New Testament and as revealed in the

testimonies of true inspiration. Communism as practiced in the society is based on faith and requires obedience to faith, self-denial, and love of God and man, and in following and adhering to this bond of love and union, which God has tied amongst them, communism will be maintained.

A large part of the land owned by the society was erected into a township by itself and called Amana Township.

A few words now remain to be said as to the present condition of the society. The increase in membership has been slow but steady up to a few years ago, but now for several years has been stationary, being 1700 or 1800. The society operates two woolen mills, one at Amana and the other at Middle Amana. At Amana is also located a factory for the manufacture of cotton prints. The power of these four manufactories is furnished by the Iowa river through a canal 7 miles in length and by several steam engines. Besides these there is a flouring mill at Amana and one at West Amana, also 7 stores distributed through the various towns. These stores supply the wants of the members as well as of the surrounding farming population. The society raises nearly all the agricultural products required for its own use, several hundred hired hands being employed for the heavier work. Nearly all the towns are provided with a water system fed from the canal or by deep wells. Each member is provided with board and dwelling, as provided for in the constitution. The meals are taken in large kitchen houses, where 30-50 people eat together, thus making cooking by individual families unnecessary. Children attend school all the year round from the age of 5 to 14. The schools are graded and are conducted by teachers who are members of

the society. The children are instructed both in English and German; but the German language is used almost exclusively by the members in their everyday work. Religious meetings are held in large meeting-houses, twice on Sunday and sometimes on week days and a short prayer-meeting is held every evening. The services are presided over by one of the elders, of which there are about eighty in all. No one at the present time has the gift of inspiration. Christian Metz died in 1867 and Barbara Landmann in 1883, but the testimonies and writings left by these are read in all meetings.

New members are not admitted except they first give proof of being fully in accord with the religious doctrine of the society, and then they usually have to go through a period of probation. The trustees have the power to expel any member whose conduct is not according to the rules of the society. The fact that all religious exercises are conducted in German makes it necessary that those desiring to become members be fully conversant with that language.

IV

RELIGIOUS FAITH¹

The confession of faith of the Community of True Inspiration is founded on the revealed word of God, as manifested in the Old and New Testament, on the divine doctrines and teachings of Christ and the Apostles that all men should obey the commandments of God, follow in the footsteps of Christ, and conform their conduct to His teachings and example set before them while sojourning on earth.

¹ This chapter was contributed by Mr. George Heinemann, a member of the Amana Society.

They believe in God the father, the almighty creator of heavens and of earth, and of all that is visible and invisible, and in his only begotten son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the mediator and savior of the world, the word, who was in the beginning with God, the light of the world, who was made flesh, God of God and son of man, sent unto the world, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish; who suffered great agony, was crucified, died and shed his blood for the remission of sin. And also in God the holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and Son, who is equally adored and honored, who has spoken and operated through the prophets of old, and who even now speaks and operates audibly through the instruments of true inspiration, and hidden inwardly, through the heart and conscience towards repentance and renewal of heart, teaching denial of ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world. They acknowledge and avow a holy, universal christian church, and a communion of saints, and all people of every nation, who fear God and work righteousness are accepted with Him. They believe in the remission of sin, the resurrection of the body, and in life blessed and everlasting.

Divine worship is offered in prayer meetings, where the word of God is read, and admonitions for instruction and useful application are rendered thereon by the elders. No sermons are delivered, nor lengthy discussions of christian theories indulged in. Prayer is regarded as very essential, a communication of the heart with God. Prayers are said in all meetings, and also at the homes and in the family circle.

Baptism with water is not practiced, but is held to be only an outward form of true spiritual baptism. Spiritual regeneration and baptism in spirit is believed to be the substance of this sacrament. Religious instruction is given, and practical christianity is taught by the parents and also by teachers to children and young people. The confirmation, or reception into the covenant of grace, occurs at the age of fifteen. It is a most solemn act, conducted in open service, where the vow is made in the presence of the whole congregation, as a covenant of faith and with God.

The Lord's supper is celebrated. It is held biennially in the manner as introduced by Jesus amongst his disciples. Feet washing is practiced and solemnly done after the example given by Christ.

They are dutifully bound in faithfulness and allegiance to the authorities, and remembrance is made in their prayers for divine guidance of the governments and magistrates. They are noncombatants, wars being believed to be against the will of God and the teachings of Christ.

Oaths are forbidden, averments and confirmations are made by affirmation.

In dress and wearing apparel the many variable styles are not imitated, stress being put on comfort, comeliness, and propriety.

Dwelling houses likewise are commodiously but plainly built; living-rooms and apartments well furnished, yet all extravagances and luxuries avoided.

Games and all frivolous and worldly amusements are not countenanced, being harmful, diverting the mind from religious matters and from that most important aim of life, to

work out the salvation of our soul in this present time of grace, this being the paramount object and aim to which all men should attain, to live in uprightness and virtue, in the fear of God, in the bond of brotherly love and affection, one to another, aspiring to keep the two great commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

On the observance, and in the obedience of these great fundamental laws and principles of true christianity is based and founded the faith and creed of the society; these constitute the progress, success, and continuance both as a religious community and as a communistic association, and to this aim also point and tend the precepts and doctrines of the testimonies of true inspiration, conforming to the word of God and the doctrines of holy scripture.

This does not imply an ascetic life, cheerless and discontented. There are burdens, cares, and anxieties, but in the relation of every day life, in the coöperation for mutual benefit, in the solicitude and care for the welfare and happiness of everyone and in the interest and sympathy participated in by all, is well manifested that their life is blended with peace and cheerfulness, and that great comfort is found in that bond of love and union, loyalty and attachment that joins one to another, elders to members and old to young.

CHARLES FRED NOE

AMANA
IOWA COUNTY, IOWA