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Subject

Date

The Hutterities in North America

Hutterities is a cub-cultural group of Anabaptist having a firm belief that they can honor God by adopting communal ways of living. These groups are still existing in Canada and United States where they are clinging to their old traditional and religious values. They emphasize on devoting pacifisms and fulfilling their religious duty by living communally. Their belief also encourages them to accept sufferings which has always remained part of their culture. They must be always ready for suffering although they adapted to the changing social, political and technological conditions of the world. Hutterites is still the largest family-type communal group in the west. In 1965, around 16,500 Hutterites were living in colonies. The population census reveals that 30,000 Hutterites lived in Manitoba and Alberta. While the facts depict that 32,500 were living in Canada by 2011.

Outsiders or non-Hutterites can rarely enter these groups if they are willing to accept communal living. Every person who is member of this group accepts the rural settings where agriculture is the primary way of life. Those who belong to the group adopt the same Hutteritian norms. Many people attempt to join the groups but fail due to many reasons such as their non-familiarity with Carinthian-Tirolean dialect. This is a rare language spoken by Hutterians but outsiders are unaware of it. Thus, language acts as a boundary for many people to enter the group. Cultural boundaries and traditions also restrict outsiders to become members of the group. This require changing attire, religious actions, customs and traditions. Another reason which restrict non-Hutterites is the non-acceptance of divorce. The community don’t accept divorcees or the person who has married a second time.

Hutterians convey their ‘IN group’ status in various ways such as the women wear black work trousers with colored shirts. They wear polka dotted head scarfs to exhibit uniformity. They also wear long patterned aprons. Men are all bearded and visit church on Sundays. Women also visit church on Sunday evening to show their connection with the religion. Women take care of the home chores such as washing clothes on Monday and cleaning on Friday. Socialization process depicts that men and women hardly get any opportunity to meet with the outsiders. There, belonging to the reference group is the only way of interacting with the people of community. Hutterites is an isolated group because people don’t interact with outsiders until it is very important. The norms and values of Hutterites are different from others and is also one of the significant reasons which restricts them from communicating with others. The members have to follow some norms such as premarital sex is not allowed. The couple does not tell anyone until they are together and share the news only at the time of marriage. During mealtime, the members eat in silence and the coffee is poured by the oldest person. After meal every person carries their own plate to the kitchen.

The Pedigre is the chief of the of the community who remains the deciding authority and holds the highest power. He takes the role of a minister and is responsible for performing his duties which include conducting sermons in the church, arranging marriages and taking care of the management related activities. The advisory board enjoys the highest status in the colony which comprises of Hausholter (manager), Weinzedl (farm manager) and Zullbrueder (witnesses). The advisory board has most important duty of managing church related activities. They have the authority to make decisions related to day-to-day activities such as economic aspects and job positioning. They assure maintenance of community disciples and elimination of wrongful practices. The board also decides the membership by determining the personalities and beliefs of the people. Memberships are decided on the basis of communal patterns and assessment of the personality attributes of the people. It is mandatory for all members to accept the communal lifestyle and accepting pacifism as actualization of Christian love and acceptance of avoiding social evils like corruption, aggression and violence. Hutterites are taught at young age to follow cultural norms and do right things. Any person who fails to act according to those norms is a deviant. Jacob Hutterr was the creator of these norms and values based on the Christian beliefs. Visiting church, adoption of communal lives and good behavior are common norms.

The traits required that the members must develop include; discipline, pacifism, simplicity, honesty, respect for the people and piety. These traits are most important and must be acquired by all people. The members who fail to develop these traits and acts differently are considered as deviant. The customs and norms of Huttterites are different from other cultures. Most of the practices prevalent in this group are non-existent in other cultures such as on the special day of marriage the couple spend their time with five other couples. This make Hutterittes different from American culture. People cannot buy property because the community believes in the concept of common wealth which is missing from all other cultures.

Hutterites have a mission of promoting the values of Hebrew-Christian Bible. They are working to influence members to transform themselves according to the teachings of New Testament. The faith of Hutterites was written in 1540 by Peter Rideman. The mission focused on convincing people to realize the reality of life and death. The central theme of this sub-group is to encourage people to adopt communal way of living. Hutterites are gemeinschaft type community because social relationships depend on community ties. People are bound to have relationships with others which make Hutterites isolated community. Hutterite is a rural peasant society because agriculture fulfills the idea of communal way of life. It is easy to make such decision because the traits and norms existing on this group are non-existent in other cultures or groups. Western or modern world has given the choice of premarital sex to the people and they don’t face social constraints (Hostetler and Huntington). While in this group all members are bound to follow social norms and values. Traditional and cultural values are superior and more significant compared to the individual choices or values. Natural will is important for determining relationship among members. The only way of maintaining communications is through face-to-face interactions. People lack property ownership rights which is also a prominent feature of gemeinschaft type community. These attributes confirm that Hutterites is gemeinschaft type community. The traits of virtue, simplicity and lack of self-interest represent gemeinschaft type community because this is the idea of rural life.

If I wanted to join the community, I will have to develop the traits required for acquiring membership. I would learn the language of Hutterittes, adopt a communal way of living, give up my wealth and property for the community’s welfare, quit being aggressive and focus on the common rather than personal interest. I would play the role of the chief who has the responsibility of managing day-to-day activities. For that I would manage all activities fairly, handle marriages, church activities and guide people.

Work Cited

Hostetler, John A. and Gertrude Enders Huntington. The Hutterites in North America. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.