City on a Hill
a study of american christian utopias

Elizabeth F. Johnson

Thesis Advisor- Dr. Francis Parker

An Honors Thesis (Honrs 499)
Ball State University
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It is a basic human trait to try and strive for perfection. To want to create a utopia, a perfect environment to live in. For some this perfection came through creating a society that was financially rich, for others in came with being environmentally friendly. Yet throughout history there have always been groups that sought this perfection through Christianity. *City on a Hill* observes nine American communities, from the first immigrants to a modern communities, that sought their perfection through following the teaching of Christ. Each chapter in this study is dedicated to looking at how each group took a doctrine based on an Apostolic church to carve out their social and physical environments. In the conclusion of this study, the similarities and differences in these nine communities are evaluated to determine what themes there are in American Christian Utopian communities.
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Introduction

"'You are the light of the world.' A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." – Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV)

It was with these words from the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus commanded his followers to set an example of "perfect love" for the world to see. Throughout history over 2,000 groups have taken this commandment and have attempted to create a perfect society or utopia based on the "city on a hill." (Holloway, 1966) In the United States alone, there have been over 500 attempts at this perfect Christian community. While there have been many attempts, there have only been a handful of communities that are seen as successful. To be successful communities needed to have a long life: usually lasting at least 50 years but often over 100 years. Another part of a successful Christian community was the group’s ability to create a new environment, both social and physical that provided an example of the true Christian life. This study will examine
none of these American Christian utopian environments to observe how their doctrine affected their social and physical environment and to determine what trends in these environments connect all these groups together.

The groups that were picked for this study are considered successful Christian Utopian experiments. They all had membership of over 100 people, were based on Christian principles and had life spans of 50 years or more. The groups also needed to have enough current research in order to perform observations on their built environment. The communities that fit these requirements were the Puritans, Moravians, Harmonists, Separatists of Zoar, Inspirationalists, Shakers, Mormons, Perfectionists, and the Bruderhof. While most of the groups in the study flourished during the 19th century, the Puritans were included because they were the first to seek religious freedom in the new world and the Society of Brothers, or Bruderhof were included because they provide an example of a modern utopian experiment. These two groups will help show that any social or physical trends present are not dependent on the time period. However, the majority of the groups are from the 19th century because that was when utopian fever spread throughout the country.
Christian Utopia in America

The first immigrants, the Puritans, to America came seeking religious freedom. They came to America seeking to establish their “city upon a hill” to prove to the world, and especially to England and the Anglican Church that their ideals were pure. The Puritans founded their communities on the notion that the new world had a God given mission to be the cradle of a more perfect social order. This theme and ideal was carried on through other religious sects that also traveled to the new world looking for a haven that they could start their own version of utopia.

In was in the 1800s that America strongly took on the role of haven for many religious groups. Fueled by social changes in Europe and America, Christian and non Christian utopias
flourished in America. Of these Christian groups, many came from Germany to escape the abuses of the Lutheran Church. These groups were coming from the country that was the hotbed of activity during the Protestant Reformation. It was the country in which Martin Luther protested the Catholic Church with his 95 theses to begin the separation from the established church. Luther’s ideas spread quickly through Germany and the Lutheran church was established to provide a place that corrected the impurities of the Catholic Church. However, it wasn’t long before other groups were protesting the German established religion, Lutheranism. These groups founded their principles and base of protest in the Pietistic traditions of Jan Boehem. (Perkins, 1975) They strove for a simpler life exemplified in the Acts of the Apostles. As a whole these groups were called separatists and were based out of the small rural town of Wurtemburg. Within this group there were many leaders and many different sects. While each group based their protests on the same principles, how these principles materialized once they established themselves in America differed slightly in each group. The most successful of these sects were the Moravians, Harmonists, Separatists of Zoar, and the Inspirationalists.

While these groups all came to America seeking religious freedom from an oppressive government, there were also groups established on American soil that simply sought religious freedom from an orthodox tradition. In the late 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, a Puritan theologian by the name of John Edwards inspired fervent emotional responses from his sermons. The following for this new emotional service expanded and became known as the Great Awakening. (Holloway, 1966) In order to bring back more people into the church Edwards encouraged frenetic demonstrations. These demonstrations, which thrived in the frontier, inspired many young people to seek something different from the traditional orthodox church. All these groups were inspired by emotional revivals, but like the Pietistic groups, how they materialized after these revivals was different in each group. The Shakers, Mormons, and Perfectionists were all examples of successful groups revival inspired groups. Eventually by the late 18th century and early 19th century, these revivals spread to Europe through missionaries. The Bruderhof from
Germany was started after one of these revivals and like the many Germany groups before them; they eventually traveled to America to establish a community.

All these communities attempted utopia on American soil. They attempted to combine economic political, social, familial, and most importantly religious spheres. In creating a purified, spiritual society based on Biblical truths, the groups were not only creating a city on a hill, but they were trying to live out Christ’s Kingdom as he commanded. (Kanter, 1972) These utopias represented humankind’s deepest yearnings, noblest dreams, and highest aspirations and the following chapters will show how some groups fulfilled these yearnings, dreams, and aspirations.
In 1534, Henry the VIII of England rejected the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church and formed the Anglican Church of England. With the separation, the English created a distinction between themselves and the rest of Catholic Europe. However this distinction was more or less the fact that the English did not accept the Pope as the head of their church. In the late 16th century, many people in the church felt that there needed to be a larger distinction between the two churches. A group, the Puritans who aimed at purifying the church, became agitated with the Church of England and wanted to reform the church while still remaining members. This Puritanism was spawned from the break with the Pope. This group also believed that there were many more abuses to correct in the church other than just following the leadership of the Pope. (Waller, 1973)

This group wanted many of the practices of the new Anglican Church to be revoked because they were too reminiscent of the Catholic tradition. They aimed at purifying the Church of England so that it would be restored to what they conceived as the traditions of the original church founded by Christ in the first century. (1973) While the group as a whole agreed that a new sense of purity needed to be bestowed on the church, there was never a full agreement of the extent of this purity. Some of the Puritans wanted certain practices to be abolished, such as confession of sins to the priest, or wanting the lavish decorations to be simplified, while others wanted the ministers to preach and wanted prayers to be voiced from divine inspiration, not from a book. There were even extreme Puritans who believed that a whole "new form of ecclesiastical government" needed to be enacted. (1973, pg 40)

At first, the group as a whole did not believe in separating themselves from the Anglican Church; they simply wanted to continue a movement that was already underway. However, the larger church believed that there had been enough reform and the church needed to stabilize the changes already made. (1973) On most issues the Puritans agreed with the Anglican Church and from the outside there was not a huge difference between the two groups, however, the larger church rejected the changes that the Puritans felt were necessary for Christian purity. Because of this rejection, the Puritans felt that it was necessary to remove themselves from England and start
new communities based on their principles. The Puritans saw the new world in America as the opportune place to build up their church communities because they could start anew without the restrictions of the Anglican Church on their doctrine.

The move to America in the 1630s made the group extremely radical in the eyes of the church. Despite this radical view, the group was still culturally English and remained a protestant-centered faith, which believed that all men were saved through faith not through deeds and that the whole of the Gospel was truth. (1973) While many of their other beliefs were not too far from many of their Anglican counterparts, their doctrine stressed a stricter orthodoxy. The Puritans believed that everything in life needed to be ruled by the truth of the Gospel. If a tradition or action of the church was contrary or not included in the word of God then these traditions were abhorred and considered heresy. They also believed that all knowledge was one, that every aspect of life was organized in a hierarchical scale of values all leading toward a glorification of God and that all human activity be regulated by that purpose. For this reason, the Puritans believed in simplicity and modesty. They did not believe in lavish surroundings, but rather believed that simplicity kept the focus toward God. (1973)

The Puritans also believed that religion should be interpreted through study and logical exposition because God only conversed with his people through the Bible. For this reason the Puritans always maintained a school in their communities and as soon as they could, established a college in their new communities. For example the beginnings of Harvard could be seen in the Cambridge plan as early as 1637. (Reps, 1965) Learning was the utmost importance in being able to understand the Bible. While not everyone was given the gift to be a professionally learned man of the Bible, the Puritans believed that the all men should be well versed in divinity. The common man, including the merchants and farmers, in the community were still expected to read or know the Bible stories and were encouraged to memorize important verses. This expectation put the men of the Puritan communities on a more equal footing than their counterparts in England. Another strongly held belief among the Puritans was that the saints of the church, or the saved
members, had to have a divine infusion of grace and that this divine infusion was predestined by God.

In order to have these beliefs realized the Puritans felt that immigrating to New England would prove that a state and church could be erected based on these principles. They came to New England to establish the perfect society for the Kingdom of God or the best society that fallible me could create. (Waller, 1973) While the Puritans stressed individualism, in that each person has to work out his own salvation, they also believed that they were all bonded together as believers. This bond called them to move as a group and establish new communities for the Kingdom of God.

These new communities constituted a society as one organism functioning toward a definite purpose in which the state that would be established would be necessary for discipline and order. (1973) The Puritans did not necessarily believe in the social equality of all men on earth, but rather than some men were predestined to be leaders, while others were to be followers. Their government reflected this belief in their semi-dictatorship form of government. Those who

**Figure 3:** Map of Massachusetts 1630-1642. All these towns were Puritan founded towns that grew out from Boston.
lived in the settlements were expected to do as the seven selectmen established, however, all the citizens followed their rule and believed it was the correct way to discipline the members of the community. These selectmen were not only governmental leaders, but also religious, since the church and government were intertwined. This was exemplified through the disciplinary authority of the church, which included political and legal penalties for ecclesiastical heresy and disorder. The Puritans felt that their government and church should be one because God had made a covenant with them to establish their community and therefore their social law was also the Bible.

As the Puritans immigrated to America they were told by John Winthrop in his *Model of Christian Charity* that they were to be a “city upon a hill” with all the eyes of the world upon them. (1973) In this new “city” the Puritans were committed to working together to form a more perfect society. Winthrop declared that they must be willing to give up their lavish superfluities to supply the necessities of others and that they needed to uphold a familiar commerce together through the laboring and suffering together. This sense of a bonded brotherhood was from their belief that God had made a covenant that they be bonded together in a society where every man needed each other. In order to fulfill this, the Puritans accepted the government regulation of business, land, and the curtailing of individual profits in the interests of the welfare of the whole. (Haller, 1952)

As a group in 1630, the Puritans had a mass exodus from the Old World on a fleet of eleven ships and more than a thousand settlers. (reps, 1965) Because of the large population, the Massachusetts Bay Company, the company formed by the Puritans to grant land for new Puritan communities, created many settlements each planned to accommodate a small population in order to keep discipline attainable. All these communities were planned on a similar basis and contained similar social and physical features. The physical organization of the original communities reflected the communal commitment and was therefore in the basic unit of the agricultural village. This Puritan communal way of life lasted for years within the small communities formed by the Massachusetts Bay Company. While Puritanism remained after the
1790s, the communal way of life dissolved when faced with population growth and diversity. Because of this threat of diversity, the towns of the 1630s retained homogeneity by organizing and growing beside the church. This growth of towns paralleled that of the church because the Puritans felt that their town was planted for the purpose of God and that it would not survive without the church. Because the Puritans moved as a community, they frowned on isolated homesteads because it would provide an opportunity for evilness since the individual homesteads often could not easily travel to church. The Massachusetts Bay Company even required that there be a minister along with a sufficient number of families to support this minister before they gave a grant of land. (Haller, 1951)

New households had to be admitted as an inhabitant by the original members of the grant. To be admitted, a household had to prove their "saint-hood" in the church through a public proclamation and confession of their regeneration. Once admitted, each household received a voice and vote in the governing of the community and permission to build a dwelling on one of the house lots. Also, a requirement was to pay taxes and rates in proportion to their estate and holdings to support the community in a fair way as well as to provide a salary for their minister. Part of this provision of taxes was to provide proof that the household would work their fair share and that they would not become a "poor-liability" on the rest of the community members. (1951) Once paying these taxes, all members were entitled to a share and use in the division of common lands of the town. In order to accept the

Figure 4: Typical Puritan house lot with dwelling house, barn garden, and orchard.
use of these common lands, the head of household had to also agree to serve as a selectman, a member of the governing body of the town, if elected.

The original settlers of these Puritan towns all shared in the land granted to them. They would only allow newcomers until their land could no longer be divided fairly and without any other members sacrificing. Each household was allowed to have enough land to meet their apparent needs and capacities. The town was organized similar to an English farming community, showing that the Puritans retained their English culture. The land was divided into house lots which each had a dwelling house, barns, gardens with small crops and livestock and orchards. (Figure 4) Reflecting their belief in moderately equal society, these lots were picked at a random basis in order to give each man a fair chance at the land. All the houses were very similar because of the materials available and the nature of the Puritans not to distinguish themselves in an extravagant way. The houses, such as the Parson Capen house, (Figure 5) were typical four-room houses with a central staircase and large central fireplace. While the houses were of half-timber construction, the rich exteriors were covered with clapboards to provide a simple exterior. The only visual interest to the exterior was the slight projection at the second floor and the drop pendills at the corners reminiscent of the medieval traditions, which

Figure 5: Parson Capen house built in Topsfield, MA in 1683. The bottom picture shows medieval details in the drop pendills and the overhang ledge.
Figure 6: Map of Sudbury, MA in 1639. This map shows how the typical Puritan town lined the meadow as well as the organic layout of the town.

the Puritans came from. (Gelernter, 1999) Otherwise the houses were a simple box of natural color and this austere and modest approach reflected the Puritans’ desire to give up lavish worldly items. (Garrett, 1995)

Houses were on lots laid out along one or a few streets all in a compact plot and each lot was usually ½ acre. Most lots were fenced in to distinguish the individual property and to protect the land from Indians and large livestock, such as cattle and hogs. The streets provided an occasional enclosure for cattle, while also being the general area for militia training, sawing of timber, storage, and a child’s play area. Along with the house lots, the land in the towns was divided into probable use. Most towns had a meadowland, which was divided out evenly to let each household harvest hay for their cattle. Towns even tried to be efficient by laying out lots so
that some or all would adjoin their share of meadow. *(Figure 6)* Common land was also divided among households and the plots of this land were used for garden vegetables. A single fence that each household was responsible for maintaining surrounded the entire land. Rectangular plots, measured by acres and rods, divided the fields in an efficient manner, showing the Puritan need for order. This division of land was an attempt to give each inhabitant a share of each of the kinds of land available. While each inhabitant had their own lot, the selectmen determined what types of crops would be grown and when they would be planted and harvested in order to have a communal work effort to make the most efficient use of time and work for the welfare of the whole. *(Reps, 1965)*

The Puritans wanted a nucleated compact form of settlement with the meetinghouse being the center of the town, in order to make each household within walking distance of the center. These villages never had a sense of formal design of the layout because this would have gone against the “spartan, stern philosophy” of the Puritans. *(1965, pg 124)* The few streets that were in the town were laid out organically, following natural elements of the town, such as meadows, rivers, or swamps. The common grounds for farming were beyond the house plots in order to make the houses closer to the meetinghouse. This meetinghouse was a requirement of the grant for the town and often this requirement stipulated that the meetinghouse be built at the center. At one point the Massachusetts Bay Colony had a law that forbade any dwelling from being further than 1/2 mile from a meetinghouse. Also a reflection of the modest beliefs of the Puritans, the meetinghouse was a simple half-timber building with clapboard covering similar to the dwelling house. *(Figure 7)* The Puritans abandoned the long linear nave that was prevalent in the lavish Anglican churches in England. Instead they adopted a simple form, either square or rectangular with a pulpit at the center on a long side opposite the entry door. *(Gelernter, 1999)* This placement of the pulpit provided more opportunity for church members to gather closely to the minister.

With the meetinghouse at the center of the town, the Puritans showed that the center of their society was the church. This meetinghouse was the place not just of worship, but also
of government. The Puritans believed that government and religion were one and that their communities were formed for the purpose of God, so His biblical laws governed every aspect of their lives. This basic belief led the Puritans to reject lavish extras in life and to have a well-ordered and disciplined life that was lived out in a communal setting where individuals worked for the welfare of the whole. These beliefs were reflected in the Puritans’ architectural designs and their town layout. All men were guaranteed shares in the land and were expected to serve in the governing of the town and their buildings remained plain in detail in order to keep lavish extras from their lives. The early Puritans of the 1630-1640s kept the welfare of the community the paramount issue and public control over the land was thought of as essential to their mission of creating the perfect society for the Kingdom of God.

Figure 7: First meeting house in Sudbury, MA built in 1643. This is a typical Puritan meetinghouse in New England.
chapter 2

Moravians
1744-1820s
In 1467 a group of Bohemians who were followers of the religious reformer Jan Hus seceded from the Church of Rome. This group of around 1,000 settled in a town east of Prague in the Moravia region Bohemia, from which they later received their name of the Moravians. They tried to pursue a pietistic mode of life that valued morals and conduct over doctrinal uniqueness. (Gutek, 1998) Once in this town they started to organize their church and elect their own bishops. By the 17th century they were a growing force in Eastern Europe. However, in 1620 with the thirty years war and the defeat of the Bohemian Protestants, the group was forced to go underground and into exile. (Gollin, 1967)

Finding refuge in Germany and Poland, the church started to regroup with the help of Count Zinzendorf of Saxony. At first this noble simply let the group seek refuge on his land with the hopes of converting them to his form of Lutheranism. However, soon the simplicity and devotion of the group transformed the Count to the Moravian religion and he quickly became a leader of the church. With the Counts’ financial backing and political authority, the group started to build a community in 1722 at Herrnhut and began to resurrect the church. In 1736, the relationship of the new church and the government of the region deteriorated and the group then believed it was their calling to start their missionary work. (Gutek, 1998) The church sent a group over to America because the British offered Count Zinzendorf religious freedom for his church.

The first attempt at a community was in Georgia, however the hot humid climate and conditions were far from favorable for the group from cold northern Europe. Soon the group traveled north to Pennsylvania where a friend of Zinzendorf, George Whitefield, promised the group land in Northampton County at the fork of the Delaware River. (Figure 8) In 1741 the group bought their first tract of land and called the land Bethlehem since their first service with their bishop present was on Christmas. (Gollin, 1967) Eventually the group fulfilled their missionary vision and expanded to other areas in America. The largest and most successful expansion was to the Wachovia territory, a 100,000-acre area in the piedmont region of North Carolina. (Reps, 1965) The main settlement of this territory was Salem, which was planned in 1766. While the two largest Moravian communities were separated by hundreds of miles and
were even planned 20 years apart, the religious and political aspects of each community were similar as was their physical environment.

Once in this community, the Moravians or United Church of the Brethren, were able to freely practice their beliefs. While the group never developed a systematic theology and had no written creed, the body of believers was bound together by custom and tradition. Their foundation lay in their concern for religious conduct and ethical morals rather than strict doctrine that was reminiscent of the Catholic Church. The *Bible* was regarded as the source of all religious truth and Christ, not the Pope, was the head of God’s church on earth. (Gollin, 1967) The group also emphasized the heart as the seat of the religious experience and that because the heart was the center, the human mind could not comprehend God through his thoughts. However, God would still reveal Himself in a manner comprehensible to mankind. This was accomplished through Jesus Christ who was both God and man. For this reason Jesus was the central focus of the group. The Moravians, similar to Luther, believed that it was only through Jesus that man could understand God. However, the Moravians differed greatly from other Protestant groups of the time because their concept of salvation rested in the fact that since Christ had atoned for sins of man on the cross, man was no longer forced to eternal penitence, but was free to love and adore God. This was different from other Protestants because this freedom and reconciliation of God did not include a painful personal struggle for conversion, but instead was a joyous reunion. (1967)

Because Christ was the central focus of the group, the crucifixion was also a central visual symbol because it represented the suffering of Christ and His love for believers. The Moravians were in awe of the crucifixion. They believed that this awe was similar to the direction
in Matthew 18:6 that followers were to be like children in arms. Also part of this commandment to be like children was the call to a simple life with simple worries and true faith. Another commandment they stressed was the belief that the religious experience is a social rather than an individual act. While the individual still had to seek communion with God alone, God demanded that his followers be known by their brotherly love. (1967) This brotherly love extended not just to their community of believers, but to also the outside world. While the group did feel that their way of life and communion with God was closer than any other Protestant group, they felt they were specially chosen to spread the Gospel to the heathens and non-believers. (1967)

Since the group was a missionary based group, there were often new converts. To be accepted into the community, the convert had to prove their support for the religious goals and life of the community. The final decision was put to the lot, or a system of picking out the answer from a box. This system allowed the will of God to fully direct the path of the community. Most decisions for Moravian communities were put to the lot, even marriage, town planting, and overall direction of the community.

Since the Moravians valued conduct and ethics above strict doctrine, their beliefs were exemplified through their actions. They believed that every Christian who found his calling must truly serve God through punctuality and attention to detail. For the Moravians this became central to the Christian way of life and reflected their efficient work ethic. While they did not believe that work was necessary for salvation, they did believe that it was essential to maintain grace, which was needed to do the missionary work that God had called them to do. (1967) Therefore community members were obligated to carry out work as a sign of their love and loyalty to God. This loyalty to God was also shown in the Moravians following the “great law”- love your neighbor as you love God. This law was the basis for the development of cooperation and willingness to work as a group. Because this connection was religious and based on willingness, loyalty and faith to God, there was no formal written contract of this bond. (Gutek, 1998)

Another expression of their beliefs and tradition were the Moravian rituals. The basic church meeting consisted of prayers, hymn singing, recitation, and participation in the Lord’s
Supper. One special ritual was the love feast, which was a meeting of simple hymn singing and a simple meal of bread and coffee that was passed from member to member signifying the connection to each other. (Gollins, 1967) This ritual was done often in the Moravian community at both religious and political meetings since politics and religion were interwoven and often not distinguishable from each other. Through combining the two spheres and making them indistinguishable, the Moravians believed they were providing social cohesion.

This cohesion was also provided through their leadership and authority. The government in the original settlement of Herrnhut ultimately controlled all Moravians, both those in America and those still in Germany. However, because the settlements were too far away for direct everyday governing, each settlement was allowed to have a central board made up of the bishop of the community as well as elders in the community selected by the government in Herrnhut. (1967) This central board divided responsibilities and management into divisions, such as the economy or general supervision. (1967) There was also a communal council, which was open for all adult male and female members and was an advisory organization that was a debating forum for any proposed changes. Another part of this communal government was the General Economy, which was a communal work effort for the greater good and sufficiency of the community. Because of this communal work effort, no member received a wage, but rather received clothing, food, living quarters and supplies for industry. Any money that the community made from outside trade was put into the community holding and because their money was communal so were the ownership rights to buildings and land.

Once the government and economy were set up, the community was divided into two groups: the congregation of pilgrims and the local settlement congregation. The congregation of pilgrims consisted of elders and missionaries who were responsible for the implementation of religious goals. The local settlement congregation was responsible for the material support and welfare of the community. The whole community was further divided into a choir system for fellowship and brotherly bonding. This system was an intense stratification of community according to age, sex, and marital status. Because the Moravians believed that there was a fine
line between religious and sensual intimacy, all the choirs were same sex groups to prevent any sexual intimacy. The communities even created separate walking paths for the single men and women to prevent lustful thoughts or actions. (1967) Even married women stayed separated from husbands for most of the day. There was even a choir for children because child rearing was a communal effort as well as separate boys and girls schools.

The choir system was not just a system of fellowship and social cohesion, but of working and living arrangements. Each choir had specific tasks that they were to perform for the whole community in order to try and make a self-sufficient environment. Because these groups worked and lived separately from other choirs, each choir had its own building. The building housed the living quarters, dining room, and a workspace that was adapted to each of the specific tasks of the choirs.

Figure 9: Moravian town plans. Bethlehem (left) and Salem (right) in 1766
The Moravians believed that this setup for the choirs was also a more efficient use of space and time, which they believed was furthering God’s Kingdom. (Gutek, 1998) This same ideology can be seen in the planning of both Bethlehem and Salem.

Bethlehem and Salem each emerged as the trading center in their region and were open to the outside world because of the commitment to missionary work. Both communities were surrounded by other Moravian settlements that concentrated on agricultural production to provide food and raw materials for the trading centers. In return these communities benefited with finished products. (Murtagh, 1967) This ordering and relationship as one large community was reflected in the layout of the town as well. These towns all reflected aspects of the original communities in Germany. Bethlehem and Salem further showed the ordering through their layout. Both towns had straight streets in a grid pattern with a fairly symmetrical layout. The streets even formed a large cross showing the Moravian preoccupation with the crucifixion. In Bethlehem perfect symmetry was hard because no physical plan was adopted till after most of the central town was erected, however in Salem the plan was very symmetrical and ordered. Also the towns included a central square close to the center. (Figure 9) Reflecting their European background this central square was an open and recreational space. Adjacent to this square was the Gemein House, the Moravians’ multi-purpose house. It was the first building in both communities to be built and was the center of activity for the community.

Before a church could be erected, the Gemein House even provided a chapel and meetinghouse for worship. (Figure 10) Other buildings that were erected were concentrated around the central square and around the church for easy access by all citizens.
The surrounding land was then used for orchards and agriculture till needed for further expansion of industrial sites. (Reps, 1965)

In Bethlehem the dormitories and schoolhouses also surrounded the central square. These buildings tended to be fairly large with up to five stories to house both living quarters and work areas. In Salem the central square had the usual church and Gemein House along with the single women and men houses, schoolhouses and stores. By 1766 when Salem had emerged as a trading center in North Carolina, the General Economy of communal work had subsided as the main work system. Instead members were allowed to apply for permission to have individual stores and therefore individual profits. These stores still had to remain in the center of town in order to keep all the business in the center of town, once again showing the need for order in Moravian towns. Salem had single women and single male dormitories, but did not have any dorms for married families because families were allowed to live in individual houses. However these houses were still owned by the community and each family was given the same lot dimensions and house requirements. Despite there being more lots and houses in Salem than in Bethlehem, Salem still was a concentrated community because the planners refused to let the town sprawl in order to prevent problems and divisions among the congregational family. (1965) Both towns grouped uses together to provide another efficient use of time and land. In Bethlehem, all the industrial buildings were grouped by the creek to take advantage of the water for mills. These work buildings were still communally owned and each mill was the responsibility of a specific choir,
usually the male choirs.

Both towns used the same architectural vocabulary as well. Because of their Germanic roots, the architectural details and styling were based on continental Europe and not England. The buildings were fairly plain and were large rectangular structures reflecting the Moravian simple nature and efficient work value. One building that was specific in design and layout was the Moravian chapel/church. (*Figure 11*) The main building was a large rectangle with an entrance to sanctuary on both a long side and short side. Benches were placed parallel to the long side in order to provide a more egalitarian space. There was not a pulpit because services were conducted from behind the communion table, which was at a low level signifying the importance of community. (Yates, 1968)

*Figure 12*: Moravian Dormitory. Single Sister house in Bethlehem, PA. The Germanic brick arches are above windows and doors has a herringbone pattern.
While there were differences between particular buildings, most buildings still showed the simplicity of the Moravians and had similar details. The windows and doors were evenly spaced and symmetrical with a slight accent on the center showing the ordering of the communities even in buildings. The windows had brick arched window heads and were double hung. Another detail employed in most buildings was the herringbone pattern on doors. (Figure 12) There were relatively small voids in the solid expanse of the walls so the buildings could get a lot of sunlight and ventilation. The roofs were either gambrel roofs or straight gable pitched roofs often with a slight kick and double dormers reflecting the Germanic style. (Murtagh, 1967) Often buildings were originally half-timbered buildings with clapboards on stone foundations with a central fireplace since they were fairly quick and easy to erect and were the traditional building construction. However, most buildings were replaced with masonry construction: limestone in Bethlehem and red clay brick in Salem. (1967)

The Moravians were a group that concentrated on efficiency and attention to detail because they believed that a well-ordered society glorified God. Because of their strong desire for missionary work, the towns were not reclusive, but rather interacted with other secular towns and the roads often connected to these towns. Bethlehem and Salem’s town plans and the architectural details show symmetry, simplicity and order for a society that was centered on an ordered communal effort that they believed reflected the brotherly love the God commanded of his believers.
chapter 3

Harmonists
1805-1905

Harmony Economy

New Harmony

Salt Lake City

Puritans
Moravians
Shaker
Harmonists
Separitists of Zoor
Mormons
Inspirationalist
Perfectionists
Bruderhof
By the 18th century, the Luther reformation had taken strong hold on Germany and there was still a strong religious ferment in the air. This strong religious sentiment reigned with the end of the 30 years war because the Rhine region had been left desolate and the people were ready for anything that brought hope. Then in the late 1780s, the preaching of George Rapp brought a renewed hope to these people. Born in 1757 to a common vine grower, Rapp understood the lives and issues of the common person. (Duss, 1943) He became well versed in the strong Piest tradition found throughout Germany's many religious sects. By the age of 30 Rapp was becoming a radical separatist preacher with a tradition in Piest thought. Quickly getting a large following, Rapp preached the belief of freedom of religious expression.

His basic difference and dissent was the principle of conscience, which is the belief that each individual was divinely ordained to judge most things for himself. Other beliefs were formed to create a written creed to submit to the government in order to get civil protection. In this creed Rapp established the tradition of house churches that meet in small groups to talk and worship freely. Also the group didn't feel that baptism was a necessity for their children since it was not required for salvation. However, they still kept the tradition because for them it served as a way to dedicate the child to a life being raised in the church.

They also didn't agree with the tradition of teenage confirmation that was practiced in the Lutheran church because they felt that as a young teenager one was unable to make strong commitment to God. They also saw that most children at this age were still more concerned with material possessions than they were with their future in heaven. (1943) This act of commitment should not be determined by age, but should be expressed when one has free will and true faith. Another established tradition in the creed was the change of the Lords supper to a type of love feast that reestablished a spiritual and social harmony among the group. (Kring, 1973)

The group also did not allow their children to attend the public schools because they were run through the Lutheran church. They believed that by forcing the Lutheran religion on children at school, they could not freely accept salvation. Instead, they educated their own children to separate them from religious control. (Duss, 1943) While the group also did not agree with the
state government, they believed that the Bible taught them to be tolerant and abide by the rules established. However, the one rule they refused to follow was military service and war. Being pacifist, the group felt that war was not being loving of all brothers and sisters.

The civil authorities approved all these beliefs that were expressed in the creed submitted to the government. This approval gave the group the right to freely worship and was supposed to give them protection from persecution. However, even with this protection of the government, the new separatist sect still received heavy persecution from local churches in their home of Wuttemberg. (1943) By 1803, Rapp decided that the group had to move to have religious freedom. At first Rapp considered staying in Europe, but after reading papers that promised religious freedom in Pennsylvania, Rapp decided to scout out America.

Once arriving in Baltimore, Rapp quickly traveled to Pennsylvania. Rapp bought 3,000 acres in Butler County, which was 25 miles north of Pittsburgh. (1943) (Figure 13) By 1804, 300 of Rapp’s followers arrived in Baltimore and one month later another 260 more arrived. Because the winter was fast approaching, most of the immigrants found temporary work and living arrangement in Baltimore. Eighty men along with Rapp traveled to Butler County to start clearing the land and building their community. On February 15, 1805 those who wanted to commit to the community moved to Butler County and their new town of Harmony. Once there, they agreed to the Articles of Agreement for Harmony Society. This contract formed a communistic society with a common

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Figure 13: Harmonists in Pennsylvania. This map shows the Harmonists’ towns, Harmony and Economy, that were outside of Pittsburgh.
This ideal for the society was established based on the early apostolic church set forth in the second chapter of Acts. In this contract members agreed to give up all property to the group and to follow the rules and regulations established. They could also demand no payment for their work. In return for their work, the members received free schooling for the children, all privileges in the church, and health, food, and shelter needs.

Soon after the articles were adopted there was a free election that unanimously put George Rapp as the head of the community. Also governing with him was his adopted son, Fredrick. George took care of the spiritual matters and Fredrick the material. Under these two leaders was a 7-member board of elders who advised the Rapps. The 600-member society and economy was divided into departments, such as agriculture, industry, and education. Even with this organized society, the group suffered near starvation and other hardships in their first year.

In order to try and alleviate some of the problems with food shortage, the group decided to become celibate. This way women were not deterred from working when pregnant and there was not the constant increase of mouths to feed. However, after the community was through the rough period, they decided to remain celibate because “he that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord.” Because of this new way of life, the family organization was altered as well. They no longer lived by bloodlines, but rather grouped members together in large houses. Because most everyone agreed to celibacy earnestly, they felt that there was no need to separate the sexes. This celibate life remained voluntary and was never a written rule of the community. Until the 1830s children continued to be born within the Harmonist community and marriages were still performed in the church.

By 1814, the group had overcome many hardships in Harmony and had grown to the limits of their land. Seeking land that was more suitable to their vine-growing heritage, the group purchased 7,000 acres in the Indiana territory on the Wabash River. This new town, New Harmony, gave them ready access to the river economy on the Ohio, but separated them from immoral river society. Within ten years, the group developed a sophisticated town and economy. The hills and surrounding land were cultivated and bringing in surpluses. However,
even with the booming agricultural land, the group felt displaced from the East coast markets. In 1824, the group of 700 people moved 600 miles upstream to build their third and final community of Economy. On a 3,000-acre piece of land 18 miles north of Pittsburgh and on the Ohio River, the Harmonists built a diversified industrial city that embraced the science of economics. This town prospered as a Harmonists settlement until 1905 when the leadership council decided to end communalism because of the stress of outside influences on the economic market of the town. At this time the council started to sell Harmonists land and divide the assets among the remaining members.

The Harmonist moved and formed three different successful towns. While each town had its own unique geographical features, all three were organized in a similar fashion. All the towns were designed and planned by Fredrick Rapp. He believed that the town needed to be organized and efficient to create a good industrious economy. A good economy was key in the stability of the group and the continued communal spirit that they held. Part of this efficient town was a simplicity and modesty. Most buildings were simple in design with little detail or ornamentation and were laid on a symmetrical axis.

Part of this organization was the town plan and layout. (Figure 14) All the towns had to clear trees and an area by a river or stream to develop the town. The basic grid was employed for the street layout. In New

Figure 14: Economy, PA town plan. The church is towards the center of the town and houses are evenly spaced within each square.
Harmony and Economy the streets were laid out parallel and perpendicular to the river with a strong effort to also layout the streets according to the cardinal points on a compass. (1943)

Near an entrance to the organized town was a community store for outsiders. While the group often wanted to separate themselves from the immoral river society, the group still needed the outside economy to prosper. Other than this interest in the economy, the Harmonist did not serve any evangelistic function for the outside world. Instead they felt that their “destiny was to set an illustrious example of the harmony of human relations, the natural cooperative economy of the community of goods, and peaceful living of Christian fellowship.” (1943, pg 44) This example was to show that a heaven on earth was possible because of Christian communalism in which the members worked hard to keep the environment trim and neat. This organization and “neatness” encouraged the Harmonists to stay away from the “muddy” affairs of this world.

Near the center of the town, a church was eventually built for worship. This was not the first building built in the town because the industrial buildings and agriculture needed to be developed first to establish the town economy. Rather the house church tradition remained in the beginning stages of the town and was often continued even after the large wood-framed church was built in each town. (Figure 15) While this building was not considered to be essential for the Harmonists spiritual life, they still created a structure of importance. This building was usually a traditional church design made of wood-frame or of brick. It always had a copula with bells to announce the beginning of service. Eventually the Harmonists also employed stained
Harmonists

The majority of the buildings that lined the streets of the grid system in the Harmonist towns were the individual households. These buildings were at first built of logs in order to provide a quick shelter for the settlers that were sent to clear the land. Once an economy and industry was established, more permanent homes and dormitories made of brick were erected. They were all the same design and were each on ¼ acre lots with the house in the middle to prevent the spread of fire. (1973) They were made of red brick and had central chimney for cooking and warmth. Each house had one side entrance in the tradition of German rural dwellings. They also felt that only one door was necessary for entrance into the buildings. One door kept the house warmer and kept the house cleaner. (1973) This side door and the interior doors were all six-panel or Christian doors with the symbol of the cross on top and an open Bible at the bottom.

The brick and frame houses all were two stories high and very close to the street, reminiscent of German towns. They had simple windows and little detail. However, when visitors came into the towns, the houses all looked peculiar because of the vines that grew between the first and second floor windows. (Figure 16) These vines were grape vines used to make wine. The Harmonists directed the vines to grow on the brick houses because brick retained heat and this kept the vines warmer to produce sweeter grapes. (Reps, 1965)

Figure 16: Harmonists house in Economy, PA. Grape vines, which are used for wine, cover the middle of the house
Not only did the Harmonists grow grapes within each lot, they also grew fruit and vegetables. These provided produce for each household to eat. Any space not used for vegetable or fruit was filled with flowers. (Duss, 1943) The Harmonists were known for the beautiful flowers that they produced and harvested. Both their house lots and public spaces were filled with flowers to beautify the town. All the streets were lined with trees and benches for enjoying the shade. (Hinds, 1971) They believed that since God created the world and every creature and plant in it, that they should celebrate nature. Often the group would even meet outside to worship, rather than in the church.

They also celebrated nature through elaborate Labyrinths. (Figure 17) In each town a large tract of land was used for a garden maze or Labyrinth and the same design was used for this maze in all three towns. While most other gardens and structures in the town were clean and neat, the maze was rough. The hedges were not all trimmed evenly and the paths were bumpy and uneven to represent the uneven road of life. (Kring, 1973) In the middle of the maze the environment changed to a well planned and built grotto structure. There were flowers and a beautiful statue of Mary in this grotto. This contrast of uneven and unstructured to a detailed beautiful center represented that while humans may not be externally beautiful, their internal beauty could be found.

Other important structures in town were the work buildings. The industrial buildings would often be close to the river to provide waterpower. Other workshops were often near the center of town. Within these workshops, every industrious need was taken care of for the community. They also produced

Figure 17: Harmonist labyrinth in New Harmony. There is a grotto in the center of the garden. During the 19th century this labyrinth would have had taller bushes.
goods, such as furniture, to sell. These goods were known for their craftsmanship and simple designs. Duss, 1943) Like the houses, these buildings were usually made of red brick with simple design elements. An “S” design was often employed in details of these buildings to represent the serpent or seven deadly sins and to warn members to beware of evil. (Kring, 1973)

While the industrial and work buildings were extremely important for the economy of the group, Fredrick Rapp also built an art museum in Economy, PA. He saw this building as a form of worship because through the enjoyment of art, one can enjoy God as well. Along with a museum, the Harmonists built a choir hall to showcase their musical art and to worship God with music. Another form of worship for the group was charity. While the group did not have an evangelistic attitude, they still accepted visitors and became known for their hospitality. Each town had an inn to provide for these visitors. Eventually some of these visitors joined the group after an opening and confession of their past sinful life.

The Harmonists were a simple society that looked to the Rapps for leadership. With their guidance they were able to form three successful towns. They moved their whole town successfully because they believed that with each move they were creating a better societal example for the world. They stressed having a strong economy because they believed it was essential for the success of their community. Without a successful economy, the community could not be a good example of communal living and could not have the time and pleasure of worshiping God. Their economy in Harmony and New Harmony was based on agriculture, supplemented by industry. However, with the move to Economy the set up changed. Efficient industry became the main function of the economy. Even with this shift in the economy, simple grid patterns and simple architecture was employed to provide efficient towns at all three locations. However, while the buildings that were function/work related were simple, the buildings used for enjoyment often had decoration. Beauty was an important part of the Harmonist life; they worshipped God through their enjoyment of nature, art and music. For them creating a beautiful, industrious, successful community was their way to create a heaven on earth.
City on a Hill
chapter 4

Separatists of Zoar
1817-1898
In German provinces on northern Europe the Protestant Reformation in the form of Lutheranism had taken hold of the people and the government. However, there were groups of people that still felt the Lutheran church had many impurities and needed to continue reform. One of these groups was the piestic group of the Inspirationalists. While the group was composed of Germans, the founder of this sect was a Swiss woman named Barbara Gruberman. She was considered the “inspired one” and was a medium who received messages while in a trance. (Gutek, 1998) During an episode of physical persecution from Lutheran followers, she received a physical injury that led to her death. Joseph Bimeler took over the leadership position. He was a son of a farmer who was educated to become a teacher. Because he was literate and well read, he had access to the Pietistic teachings and therefore had a better understanding of the protest against the established church. He was also a man who while not imposing physically had a gift for preaching and was known to captivate an audience with ease. (1998)

Using his educational skills, Bimeler wrote the groups existing beliefs and codified them with the civil government in Germany. The groups still held onto the basic Christian beliefs of the holy trinity, the fall of man through Adam, and the use of the Bible as Holy Scripture. They used this Holy Scripture as the basis of their simple beliefs and way of life. Part of this simple form of Christianity was the rejection of rituals and sacraments. Baptism, confirmation, and communion had no place in their religion. They also rejected ordained clergy and ecclesiastical authority because they felt that God made everyone equal and that no human was any better than anyone else. To protect their children from these “impure” traditions and hierarchy, the Separatists opposed their children being taught in the Lutheran run public school. (1998) The group was also pacifist and refused to serve as soldiers. They believed that the Bible told them that a Christian cannot murder a friend or an enemy. While they opposed service in the military, they still thought that government was a necessity to maintain order, protect the good and honest and punish the wrongdoers.

Like many of the other separatists groups in Germany, the Separatists were persecuted heavily for their beliefs. Even with the acceptance of their covenant by the civil government,
Separatists of Zoar

Ecclesiastical authorities still reigned terror on the group. While their cousin group, the Harmonists, left for America in the early 1800s, the Separatists attempted to live through the persecution. However by 1817, the harassment became too violent and the group led by Bimeler sailed for America. (Reps, 1965) In this new world, the group believed that they could not only receive religious freedom, but that they would also have the opportunity to prosper. (Randall, 1904) This opportunity was important to many in the group because many in the group had lost their businesses and farms during the persecutions.

Upon arrival in Philadelphia in August of 1817, the Quakers befriended the group of 300 immigrants. The Quakers provided food and shelter for Separatists as Bimeler searched for land suitable for a new community. Finding a 5,600-acre tract along the Tuscarawas River in eastern Ohio, Bimeler secured a $15,000 loan from the Quakers to buy the land and supplies necessary to build a community. (Gutek, 1998) The land was heavily wooded, near a river, had many good springs, and most importantly it was fertile. Bimeler and a small band of men traveled to the area to clear land for the community before the rest of the group arrived. They laid out the grid pattern town (Figure 18) on the eastern shore of the Tuscarawas River and named the town Zoar after Lot's biblical city. This name also meant "a place of refuge" and "sanctuary from evil." (1998, pg 104)

In the spring of 1818, the rest of the group moved to the town. In this first year of the community, the members remained individual owners of their property and tried to farm and prosper individually. However, after a harsh winter, the group realized that a communal effort was necessary for the survival of the group as a whole. If they retained separate ownership, members would scatter and the group would lose their identity as an example for the world. (Randall, 1904) Instead they saw their community as an example to the outside world and as the group that had found the way to eternal life. (1904) They wanted to be an example to the "false Christians" from whom they separated. By separating and making a new successful community they felt that they were showing the righteous way and providing a route for salvation. (1904) They realized that to become an economically prosperous community, they needed to combine
efforts. Therefore in the spring of 1819, they officially organized the Society of Separatists of Zoar with articles of agreement. This covenant lasted until 1898 when the community stressed from the loss of members, decided to divide the land among the remaining members and start to allow the outside world to move into the community.

In this covenant all members agreed to give all their property to the community and live in a communal environment. This communal environment created a society where there was not rich and poor and this was more pleasing to God because a society with rich and poor classes produces sin. (1904) In this egalitarian society there were a total of 40 dwelling units for the members. (1904) Families lived

**Figure 18:** Zoar town plan. The garden can be seen along the main street as well as the church.
together with 2-3 family units living in one dwelling. There were only children under the age of three living in the household. All other children lived in the children’s dormitories adjacent to the school. They lived in these dormitories till they were 18 years old and applied for membership in the community. In the dwelling units there was also often a single/celibate member(s). In 1822 celibacy was made a rule in the community because of a food shortage, but as soon as the community gained prosperity it was dropped in 1830. While the rule was not mandatory after 1830 many still chose to remain celibate because it was more commendable and Godly than marriage. They saw marriage only as a means for procreation and it was written that sexual relations should only be entered for the purpose of producing children. (Gutek, 1998)

The articles also created two classes of members, all of whom had to be German. There were the permanent associates or the second class and the novitiates or first class. The noviates were composed of children under the age of 18 and other members who had not yet turned over their property to the common good. While members in this class were still allowed to retain their property, they were not given full rights of voting or leadership. Member of the society did not receive wages, but instead worked in exchange for food, shelter, and clothing. Part of the articles established a constitution to run the community. The leaders of the community were elected by a majority vote of both men and women. There were 3 elected trustees and then a panel of 5 board men who acted as an advisory and appeal council. (1998) Bimeler was elected as one of these trustees and continued to lead the community along with other elders.

The articles also established the work system. In the beginning men and women both worked in manual labor. However once the community became prosperous men worked in the fields and in the mills while women worked in the gardens, hotel, and the country store. The primary pursuit of the Separatists was agriculture. They also had mills to process their food and to make other necessities, such as clothing for the group. They also made other goods, such as furniture and stoves, in the mills to sell in their country store. Because of their position on the river and their closeness to the Ohio & Erie Canal, their store was busy and provided a fairly steady income for the group. (Randall, 1904)
By the 1830s the group had become self-sufficient and prosperous. They had little contact with or use for the outside world. In 1832 after they received more immigrants, they had their peak population at 500 members. However this peak was short lived because cholera hit the group two years later, killing off one-third of their members. They never recuperated from this loss because of the requirement that all members be German and because they did not have evangelical pursuits. While they did not seek visitors or converts, their hotel and country store brought in many outsiders to the town.

When these outsiders came into the town, the most noticeable element of the town was the garden in the center of town. This 2.5-acre garden symbolized the New Jerusalem described in the book of Revelations. (Figure 19) In the center was a large spruce representing everlasting life. Around the spruce was an arbor vitae hedge circle that represented heaven. (Gutek, 1998) Beyond the circle were 12 juniper trees with 12 radiating paths representing the apostles and the 12 paths to righteousness. (1998) The other path in a grid pattern stood for the routes of temptation along the righteous path.

Figure 19: Zoar Garden. The Separatists had 2.5 acre garden with a large spruce in the center. The garden is in a central location in town.
This garden was adjacent to the public buildings in the town along the principal street, Main Street. All these buildings were of different shape and size because they had different functions.

The only building lavishly decorated was the home of Bimeler, however he still shared his home with 5 other family units. All other buildings were simple frame buildings constructed with brick and were 1-2 stories. *(Figure 20)* They had red heavy trough-shaped tile roofs. (Randall, 1904) Widows and doors were simple with little detail. However many dwelling retained a piazza or double piazza because this created a sense of hospitality and a place for groups to gather in the evening. (Hinds, 1971) These piazzas were in the rear and the front of the house had simple steps that were right on the street. Also gardens provided flowers for decoration in the spring. These gardens were also utilitarian because they provided vegetables and fruit for the members of the household. While some food was provided for all members, individual households also had to work in their own gardens to harvest produce.

They had a town hall used for the annual meeting of the business of the town as well as political meetings. The building had a bell cupola to tell the members when to gather for dinner or meetings. Also along this street was the church. *(Figure 21)* This building was a traditional style constructed in red brick with a cupola. It had straight back seats with undecorated walls and ceilings to prevent distractions during the simple service. (Randall, 1904) Because the groups did not believe in practicing any of the sacraments, the service usually consisted of a couple of
hymns and a teaching. They did not have prayer books or hymn books because they felt that these should be from the heart and not recited.

While the group had a church they did not just confine their worship to the church. The Separatists felt that they worshipped with making the best use of their time. This combined with their German heritage created a hard working and industrious community. They had no need for excess and had a temperament of rigid plainness. (1904) The buildings were not extravagant because they were seen as utilitarian and excessive decoration would not produce products to be sold for income or produce food or clothing. Their town plan reflected this as well. Like many other communities, they set the town on a grid pattern for ease of laying out the streets and the ease of movement through the town. For the Separatists winding streets would lengthen the time of travel as well as lengthen the time of laying out the town.

In this grid there were nine streets. The principal street was Main Street, which led out of town to other villages and contained most of the public buildings. All the mills were along the river to take advantage of waterpower generated by the river. One specific mill was used for printing. The group wanted to print and reproduce all of Bimeler's teachings because they thought that it would be a disservice to the world if they kept his divine messages to themselves.

Figure 21: Church in Zoar. The traditional church on Main Street in the town.
The Society of Separatist of Zoar was one of many groups from the Pietistic tradition of Germany. With this tradition came a simplified life in beliefs and in their physical environment. Little detailing was ever used in their buildings and function over form was always the most important aspect of any buildings. The town as a whole also used little detailing. Streets were in a grid pattern and were simple dirt roads. The only strong detailing in the community was in their community garden at the center of town. This garden provided a strong symbol and reminder to the community of their salvation, the paths to heaven, and the constant temptation that was in their path. This reminder helped their members focus on work and create a good use of their time. For the Separatists one of the most important aspects of life was to worship God through taking advantage of time. By creating a successful prosperous town, they felt they were taking advantage of their time and creating an example of heaven for the world to see.
City on a Hill
Inspirationalists
1840-1932

chapter 5
Southern Germany was the hotbed of protest against the Lutheran Church. Many sects formed with a goal of reforming the church. Once such group was the Community of True Inspiration, also known as the Inspirationalists. In 1714 a group of members from the Lutheran church gathered to voice religious concerns over the strong liturgical traditions of the Lutheran church. (Barthel, 1984) The felt that the church was bound by the traditions of the service order and prayer books and that there was no freedom for the members. This group looked to the teachings of Boheme and other pietistic teachings for guidance. They wanted the church to look back to earlier versions of Christianity and to live a simple piety that carried worship into all parts of their lives. They believed that one could only find true salvation by studying the Bible and therefore rejected professional clergy who claimed that they provided a route to salvation through their teachings. Like many other pietistic sects, they rejected the sacraments of infant baptism and confirmation because they felt that children did not understand what the sacraments symbolized. They also refused to serve in the military for they refused to kill others, and they educated their own children rather than having them influenced by the Lutheran State run public schools.

From this small group that met in 1714 three brothers, the Potts, traveled around the German proveniences holding meetings and preaching the simple church lifestyle. Along their travels they recruited Johann Rock and Eberhard Gruber. With these two men the sect started to build a following. Rock and Gruber quickly took leadership positions among the group. Along with the traditional pietistic beliefs the group also believed that God would speak directly to humankind through certain individuals called instruments using both written and spoken words. (1984) Under inspiration the instruments, or Werkzeug, would shake, lose control and then deliver testimonies. Through their inspirations the Werkzeug had a pathway to charismatic authority and power.

Rock took this pathway and quickly was declared as a Werkzeug and retained a leadership role. While Gruber never received inspirations he retained a secular leadership of the group. He created guidelines for religious thought called the 21 Rules for the Examination of Daily Life. Among these rules, the most important were to obey God and superiors, practice selflessness, live
in love and pity toward your neighbor, and to practice abstinence and control with food and drink. (1984) Concerning their interaction with the outside world, Gruber instructed them to have no intercourse with worldly-minded men and to never seek that society. In these rules they also acknowledged that marriage was a necessary institution for procreation, but celibacy was still encouraged and desired. While the group rejected much of the liturgical traditions of the Lutheran church, they did accept and follow the Apostles Creed. They also saw the 10 commandments as central to living a godly life and used the Lords Pray daily.

With the death of Gruber in the 1750’s the movement began to die down. However in the 1800s there was a strong revival fed by the end to serfdom for the peasants in German territory and the rise of industrialization. These threatened the old way of small village life and caused many to turn toward the Inspirationalists’ simple beliefs and simple traditions to hold on to what they knew. (1984) Out of this new revival came a new Werkzeug, called Michael Krausert. He began preaching the piest doctrine again and recruited many to the movement. One of these new recruits was Christian Metz, who also became a Werkzeug and became the new leader for the group. Like the original leaders, Metz and Krausert traveled the German provinces recruiting members, however in between travels they always took periods of solitude to distance themselves from the sinful world they were putting themselves in to recruit members. (1984)

Once members were gathered, they began living on an estate owned by one of the wealthier members of the sect. On this estate they accepted a degree of informal communalism by living together, working the land together, and sharing the proceeds from the land. This communalism was established to encourage the members to separate themselves from the sinful world, but to also provide for all members of the group, both rich and poor. By 1840, the group was estimated at having 350-400 members living on the estates and another 600 scattered throughout Germany and Switzerland. (1984)

Because of this new communalism and their separation from the Lutheran Church, the Inspirationalists received constant persecution from both the government and Lutheran population. In 1842 the government refused to allow citizenship to any Inspirationalist from
Switzerland that wanted to live on the estate. Upon receiving this regulation, Metz told his community that they must prepare themselves to move west. Soon after this announcement a group of four men left for the new world to scout out land.

The land first decided on was outside of the new city of Buffalo, NY. The land was bought from the Indians at $10.50/acre and a total of 5,000 acres were purchased. (1984) (Figure 22) Once the land was bought in 1843 the first 350 members immigrated and two years later after the land and town was laid out another 800 members came to New York. With the influx of members into the area, four new towns were formed in the area they called Ebenezer. In these towns they adopted the German village model that upheld self-sufficiency. They believed that by being self-sufficient among just fellow believers, they were truly showing trust and the prosperity of God.

To provide this self-sufficient lifestyle each town had its own craft shops, kitchens, bakery, meat market, school, and church. Each village also had mills, however, each town had its own particular mill. This created a regional aspect for the villages and made sure that no village was competing against each other in the outside market.

In 1846 the official constitution was adopted in which communalism was the primary focus. (1984) In the constitution they even declared that it was an eternal disgrace for any who would cause the communities to dissolve. Also in this constitution the authority of the village was established. The Werkzeug was the leader of the entire group and was given his authority through his/her divine inspirations. Under the Werkzeug was the board of trustees, which was a group of 13 elders selected yearly from the male members of the community to run the temporal and...
economic offices of the towns. The next group in the hierarchy was the village elders who were in charge of the spiritual day-to-day well being of the members of each individual village. Also at the village level were the General Managers who were the heads of each economic enterprise in each town. The village elders and General Managers met every day to discuss the business of the town. Each village kept its own records and managed its own affairs. The only requirement was that at the end of each year all accounts had to be balanced. (Fogarty, 1972) All the extra profits were divided among the region to provide for expansion.

The economic order of each town was also developed on the model of the old German social order. It was a highly structured system that was based on delegation of tasks. There was a balance of tasks between agriculture and industry. The tasks were divided by gender. The men were in the fields and the mills, and the women were in the kitchens and gardens. Anyone who worked for the community received wages, but they were to buy their clothes and food from the community. All the extra produce and the products furnished from the mills were sold to the outside communities to provide profits for the community that allowed them to continue to expand. (Barthel, 1984)

The expansion that they needed was not possible in New York. With the growth of Buffalo, the Inspirationalists felt that the outside world was encroaching on their towns and that the sins of the worldly population would cause ruin and devastation in the community. Because of this encroachment, the group felt that it was necessary to move to a more isolated and larger site out west. In 1854 they bought 26,000 acres in Iowa that had the large Iowa River running through it to provide fertile land.

The summer of 1855 they established their first settlement and by 1862 a total of other villages were located about 1.5 miles apart. (Figure 23) In 1896 another seventh village was started. In this region, the Inspirationalists established the same type of economic and social ordering that they had established in Ebenezer, but at a larger extent. The area that they settled became known as Amana, which was taken from the Songs of Solomon and meant remaining faithful. (Fogarty, 1972) By 1874, the population of the entire community neared 1,450 people.
This population was divided among the six villages with four villages being around 125-150 people each and two large villages, Amana and Middle Amana, having populations of 450 and 350 respectively. (1972) These populations all lived within the village limits and went out to the fields each day.

The farming land was an irregular circle within all the village possessions thus making the villages spaced so that all the land could be easily farmed.

The farming and agriculture prospered because of the fertile land and the river provided waterpower as a means to provide finished goods to sell. While many of their handcrafted products were attractive to the outside world, their most prosperous industry was their woolen goods. (Gutek, 1998) While the group moved to Iowa to distance themselves from the sins of the growing city, they were still economically tied to the national market. Eventually this national market expanded and Iowa was not isolated from society. The pressure of this market caused the communal life of the Inspirationalists to dissolve in 1932 and all the land an ownership of the industries was divided up among the community members. However they retained their church and strong German heritage.

This tie to the national market also brought along curiosity and visitors. The Inspirationalists still primarily spoke German, but they accepted visitors in their inn and at busy harvesting season they even often hired outside help. However, these visitors or hired help would never be allowed to become part of the community unless they were German. There was

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**Figure 23:** Map of Amana, low. There are seven Amana towns all in the same region and within .5 miles of each other.
no recruitment mechanism and most members were either born into the community or were immigrants from Germany.

All the villages were planned along one main street. Any other streets in the villages usually were either perpendicular or parallel to the main street making the beginnings of a grid system. (Figure 24) The main street was primarily for stores and workshops. The farm buildings and mills were placed on the edge of town and by the water supply. While the streets provided access into the towns and access to the shops and farm buildings, the main travel routes within the rest of the community were pedestrian walkways. The main idea was to create six or seven residential houses, with a couple of kitchen houses, the school, and church surrounding a block. Within this block a system of footpaths provided access to the buildings and often the only access to the church and schools was via these footpaths. (Hayden, 1976) (Figure 25) These footpaths helped the community retain its inward looking tradition and kept their spiritual and communal life separate from the outside world.

All the buildings along the square and the town abutted the streets in the German fashion. Most of the buildings looked the same, very plain

Figure 24: Amana village street plans. All seven of the villages show a grid pattern.
made of plain unpainted wood or brick/stone yielded from the sandstone pits near the villages. (Reps, 1965) One building that depended on the masonry built buildings for food storage was the Kitchen house. The community ate all their meals in common, but they were still divided into groups of around 30-40 people per Kitchen house. In these houses, women and men sat at different side of the room to encourage celibacy and all their means were shared together.

All the houses had gardens large enough to harvest fruit and vegetable produce. Often there were also grape vines and trellises on the outside of the houses to provide shade on the building to keep it cooler in the summer. The houses were two stories high with two suites per floor. Each suite held a family or single member of the town. Usually everyone in the house was grouped by bloodline. The interiors were kept plain as well. A simple light blue white wash gave slight color to the walls and the only decoration allowed was religious images and mottoes. Most of the furniture in the houses was antiques brought over from Germany or were hand made in the mills. (Gutek, 1998)

Only adults over 14 and children under 2 years of age lived in the households. From ages 2 to 5 the children were in the kinderschule. From age 5 to 14 the children received proper education in German and English. At the age of 14 each student took up a task that was assigned to him by the village elders. If a student was to become a doctor or another task that needed additional education, the elders would support the student through college. The schools
were made of the same red brick, but were recognizable because they were larger than the houses. The schools contained both teaching rooms and dormitories for the children.

Another noticeable building in the town was the church building, which was always placed at the center of town. (Figure 26) Again, the architecture was the plainest with the only decoration being a steeple house. (Fogarty, 1972) The churches were often whitewashed on the outside for some distinguishing feature. There was an area in the front of the church for the presiding elder and then an area for each of the three congregations to sit in. The youngest congregation, the children, sat up front. The young adults sat behind the children and the elders sat in the back. There was a central rectangular room, the Saal, that all three congregations met in each day and for the two special holidays of confession or Unterreing and communion or Liebesmah. On the sides of the large rectangle were rooms for each of the separate congregations to meet for prayer meetings.

In total the groups met 11 times per week in either their congregation or as a whole community of believers. (Gutek, 1998) Like the houses, the interior of the church was whitewashed with a light blue color. The floors were left a bare wood with a strip of carpet acting as a center aisle. In the front was a simple table acting as a pulpit with a green cloth. There were no statues, altars, paintings, or stained glass allowed in the church of the rest of the community because it was believed that these were distracting from the lessons being taught. (Gutek, 1998) The service was a simple service with a couple of hymns and testimonial teaching from an elder.
There was no professional clergy and anyone who was voted in the board of trustees would be able to give a teaching.

The Inspirationalists moved west from Germany and came to America for religious freedom. They eventually moved even further west from New York to Iowa in order to provide a better environment for purity among their group. This separation was necessary for the group to truly realize their community. They lived a simple life based on their focus of the Apostolic church. They kept their architecture simple and towns small to provide a strong sense of community within each town. By creating a regional aspect that had diversification of industry to their town they made their community as a whole more self-sufficient because they did not have to depend on any worldly industries or products. Through this self-sufficiency of their seven villages in Amana Iowa, the Inspirationalists created their piece of heaven on earth.