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Double Honor: Elite Hutterite Women in the Sixteenth Century

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Studies of early modern Anabaptism have shown that many Anabaptists sought to model their communities after the examples of the New Testament and the early church before the "fall" of the church into a coercive, sword-wielding institution through the person of Constantine in the fourth century C.E.[1] The Anabaptists claimed that one had to voluntarily choose to become a Christian through believer's baptism and suffer for his or her faith just as the martyrs of old had done in the face of Roman persecution. During the course of the sixteenth century, their Protestant and Roman Catholic enemies did not disappoint, as hundreds of Anabaptists were executed for their rejection of "Christendom." To the "magisterial" Christians, Anabaptists were dangerous heretics because they denied the God-given power of spiritual and secular authorities.[2]

Given the Anabaptist attempt to model their faith after the example of the early church through the imitation of Christ and his disciples, it is not surprising that their communities reflected similar tensions between charismatic and scriptural authority, especially with respect to the role of women in the church. The activity of the Montanist prophetesses Priscilla and Maximilla, including their reception by the group that later prevailed as "orthodox," is a good example of this tension in the early church.[3] As the reading of both early church martyr narratives (for example, the Gallic martyrs [5.1.1–5.1.61], the Alexandrian martyrs [6.41.1–6.42.2, in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*]), and the Mennonite *Martyr's Mirror* from the seventeenth century demonstrate, both male and female martyrs were

[1]For example, see Geoffrey Dipple, *"Just as in the Time of the Apostles": Uses of History in the Radical Reformation* (Kitchener: Pandora, 2005).

[2]George Huntston Williams popularized the term "Magisterial" as a descriptor of the "state" churches of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin in contrast to the "Radical" communities of the Anabaptists, Spiritualists, Anti-Trinitarians, and others who generally did not ally themselves with the secular authorities, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed. (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992).

[3]See esp. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), 1:5.14–5.18.6.

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elevated as heroes to be emulated by the rest of the faithful.[4] When it came to martyrdom, members of the "weaker" sex were often depicted as that much stronger through Christ, who gave them the "manly courage" to persevere in the face of persecution.[5]

In the early years of these movements, when the role of the Spirit was emphasized over that of the Letter, the mantle of leadership or prophetic power fell to women as well as men. Recall instances of female prophecy in Luke-Acts (Anna, Luke 2:36; Philip's four daughters "who prophesied" from Acts 21:9),[6] the prophetesses Maximilla and Priscilla noted above, and Ursula Jost, a follower of Melchior Hoffman in Strassburg.[7] For many Anabaptists, especially those more inclined to trust the authority of the Holy Spirit over the commands of the "dead" letter, both men and women wielded charismatic authority in their communities.[8]

On the other hand, like most proto-orthodox Christians of late antiquity after the apostolic period, most Anabaptist groups also accepted the patriarchy of the Pauline letters and other New Testament texts as a fundamental community-building strategy, especially in the decades after the Peasants' War (1524–1525) and the fall of the Kingdom of Münster in 1535. By 1545, the early charismatic leaders or inspirers of the various Anabaptist groups were either dead (Thomas Müntzer, Conrad Grebel, Balthasar Hubmaier, Hans Hut, Jakob Hutter, Melchior Hoffmann) or had spiritualized their positions to the point where Nicodemism was a viable survival strategy (David Joris).[9] Thus, led by men such as Menno Simons (Dutch Anabaptists), Peter Riedemann (Hutterites), and Pilgram Marpeck (South German/Austrian Anabaptists), many Anabaptist groups structured their congregations according to more

[4]Thieleman J. van Braght, *The Bloody Theater: Or, Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians: Who Baptized Only upon Confession of Faith, and Who Suffered and Died for the Testimony of Jesus, their Saviour, from the Time of Christ to the Year A.D. 1660*. 9th ed. (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald, 1972).

[5]The theme of "manly courage" runs throughout Anabaptist martyr narratives; see esp. Hermina Joldersma and Louis Grijp, eds. and trans., *Elisabeth's Manly Courage: Testimonials and Songs of Martyred Anabaptist Women in the Low Countries* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001). See also Marlene Epp and H. Julia Roberts, "Women in the *Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren*," in *Profiles of Anabaptist Women: Sixteenth-Century Reforming Pioneers*, ed. C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996), 208–9.

[6]On prophecy in Luke-Acts, cf. Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers: A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology* (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic, 1999); and Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1991).

[7]On Ursula Jost, see esp. Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 391–92.

[8]On this point, cf. Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

[9]Based on Matthew 10:32–33, Nicodemism was the practice of outward conformity to the Church but an inward denial of its truth; see esp. Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

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traditional models of community in the Old and New Testaments. Their leaders wanted the "brothers" and "sisters" to reflect a biblical humility, sobriety, and obedience due to God in the midst of a fallen world of sin, death, and the devil.

What that daily life looked like among these later, more "Biblicist" Anabaptists varied somewhat among the surviving groups. For most, including the Mennonites and Swiss Brethren, the home was the locus of both family life and worship, replete with the familiar patriarchal patterns of early modern life.[10] The Hutterite Brethren chose to dwell in communes called *Haushaben* or *Bruderhöfe* in southern Moravia; this part of the Bohemian kingdom provided a haven of toleration for a number of Anabaptist groups who fled imperial persecution the late 1520s and 1530s. Based on their reading of Acts 2 and 4, the Hutterites transformed *Gütergemeinschaft*, or community of goods, into a complex social system based on the rejection of private property.[11]

Anabaptist wives were to obey their husbands, who were to obey God. This point was confirmed by 1 Corinthians 11, 1 Timothy 2:12, and other familiar proof-texts employed by the surviving Anabaptist groups in their confessional literature. Most Anabaptist women engaged in their traditional childbearing and housekeeping roles because that was simply what they were supposed to do. The Hutterite commitment to *Gütergemeinschaft* made it especially difficult for women to break communal norms; Marlene Epp and H. Julia Roberts point out that Hutterite women were bound up in a system "shaped by expectations of obedience and submission."[12] Overall, Anabaptist women of the late sixteenth century were deeply imbedded in religious communities that were squarely in the Biblicist camp. They expressed their religiosity within the bounds of their particular community of faith.

I. Beyond Routinization

The narrative recounted above, with its underlying tension between the Spiritualist and Biblicist impulses of both the early church and early modern

[10]Sigrun Haude notes that "the social profile of an Anabaptist marriage was for the most part a reflection of contemporary society. Wives were to be obedient to their husbands, serve them, and be their housekeepers," "Gender Roles and Perspectives," in *A Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism, 1521–1700*, ed. John D. Roth and James M. Stayer (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 453.

[11]Peter Walpot, leader of the Hutterites from 1565 to 1578, offers the most compelling defense of the Hutterites' practice of *Gütergemeinschaft* in *The Great Article Book* (1577). Part 3 of that work, "True Yieldedness and Community of Goods," is reproduced in English translation in *Early Anabaptist Spirituality: Selected Writings*, in *The Classics of Western Spirituality*, ed. and trans. Daniel Liechty (New York: Paulist, 1994), 137–96.

[12]Epp and Roberts, "Women in the *Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren*," 212.

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Anabaptism, is not new. In 1959 the famous Mennonite historian Harold Bender claimed that "in the early Anabaptist movement women played an important role. . . . Later, after the creative period of Anabaptism was past, the settled communities and congregations reverted more to the typical patriarchal attitude of European culture."[13] The model is deeply indebted to Max Weber's account of "routinization" (*Veralltäglichen*), that is, the process whereby the initial creative, charismatic moment of emerging religious communities gives way to an institutionalization that either limits the charisms of its members or channels those charisms into acceptable outlets in the name of a carefully crafted identity.[14]

Sigrun Haude, citing the more recent work of Linda A. Huebert Hecht, Auke Jelsma, and C. Arnold Snyder, reports that "many scholars have drawn on the 'early-late' model" of Weber, when "the chances for more independent and weighty female roles were greatest during the early, unstructured phase of the movement, while such freedom was largely diminished during the later, more institutionalized period."[15] These and other historians of early modern Anabaptism have articulated their work within the framework of the tension between the Spirit and the Letter, as it helps them explain the Münster debacle of 1534–1535 as well as later Dutch Mennonite communities of the seventeenth century that used the ban and shunning as means to maintain communal norms. The emergence of the Hutterites has been examined along similar lines, especially during the late sixteenth century.[16] Scholars of

[13]Harold S. Bender, "Women, Status of," in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia: A Comprehensive Reference Work on the Anabaptist-Mennonite Movement* (hereafter *ME*), ed. Cornelius J. Dyck and Dennis D. Martin, 4 vols. (Hillsboro, Kans.: Mennonite Brethren Pub. House, 1955–1959), 4:972.

[14]Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, intro. Talcott Parsons (Boston: Beacon, 1963); on the subject of women prophets in various world religions, Weber contends that "only in very rare cases does this practice continue beyond the first stage of a religious community's formation, when the pneumatic manifestations of charisma are valued as hallmarks of specifically religious exaltation. Thereafter, as routinization and regimentation of community relationships set in, a reaction takes place against pneumatic manifestations among women, which come to be regarded as dishonorable and morbid," 104.

[15]Haude, "Gender Roles and Perspectives," 437; Haude cites Linda Huebert Hecht, "An Extraordinary Lay Leader: The Life and Work of Helene of Freyberg, Sixteenth Century Noblewoman and Anabaptist from the Tirol," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 66, no. 3 (July 1992): 312–41; and Auke Jelsma, *Frontiers of the Reformation: Dissidence and Orthodoxy in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998). See also Huebert Hecht, "A Brief Moment in Time: Informal Leadership and Shared Authority among Sixteenth Century Anabaptist Women," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 17 (1999): 52–74; Keith L. Sprunger, "God's Powerful Army of the Weak: Anabaptist Women of the Radical Reformation," in *Triumph Over Silence: Women in Protestant History*, ed. Robert L. Greaves (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1985), 44–74; Gordon Zook, "Current Patterns of Shared Leadership in Mennonite Church Congregations" (D.Min. thesis, Lancaster Theological Seminary, 1989), 5.

[16]Astrid von Schlachta's *Hutterische Konfession Und Tradition (1578–1619): Etabliertes Leben Zwischen Ordnung Und Ambivalenz* (Mainz: Von Zabern, 2003) is of particular note with respect to

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Anabaptist women have found it particularly helpful as a lens through which to interpret the rise and fall of Anabaptist prophetesses and the elevation of female martyrs alongside later evidence that demonstrates a highly regimented and anonymous routine for most Anabaptist women in their daily lives.[17] In using Weber's theoretical apparatus, their research has yielded important insights about Anabaptist women, yet also supplanted idealistic accounts that argue for the equality of women and men within Anabaptism.[18]

Nevertheless, our understanding of Anabaptist women must supplement Weber's model with new ways of approaching the evidence and with new narratives.[19] The elements of the Weberian narrative are predictable, and appear in a similarly predictable order. First, the scholar presents evidence of female prophecy or leadership in the "early" period and makes a case for the importance of that evidence for our knowledge of early modern Anabaptism.

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the institutionalization of Hutterite Anabaptism. Although she does not use the routinization thesis per se, she argues for a Hutterite "confessionalization" beginning in the late sixteenth century. First articulated by Ernst Walter Zeeden but popularized by Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling, the confessionalization thesis is indebted to the work of Weber and Ernst Troeltsch on the formation of religious institutions. It seeks to account for the political, social, and religious processes through which the various new post-Reformation "confessions," in concert with secular authorities, defined themselves through creedal statements, ordinances, ritual performances, and social discipline of their subjects. The Hutterites rejected the "world" and therefore did not officially rely on any "state" support or overt coercion, but they nonetheless established a clear leadership structure, strict religious practices, a social hierarchy, and forms of internal social discipline. On confessionalization, see esp. Reinhard, "Gegenreformation als Modernisierung? Prolegomena einer Theorie des konfessionellen Zeitalters," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 68 (1977): 226–51; Schilling, *Konfessionskonflikt und Staatsbildung: eine Fallstudie über das Verhältnis von religiösem und sozialem Wandel in der Frühneuzeit am Beispiel der Grafschaft Lippe, Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte*, vol. 48 (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1981). For an overview of confessionalization as it applies to studies of Anabaptism, see Michael Driedger, "Anabaptists and the Early Modern State: A Long-Term View," in Roth and Stayer, *Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism*, 507–44.

[17]As Werner Packull points out, "silence as to the female companions who bore children, worked alongside their husbands, and, like them, suffered persecution and martyrdom, was the rule rather than the exception in Hutterite sources," *Hutterite Beginnings: Communitarian Experiments during the Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 241.

[18]G. H. Williams is notable for his claim of equality between men and women in *Radical Reformation*, 762. An early critique of this model is Joyce L. Irwin, *Womanhood in Radical Protestantism, 1525–1675* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1979). Irwin is critical of scholars who gave "the impression that Anabaptism and other radical movements changed the status of women," xv. On this point, see also Wes Harrison, "The Role of Women in Anabaptist Thought and Practice: The Hutterite Experience of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23 (1992): 49–69, esp. 49–50.

[19]Haude, "Gender Roles and Perspectives," 437. Haude is especially critical of the thesis in an earlier essay, "Anabaptist Women—Radical Women?" in *Infinite Boundaries: Order, Disorder, and Reorder in Early Modern German Culture*, ed. Max Reinhart (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1998). She notes the difficulty of assigning "early" and "late" periods in different geographical regions and argues that the thesis relies too heavily on male prescripts. For Haude, the thesis is "neither helpful nor generally applicable," 317.

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Then the scholar accounts for the demise of this female charisma in the "late" period by invoking the onset of patriarchy,[20] usually articulated as an accommodation to the social values of early modern society or to the Biblicist impulse within the community.[21] The scholar devotes little or no attention to Anabaptist women who lived after the "window of opportunity" for leadership roles had closed, as they do not interest her or him.[22]

Besides privileging the presumably creative early period of female leadership, the scholar may also romanticize this period and the activities of female and male leaders, prophets, and martyrs. The (re)turn to the regimented patriarchy of the "dead" letter signals a loss of creative power and is often lamented. For example, in his examination of the Swiss Anabaptist shift from "pneumatic enthusiasm to the congregational election of male leaders," C. Arnold Snyder argues for a continuation of both male and female charisma in poetic fashion: "this individual call of the Spirit may have been dampened, but it was not extinguished by the emergence of Swiss Anabaptist congregational polity."[23] One cannot help but sense that Snyder regrets the "dampening" of charismatic authority in Swiss Anabaptist communities.[24]

Scholars have already begun the work of developing models that move beyond Weber's paradigm. They have looked for ways of interpreting the

[20]The Mennonite scholars Dorothy Yoder Nyce and Lynda Nyce highlight the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and other feminist theorists on issues of power and patriarchy in religious communities. For example, they cite Schüssler Fiorenza's notion of "kyriarchy," which moves beyond male power over women and includes all the "rule of the emperor/master/lord/father/husband over his subordinates," "Power and Authority in Mennonite Ecclesiology: A Feminist Perspective," in *Power, Authority, and the Anabaptist Tradition*, ed. Benjamin W. Redekop and Calvin W. Redekop (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 157; cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 14, 62, 196.

[21]For example, C. Arnold Snyder writes that "in the end, societal assumptions about the 'proper' role of women lent the weight of cultural legitimacy to the establishment of a biblical patriarchal church order," *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora, 1995), 269.

[22]A good example of this narrative form is Huebert Hecht, "A Brief Moment in Time." Huebert Hecht notes that Anabaptist women had a "'window of opportunity,' a brief moment in time," in which to exercise leadership within early modern Anabaptist communities, 66.

[23]C. Arnold Snyder, "Margeret Hottinger of Zollikon," in Snyder and Huebert Hecht, *Profiles of Anabaptist Women*, 51–52.

[24]This sentimental privileging of the Spiritualist, charismatic period may reflect contemporary attitudes toward women within certain Anabaptist communities of faith, but I am not sure how it advances our historical knowledge of early modern Anabaptist women. It assumes a theological *telos* for Anabaptism that Anabaptist communities fail(ed) to live up to, and that is a theological argument, not a historical one. Others have made similar observations, including Merry Wiesner-Hanks. She noticed a "somewhat hagiographic style" in a few authors who wrote for *Profiles of Anabaptist Women*, although she adds that "most approach their subjects more dispassionately, noting their limitations as well as their heroism," review of *Profiles of Anabaptist Women*, edited by C. Arnold Snyder and Linda A. Huebert Hecht, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 30, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 1171–73.

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evidence that address how Anabaptist women negotiated their roles both within their communities and before outsiders regardless of the time period. For example, scholars of Hutterite Anabaptism have examined what life was like on a daily basis for women and also how women could be quite assertive before the male leadership group.[25] Moreover, scholars of Dutch Anabaptism have found "feisty and intelligent repartee by female Anabaptists" in the face of persecuting authorities.[26] The key word for these studies is "negotiation," as the Anabaptist women they present are imbedded within specific contexts. These studies do a better job of articulating particular instantiations of male power over women that women had to negotiate, and are not bound to evidence that "fits" Weber's model.[27]

Research projects based on evidence of female negotiation are not the only means to approach the study of Anabaptist women without recapitulating the Weberian "early-late" narrative form. More work is needed on the place—or places—of women in Anabaptist communities, with attention to how Anabaptist women were treated, what men and other women expected of them, and what these women could expect from life within their own communities on a daily basis. For example, both Helen Martens and Werner Packull engage the issue of male expectations for Hutterite women.[28] Martens examines Hutterite hymns and reports that many enjoin women to be obedient to men by using biblical examples, including Eve, Esther, and Mary the mother of Jesus.[29] Packull examines two early seventeenth-century Hutterite codices that deal with the manners, virtues, and education of young women.[30] According to these codices, any education young women might receive was to serve them in their work. Being "born to work like birds to fly," Hutterite women were to avoid idleness and do their work in humble submission.[31] Packull recounts what the Hutterites thought the "ideal" woman should be through the lenses of table manners, social interactions,

[25]Cf. von Schlachta, *Hutterische Konfession Und Tradition*, 128; Harrison, "Role of Women," 64–67.

[26]Haude, "Gender Roles and Perspectives," 438–41; cf. Jennifer H. Reed, "Dutch Anabaptist Female Martyrs and their Responses to the Reformation" (M.A. thesis, University of Florida, 1991).

[27]For example, in "Anabaptist Women—Radical Women?" Haude argues that "Anabaptist women used male perceptions of female simple-mindedness to negotiate advantages for themselves and their families," 313. This observation is not limited to an early or late period in the history of Anabaptism.

[28]An excellent example of the use of male prescriptive literature to learn more about "Radical" women (that is, Anabaptists, Spiritualists, Puritans, and Quakers) is Irwin's *Womanhood in Radical Protestantism*. Among many others, she includes texts from Balthasar Hubmaier, Menno Simons, Caspar Schwenkfeld, and Sebastian Franck.

[29]Helen Martens, "Women in the Hutterite Song Book," in Snyder and Huebert Hecht, *Profiles of Anabaptist Women*, 222–43.

[30]Werner Packull, "'We Are Born to Work Like the Birds to Fly': The Anabaptist-Hutterite Ideal Woman," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 73, no. 1 (January 1999): 75–86.

[31]Packull, "We Are Born to Work Like the Birds to Fly," 80.

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and similar quotidian concerns. Nevertheless, both Marten's work on Hutterite hymns and Packull's study only point to how Hutterite men understood the place of women within their community. Neither explores how the very structure of Hutterite society affected the lives of women within it.

II. Development of the Hutterite Hierarchy

As Haude notes in her review of the literature, "nearly all scholars are agreed that the social hierarchy and distribution of roles in the various Anabaptist groups reflected that of contemporary society."[32] The hierarchy of the Hutterites, however, did not reflect the patriarchy of the typical early modern nuclear family, as in the case of the Mennonites and Swiss Brethren.[33] The best parallel to Hutterite society is probably medieval monasticism, as both forms of life feature isolation, collectivism, and egalitarianism as communal goals as well as a clearly defined leadership hierarchy.[34] The "sacral corporatism" of the craft guilds[35] has also been forwarded as a possible parallel.[36] Above all, the community as a group, not the family, was the primary unit of Hutterite society, and it had its own divisions of labor, written and unwritten rules, and leadership structure. Therefore, before turning to the issue of women within Hutterite society, I must first give an

[32]Haude, "Gender Roles and Perspectives," 440.

[33]James Stayer argues that "the community was everything, and the family was as weak as it could be without disappearing entirely," *The German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 146.

[34]Many historians have also sought comparisons between Anabaptism and medieval monasticism because both represent efforts to return to the piety and ascetic ideals of the early church. See esp. Kenneth Ronald Davis, *Anabaptism and Asceticism: A Study in Intellectual Origins* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald, 1974). Others have highlighted the similarities between the economic life of the medieval monastery and the Hutterite *Haushaben*. John W. Bennett argues that the "original economic image of the [Hutterite] colony was that of a self-sufficient island in the midst of the interdependent economy of 'the outside' with its specialized production and commerce. This concept had its historical antecedents in the medieval monastic community, and in the manors and estates of the nobility of the sixteenth century," *Hutterian Brethren: The Agricultural Economy and Social Organization of a Communal People* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1967), 161.

[35]Several authors have noticed the affinities between the Hutterites and craft guilds. See esp. Hans-Dieter Plumper, *Die Gütergemeinschaft bei den Täufer des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Göppingen: Alfred Kümmerle, 1972), 129–58; Michael Mullett, *Radical Religious Movements in Early Modern Europe* (London: Allen and Unwinn, 1980), 33–54.

[36]On "sacral corporatism," see esp. Thomas A. Brady, *Ruling Class, Regime and Reformation at Strasbourg, 1520–1555* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 3–19. According to Bob Scribner, sacral corporatism "embodied the notion that salvation and material well-being were achieved in working for the common good in and through a corporative endeavor in which the selfish interests of individuals were subordinated to the good of the whole community," "Practical Utopias: Pre-Modern Communism and the Reformation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 36 (1994): 743–75, 770.

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account of the hierarchy of Hutterite Anabaptism as it developed beginning in the late 1520s, and then present a picture of the daily life of the Hutterite Brethren on their *Haushaben*.

First, unlike most other Anabaptist groups, the Hutterites were able to focus much of their energies on the establishment of their communities in Moravia because they were relatively free to do so. An important enabling factor for the Brethren was the political and economic climate of the land they chose to settle. As Jaroslav Pánek points out, at the turn of the sixteenth century, "Moravia offered exceptionally favorable conditions for the reception of new settler groups. Large tracts still remained waste after the holocaust of the Bohemian-Hungarian wars of the second half of the fifteenth century."[37] Moreover, the local lords in southern Moravia ruled with relative autonomy under the weak Jagiellonian kings of Bohemia in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.[38] Even when the Hapsburgs came to power through the person of Archduke Ferdinand in 1526, the Moravian lords managed to hold on to many of their traditional rights. Most importantly, they did not want to be coerced in matters of religion, and often accepted colonists such as the Hutterites who were not Utraquist or Catholic.[39] The Hapsburgs usually left these lords and their vassals alone in return for financial support against the Turks.

The Hutterites did not escape intermittent and sometimes intense persecution, especially in the early years when Anabaptism was considered a grave threat to social order in the empire, but they nonetheless benefited from this power struggle between the local Moravian lords and the Hapsburgs.[40] Freed from the devastating social and economic costs of lasting and systemic persecution, they established Moravia as a "Promised Land"

[37]Jaroslav Pánek, "The Question of Tolerance in Bohemia and Moravia in the Age of the Reformation," in *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation*, ed. Ole Peter Grell and Robert W. Scribner (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 244; cf. Scribner, "Practical Utopias," 765.

[38]On the Jagiellonians' weakness with respect to the estates, see Maček, "The Monarchy of the Estates," in *Bohemia in History*, ed. Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 98–103.

[39]Josef Válka has called this tolerant attitude in Moravia a "kind of non-confessional Christianity" as well as "supradenominational Christianity," "Moravia and the Crisis of the Estates' System," in *Crown, Church, and Estates: Central European Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. R. J. W. Evans and T. V. Thomas (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 152–53; cf. Válka, "Rudolfine Culture," in Teich, *Bohemia in History*, 120; Thomas Winkelbauer describes the rationale of the Moravian nobles as a commitment to an "überkonfessionellen Christentum," "Überkonfessionelles Christentum in der 2. Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts in Mähren und seinen Nachbarländern," in *Dějiny Moravy a Matice Moravská: Problémy a Perspektivy*, ed. Libor Jan (Brno: Matic moravská, 2000), 131–46.

[40]Packull observes that the fortunes of the Anabaptists in Moravia "vacillated inversely with the Turkish threat and in accordance with the tug of war between local noble interests and the strength of central authority," *Hutterite Beginnings*, 73.

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(*gelobte Land*)[41] for new converts who could escape persecution in return for obedient service to the local lords.[42] The prosperity of the Hutterites is evident in how they recorded their own history. Begun in the late 1560s, their *Chronicle* not only notes periods of persecution early in the movement (intermittent during the years 1536–1553) but also periods of growth. They called 1554–1564 the "Good Years" and 1565–1591 the "Golden Years."[43] The only other early modern Anabaptists to achieve comparable success were the various Dutch Mennonite groups, who enjoyed toleration in Netherlands, Poland, and Prussia beginning in the late sixteenth century.

Despite its bias, the *Chronicle* is our most important source of knowledge about the Hutterites; it is a year-by-year account of their religious life, including elections of leaders, persecutions, prison narratives, and missionary exploits. After linking Hutterite history to biblical history and that of the early church before its "fall" under Constantine the Great, the chronicler writes that the Brethren emerged from a series of schisms and relocations that began with a conflict in 1526 between a pacifist group led by Hans Hut of Bibra and a non-pacifist group founded by Balthasar Hubmaier in the town of Nikolsburg (Mikulov) in southern Moravia.[44] After being expelled from Nikolsburg, the pacifists embraced community of goods under the leadership of Jakob Wiedemann. The *Chronicle* recounts the turn to Christian communalism in 1528 as follows:

> About two hundred people (not counting children) from Nikolsburg and Pergen and the surrounding area gathered outside the town of Nikolsburg. . . . They started on their way and encamped in a deserted village between Dannowitz and Muschau and stayed there for a day and a night. They took counsel together in the Lord because of their immediate need and distress and appointed servants for temporal affairs; Franz Intzinger from Leoben in Styria and Jakob Mändel, who had been treasurer to Lord von Liechtenstein in Nikolsburg, with Thomas Arbeiter and Urban Bader to help them. These men then spread out a cloak in front of the people, and

[41]The Hutterites "called Moravia the 'blessed land,' the 'promised land,' the 'pious land,'" Claus-Peter Clasen, *Anabaptism, A Social History 1525–1618: Switzerland, Austria, Moravia, South and Central Germany* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1972), 235.

[42]Packull calls this arrangement a "symbiotic trade-off" in his point that "opportunities were provided by feudal lordlings who offered the hunted heretics religious tolerance in return for economic benefits," *Hutterite Beginnings*, 66. Bob Scribner also describes Hutterite–lord relations as symbiotic. He argues that the Hutterite were like the birds that ate from the mouths of crocodiles in an "arrangement of mutual convenience. They were allowed to remain, as long as they did not become an irritant to their host," "Practical Utopias," 773.

[43]*The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren* (hereafter *Chronicle*), vol. 1, ed. the Hutterite Brethren (Rifton, N.Y.: Plough Publishing House, 1987), v. It was begun in the late 1560s by Kaspar Braitmichel and continued by others after his death in 1573.

[44]Ibid., 47–49. Hubmaier's group became known as the *Schwertler* (sword-bearers), while Hut's followers were called the *Stäbler* (staff-bearers).

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> each one laid his possessions on it with a willing heart—without being forced—so that the needy might be supported in accordance with the teachings of the prophets and apostles. Isa. 23:18; Acts 2:44–45; 4:34–35; 5:1–11.[45]

Under Wiedemann and his servants, this community settled at Austerlitz (Slavkov u Brna) with the permission of the local lords, the von Kaunitz family. Differences arose quickly among the Brethren over a number of issues, however, including church discipline, preaching, the education of children, and marriage practices. A splinter group of about 150 Tyroleans led by Georg Zaunring then moved to Auspitz (Hustopeče).[46] Zaunring, however, was excluded in 1531 when his wife committed adultery and he did not separate himself from her.[47] The Brethren then called Simon Schützinger and Jakob Hutter (1500–1536) from their mission work in the Tyrol to lead the Brethren at Auspitz. Schützinger "was appointed shepherd of the church in place of Georg Zaunring."[48]

Hutter finally rose to power in 1533 in the midst of rampant infighting and turmoil amongst all the communal Anabaptists and their leaders in the region, a fact that the Hutterites record with a decidedly "Hutterocentric" view.[49] In contrast to his main competitors, Hutter is portrayed as a fearless missionary and a charismatic preacher.[50] The chronicler credits him with having "the gift of discernment" from God, for he suspected that the wife of Simon Schützinger had stashed away money and personal effects instead of surrendering them to the community. Hutter's suspicion was ostensibly the result of the Brethren catching the wife of a new convert withholding personal money from the communal storeroom, but it was perhaps also motivated by Schützinger's emphatic refusal to share power with him.[51] After a search of the house revealed the contraband, Schützinger admitted that he had known about it, thus proving that he was deceitful and unfit to lead.[52] Hutter's exposure of his rival cemented his claim to leadership in the Auspitz community, as Schützinger was excluded the next day.

[45]Ibid., 80–81.

[46]The proto-Hutterites called Wiedemann's group the Austerlitz Brethren. This group eventually united with the Hutterites in 1537 or 1538.

[47]*Chronicle*, 92–93.

[48]Ibid., 93.

[49]Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 66.

[50]The two other large groups were the Gabrielites, led by Gabriel Ascherham, and the Philipites, led by Philip Plener. While the Hutterites were mostly from the Tyrol, the Philipites were primarily refugees from Swabia, the Palatinate, and the Upper Rhine Valley, while the Gabrielites were from Silesia. For more on these groups, see esp. Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 77–132.

[51]*Chronicle*, 99–104.

[52]Ibid., 103–4.

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Hutter's group soon outstripped the other communal Anabaptists in Moravia through extensive missionary work to the Holy Roman Empire. They also survived a wave of persecution between 1535 and 1537 when the Moravian estates yielded to Ferdinand's desire to rid Moravia of Anabaptists in the wake of the Münster affair.[53] After the estates passed a mandate of expulsion at Znaim (Znojmo) in 1535, the Hutterites were driven from their home: "Jakob Hutter took his bundle on his back. His assistants did the same, and the brothers and sisters and all the children went in pairs following their shepherd Jakob."[54] Nevertheless, the Hutterites managed to stay in Moravia by hiding in the countryside until the local lords allowed them back onto their estates. As for Hutter, he left on a mission trip for the Tyrol because "he was in such great danger that he could no longer serve the church by teaching in public and could never let himself be seen."[55]

Hutter's removal—and ultimate capture and execution in Innsbruck in 1536[56]—did not signal the end of his community, for he designated a successor before he left Moravia. According to the *Chronicle*, Hutter "entrusted the church to Hans Amon and advised them how to proceed in case they should need another servant. The church accepted this from God with great thankfulness."[57] Weber might have called Hutter's death the end of the "early" stage of Hutterite Anabaptism, for no other Hutterite leader designated his successor through the sheer force of his charismatic authority.[58] This may be the case, but even Hutter appears to have worked his way up the proto-Hutterite leadership ladder through various means, especially missionary work.

The death of Hutter and other important members of the early Brethren between the years 1535 and 1538, while devastating, inspired the survivors to honor their martyred Brethren by building the Hutterite community.[59] Led by Amon, the Hutterites emerged "with a clear leadership structure, a sense of

[53]The Hutterites bemoaned the Anabaptist Kingdom at Münster: "the actions of these corrupt and ungodly people brought intense suffering to the church of God in many places," ibid., 133.

[54]Ibid., 135.

[55]Ibid., 142.

[56]The Hutterites record the grisly details of Hutter's torture and execution (he was burned alive), calling him a "Christian hero" and the imperial authorities the "wicked sons of Caiphas and Pilate," ibid., 145.

[57]Ibid., 142.

[58]The *Chronicle* portrays Hutter as a martyr akin to the apostles: "Jakob Hutter had led the church for nearly three years and left behind him a people gathered and built up for the Lord. It is from this Jakob Hutter that the church inherited the name Hutterite, or Hutterian Brethren. To this day the church is not ashamed of this name. He stood joyfully for the truth unto death and gave his life for it. This has been the fate of all Christ's apostles," 146.

[59]Other notable Hutterites included the Hutterites first schoolmaster, Jeronimus Käls, and the missionaries Onophrius Griesinger, Leonhard Lochmair, and Georg Fasser, Packull, *Hutterite Beginnings*, 258.

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identity, and purpose of mission as the reinstituted congregation of God."[60] Hans Amon died in 1542 and did not designate a successor to the post of *Vorsteher* (Bishop or Chief Elder). To fill the void, the Hutterite Servants elected two: "all the elders of the church gathered and decided that the brothers Leonhard Lanzenstiel and Peter Riedemann should together care for the church, which they did with true dedication."[61] Claus-Peter Clasen, summarizing the data we have on the subsequent elections of Peter Walpot, (r. 1565–1578), Hans Kräl (r. 1578–1583), Klaus Braidl (r. 1583–1611), and Sebastian Dietrich (r. 1611–1619), points to the general protocol that developed:

> On his deathbed the old bishop might summon some of the servants and entrust the care of the congregation to them, but designation was no longer practiced. As Walpot said, it was safer if not just one man but God and the entire congregation appointed the new bishop. Before the election, held in the main community, such as Neumühl, prayers were said in all communities. The electors included the servants of the Word and temporal needs, together with a number of ordinary Brethren. Of course, only men could vote. After discussion and prayers the assembly would decide unanimously that God had chosen this or that man, always a former servant of the Word. . . . After the election the servants and the Brethren would promise obedience to the new bishop, and on at least one occasion, they all shook hands with him.[62]

The selection of a new leader by male Hutterites appears to have been a communal affair, yet one closely controlled by an inner circle of Hutterite "servants." These were the Servants of the Word and Servants of Temporal Affairs (or Needs), the next two tiers in the Hutterite hierarchy. Each *Haushaben* had a Servant of the Word, who was the spiritual leader of the commune; the Servant of Temporal Affairs, the lesser officer, was in charge of the day-to-day operation of the *Haushaben*. These offices, which were even applied to proto-Hutterite leaders, were probably not formalized until at least the late 1530s despite the claims of the Hutterite chronicler.[63] With command of three hundred to five hundred people on each commune, the Servants wielded significant power over their Brethren. Unlike the *Vorsteher*, however, they were not elected by the community they were to serve, but by

[60]Ibid., 281.

[61]Lanzenstiel and Riedemann were co-leaders of the Brethren for fourteen years before Riedemann's death in 1556. Lanzenstiel then led the Brethren as sole *Vorsteher* until his death in 1565, *Chronicle*, 216. Cf. Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 1063–66.

[62]Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 249.

[63]Recall the chronicler's claim that the proto-Hutterite group of pacifist Anabaptists from Nikolsburg "appointed servants for temporal affairs" in 1528 to help facilitate the first attempt at full community of goods, *Chronicle*, 81. The *Chronicle* also reports that Jakob Hutter was appointed and confirmed "in the service of the Gospel" for the proto-Hutterite group in 1529, 83–84.

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an assembly of all the Servants of the Word.[64] The new *Vorsteher* was always a former Servant of the Word, and the *Gemeinde*, or gathered community, promised to obey him.

The development of a growing Hutterite community with a recognizable leadership hierarchy thus began early in the movement, a product of missionary work and the local Moravian lords' protection of the Brethren in exchange for their obedient and profitable service. From two Hutterite communities in Moravia in 1535, the Hutterites expanded to thirty-one between 1536 and 1547, and had sixty-eight such settlements between 1568 and 1592.[65] By 1570, the Hutterites had established a de facto "capital" at their large *Haushaben* in Neumühl (Nové Zamky), an estate in southern Moravia. That year their elders met there with a Polish lord and three others interested in learning about their community of faith, suggesting Neumühl's primacy of place among the other communities.[66] In addition, the *Chronicle* recounts the election of Klaus Braidl in 1583 as follows: "on November 19 all the elders in the service of the word, the servants of temporal affairs, and many other brothers from all the communities of the whole church, assembled at Neumühl. They took counsel together in the fear of God to consider which of the elders should be given the burden of leading the Lord's church."[67] James Stayer reports that Braidl "reigned for twenty-eight years over a kind of state, and a very extensive and prosperous one."[68] The words "reign" and "state" are quite accurate, for the Hutterites had become very much like those principalities in the "world" they had left behind. To better understand this "state" and the places of both men and women within it, I now turn to a brief account of life on a typical Hutterite *Haushaben*.

III. Hutterite Society: Life on the *Haushaben*

The Hutterites did not imagine their society in Moravia as a hierarchy led by the *Vorsteher*, the Servants of the Word, and the Servants of Temporal Affairs. Instead, they turned to metaphors of mechanical and natural harmony to describe their practice of *Gütergemeinschaft*. They depicted life on their *Haushaben* as akin to the "ingenious work of a clock, where one piece helps another to make it go, so that it serves its purpose" or to "the bees, those useful little insects working together in their hive, some making

[64]Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 250.
[65]Martin Rothkegel, "Anabaptism in Moravia and Silesia," in Roth and Stayer, *Companion to Anabaptism and Spiritualism*, 199.
[66]*Chronicle*, 411.
[67]Ibid., 493.
[68]Stayer, *German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods*, 147.

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wax, some honey, some fetching water, until their noble work of making sweet honey is done."[69] The insect metaphor is more apt than the Hutterites realized, as most Brethren were clearly working for their queen. Outside of the leadership group, each individual Hutterite worked within a craft and agriculture system designed for maximum productivity.[70]

Most Hutterites, many of whom were new converts from the empire, were not allowed to choose their jobs upon their arrival in Moravia, regardless of their particular skills sets: "Anyone who joined the brotherhood had to learn a craft or accept his particular assignment, often very different from his former background."[71] Sewing and spinning, of course, were "exclusively tasks for women," but many also served as nurses to the young children.[72] Like most early moderns, the workday started very early for both men and women, especially during harvest season. Some male and female members received assignments off the *Haushaben*, usually in the homes of their noble patrons. This practice made money for the Brethren but also complicated their theological commitment to separation from the world.[73]

To return to the bee metaphor, a typical hive was designed to promote the interests of the community at the expense of the individual. Each *Haushaben* consisted of forty or more dwellings and larger buildings almost seventy feet long[74] and three stories high arranged around a village common or square.[75]

[69]*Chronicle*, 406.

[70]The efficiency of the *Haushaben* "gave the Hutterite communities powerful advantages within local and regional economies. They could undercut local artisans by buying raw materials in large quantities and outstrip local levels of craft production by means of their work ethic, which also eliminated holidays. . . . The Hutterites were also popular with local farmers, who could strike deals with them in grain sales and at rather better prices than they would have secured elsewhere," Scribner, "Practical Utopias," 764.

[71]*The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, 2:143.

[72]For more detailed information on specifically female occupations, see Harrison, "Role of Women," 63.

[73]While these arrangements often worked out to the benefit of both parties, there were incidents that highlighted the tensions between the commitments of the Brethren and the needs of their noble patrons, which could lead to the expulsion of the Hutterites. For example, the Hutterites refused to help at a wedding banquet on the estate of their overlord Count Franz von Thurn in 1581, and "the housekeeper, who was one of our sisters, refused to go and prepare the hens and geese or have anything to do with it," *Chronicle*, 487. The Count then expelled them from his estate. Other times, the off-site Brethren appear to have gotten too close to outsiders, as in the following incident from 1604 illustrates. Concerning the Hutterite craftsmen working at the castle of one of their overlords (Kremsier castle, the seat of Cardinal Franz von Dietrichstein), "a large meeting was called at Neumühl attended by all Servants of the Word and stewards from large and small communities. Many brothers of different trades were also there. The concern was raised that some brothers had become too familiar with people holding false beliefs, especially priests. They did not avoid them as they should have done," ibid., 564–65.

[74]Stayer, *German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods*, 145.

[75]John A. Hostetler, *Hutterite Society* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), 35. This model was flexible, depending on the proximity of the *Haushaben* to rural or urban areas. For example, the official web page for Mikulov (Nikolsburg) reports that in 1589 the

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Some outside observers compared the Hutterite compounds to monasteries[76] while one, a Jesuit named Christoph Andreas Fischer, slandered them as filthy pigeon coops.[77] As most Hutterites were immigrant artisans and craftsmen,[78] the lower floors of its larger buildings were primarily used for craft production regulated by specific guild-type regulations called *Ordnungen*.[79] These regulations were established to regularize work practices and ensure quality control amongst the various trades. The *Chronicle* records that "in each work department one brother was in charge of the shop, accepted orders and planned the work, then sold the products at the fair value and handed the proceeds over to the church."[80] Legally, the *Haushaben*, with upwards of five hundred people, were treated like towns, as their *Hausbriefe* contracts indicate.[81] They had corporate obligations to the landowners but no individual subjection to the noble lords as did their land-bound peasant neighbors.

When new converts arrived from somewhere in the Holy Roman Empire, the Hutterite leadership expected husbands and wives or singles to move into cells[82] on the second floor of one of the large houses. Each cell was furnished with a bed, a chamber pot, and a white towel.[83] As Bob Scribner observes, any children over the age of five could also expect different living arrangements, but a similarly strict daily routine:

> The emphasis on the community at the expense of the family also continued in the education of children, who were removed from their parent's care

Anabaptists owned fifty-seven manor houses in the southern part of town, "Habáni v Mikulově," *Town Mikulov*, NDC s.r.o., 2001, http://urad.mikulov.cz/_eng/index.php3?Vypis=Habani (accessed March 23, 2004).

[76]Marcantonio Varatto remarked in 1567 that the Hutterites "live together in one house as in a monastery," Henry A. DeWind, "A Sixteenth Century Description of Religious Sects in Austerlitz, Moravia," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 29, no. 1 (January 1955): 46. Cf. Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 265.

[77]The title pages of two of Christoph Andreas Fischer's anti-Hutterite works from the early seventeenth century, *Vier und funfftzig erhebliche Vrsachen, warumb die Widertauffer nicht sein im Land zu leyden* (Ingolstadt: Andreas Angermeyer, 1607) and *Der Hutterischen Widertauffer Taubenkobel, in welchem all ihr Wüst, Mist, Kot und Unflat . . . zu finden, auch des grossen Taubers, des Jakob Hutters Leben* (Ingolstadt: Andreas Angermeyer, 1607) use the same title-page woodcut depicting a "filthy" Hutterite pigeon coop.

[78]Stayer writes that "Hutterite society was marked by what we may refer to as 'the leading role of the artisanry,'" *German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods*, 150. Stayer bases this assertion on Clasen's statistical research in *Anabaptism*. See appendix C, "Statistics on the Occupations of Anabaptists," 432–36.

[79]See *ME* 2:454–55 for a chronological list of all Hutterian *Ordnungen*.

[80]*Chronicle*, 406.

[81]Hostetler, *Hutterite Society*, 39.

[82]These small rooms were "rather like monastic cells," Scribner, "Practical Utopias," 762.

[83]Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 262.

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> when they were weaned and placed first in a junior school supervised by a school mother, until the age of six; then a senior school under a school master until the age of twelve, when they were set to learn a trade. Women, sometimes assisted by older girls, were especially assigned the task of caring for the children, washing them and looking after their clothes and bedding. The children were placed in groups of as many as 200 to 300 and housed in a separate school where they slept two to a bed, supervised by a nurse, who attended to cleanliness and hygiene.[84]

It is unclear whether children of the same family would have been kept together at the same school, for oftentimes children of new arrivals were separated into different schools.[85] Some parents could not handle this prolonged separation and returned with their children to their native lands. Ordinances were developed to regulate the transactions and minimize the pain involved, thus demonstrating the pressure to deal with these concerns.[86]

These regulations concerning work practices and child rearing provide important insight into the lives of typical Hutterite men and women, who were to obey their leaders in all things. Although the Hutterites espoused a rather liberal view of divorce on grounds of faith for potential converts,[87] Hutterite leaders held tight control over marriages between believers on the *Haushaben*. The Servants of the Word arranged all of the marriages, and Hutterite women may have been pressured to marry men they did not want to in the name of obedience to the larger community.[88] Epp and Roberts note that "it would seem that the man had the upper hand in marriage, first in approaching the elders when he was ready for marriage, and second, in accepting or rejecting the woman suggested to him. The woman, for her part, took little initiative in the process."[89] Commenting on this and other practices, Stayer highlights the controlling influence of the Hutterite leadership group over the regular members of the community: "gathered by

[84]Scribner, "Practical Utopias," 762. See also Hostetler, *Hutterite Society*, 53–54.

[85]Opponents of the Hutterites accused them of separating children from their parents so early that it gave rise to instances of incest because siblings did not know each other, Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 267.

[86]Ibid., 270.

[87]Ibid., 207.

[88]Two Hutterite men, Joseph Hauser and Darius Heyn, explained the Hutterite custom to a group of Mennonites in Prussia as follows: "if a bachelor or widower among them wished to marry, he could not just pick whom he wanted but must turn to the elders. They would go to the sisters and ask among the widows and unmarried women if any wished to get married. They did not mention names or put pressure on the sisters, who they felt should rather remain unmarried. If a sister responded and was suggested to the brother and if he accepted gladly, the two would be married, but there was no compulsion. There was no courting among them; but if this should ever happen, the elders would decide, according to the situation, whether the two involved might be married," *Chronicle*, 561–62n2.

[89]Epp and Roberts, "Women in the *Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren*," 210.

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missions, organized by a self-confident elite into a close community that more than compensated for its lack of physical force by its total control of every aspect of its members' lives, the Hutterites presented a striking spectacle to outsiders."[90]

IV. Double Honor and Hutterite Women

The way of life articulated above begs the question of why the Hutterites, who rejected private property in the name of community of goods, nevertheless justified a clear leadership hierarchy on each *Haushaben* very early in their history. The answer lies in the early modern assumption, shared by most sixteenth-century people, including the Hutterites, that their leaders should receive special privileges.[91] This notion of "double honor," explained in detail below, is paramount for understanding the places of women in Hutterite society. Double honor meant that some Hutterite women, by virtue of their marriage to a leader or even a "specialist" such as a barber surgeon,[92] could expect more privileges and better treatment than those women who had not married (or been married) into the leadership group.[93]

Hutterite leaders certainly played favorites when it came to the women on the *Haushaben*, but no new convert could simply expect double honor on the basis of his or her wealth or worldly status prior to joining the community of faith. There was no transfer of right or privilege when one joined the Brethren, as the Hutterites were infamous for their emphatic refusal to respect "worldly" status. They made their position especially clear in public by refusing to take

[90]Stayer, *German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods*, 149.

[91]As Stayer relates, "the belief that those in authority should receive special treatment was well established in sixteenth-century common sense. It was reflected in the practice of most monasteries and in Thomas More's description of conditions in Utopia," *German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods*, 147; cf. von Schlachta, *Hutterische Konfession Und Tradition*, 251; Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 252–55.

[92]On the famous Hutterite barber-surgeons, see esp. John L. Sommer, "Hutterite Medicine and Physicians in Moravia in the Sixteenth Century and After," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 27, no. 2 (April 1953): 111–27, and Robert Friedmann, "Hutterite Physicians and Barber-Surgeons (Additional Notes)," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 27, no. 2 (April 1953): 128–36. So renowned was the Hutterite barber-surgeon Georg Zobel that Emperor Rudolf II summoned him to Prague in 1581 to treat a serious illness, perhaps a bout of melancholy. Zobel attended to the Emperor for six months before going back to Moravia, *Chronicle*, 487–88.

[93]The status of most early modern wives was determined by that of their husbands, a reality that women negotiated to their advantage when they could. See the example of Margerethe Prüss of Strasbourg, who managed to stay in the print business of her father by marrying three printers. According to Cheryl Nafziger-Leis, the "key to Margerethe's story was her decision to marry printers that enabled her to continue in this line of work and to retain some measure of control over the Prüss family printing business. She utilized the best means available to her as a woman of her time," "Margerethe Prüss of Strasbourg," Snyder and Huebert Hecht, *Profiles of Anabaptist Women*, 270.

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off their hats for nobles or address their overlords by their proper titles. The career of Michael Veldthaler (d. 1587) is instructive on this point. Perhaps the only noble to join the Hutterites from among the south German nobility, Veldthaler had been a *Pfleger* (county administrator) of Falkenstein in Lower Austria before his conversion in 1547. Upon joining the Hutterites, Veldthaler had to learn a craft just like any other convert, and he learned joinery (cabinetmaking) at the *Haushaben* in Neümuhl. Although Veldthaler was elected to the "service of the Gospel" in 1560 and confirmed as a Servant of the Word in 1564, this appointment was largely a product of his courageous missionary work on two separate occasions, first in 1555 and again in 1557.[94] Veldthaler's experience as a *Pfleger* was certainly an asset to the Brethren, but it is not why the Hutterites made him a leader. If his nobility had been the primary reason for his promotion, it is highly unlikely that the Hutterites would have waited nearly fifteen years to elect him to the "service of the Gospel" and accord him the double honor worthy of his office.

Given the insular nature of the Hutterite hierarchy and the "perks" associated with leadership roles, we see that Hutterite women were more than just heroic martyrs, dutiful wives, nameless nurses, or helpless widows as presented by chronicles, letters, and martyrologies. They were members of a strictly regulated community whose members could expect better or worse access to material and social resources depending on their place within the hierarchy. Hutterite women, while clearly subordinate to the men, actively participated in a system that happened to reward some and not others. As I show below, some of them dressed like noble ladies on Easter and enjoyed fine meals with their husbands while others did not. The wives of leaders could expect large private apartments and plenty of rest after childbirth, while the wives of common Hutterites could not.[95] Despite their abandonment of the traditional patriarchal household in favor of *Gütergemeinschaft*, and despite efforts to curtail the abuse of such privileges, the Hutterites were anything but egalitarian when it came to the treatment of their leadership group.[96]

[94]*Chronicle*, 323–24; 326–29; 348–52. Michael Veldthaler nearly froze to death on his first mission trip to Bavaria, and on his second trip Count Wolf von Öttingen threw him into a deep dungeon. Veldthaler later became Servant of the Word on the Nikolsburg *Haushaben*, and he was particularly hated by the Catholic priests on the Nikolsburg estate until his death in 1587. For more on Veldthaler, see esp. von Schlachta, *Hutterische Konfession Und Tradition*, 86–88; and *ME* 4:804.

[95]Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 262.

[96]The Hutterite *Vorsteher* Andreas Ehrenpreis (r. 1639–1662) finally took measures against special treatment for the wives of preachers and barber-surgeons, Harrison, "Role of Women," 64–66. Although it comes from a later period of Hutterite history, Ehrenpreis's ordinance (the *Auszug*) is evidence that there were practices to be legislated against. It appears that these elite Hutterite wives had become used to special treatment and were none too pleased with the "reformist" legislation of Ehrenpreis. Harrison notes that the wives of preachers demanded better

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To this end, I examine the places of women among the Hutterites by pointing to the Hutterite defense of double honor as it is presented in their *Chronicle*. Not only were women of the leader class treated better than women of the "commoner" class, but Hutterite leaders also appear to have played favorites with unmarried women. Next, following up on the example of Michael Veldthaler, I suggest that missionary work was a means to climb the Hutterite political ladder, and I look at the case of a Hutterite Servant and his wife. Finally, I draw upon evidence from outside observers to supplement my findings from the Hutterites. Above all, I hope to provide a comprehensive account of how the Hutterite practice of double honor affected women on the *Haushaben*.

V. Justification for Double Honor

From the beginning of the Hutterite movement, the Brethren claimed that the purity of the gathered community was not to be compromised by individual attachments to private "worldly" possessions, such as fancy clothing and other marks of individual adornment. Recall that Jakob Hutter staked his claim to leadership by proving that Simon Schützinger and his wife had transgressed this communal principle, which included hoarding a "too-plentiful supply of bed linen and shirts."[97] Peter Riedemann, considered the second founder of the Hutterites, writes in his authoritative *Confession of Our Religion, Teaching, and Faith, By the Brothers Who Are Known as the Hutterites* (1556), commonly called his *Account*, that the Hutterites are to prefer the "heavenly adornment" of modest Christian virtue to "worldly adornment" consisting of "outward show, jewelry, fine clothing, or similar trappings."[98] For new converts he adds, "we also speak concerning anyone who made clothing earlier, while in the world, before coming to the true recognition of the truth. Such a person does not sin by continuing to use that clothing until it is worn out, as long as the person does not misuse it by allowing such outward ornament to be a hindrance to oneself in striving for divine adornment."[99]

apartments, travelled with their husbands outside the *Haushaben*, and were given special tables for the celebration of communion.

[97]*Chronicle*, 104.

[98]Peter Riedemann, *Peter Riedemann's Hutterite Confession of Faith: Translation of the 1565 German Edition of Confession of our Religion, Teaching, and Faith, by the Brothers Who are Known as the Hutterites* (hereafter, *Account*), trans. and ed. John Friesen (Waterloo, Ont.: Herald, 1998), 154–55.

[99]Riedemann, *Account*, 155–56.

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Yet even in the early years of the movement, the Hutterites justified privilege for their leaders, including access to amenities not provided to common believers. The issue came to the fore in 1542 when a "faction" of disgruntled believers, led by one Hermann Schmidt, alleged that Anabaptist prisoners at Trieste in 1540 escaped "not through God's intervention but by being unfaithful and running away from God's discipline."[100] According to the *Chronicle*, which offers a retrospective account of the conflict, Schmidt and his cohorts failed in their attempt to divide the community over this issue, but they soon found another:

> When the church withstood their attempt, they looked for other ways to make the people suspicious of their servants. Among other things, they said that the servants favored those sisters whose jackets had puffed sleeves (which they had brought with them from the world because it was the fashion at the time) and took them on journeys around the country. The servants answered that they did this only so that the people they met would rejoice with the church in the grace of God. . . . The troublemakers also criticized them for providing their servants with special food and drink.[101]

The Hutterites, after conferring with their Servants of the Word and Servants of Temporal Affairs, responded to these charges as follows: "turning to Holy Scripture, they learned that those who serve the Gospel should receive their daily food by it. A threshing ox shall not be muzzled, and those with greatest responsibility are worthy of double honor. Since they faithfully serve the brotherhood with spiritual food, there should be no begrudging them the temporal food."[102]

While the Hutterites give scriptural warrant (1 Timothy 5:18)[103] for the practice of double honor against this group of alleged "trouble-makers," the chronicler's response to these complaints is quite interesting. Besides bluntly stating that the leaders should receive "special food and drink," he also affirms that the Servants rode around the country with the well-dressed "sisters" who wore the jackets with puffed sleeves. In fact, it is not even clear if these women were even their wives or not. The chronicler excuses—even supports—the practice, not only because it was a way to get people to "rejoice with the church in the grace of God," but also because jackets with puffed sleeves happened to be in fashion at the time in the "world" when the aforementioned women joined the Brethren. The chronicler is clearly

[100] *Chronicle*, 198.
[101] Ibid., 199.
[102] Ibid.
[103] 1 Tim. 5:18, which draws on Deut. 25:4: "For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward."

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mindful of Riedemann's claim in the *Account* that one could wear clothes from one's former life until they wore out.

There is little in this account that suggests the humble egalitarian practice of *Gütergemeinschaft* or the sharp separation from the "world" envisioned by Riedemann. In fact, it demonstrates the opposite: a class division between Hutterite Servants who rode around Moravia with well-dressed "sisters" and common—and apparently jealous—Hutterites who spent most of their time confined to the *Haushaben*. Moreover, although there is nothing in this passage suggesting that the Hutterite leaders respected the "worldly" status of the "well-dressed sisters" (we know nothing of their backgrounds), it nonetheless appears that women who came to the Brethren with puffed sleeves on their jackets enjoyed favors not shared by other Hutterite women. This suggests that the Hutterite leaders gave preferential treatment to women who dressed or looked a certain way, and here the practice of double honor seems to have given way to favoritism.

The account finally ends with the expulsion of Hermann Schmidt and his followers as well as an ominous note of warning to other potential trouble-makers who might question the practices of the leader class: "anyone who found fault with this should not criticize the servants but should go to the brotherhood for an answer."[104] Given that the Servants exercised tremendous influence on the lives of every member of their communes—including the power to expel them—this threat was surely not taken lightly.

VI. Hutterite Missionaries and Their Wives

Because the Hutterite leadership could expect preferential treatment, the practice of double honor may have motivated members to try moving up the Hutterite hierarchy. As Stayer points out, "missions were apparently regarded by the Hutterites as 'the moral equivalent of war' and a test of worthiness for leadership."[105] Mission work was a means to prove oneself, for a missionary who survived the dangers of the empire and brought back new converts to Moravia could probably expect consideration for some leadership role in the future. Recall that Michael Veldthaler became a Servant of the Word, not because he had been a noble before joining the Brethren, but because he had proven himself worthy in the mission field.

[104]*Chronicle*, 199.

[105]Stayer, *German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods*, 151. On Hutterite missions, see esp. von Schlachta, "'Searching through the Nations': Tasks and Problems of Sixteenth-Century Hutterian Mission," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 74, no. 1 (January 2000), 27–49.

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Selection as a missionary depended primarily on the wishes of the leaders within the community, and many were drawn from the ranks of the Servants.[106] In addition, most Hutterite *Vorstehers* were former missionaries.[107] These included Leonhard Lanzenstiel, Peter Riedemann, Hans Kräl, and Klaus Braidl. Highly regarded for the risks they took to bring people back to Moravia from across the empire and other parts of Europe, missionaries captured and killed by the authorities were almost always regarded as martyrs. Survivors, especially those who had endured imprisonment or torture, were the next best thing.

The Hutterites' regard for their missionaries is evident in their epithets; they called them "'God's messengers,' 'prophets,' 'shining stars to light up the firmament,' 'preachers of penance,' 'fathers of belief,' and 'servants of Christ.'"[108] Sent out twice a year, often to their native lands, the missionaries worked to convert non-Hutterites and get them safely back to Moravia. Their departure was a solemn affair: "The missionary would rise to his feet at a meeting and announce to the believers that he was one of those selected to visit foreign countries, and that as much as he hated to leave, he would obey the congregation."[109] Modeling their behavior after the early church, the Hutterite community would then often accompany the missionaries to the gates of the town. The Hutterites took their mission work very seriously; they even wrote a special hymn in 1568 for their departing missionaries.[110]

By the late sixteenth century, it had become standard practice for missionaries to be accompanied by one or more fellow Hutterites, and sometimes as many as twenty. These companions were to obey the missionary in all things, which suggests an authority akin to that of the two main Servants on each *Haushaben*.[111] Some of these companions complained that their fellow Hutterites "held them in low esteem" because they were often absent when they were needed for work on the *Haushaben*.[112] As support staff, the companions did not share in the respect

[106]Clasen confirms that "many missionaries were Hutterite leaders. Between 1530 and 1618, 33 servants of the Word and five servants of temporal needs were sent on missionary trips," *Anabaptism*, 215. During that same period, Clasen identifies 148 common Hutterites who were sent out as missionaries and 43 unnamed Brethren whose social status is unknown, ibid., 470.

[107]Stayer, *German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods*, 150–51.

[108]Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 214–15. Wes Harrison adds that "missioners were among the most respected of the brethren, especially in the golden years," *Andreas Ehrenpreis and Hutterite Faith and Practice*, Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History 36 (Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora, 1997), 54.

[109]Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 217.

[110]Ibid.

[111]Ibid., 215.

[112]Ibid.

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given to the missionaries. In addition to two distinct classes on the *Haushaben*, there appears to have been two classes in the mission field as well.

The leadership privileges of the missionaries may have extended to their wives, some of whom travelled with their husbands. Although the *Chronicle* does not mention any women who were chosen as missionaries, there is evidence that Hutterite wives may have acted in that capacity.[113] Schmidt's criticism of the Hutterite leaders parading around Moravia with the well-dressed "sisters" may be evidence that the Servants took their wives or consorts out on missionary trips. After all, the *Chronicle* states that the leaders did this so that potential converts "would rejoice with the church in the grace of God."

There is also the example of Leonhard Lanzenstiel and his wife Apollonia. Lanzenstiel, who would later serve as *Vorsteher* from 1542 to 1565, was first appointed as a Servant of Temporal Affairs in 1539. The same year, "it was unanimously decided by the church of God" that Lanzenstiel should go to the Tyrol as a missionary, or "servant of the Gospel."[114] The *Chronicle* notes that "Leonhard's wife, Apollonia, was arrested and taken to Brixen. Because she held steadfastly to faith in Christ and refused to recant, she was drowned."[115] Epp and Roberts note that it is "quite likely" that Apollonia was giving "public testimony to her faith"[116] alongside her husband Leonhard and that, "as travelling missionaries, women were released to speak in a manner unacceptable within their own community and in common purpose with male believers."[117] Although Epp and Roberts employ a variant of the Weberian model of routinization to account for the activity of Apollonia and others outside the hierarchical space of the *Haushaben*, it might be the case that the wives of missionaries were free to preach alongside their missionary husbands because these men had already climbed, or were in the process of climbing, the social and political ladder in the Hutterite community.

VII. The Testimony of Hutterite Enemies

The economic success of the Hutterites during their "Golden Years" (1565–1591) in Moravia embittered many of the Catholic priests in the area who were working to bring that region back to the Roman Church. These priests were quick to portray the Hutterites as hypocrites by setting the Hutterite

[113]Ibid., 216.
[114]*Chronicle*, 186.
[115]Ibid., 187.
[116]Epp and Roberts, "Women in the *Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren*," 208.
[117]Ibid., 218.

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practice of double honor alongside their claim to hold all things in common. Two priests in particular are of note. The first, Christoph Erhard, was the parish priest of Nikolsburg from 1582 to 1586. Erhard published a tract titled *Basic, Short History of the Münsterite Anabaptists and Why the Hutterite Brethren are also Justly called Anabaptists* in 1588 and again in 1589 to convince the local Moravian lords who employed the Brethren that the Hutterites were really wolves in sheep's clothing.[118] Further, the Jesuit Christoph Andreas Fischer, mentioned above, was the parish priest at Feldsberg (Valtice) in Lower Austria from 1601 to 1615; he published a number of polemics against the Brethren between 1601 and 1607. Like Erhard, Fischer wanted the local lords in the area to get rid of the Hutterites, and he used the same tactics to this end, especially in his most comprehensive piece, *On the Cursed Origins and Godless Teachings of the Anabaptists* (1603).[119] Fischer also wrote other tracts in the same vein, with even more telling titles: *The Hutterite Anabaptist Pigeon Coop, in Which All Their Shit, Dung, and Filth is to be Found* and *Fifty-Four Important Reasons Why the Anabaptists Should Not Be Tolerated in the Land*, both published in 1607.[120]

Both Erhard and Fischer comment on the apparent hypocrisy of Hutterite double honor and the benefits enjoyed by the Hutterite leadership. As with the Hutterites themselves, a major point of contention for these priests was the appearance of the Hutterite leaders compared to that of the common Hutterites. Erhard notes that while all the Hutterites dressed the same, the Servants' clothing was made of better material, with some "sisters" wearing "gowns and little silk scarves [made from] the most beautiful double taffeta[121] of orange and other colors."[122] An Italian weaver who visited Moravia in 1567 confirms Erhard's account. He claims, "it is their [the

[118]*Gründliche kurtz verfaste Historia von Münsterischen Widertauffern: und wie die Hutterischen Brüder so auch billich Widertauffer genent werden* (hereafter *Basic, Short History*) (Munich: Adam Berg, 1588, 1589). Erhard's tenure in Mikulov was marked by conflicts with the Hutterites, who were shielded from Erhard's efforts at bringing the estate back to the Roman Church by the Catholic overlord Adam von Dietrichstein, primarily because they were obedient vassals and made money for the estate through rents and taxation.

[119]*Von Der Widertauffer Verfluchten Ursprung, gottlosen Lehre, und derselben gründliche Widerlegung* (Bruck an der Theya: 1603). Fischer worked from 1601 to 1615 as the parish priest of Valtice in Lower Austria, about ten miles from Mikulov. Like Erhard, he worked for a Catholic lord, Karl von Liechtenstein, who nonetheless allowed the Hutterites to live and work on his Moravian estates for economic reasons.

[120]Fischer, *Vier und funffßig Erhebliche Ursachen Warumb die Widertauffer nicht sein im Land zu leyden* (hereafter *Fifty-Four Reasons*) (Ingolstadt: Andreas Angermeyer, 1607); Fischer, *Der Hutterischen Widertauffer Taubenkobel: In Welchem all Ihr Wüst, Mist, Kott Vnnd Vnflat* (Ingolstadt: Andreas Angermeyer, 1607).

[121]Taffeta was (and remains) a high-end woven fabric used in women's clothing (esp. bridal gowns) and bedding.

[122]*Basic, Short History*, 18; "der schönsten Doppeldaffetene von Pomerantzen und andern Farben/Röck und Seidene Schälckl."

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Hutterites'] custom that in every land in which they find themselves they live together in one house as in a monastery, and they eat and drink and wear shoes all in common, poor and rich alike in those things that they wear," although he adds that "the fact is that the ministers lead an abundant life and hold in their hands the management of everything."[123]

Much like the Italian visitor cited above, these priests emphasize the differences between the leaders and the common Hutterites. Both Erhard and Fischer point out that the leaders and their wives dress much like the people in the "world" they claim to have abandoned. Echoing Erhard's *Basic, Short History*, upon which he heavily relies,[124] Fischer writes, "until now they have scolded the world so much that they dress in sammet[125] and silk, yet the Hutterite Anabaptist women wear gowns [made from] the most beautiful double taffeta of orange and other colors, and silk jerkins, as if they were of the nobility or were free ladies, but they are only the wives of barber-surgeons, stewards, householders,[126] and Servants."[127] Notably, these were the occupations of the leading members of the Hutterite community, including the famous Hutterite barber-surgeons. Erhard's and Fischer's claims that the wives of the Hutterite leaders dressed in expensive fabrics as if they were noble ladies is strikingly reminiscent of the chronicler's admission that their Servants favored women who dressed the part of their former lives. And while we must be cautious with the testimony of Erhard and Fischer, given as they were to exaggerating the hypocrisy of the Hutterites at every turn, their testimony is nonetheless consistent with that of the Brethren themselves.

VIII. The Testimony of the Ex-Hutterite Hans Jedelshauser

There are a number of ex-Hutterites who left indications as to why they left the Brethren, including those who accused the Hutterite leadership of enjoying privileged status. The satirical hymn by an ex-Hutterite named Johann

[123]Cited in DeWind, "A Sixteenth Century Description of Religious Sects in Austerlitz, Moravia," 44–53, 46.

[124]Fischer drew upon Erhard's *Basic, Short History* in his own attacks upon the Hutterites, including his account of the hypocrisy of Hutterite dress. Nevertheless, he only cites Erhard once as a source in his entire corpus, *Fifty-Four Reasons*, 94.

[125]For a detailed definition of sammet, which was a dense soft fabric akin to velvet, see Carole Collier Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence: Families, Fortune, and Fine Clothing* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 316–17.

[126]Clasen identifies the *Haushalter* as the Servant of Temporal Affairs, who oversaw the daily administration of the *Haushaben*, Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 260.

[127]Fischer, *Fifty-Four Reasons*, 91–92; "Sie haben bißhie her de Welt so Hoch gescholten/daß sie Sammet unnd seyden trage / tragen doch die Hutterischen Widertaufferischen Weiber die schönsten doppeltaffete von Pomerantzen und andern farben Röcke unnd seiden Wämmeser als wann sie vom Adel oder gar freyin wären / welche doch nur etwann Baders / Kelners / Haußhalters und Dieners Weiber seyn."

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Eysvogel in 1583 is an excellent example.[128] Eysvogel contended that the leaders enjoyed better food, chilled wine during the summer (as compared to sour beer for the rank-and-file members), and that female favorites got to spin the best yarn, wear special necklaces, and wear their hair in attractive fashions.[129] John Oyer notes that Eysvogel's charge that the Hutterites were divided into a leader and commoner class "has an authentic ring" and "is highly credible" despite its polemical intent.[130]

Revealing evidence of the two classes of Hutterites also comes from one Hans Jedelshauser, whose complaints are similar to Eysvogel's. Jedelshauser, a needle maker from Ulm, joined the Hutterites with his wife and four children in 1579 and defected five years later in 1584. He offers twelve reasons why he left the Hutterites and converted to the Roman Catholic Church in a pamphlet based on his recantation (*Widerruf*) to Christoph Erhard.[131] The work is titled *Twelve Important and Strong Reasons* [*of*] *Hans Jedelshauser from Ulm, of craft a needle maker, and why he, with his wedded wife and four children, left the Anabaptists, as one calls the Hutterite Brethren, and converted to the Catholic, Roman Church* and was published in 1587 by Wolfgang Eder.[132] Jedelshauser claims in his introduction that he was seduced by the false promises of the Brethren, who claimed that they were the true Christians. In reason four Jedelshauser claimed to have witnessed a heated verbal exchange between a carter and a *weinzerl*, or assistant to the Servant of Temporal Affairs;[133] he writes: "I

[128]Johann Eysvogel, *A New Song about the Hutterite Anabaptists' Sect, Teaching, Life, and Residence, as presently practiced in the Land of Moravia* [*Ein New Lied / von der Hůterischen Widertöufferen Secte / Lehr / Leben / Wohnung / Im Land zu Maehrheim jetz und gebreüchlich*] (Cologne, 1583); Cf. Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 252–75.

[129]John S. Oyer, "Two Anabaptist Hymns," in *"They Harry the Good People Out of the Land": Essays on the Persecution, Survival and Flourishing of Anabaptists and Mennonites*," ed. John D. Roth (Goshen, Ind.: Mennonite Historical Society, 2000), 27.

[130]Ibid., 29.

[131]Of course, not all of Jedelshauser's twelve reasons relay the needle maker's genuine grievances with the Hutterites. Some of his more extreme claims, such as the claim that Jakob Hutter was executed for adultery in his seventh reason, are probably due to the influence of Christoph Erhard. On Erhard's use of Jedelshauser's recantation for his own polemical purposes, see my "An Anabaptist's Tale: Christoph Erhard and the Recantation of the Ex-Hutterite Hans Jedelshauser," in *Grenzen des Täufertums / Boundaries of Anabaptism*, ed. Anselm Schubert, Astrid von Schlachta, and Michael Driedger. Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte 209 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, July 2009): 126–44.

[132]Jedelshauser, *Zwelff wichtige und starcke Ursachen Hansen Jedelshausers von Ulm: seines Handtwercks ein Nadler, u. warumb er mit seinem ehelichen Weib unnd vier Kindern, von den Widertauffern, so man Hutterische Brüder nen[n]t, sey abgetretten, dieselben verlasse[n], sich aber zu der Catholische[n] Römischen Kirchen bekehrt habe* (hereafter, *Twelve Reasons*) (Ingolstadt: Wolfgang Eder, 1587).

[133]The *weinzerl* was in charge of agriculture; another assistant to the Servant of Temporal Affairs was the *kellner*, who was in charge of the community's cash for outside expenses, Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 259–60.

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confessed to my conscience that this was no pious chosen people of God because they quarrel so sharply with each other."[134]

Moreover, in reason five Jedelshauser claims that the Hutterite leaders were punished lightly for major offenses such as drunkenness and adultery while common Hutterites were punished severely: "it is publicly known by everyone that they punish the poor common people soon but the leaders slowly, a little, or not at all."[135] Commenting on this reason, Stayer notes that "even worse, he [Jedelshauser] wrote, was unequal application of the ban, in which the ordinary members of the community lived under strict discipline, while the general manager of a *Bruderhof* or his assistant could be found drunk on the job or be known to commit adultery and have the matter hushed up."[136] Besides demonstrating Jedelshauser's disappointment with the morality of the Brethren, these examples also highlight the differences between the two classes of Hutterites with respect to religious discipline on their communes.

Jedelshauser raises the issue of double honor most clearly in his eighth reason, and here he echoes Eysvogel and other ex-Hutterites. He begins by citing 2 Corinthians 8:14, Paul's claim that one should not have a shortage while the other has an abundance, but that there should be equality.[137] Jedelshauser then complains that the Hutterite "leaders, servants, householders, barber-surgeons, stewards, and their wives" received wild game to eat and wine to drink while the common people had to make do with barley, turnips, herbs, and sour beer.[138] He adds that the leaders enjoyed endless "flattering and stroking" when they were ill while everybody else had to subsist.[139]

Jedelshauser continues with many more similar instances. For example, the leaders slept on quilt feather beds while the common folk had to sleep on cattails.[140] Moreover, the leaders' wives received special treatment after childbirth: "Why is another sister from the community treated so differently when at the same time a wife of a servant, barber-surgeon, or a householder

[134]Jedelshauser, *Twelve Reasons*, 5; "hab nun ich nun müssen anhoren / bin also in meinem Gewissen gestanden / daß diß kein außerwähltes frommes Volck Gottes sey / weil sie so hitzig miteinander zancken."

[135]Ibid., 6; "wie es offentlich jederman bekandt / daß sie die arme Gemeyn bald / aber die Obristen langsam / wenig oder nichts straffen."

[136]Stayer, *German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods*, 147.

[137]"But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also a supply for your want: that there may be equality."

[138]Jedelshauser, *Twelve Reasons*, 10; "die Obristen / Diener / Haußhalter / Bader / Kelner un ihre Weiber / ihr Ordinari mit täglichen zweyen essen so uberflüssig / von Fleisch gesotten unnd bratten / von Wildbrät / Fisch und Wein haben / da doch solches die Gemeyn nit hat / und mit Gersten / Ruben und Kraut / darzu mit dem saure Bier."

[139]Ibid. "deß schmeychelns unnd streichens kein End."

[140]Ibid. "Federbetthen" versus "Rhorkolben."

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lies in bed for six weeks?"[141] As Clasen recounts, "when an ordinary sister found herself with child, she would receive only seven and a half quarts of wine during the six weeks of childbed. When the wife of a servant gave birth, however, everyone would visit her, bringing food and wine."[142] Like Erhard, Fischer, and others, Jedelshauser observes that the Hutterite leaders wear the best clothes and shoes, and their wives wear fancy silk blouses and skirts on Easter made from materials such as cordovan, swans down, and fine silk, while "the community wears really thick coarse woolen cloth, all from the most terrible materials."[143]

Above all, Jedelshauser laments the disparity between the leaders and the rest of the Brethren manifest in such public signs of their privileged status.[144] He confirms the claims of both the Hutterites and their Roman Catholic opponents that double honor was the way of life on the *Haushaben* whether the common Hutterites liked it or not. The Polish Brethren, an Anabaptist group that initially considered uniting with the Hutterites in the late sixteenth century, echoed these complaints as well. One of their members wrote an anonymous tract around 1570 lambasting the Hutterite leaders for their condescension toward regular believers, their poor treatment of the community, and for allowing themselves special privileges.[145] Like Jedelshauser's eighth reason, the complaints of the Polish Brethren revolve around the alleged hypocrisy of the Hutterite leaders, who did not apply the egalitarian logic of *Gütergemeinschaft* to their political or social behavior.

IX. Conclusion

The Hutterites forged a highly successful system of communal living during the late sixteenth century in Moravia based on their theological commitment to sharing all goods in common and separating themselves from the fallen "world." They were highly visible to outsiders based on these commitments,

[141]Ibid., 11; "Wie wann eines Dieners / Baders / Haußhalters Weib in den sechs wochen ligt / zugleich ein solcher Underschyed gehälte wirdt?"/ zugleich ein solcher Underschyed gehälte wirdt?"

[142]Clasen, *Anabaptism*, 253.

[143]Jedelshauser, *Twelve Reasons*, 11; "die Gemeyn ein gute dicken grobe Loden / oder Tuch / alles auff das schlechtist."

[144]Stayer concludes that Jedelshauser's tract "breathes a disillusioned idealism, which is a good deal more credible than the learned anti-Hutterite polemics of Catholic clerics," *German Peasants' War and Anabaptist Community of Goods*, 147.

[145]"A Treatise not against that Apostolic Community . . . but against the 'Communists' in Moravia," *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society* 11, no. 3 (London: Lindsey, 1957), 90–104; on the provenance of this tract, see Stanislaw Kot, "Polish Brethren and the Problem of Communism in the XVIth Century," *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society* 11, no. 2 (London: Lindsey, 1956), 38–53; cf. Harrison, *Andreas Ehrenpreis and Hutterite Faith and Practice*, 205–8.

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especially as they erected several communes across southern Moravia. Nevertheless, they also established a strict hierarchical structure and justified special treatment for their leaders through the principle of double honor. As evidence from the Hutterites, hostile outsiders, and ex-Hutterites demonstrate, double honor led to the development of two classes of Hutterites on the *Haushaben*, with the heroic missionaries somewhere in between. At the top were the leaders and their wives, who often dressed in more expensive clothing and received double honor befitting their status; unmarried female favorites may have also benefited from special treatment akin to double honor. Following the leader class, the missionaries were revered for their bravery in the face of imperial persecution and regarded more highly than the regular workers in the community. They seem to have had a better chance of becoming Hutterite leaders because of their recruiting work, and their wives may have had more opportunities to serve as spiritual leaders in the mission field. At the bottom were the commoners, who performed various tasks on the *Haushaben*, although some worked off-site in various capacities for their noble patrons. These Hutterites generally wore modest peasant dress of cheaper materials and did not enjoy special food or drink or other privileges. They lived in small cells and were assigned jobs by the Servants in the name of the larger community.

Their economic practice of *Gütergemeinschaft* aside, the Hutterites created a society of hierarchy and privilege. Like the heads of religious houses, noblewomen, and queens, who enjoyed privileges above and beyond those of common women, the wives of Hutterite leaders could expect better food, better clothing, and better health care than normal Hutterite women. Regardless of how little this tells us about individual women on the *Haushaben*, it does give us insight into the different ways they were treated within their own communities. Few Hutterite women could expect freedom from the traditional obligations of sixteenth-century womanhood, but some could expect an easier time of it.

Weber's routinization thesis has certainly helped scholars explain certain aspects of the lives of women in Anabaptist communities from the sixteenth century. Accounts of female leadership, prophecy, and martyrdom in the early years of the Anabaptist movements have greatly enriched our knowledge of early modern Anabaptist women; so too have studies that focus on female negotiation of male power structures. As helpful as these projects have been, however, there are other ways of approaching the evidence from the early modern era that can be just as fruitful, including analyses of community hierarchies and how they affected the lives of Anabaptist women. Here I have demonstrated, through the lens of double honor, that some Hutterite women—the wives of the leader class—were treated much like the privileged women of the "world" they rejected.

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