



Utopian Communities: Survival of Old Order Hutterite, Amish and Mennonite Groups

Elsie W. Hamel

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This study is a comprehensive review of religious and secular utopian sects to determine why three Old Order Anabaptist groups have survived for four centuries and have thrived into the twenty-first century when hundreds of sects have failed. Utopian theory provides a background to elucidate the reasons why many people were attracted to these communities. A multitude of key factors contributed to the decline and failure of the non-Old Order sects; e.g., a lack of commitment, the absence of a central belief system buttressed by uniform governance, self-centered charismatic leaders, the inability to provide economic support, poor work ethics, a disparity of common goals and a decline in community membership. Also, readers are given a glimpse of mid-twentieth-century Pennsylvania Dutch farm life.

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