

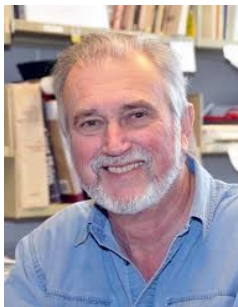
THE HUTTERITES IN NORTH AMERICA: Confronting the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

The Hutterian Brethren (Hutterites) are a German-speaking pacifist Anabaptist Christian group that first settled in the United States in 1874. Believing the New Testament advocates community of goods, they practice communal living with 70-160 people. In 1919, following persecution for their pacifist beliefs in the USA they migrated to Canada, settling in Manitoba and Alberta. With a high birth rate the initial six Canadian colonies in 1919 have grown to over 500 today, scattered over the Canadian prairies and the northern plains of the US. Hutterites see their colonies as arks in a secular and sinful sea. Exposure to the outside world was minimized through a variety of strategies which have become increasingly ineffective in the digital age. Physical separation is no longer an effective barrier to the penetration of ideas and values into the colonies as it was even in the 1970s. This presentation evaluates the relationship of the Hutterites with the outside world in the age of the internet and I-phone. It considers the ways in which their community adapts to a world where exposure to the values of the secular world poses increasingly complex dilemmas. These communities add to the diversity of rural Canada



PRESENTER

John (Jock) Lehr is a Senior Scholar at the University of Winnipeg, where he was formerly a Professor in the Geography Department. His early education was in the UK where he received a BA (Hons) in geography from the University of Wales. After coming to Canada he obtained a MA from the University of Alberta and a PhD from the University of Manitoba. He also has a Certificate in Education from the University of Liverpool. He has taught at Stockport College of Technology in the UK, the University of Victoria, British Columbia, and at Bar Ilan University in Israel. By training and inclination, he is a historical geographer with geographically diverse research interests, including image building, ethnic and religious settlement in western Canada, communal settlement in North America, Israel and Japan, and Ukrainian settlement in Brazil and Argentina.