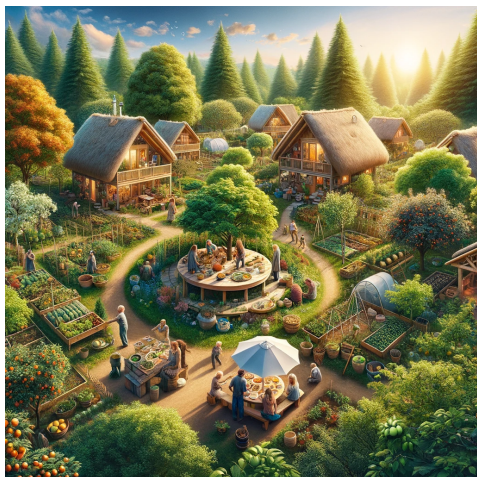


# Timeline for a Conservative Mennonite Congregation forming a Colony

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January 28, 2024



## 1 Concise Vision Statement

In the heart of Ontario, a pioneering Anabaptist community is emerging, blending traditional values with sustainable living through a unique model that combines a shared food forest and private family spaces. This community, is designed to foster both communal engagement and individual autonomy, featuring a flexible communal-private meal system and a governance structure inspired by the divine within each member. The establishment process, encompassing planning, land acquisition, and construction, is guided by principles of continuous improvement, sustainable practices, and a 'God-o-crat'ic Holacratic approach. This ensures a dynamic, spiritually rooted community, harmoniously balancing tradition with modern organizational efficiency.

## 2 Timeline

Given the context you've provided – a Conservative Mennonite church of about 130

people looking to form a new colony due to high land prices – the process of establishing this colony will involve several key steps. You've identified a need for approximately 100 to 180 acres to sustain a smaller group of about 33 to 60 people. Here's a tailored timeline and strategy for your community:

### 2.1 Initial Discussion and Proposal (1-3 months)

- **Weeks 1-4:** The idea of forming a new colony is proposed, often in response to growth, logistical challenges, or a desire for new settlement opportunities.
- **Weeks 5-12:** Community discussions and meetings take place to gauge interest and discuss the feasibility of forming a new colony.

### 2.2 Feasibility and Initial Planning (3-6 months)

- **Assessment Phase (1-2 months):** Conduct thorough assessments of the community's financial resources and potential land options. This includes exploring the feasibility of purchasing 100 to 180 acres, possibly by pooling resources.
- **Community Meetings (1-2 months):** Hold meetings to discuss findings, gauge interest, and get input from the community members. This will help in understanding who is willing to move to the new colony and contribute financially.
- **Preliminary Decision (1-2 months):** Based on these meetings, make a preliminary decision about whether to proceed.

### 2.3 Detailed Planning and Land Acquisition (6-12 months)

- **Land Search and Negotiation (3-6 months):** Actively search for suitable land, including properties not currently on the market. Engage in negotiations, aiming for land that meets your agricultural and living needs.
- **Final Decision and Purchase (3-6 months):** Once a suitable land is found, make a final decision and proceed with the purchase. This includes finalizing financial contributions from community members.

## 2.4 Design and Development Planning (6-12 months)

- **Infrastructure Planning (3-6 months):** Plan the layout of the colony, including residential areas, communal spaces, agricultural land, and areas for livestock.
- **Construction Planning (3-6 months):** Develop plans for building essential structures. Consider sustainable building practices that align with your values.

## 2.5 Construction and Relocation Phase (12-18 months)

- **Infrastructure Development (6-12 months):** Begin construction of essential infrastructure. Prioritize communal facilities and homes.
- **Gradual Relocation (6-12 months):** Start relocating families as homes and facilities become ready. This can be done in phases to manage resources efficiently.

## 2.6 Establishment and Adjustment Phase (12 months)

- **Finalizing Settlement (6 months):** Ensure all families and essential services are fully moved and operational.
- **Community Adjustment (6 months):** Focus on community bonding, establishing routines, and adjusting to the new living environment.

## 2.7 Long-term Development and Sustainability (Ongoing)

- **Sustainable Practices Implementation:** Gradually implement and improve sustainable agricultural practices, energy solutions, and community programs.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Regular community meetings to discuss improvements, challenges, and future planning.

## 2.8 Formalization and Celebration (1-2 months)

- **Month 48+:** A formal ceremony or celebration to acknowledge the successful establishment of the new colony, reinforcing community bonds and shared values.

## 2.9 Notes:

- **Flexibility and Adaptation:** Be prepared for adjustments in the timeline based on land availability, construction progress, and other unforeseen factors.
- **Community Involvement:** Ensure ongoing communication and involvement of the community at each stage for smooth transition and commitment.

This timeline provides a structured approach while allowing flexibility for the unique needs and decisions of your community. The success of this endeavor will largely depend on the collective effort, resource pooling, and shared vision of the community members.

## 3 Hybrid Food Forest Design

**1. Communal Food Forest with Private Sections:** - The food forest is a communal entity, but each family is allocated a specific section for which they have primary responsibility. - Families maintain their sections, planting and tending to a variety of trees, shrubs, and plants, while the overall design and biodiversity goals are aligned with the community's objectives.

**2. Shared Harvest Principles:** - While families maintain specific sections, the harvest can be partially shared. For example, fruits from trees in communal pathways or public areas are for communal use. - This encourages a sense of shared benefit and fosters community spirit, as families contribute to and benefit from the communal resources.

**3. Private Plots for Personal Use:** - In addition to their section in the communal food forest, and private home each family has a private plot, possibly located in their backyard from the central community area. - These plots allow families more freedom in terms of what they plant and how they use the harvest, catering to individual preferences or needs.

### 3.0.1 Implementation Strategies

**Planning and Allocation:** - Carefully plan the layout of the food forest, ensuring diversity and ecological balance. - Allocate sections to families based on various factors like family size, capability, and preferences.

**Guidelines and Education:** - Establish guidelines for maintaining the sections to ensure the health and productivity of the food forest. - Provide education and resources on sustainable agricultural practices and food forest management.

**Community Governance:** - Form a committee or council to oversee the food forest, handle disputes, and ensure that communal goals are met. - Regular community meetings for discussion, feedback, and collective decision-making.

### 3.0.2 Historical Precedents and Lessons

- **Medieval Open-Field System:** Individual families cultivated strips in a common field, learning the importance of coordinated planning and crop rotation.
- **Traditional Chinese Agricultural Practices:** These systems often combined personal ownership with communal responsibility, teaching the value of shared resources and individual contributions.

### 3.0.3 Benefits

- **Sustainability and Biodiversity:** The food forest approach promotes ecological health and biodiversity.
- **Community Cohesion:** Shared responsibilities and benefits strengthen community bonds.
- **Flexibility and Autonomy:** The combination of communal and private areas respects individual autonomy while promoting collective well-being.

### 3.0.4 Challenges

- **Resource Management:** Balancing the communal needs with individual preferences requires effective management and communication.
- **Equitable Distribution:** Ensuring fair and practical allocation of sections and private plots can be challenging.

This model presents a sustainable and community-oriented approach to land and resource management, harmonizing individual initiative with collective responsibility. It

fosters a strong community ethos while allowing for personal autonomy and stewardship.

## 4 Hybrid Communal Meal System

**1. Communal Meals Structure:** - **Frequency:** Offer one or two communal meals per day, such as lunch and/or dinner, allowing members to come together for shared dining experiences. - **Meal Setting:** Organize these meals in a buffet style, where community members can serve themselves and choose their seating arrangements. This format encourages interaction but also respects the desire for family groups or personal space.

**2. Flexibility and Choice:** - **Optional Participation:** Make communal meals optional, not mandatory. Members can choose to join based on their schedules and preferences. The meals are offered in the spirit of making sure all have opportunity for food and community everyday. - **Breakfast at Home:** Families can have breakfast in their own homes, providing a daily opportunity for private family time.

**3. Menu Planning and Preparation:** - **Diverse Menus:** Plan menus that cater to various dietary needs and preferences within the community. - **Rotating Responsibilities:** Share the responsibility of meal preparation among community members, possibly through a rotating system or volunteer basis.

**4. Dining Area Design:** - **Family-Friendly Tables:** Design the dining area with tables of various sizes to accommodate different groups, from individual members to large families. - **Open Seating Plan:** Avoid assigned seating to allow flexibility and spontaneous social interactions.

**5. Community Involvement:** - **Feedback and Suggestions:** Regularly seek feedback from community members about the communal meal system and be open to adjustments. - **Community Cooking Days:** Occasionally, organize days where members can cook and present special dishes, fostering a sense of sharing and culinary diversity.

### 4.0.1 Benefits of the Hybrid Model

- **Balances Community and Privacy:** Offers a blend of community en-

agement and private family time.

- **Encourages Social Interaction:** Provides opportunities for members to interact, build relationships, and foster a sense of belonging.
- **Respects Individual Preferences:** Acknowledges that communal dining may not be desirable for all members at every meal.

#### 4.0.2 Considerations

- **Logistics and Scheduling:** Coordinating communal meals will require effective planning to manage resources and schedules.
- **Cultural Sensitivities:** Be mindful of various cultural and personal preferences regarding food and dining.

By implementing this hybrid communal meal system, your community can enjoy the benefits of shared experiences and maintain the warmth of individual family traditions. It's a flexible approach that can evolve based on the community's experiences and feedback.

### 5 (God-o-cratic) Holacratic Organization

The vision for this Anabaptist community integrates traditional spiritual values of recognizing the divine within each with modern organizational principles, specifically those akin to Holacracy, to create a dynamic and resilient governance model.

1. **Rooted in Anabaptist Tradition with Contemporary Adaptation:** This community draws from its Anabaptist roots, emphasizing the teachings of Jesus and the practices of early disciples. Distinct from centralized ecclesiastical structures, it seeks to embody the humble, service-oriented leadership exemplified in the New Testament. This approach aligns with contemporary models like Holacracy, emphasizing decentralized decision-making and collective wisdom.
2. **Embracing Tensions as Opportunities for Growth:** Problems and tensions are not seen as obstacles but as chances for community enhancement and spiritual growth. Inspired by Biblical teachings, these challenges are

approached with an attitude of perseverance and hope, recognizing them as pathways to achieving a more robust and faithful community.

3. **Dynamic Steering for Decision-Making:** Decision-making is guided by faith and principles rather than rigid hierarchy or unanimous consensus. This approach, akin to Dynamic Steering in Holacracy, involves making decisions that are good enough for now and safe enough to try, reflecting the community's commitment to adaptability and continuous improvement.
4. **Circles of Service for Community Structure:** The community is organized into various "service circles," each focused on different aspects of communal life, from spiritual guidance to practical tasks. This structure ensures that leadership and service roles are distributed among many, fostering a sense of equality and shared responsibility.
5. **Flexible Roles Guided by Spiritual Discernment:** Traditional rigid duties are replaced with flexible roles that members can adapt based on their gifts and the community's needs. This approach is continuously refined in Stewardship Meetings, ensuring roles are relevant and aligned with the community's mission.

6. **Stewardship and Service Meetings for Effective Governance:** Regular meetings, inspired by Holacracy's Governance and Tactical Meetings, are held for managing roles, addressing immediate operational issues, and ensuring that the community's structure and activities are always aligned with its core values and objectives.

In summary, this community seeks to blend the spiritual richness of its Anabaptist heritage with the efficiency and adaptability of modern organizational practices. This hybrid model aims to create a community that is not only deeply rooted in Christian values but also dynamic, responsive, and sustainable in today's world.