

MISSION TO AMISH PEOPLE

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Dear Friend,

March 2005

In a moment I would like to share a portion of scripture with you that has always excited me but it was not until recently that this scripture took on a much deeper meaning in my life. The reason I want to bring this scripture passage out is because of Jennifer and Edna. These two mothers have been neighbors for a number of years but come from two different cultures. Jennifer was born and raised in the English culture and belonged to the Catholic church all her life. Edna on the other hand was born and raised in the Amish culture and belonged to the Amish church all her life.

Over the years, the two mothers were able to visit each other but there was an *un-seen* but *felt* wall between them, called *cultural differences*. But then a miraculous thing took place in both of their lives—something that would change and impact their lives for all eternity. Both of them turned their eyes on Jesus and asked Him to come into their lives and save them from all their sin. Because of this life changing experience, Jennifer and Edna now stand on common ground and because of this common ground they are able to come together almost every week and learn from each other. God is so good! Now, lets look at the scripture I mentioned above.

Ephesians 2:13-14, But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Family Update

Life at the Keim homestead has stayed about the same this winter. Jonathan and Rachel continue to grind away at school each day. Rachel has a friend who calls her about every day and sometimes she comes by for a visit at our house. One day Rachel opened up and started sharing the gospel with Paige and ended up leading her through the prayer of salvation. Thank you Lord for giving us children who long to share the gospel truth. Esther is doing very well at her place of employment. She was originally hired as a third shift temporary but here of late there has been talk of hiring her. They really like her and the work she does. In our 5 years of ministry we have always done ministry together but some of this had to change and I guess it has helped me to better realize how important Esther's role was in the ministry. She misses the part of going along to update & speak at churches.

Financial Update

As of March 1, we are completely caught up with bills. We are still one month behind on payroll but that is much better than two month which is what it was like by the end of January. Two more churches have taken the ministry on for support—one from Plymouth IL and the other from Portland IN. The ministry received several special gifts in Jan and Feb, one in the amount of \$5,000. Thank you for giving; for praying, and partnering up with us in serving the Lord and His ministry. What a joy and blessing it continues to be! We have appreciated the MAP board and their efforts in helping us brainstorm some fund raising strategies for long term financial coverage. We have figured out that as the ministry sets right now we will need to raise about \$35,000-\$40,000 above our pledged income to finish the year out in the black. We are going to try and do this through special grants and a fund raiser in September.



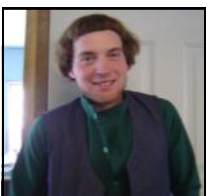
African Missions Trip

Three of our young folks came back from Kenya after being on a missions trip for two weeks. They had lots of wonderful stories to tell us as they shared their pictures and video. While in Kenya they helped built a building that is going to be used to educate Christians in the area of evangelism. They also had a part in seeing 30 people make decisions for Christ. Thanks so much to Steve and Becky Bixler who lead the team and did an absolute outstanding job doing it. Daniel (front left) is working on putting a missions committee together from our church in Mt Gilead. Their desire is to plan and organize more mission trips in the future. That's what it is all about—making eternal differences for the Kingdom of God.



Salvation

For over a year the Holy Spirit shed light of His great plan for man's redemption and salvation on the heart of this young man named Joni. At first Joni ignored it and even went through a time of rebellion. He told me one day, Joe, if I did what I had planned to do I would be in jail today. He shared how he and some others were so aggravated over the way the Amish church was treating them that they had plans on burning some barns down. But he said, by God's grace we did not do it. On January 8, 2005 he prayed and asked Jesus to save him and as a result was birthed into God's family. Now Joni was faced with a big decision because in about one month he was scheduled to be married to the girl of his dreams. When he started talking to his friends about his new relationship in Christ it did not go down so well and immediately he was faced with another big decision—Do I please my girlfriend and parents or do I sell out to the One who saved me. Several weeks after his salvation he left the Amish church and started coming to our church in Mt Gilead. He has been faithful to every church service and has a real hunger and longing to better understand the Word of Truth.



Salvation & Baptism

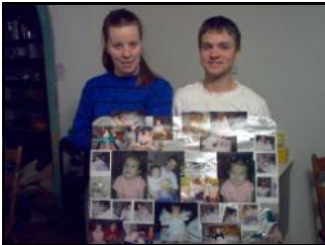


About a year ago Miriam came to the door asking if she could stay at our house until she could get on her feet. We said yes, and for the next 3-4 months Esther helped her get to and from work. When the time finally came for Miriam to move out on her own she had not yet made a decision to accept the Lord. We dreaded to see her go that way but felt that we had done all we could to be a Christian testimony to her. Several months after she moved out she went to a church with a friend of hers and heard the gospel preached and went forward for salvation. A week later the same pastor baptized her. Since then she has been faithful in church. This story reminds me of a message I heard a pastor preach one

time. He said, it's not our job to build the church but the Kingdom—Let God build the church. Miriam has dreams of starting her own restaurant.

Rhoda Goes to Heaven

Chris and Delilah were so excited when they heard that they were going to have a little baby. They had no idea that their excitement would soon turn into more heartache than any young couple should have to bear in a lifetime. Rhoda was born with several life threatening problems and for the next 18 months she would spend most of her time in the Akron Children's Hospital. The hospital finally said that Rhoda could go home but she would need to be on a oxygen machine which would require electricity. The Amish community got together and decided that electricity was not an option and that Chris and Delilah should just bring Rhoda home and put her in God's hands.



The young parents chose to go against the churches rules and bring electricity into their home to run the breathing machine. The church then took action against them and excommunicated them. The Amish immediately began to shun them and quit helping them out which in turn drove the young couple to join the English culture. Chris said, about a year after they left the Amish they put their Amish clothes on one night and went back home to visit his parents. When they entered the home they found his dad reading the newspaper so they went over to say hi but dad continued to read his paper and never once said a word. After a short conversation with the rest of the family in the kitchen Chris and Delilah decided they had better leave. On their way out they asked little Rhoda to say bye to grandpa but again grandpa would not even so much as recognize them. About 4 weeks ago Rhoda died at the age of 18 month and was buried in an English cemetery close by. Most of the nurses and doctors from Akron Children's hospital were there for the funeral. Delilah has a dream of going on to nursing school. Esther and I have been trying to share the hope of Christ with them.

Daniel and Sarah are another young couple in our area who left the Amish about 4 weeks ago. The reason they left the Amish is because they got saved and decided to follow God's teaching instead of the church. Several days after they left the Amish, their parents and a group of Amish ministers came to their home to persuade them to stay Amish. When Daniel began to share about their salvation and freedom in Christ, the ministers and parents did not want to hear it and Daniel said, they literally had a funeral for them right there in front of them. Two weeks after this incident Sarah lost her baby through a miscarriage.

Rules and Regulations

At this time I would like to share just a few Amish rules and regulations that some of our communities in this area have established. This will help you understand what we deal with on a daily basis. It will also help you to understand why so many of the younger generation is saying, we can't do this anymore. In one community they are not allowed to have any flashlights; another community says you are allowed flashlights but only two cells. One community says you are not allowed to have two buggy lanterns because it looks to much like a car with two tail lights—after several fines from the local sheriff the church agreed that they could have two buggy lanterns but one lantern had to be up higher than the other side. Another community says you can hire someone to take you to the doctor in a car but if you stop at grocery store or Wal-Mart along the way, you will be disciplined in church. Another community says you are allowed pre-painted siding but you have to re-paint it as soon as you put it on your barn. Another community says the soles on a shoe can not be flat but have to have an off set. The list goes on and on but get the idea of how contrary and frustrating religion can be. Think about this, of all the people groups (Atheists, criminals, ungodly or governments) that could have nailed Jesus to the cross—it was the religious group.

Adopt-a-Person



You have seen Aaron in the newsletter before but this time we wanted to put him in because he has a special request. God has really been working in his life and in the past five month he has really grown spiritually. Just last week he came to us and asked if we still have that Adopt-a-Person ministry and if so he would like to be adopted by someone. He said he is looking for someone that would hold him accountable in His walk with the Lord. He is not allowed to be back and forth with his family. Aaron is very handy with carpentry skills and mentioned that he would be happy to help the person/couple that adopts him. In turn he would like their spiritual accountability and support. Aaron has been saved and baptized and comes to our church in Mt. Gilead. He has a full time job and his own transportation. If you are interested and would like to know more about the Adopt-a-Person ministry please let us know and we will connect you.

First Missions Conference

Our church is working very hard to put our first missions conference on this month. Our plans are to start the Faith Promise program and begin supporting a missionary. Our pastor from the home church in Savannah will be preaching and teaching during the 4-day conference. Larry Scrant from Spencer OH will be there to share his ministry to the prisons. It's going to be good.

Your partners in the ministry—Joe, Esther, Jonathan and Rachel Keim

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