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Blood, Sweat and Tears

—by Joe Keim

Dear Friend:

Since 2000, Esther and I have traveled tens of thousands of miles and shared the ministry with local churches. Love offerings were shared; churches felt led to take the ministry on for ongoing support. Individuals and businesses also joined.

As the financial support increased, so did the correspondence Bible studies, Amish Voice, volunteers, and staff. Young adults leaving the Amish culture also increased. Housing, jobs, education, and other needs followed and were met.

Around 2012, it became quite apparent to me that local churches in America were struggling to add on new ministries for support. Every year, we lost two to three supporting churches because of financial hardships. Gaining new ones was nearly impossible.

The ministry continued to expand. By 2016, I was convinced that we needed to come up with new ways of funding *Mission to Amish People*. This led to twenty people investing over one million dollars in a 6,000 sq. ft. bulk food and deli store, similar to those you find in Amish communities in Holmes County. It all happened fairly quickly, and by March of 2018, we opened the doors to Beyond Measure Market. New Beginnings Homestead opened the same year.

About two months after opening the non-profit supporting retail store model, our manager moved on. Expenses were running higher than profits. Three other bulk food stores went up within fifteen minutes of us.

Overnight, Esther and I were thrust into managing a food business that we had no

experience in. To say it was brutal is an understatement. By February of 2019, the financial picture looked so bleak, it seemed impossible.

Regardless of how dark and discouraging things had become, we had an immense determination to succeed.

Some of the greatest people this world has ever known surrounded us, cheered us on, and gave us solid advice. Little by little—literally penny by penny and customer by customer, things started looking up. By April of this year, we felt comfortable enough to start interviewing for a new manager. Financially speaking, it still doesn't seem possible; however, we have learned to walk by faith and not by sight. As of this writing, it appears we have found God's person for manager. Please pray. We will tell you more next time.

Sowing and Waiting

—by Samuel Girod

Several weeks ago, Polly and I loaded the children in the van and headed down to Leitchfield, KY, where my brother, his wife, my sister, and her husband live. God burdened my heart to visit my siblings' 62 year old father-in-law who has stage 4 cancer and will probably not live on this earth much longer. I hated that I didn't take the opportunity to share the Gospel with Him during our visit. I was afraid that he would die and I wouldn't get another chance.

This past week I got word that he was not doing well and has lost all of his beard

hair from the treatments. I had such a burden to go witness to him. He is a man of wisdom and well-known in the community. I didn't feel that he would hear - knowing where I come from, but God put such a heavy burden on my heart that I went. I took a friend from church and my 2 oldest - Rebecca and Malachi. We were there 3 hours. The Spirit of God was, no doubt, there as well.

We shared that salvation is by faith alone.

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for

righteousness.” Romans 4:5

We also shared that people, lost and in bondage, can't see the spiritual things of God.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14

There was no profession of faith made that we know of that day, but seeds of God's Word were planted and watered. Now we wait for His increase.

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Baptism Testimony from a Former Amish Man

—by Eli Gingerich

When I was about twelve years old, I read a book about a son that would pray, and God would answer. I was confused because the boy in the book had a bicycle, and I thought that God wouldn't listen to someone who owned sinful things. My Dad explained that it wasn't bad because his parents had not taught him that it was a sin. It was at this point in my life that I started wondering why God would let some people have more than others.

At the age of fifteen, I started to rebel against my parents. At seventeen, I got into an argument with my dad, left home, and moved in with three other ex-Amish boys who were about my age. A month later, I was getting drunk every weekend.

I started worrying about where I would go if I died. Would I end up in Hell? My concerns worsened until I felt sure that I would. I went to church a time or so, but it didn't make any difference in my life.

One day, I went to a business meeting with friends. Afterwards, we met with the prophet who had been teaching. He asked people to begin praying. During their prayer, God would give them a vision about something random, such as a school bus. The prophet would then relate their vision to something in the Bible.

Right away, I got a strong feeling that this was a false prophet. I remember very little of what he said, but I was scared worse

than before; it felt like there was a demon in that room.

When I got home, I went straight to my bedroom and started begging God to show me His will and forgive me of my sins. I prayed for about three or four hours, and went to sleep crying. When I awoke the next morning, I felt happy and at peace. There really are no words to explain how I felt. It was a feeling of peace like I had never felt before. I knew that if I died, I would go to heaven.

I didn't know the scriptures well at that time. I hadn't learned about the new birth, but I knew that I wanted to live a better life. For this reason, I went back to the Amish. At first, everything seemed to go well, but before long, I started growing in my rebellion toward my parents again.

Seven months later, I left. I lived with one of my dad's neighbors for six months. Then I met a Mennonite family, and we started discussing scriptures. This is when I first learned about the new birth.

I eventually moved in with the Mennonite family, and went with them to church every Sunday. This only lasted about seven months since they had man-made rules very similar to the Amish. Their boys were confused and asking some of the

same questions that I had when I was a young Amish boy.

I moved back home again. I decided that there simply wasn't a perfect or right church. A year later, I became a member of the Amish church. I knew their teaching wasn't right according to the Word of God, but I also didn't think that keeping the rules would harm me.

I continued to wrestle with myself and eventually started reading the Bible more to try to find answers. It wasn't long before I came to realize why the church was having so much trouble. It all stemmed from the man-made rules. We were not made to be God and to govern other people's ways of life. Rather, we were made to follow Jesus and the rules He had already set forth in His Word.

After some time, I got married. My wife and I both struggled with the Amish church and finally decided to leave together. Leaving brought peace back into my heart.

Since leaving, Joe Keim and Eli Hostetler have been helping me to understand God's Word better. I hope to continue to grow in my faith and to eventually reach other Amish with the good news.

