

# The Amish Voice



PO Box 128, 575 State Route 250 N, Savannah OH 44874

Office: (419) 962-1515

September 2010

## Let the World Die and Spend Eternity in Hell?

—by Joe Keim

Mark chapter 16 is quite possibly one of the most exciting chapters in the entire Bible; it is in the 6<sup>th</sup> verse of this chapter that we are told that...

### JESUS IS RISEN!

Do you realize that those three words, in Mark 16:6, set Christianity apart from ALL other religions in the world? Let me explain.

Every religion in the world follows a leader. For example...

- ◆ Muslims follow Muhammad
- ◆ Buddhists follow Buddha
- ◆ Mormons follow Joseph Smith
- ◆ Jehovah Witnesses follow Charles Russell

And the truth is, when Muhammad, Buddha, Joseph Smith and Charles Russell died, they stayed dead. And friend, they are still ALL



dead to this day. But, in the case of Jesus Christ, that is NOT so.

Mark writes in Chapter 16:9, 12 and 14:

***NOW WHEN JESUS WAS RISEN** early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene...*

*After that He appeared in another form unto two of them...*

*Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat...* --Mark 16:9-14

Not only does Mark chapter 16 tell us that our King and Savior, Jesus Christ, rose from the dead, but the writer also offers proof by telling us that Jesus was seen by various people who had been with Him before they laid His dead body in the tomb, just days before.

Thus the question; which leader would you rather follow? Muhammad, who is still dead, or Jesus Christ who has risen from the dead?

Aren't you glad that you were raised in a home where you heard about Jesus from a child up? Otherwise, you may have been born into a family that followed a dead leader, rather than a live one.

Now, let's keep digging a little deeper to see what else happened in Mark chapter 16.

We are told in verse 14 that the eleven apostles had come together and were eating, when all of a sudden, out of nowhere, Jesus appeared right in midst of them. And accord-

ing to Mark's writing, the very first words out of Jesus' mouth were...

***GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD, and preach the gospel to every creature.*** --Mark 16:15

Jesus did not beat around the bush! He did not even seem to have introduced Himself as one who had come back from the dead. No, He got right to the point; He said "Go ye into all the world [everywhere] and preach the gospel to every creature."

Jesus knew that His time on earth was limited to about a month, and then He would be taken up to heaven. At the very forefront of His mind were these thoughts:

1. Men, when I leave for heaven, you must carry on the truth that I have been teaching you for the past three years.
2. Don't quit preaching the gospel until the whole world has heard.
3. Preach it to every single man, woman and child you come in contact with. Don't miss a one! Don't stop until all have heard!
4. Preach it to the white people and also to the black people. Preach it to the Russians, the Africans, the Americans, the Italians, the Mexicans, the Koreans, the Chinese, etc.
5. Preach it to those who drive buggies and preach it to those who drive cars.

6. Preach it to the city folks and preach it to country folks. Preach it to the rich and preach it to the poor.
7. Preach it! Preach it until the day you are received up to glory.
8. Preach it to the whole world!

And friend, just in case it did not sink in the first time, let's look at the verse again:

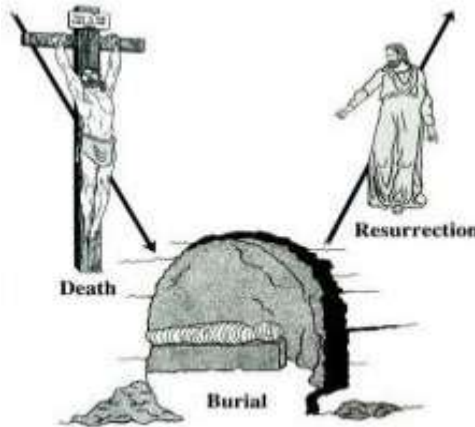
[Jesus commanded] *go ye into all the world, and preach **THE GOSPEL** to every creature.* --Mark 16:15

We are not to preach our own thoughts and ideas; neither have we been asked to preach our man-made rules, world religions and philosophies. But we are to preach the gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news which the world desperately needs to hear.

Some years later, after Jesus had given the eleven apostles the clear command to preach the gospel to every creature, the Apostle Paul explained in greater detail what the gospel

meant. He wrote...

*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you **THE GOSPEL** which I preached unto you...how that <sup>(1)</sup> Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that <sup>(2)</sup> He was buried, and that <sup>(3)</sup> He rose again the third day according to the scriptures --1 Cor. 15:1-4.*



Did you notice how Paul explained the gospel? He explained it as...

1. Christ died for our sins
2. He was buried
3. He rose again the third day

I personally believe, it is very important that we understand that the gospel is not just that Jesus died and rose again. But it is that Jesus died, was buried and then rose again the third day. It is this 3-part message (gospel) that Jesus commanded His followers to preach all over the world to every creature.

And dear friend, may I remind us both; the commandment that Jesus gave to His followers that day was not just for them. It was for every generation of believers after them. I would also like to remind ourselves that Jesus' commandment to preach the gospel to the whole world does not consider difficulties, dangers, or barriers to be reasons for not going. Not once did Jesus talk about excuses for

## Heart to Heart with Joe Keim

Tonight, we were informed that an Amish man in his late thirty's is lying in a bed, struggling for just a little more time on this side of eternity. This family man has been stricken with cancer that cannot be stopped without God's intervention. It has been said that the father and his family have cried out to God for mercy and healing, but for some reason God has not chosen to answer their passionate cry.

As we ponder on these thoughts, we, I'm sure, can't help but relate. Yes, we have all been there. In fact, some of us are there now. We have prayed, we have wept, we have begged, we have done everything we can to try and get God to look our way and show mercy and healing, but to no avail. And if you are like me, you have, at times, longed for just a few words with God. Or maybe a sign that would shed a small amount of light on why God is allowing this to happen. But nothing happens. Nothing!

Paul writes in Romans 8:22, "*For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*"

The word "creation" refers to everything, including animal, plant, and mineral. Yes! Everything in this world is groaning and travailing in pain. It has been that way ever since Adam and Eve made the huge mistake of eating from the tree they were forbidden to eat of.

In Acts 14:22, it says that Paul and Barnabas were "*...exhorting them [believers] to continue in the faith, and that we must through much trib-*

*ulation enter into the kingdom of God."*

Just because we become a believer in Christ, does not mean that we will get everything we want from God. No! Not at all. We still live in a fallen world.

Take a look at what these Bible characters went through:

John writes in Rev. 1:9; "*I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation...*"

Paul writes in 2 Cor. 1:8, "*For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:*

Even Jesus went through unbelievable sorrow as He and His disciples entered the Garden of Gethsemane. Mark 14:33-34 says, "*And He [Jesus] taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.*"

With that in mind, dear friend, may I urge you to hang in there for all you've got? Don't even think about giving up! Others have done it and so can you.

Some day, it is my hope that I can say with Paul, "*For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*" —2 Tim. 4:6-8. —And I wish this very same thing for you—

**W H O** This publishing work is registered as a charitable organization in the USA and is supported through freewill offerings. We welcome your articles, testimonies and questions. We reserve the right to edit or decline any material and are not responsible for the return of any articles.

**W E A R E** Since our beginning in 2000, many people have written to us, asking to be added to our mailing list, while others have sent us names of their friends and family members. We think it is important for us to tell you that the cost of *The Amish Voice* is \$.45 a copy and is totally funded by readers from across our great country, who appreciate the ministry and care to support it. If the Lord would lay it on your heart to come along side of us, by helping with expenses, it would be a great benefit as well as highly appreciated. In order to continue receiving the Amish Voice, please keep us informed of any changes to your address.

not sharing the gospel. He just said, "Go!"

The issue of eternal life vs. eternal damnation is far too important an issue to allow anything to stop the gospel from going forth. In fact, if you stop and think, what if a previous generation had completely stopped preaching the gospel? If that were the case, then we would have missed out.

Aren't you glad our forefathers didn't stop preaching the gospel? But now wait a minute, before we get too caught up in our excitement and appreciation; what about the nations who did forsake the gospel and quit passing it on to the next generation? Are we just going to sit on the side lines and hope that somehow things will change for them?

God forbid that we would be so selfish as to wait on them to come to us to hear the gospel; if they don't come, well than it's their own tough luck. I mean, wouldn't we want someone to come to us, if that other person knew about the gospel and we didn't?

The gospel has to be carried forth. No land is to be neglected; no people are to be ignored. The believer is commanded: "**Go ye into all the world**" (Mark 16:15).

You may have heard Christians make some of the following statements:

1. But our church does not teach this, therefore, I am not going to be held accountable by God for not going.
2. I don't have to preach the gospel; people are reminded of God when they see my plain life style and modest dress code.
3. That's not for me. I am a quiet and reserved kind of person that has a hard time coming up with the right words.
4. Other people know their Bible better than I do. If I tried to preach the gospel to my neighbor, family members or friends, I would get all tangled up and embarrassed.
5. I don't want to appear as if I am too wrapped up in God or the Bible. Someone might look at me as a goody-goody two shoes.

The five excuses that I just listed may sound good to you now, but truthfully, do you really think they are good excuses?

Think about it this way, if God were to ask

you why you didn't go into all the world and preach the gospel, which one of the five excuses would you use?

For example, if you and I were to use excuse #4, it would say a lot about where we stand with God. It would mean that the Bible has not been all that important in our life. It would also mean that our faith and understanding of God was weak, otherwise we would trust what Jesus said in in the next Scripture.

*...take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. **FOR IT IS NOT YE THAT SPEAK, BUT THE SPIRIT OF YOUR FATHER WHICH SPEAKETH IN YOU.***

--Matt 10:19-20

Wow! Let that sink in for a minute. If I understand what Jesus was saying there, He meant that all I have to do is... **Open my mouth and He will do the speaking.** How hard could that be?

Well, one might say, I have no problem opening my mouth and letting Jesus speak through it, however, it's very frightening to me when I think of trusting the Lord to come through with the right words at the right time.

I hope that wouldn't be our answer, but if it is, than shame on us.

Several thousand years before Jesus spoke the words in Mathew 10:19-20 (the verse we just read), God met up with a young 20-yr old boy named Jeremiah and asked if he would partner with Him in reaching the children of Israel, who had strayed away from Him. The young boy replied by saying, "*But Lord, I cannot speak, for I am only a child.*" The Lord, however, responded to Jeremiah with words that should give all of us courage to preach the gospel.

Look at the Lord's response to Jeremiah:

*But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee*

*to deliver thee, saith the LORD. Then the LORD put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.* --Jeremiah 1:7-9

Most of us have never experienced what it's like to have God speak through us. But those who have experienced it, have also felt the deep joy and fulfillment of having been used of God.

Look how the Psalmist put it:

*He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed (spreading the gospel), shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.* --Psalm 126:6

I like how Samuel Eyles Pierce explains this verse.

*"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed"-- This is very expressive of a gospel minister's life; he goeth forth with the everlasting gospel which he preaches; he sows it as precious seed in the church of God; he waters it with tears and prayers; the Lord's blessing accompanies it; the Lord crowns his labors with success; and at the last day he shall doubtless come again with joy from the grave of death bringing his sheaves with him; and will, in the new Jerusalem state, be addressed by his Lord with, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."*

—Samuel Eyles Pierce (1746-1829?)

Some reader might use the excuse that he or she only has an 8th grade education. To that excuse, I would have to remind you--the Bible tells us that Peter and his brother Andrew were fishermen by trade. Most likely, they were just ordinary and unskilled men in the community. But that did not matter to our Lord at all. He just needed someone who was willing to use their mouth for Jesus. That's all.



*And He [Jesus] saith unto them [Peter and Andrew], Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed Him.*

--Matthew 4:18-20

And with that said, may I remind ourselves, that is all Jesus is looking for in us. He can use us, whether we are 8 yrs old or 80. He can use us whether we stutter like Moses or lived in a whales belly like Jonah. He can use us whether we are a woman, a man, a child, educated or un-educated.

In fact, when the ordinary, unlearned fisherman named Simon Peter made himself available to God in Acts 2:14-41, God spoke with such power that 3,000 people cried out to God for salvation and were baptized.

Here is the record, as written by Luke:

It all started in verse 14 of Acts chapter 2, when Peter got up and boldly began to preach.

*But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: --Acts 2:14*

And for the next 27 verses, Peter preached his heart out. Or should I say, Peter opened his mouth and the Holy Spirit of God took over. By the time we get to verse 41 of the same chapter, we are told that several thousand people were converted to Christianity.

*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)*

1. Aren't you glad that Peter opened his mouth for God to speak through?
2. What do you think God could do if you opened your mouth for Him?

Think about this: How many lost people do you and I cross paths with each week, and not once do we warn them about their eternal destiny. Do we not care at all?

Here are some questions for us to consider:

1. What man or woman would allow their next door neighbor to go to an eternal hell of fire and brimstone and not warn them about it?
2. Who, knowing that their best friend has not yet obeyed the gospel, would not fall on their knees and weep for God to save him or her?

Is our farm or business or garden or canning actually that much more important than that lost soul? Or how about the man who lives in another city? Another state? Another

country? Does it matter at all, that they do not know the gospel? Are we really that cold hearted that we will just try to excuse our guilt away?

Look at the words of Jesus:

*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. -- Acts 1:8*

*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying ... Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, ... and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

*-- Matthew 28:18-20*

Are you going? Have you told anyone? If not, why? Maybe it's because you yourself have not believed the gospel. Oh, you say, but wait, I have made a vow on bended knee to build up in the Amish church as long as I live; I have also been baptized and am following the teachings of my forefathers.

My dear friend, as good as those things may seem to you, they are not the gospel. Remember what the gospel is? Let's read it again, so we know for sure.

*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures: --1 Corinthians 15:1-4*

The Bible has a clear message to those who have not yet obeyed the gospel. In fact, God describes what will happen the moment someone dies and has not yet believed the gospel.

*In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting de-*

*struction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power;*

*--2 Thessalonians 1:8-9*

The words "everlasting destruction" does not mean total destruction or ceasing to exist. They mean exactly what they say in this verse: to be separated from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His power—an eternity of woe (A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol.4, p.44).

They mean complete ruin and loss; to be cut off, excluded, removed, separated, extinguished, deprived, abhorred, and banished from all the good things of life.

**Complete ruin and loss:** from all that life should be.

**Cut off:** from the presence of God and from the glory of His power and of heaven.

**Excluded:** from all joy, pleasure and satisfaction. It is utter emptiness.

**Removed:** from all companionship and associations and from all possessions. It is being left all alone and left with nothing. It is utter loneliness.

**Separated:** from the presence of all goodness and righteousness—from God and from all those who sought after righteousness. And there is no prospect of the separation ever ending, not even for an hour.

**Extinguished:** from love and affection. It is a hell of passion let loose.

**Deprived:** from the Holy Spirit restraining the force of evil. It is a hell of lawlessness.

**Abhorred:** from the bodies of glory. It is a decayed carcass (Isaiah 66:23-24).

**Banished:** from all hope. It is being eternally lost forever, and there is no prospect of the banishment ever ending—not even for one hour.

The great black preacher, E.V. Hill, who is now with the Lord, once shared how he as a youngster went to a church service, many years ago, and that night the preacher got up and started preaching on hell. As he was preaching, he shouted out, "if you are sitting in this place tonight, and not yet born again, you are like a person who is swinging over the lake of hell on a cob web."

Dearest reader, there is a lot of truth in that

statement. No man, woman or child, alive at the present time, is promised the next 30 seconds on this side of eternity. James chapter 4 describes life as a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. And while we are yet alive, we must keep our focus on eternity.

### It Isn't Fair!

Fred D. Jarvis

*It isn't fair! It can't be right!  
I now protest with all my might!  
I raise my voice both loud and strong.  
It's wrong my friend! It's wrong; it's wrong.*

*It's wrong, I say, dead wrong, indeed!  
That's why I weep and beg and plead.  
It is black and wicked sin  
To keep the light from dying men!*

*I plead the cause of men afar,  
Unsaved, unloved, untold they are  
Why have we been so late and slow?  
Why have there been so few to go?*

*Unsaved, unsought, and still untold  
Because we love and hoard our gold.  
How dare we show such selfish greed  
And keep the truth from men in need?*

*Let's follow Jesus' last command!  
Let's take the light to every land!  
This truth is plain: The need is great;  
The time is short; the hour is late!*

*Let's not linger, rest, or sleep,  
But rise and go and give a weep  
And quickly tell a dying race  
Of Jesus' love and power and grace!*

The Bible says:

*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

--2 Corinthians 4:3-4

Whenever I read this portion of Scripture, I can't help but ask myself, "am I really hiding the gospel from those who are lost?" Who in their right mind would do such a wicked selfish thing like that? I mean, think about it. Why, if I know and have believed the gospel, would I than hide it from others who are lost?

There is only one good answer to this whole thing: you and I have to quit hiding the gospel and get busy telling everybody that they can be saved from hell, if they will just believe the gospel.

The End

This study was written by Joe Keim, for the Amish Voice, in hopes that my people, the Amish, might better understand the great need of taking the gospel to other people and nations of this world.

## If someone asks you to prove that God exists, What do you tell them? —S. Yoder

Joe Answers: When I was ordained to the ministry, the question was asked, "does the Bible prove that God exists?"

My first thoughts were "of course the Bible proves that God exists". But then as I began to think about it, I realized, there is not one verse in the entire Bible that proves there is a God.

Someone says, but what about Psalm 14:1 where it says, *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.*

To which I say, but that still does not prove there is a God.

The only type of Scriptures that cause us to believe there is a God, are ones such as Exodus 8:1, where it says, "*And the LORD spake unto Moses.*"

Over 4,450 times, the Old Testament uses phrases such as "the Lord spake" (and) "thus saith the Lord"

And then we have Scriptures such as Genesis 19:24, where it says, "*Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven*"

Someone might say, "prove to me that this fire from heaven was from the Lord", to which I would say, "prove to me that it wasn't."

As for me personally, I would not need any more proof than what I just shared. But then I also realize that I had the wonderful privilege of growing up in a home where I was taught from little up that there is a God. What about the man or woman who did not have such an opportunity? To them, I would have to share the following thoughts and Scriptures as proof that there is a God:

In Genesis chapter one, we are told:

V-3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light...

V-6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters...

V-9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place...

V-11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass...

V-14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament...

V-20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life...

V-24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind...

V-26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...

And after I showed the person these verses, I would have to take them to Romans 1:20, where it says... *For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

If there were still questions in the person's mind, I would take him or her to the zoo and say, study and compare the following creatures:

Go check out the elephants and when you have taken a real good look at them, leave their pen and go find the honey bee (compare the two). From there, go back to Elephant area and take a good hard look at the giraffes. After you have studied the giraffes up and down, left and right, well then make your way to the bird section and study the hummingbird (compare the two). Don't forget to compare and study the differences between the whale and the spider.

Don't forget to study the human body and how it works.

After you have done your home work, come back and try, if you can, to prove to me that these very different creatures just happened to come together on their own. To think that they just came together on their own, would be no different then passing a barn and saying, Wow! Look! See how that barn came together all on it's own.

No! Behind every barn is a craftsman and a builder. And, so it is with the tree in the woods; behind every tree is a creator.

Hebrews 11:6 says, *But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*



## Amish Population Trends 2009-2010

**Population.** In the one-year period from 2009 to 2010, the Amish of North America show an estimated population growth of 5 percent, increasing from 237,500 in 2009 to 249,500 in 2010. (Figures include adults and children.) If it continues growing at an annual rate of 5 percent, the Amish population will double in 14 years, by 2024. Their population doubled in the 20-year period from 1991 to 2010.

**States.** Amish communities are located in 28 states and the Canadian province of Ontario. In 2010 a new Amish settlement was established in South Dakota. Three states (Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana) have two thirds (64.8 percent) of the North American Amish population. The top ten states account for 93 percent of the population.

**Settlements.** Sixteen new settlements (geographical communities) were established over the past year (one about every three weeks)—an increase from 411 in 2009 to 427 in 2010. New settlements are typically small with a few families in one district (congregation). Older settlements such as Holmes County, Ohio, and Lancaster, Pennsylvania, have more than 150 districts. Larger settlements may have several different subgroups, whereas smaller settlements typically have just one subgroup.

**Districts.** The number of districts (congregations, each of which is composed of 20 to 40 families) grew from 1,738 to 1,826, an increase of 88 from 2009 to 2010, at a rate of 7.3 per month across the country.

**Growth States.** The following statewide growth rates were above the national average of 5 percent: New York (19 percent), Minnesota (9 percent), Missouri (8 percent), Wisconsin (7 percent), Illinois (7 percent). Colorado is a rapid growth state. Its number of church districts doubled from 3 to 6 as a result of both new immigrants from other states and natural growth. States with a population increase of 1,000 or more are, in order of increase, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Wisconsin.

**Static States.** Nine states (with three or more church districts) showed no growth between 2009 and 2010: Minnesota, Tennessee, Delaware, Maryland, Montana, Oklahoma, Virginia, Arkansas, and Maine. Kansas and Nebraska each lost a district.

**Reasons for Growth.** The primary forces driving the growth are sizeable nuclear families (five or more children on average) and a high retention rate (Amish children who join the church as young adults) that typically is 85 percent or more. A few outsiders occasionally join the Amish, but the bulk of the growth comes from within the community.

**Notes:** Settlement and district statistics were updated in July 2010. Population figures (which include adults and children) are estimates calculated using state-sensitive averages of the estimated number of people per church district. The number of adults and children per district varies by region, community, affiliation, and age of the district. Thus the actual number of people in a specific district or state may be higher or lower than the estimates in these tables. The national composite average per district is 136.6. The profile includes all Amish groups (Old Order and New Order) that use horse-and- buggy transportation, but excludes car-driving groups such as the Beachy Amish and Amish Mennonites.

**Sources:** **Raber's Almanac**, correspondents in Amish publications, the annual migration report in *The Diary*, state and regional settlement directories, and informants in various settlements.

To cite this page: **"Amish Population Trends 2009-2010, One-Year Highlights."** Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies, Elizabethtown College. [http://www2.etown.edu/amishstudies/Population\\_Trends\\_2009\\_2010.asp](http://www2.etown.edu/amishstudies/Population_Trends_2009_2010.asp).

# The Most Important Thing

—Eli Stutzman

Over the years, we have seen many instances of people vying over who is right or who is wrong. Now of course we all want to be right and win the argument. To prove our 'rightness' we can quote the people of old, wise people of today and scripture to no end.

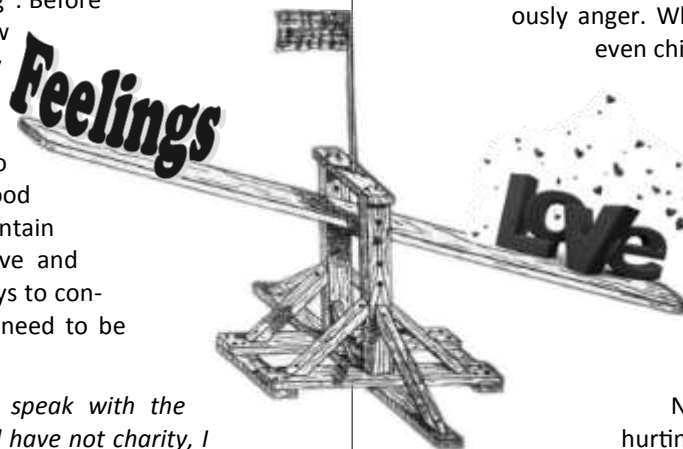
Scripture is good if used properly. Too often though, love is lacking. Not that warm fuzzy feeling, but the act of caring and respecting another's feelings. When our feelings get hurt, our reaction is to hurt back so they will know how unkind they were.

What did the apostle Paul have to say about this?

I know we understand that we are to provide food, shelter and clothing for our families. Is that all that is needed? For some reason when I grew up I believed my feelings were unimportant. Now that I am older, I know that is not true. Feelings drive so much more than I ever thought when I was young. Love has to consider the feelings of others. When you hurt someone's feelings they will often cause trouble.

Many decisions are made on a "feeling". Before you married your wife, did you know all about her? I know I didn't. Many times we don't have all the facts, and we depend on feelings. Often when we make major decisions we do so based on feelings. And that can be good if we have healthy emotions. To maintain healthy emotions, we need to forgive and offer apologies when needed. Love says to consider others, even children. Children need to be taught this as well.

1 Corinthians 13 says; *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.*



Even though the rest of your life is all in order, missing love (charity) makes it useless. The reason I write about feelings and love in the same article is because if we lack love, we won't care about other people's feelings.

Recently I heard about an encounter between two young boys at our camp; I have changed their names. Bill came running to his counselor and said "John and I were playing tether ball and I happened to hit his face with the ball. Then he came over and punched me in the face". I doubt this is the whole story, because a lot may have happened in that short time span between the first and last part. This was an accident, of course. How would you handle this?

So I told the counselor that there is a lot to learn in life for these children. It depends on whether Bill apologized quickly or laughed at the incident. Maybe he did nothing. Knowing that people have feelings is very important if we are to get along in life. If you have love, you will consider others as important as yourself.

The feeling that drove John to punch his friends in the face was obviously anger. When an incident like this occurs, we all, even children need to deal with it quickly, Showing concern, causes anger to go away. Showing disdain, such as laughing will raise anger quickly.

Because I was not there, I don't know how it all came about. This I do know; love causes me to consider others. Teach your children how to handle such incidents and you will do them a great favor.

Now we know we can't always avoid hurting the feelings of other people. Circumstances and misunderstandings will sometimes cause us to be on the receiving end of someone's temper.

Practice love and you will be able to work it out. Remember, a soft answer turns away wrath.

Eli Stutzman — Ontario Canada  
Phone: (519) 866-3737

Jesus Paid It All

**Ephesians 2:4-5**, *But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace ye are saved;*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT: Suppose your best friend offered to buy you a new buggy. You tell him that you can't accept

it outright and offer to help pay for the buggy. Then you say, "Here's a quarter. Thank you!" Now you're driving around, and somebody compliments you on your new buggy and you say, "Thanks! My friend and I bought this buggy." Wouldn't that be ridiculous? Well, that's what we're doing with God when we add our

two bits-worth of self-effort to His grace. If you do that, you take the glory from Almighty God. When you get to heaven, all you're going to be able to say is, "Jesus paid it all."





# God's Armor: Are You Wearing It?

—Joy Knepp

Hey, Ladies,

Well, I guess by the time you read this, the school bells will be ringing again! I sure don't know where the summer has gone! But I'm trying to remember that I can ruin today by being sad that yesterday is gone.

So, we have to count every day as the blessing it is and enjoy it to the fullest!

As I've been praying about what to write this time, I feel God has taken me to Eph. 6:10-18, where Paul wrote:

*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

*<sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*<sup>12</sup> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood (human beings), but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*<sup>13</sup> Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

*<sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;*

*<sup>15</sup> And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

*<sup>16</sup> Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

*<sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

*<sup>18</sup> Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; —Ephesians 6:10-18*

Wow, when we start getting a hold of this passage it almost blows our minds!

When I get done shopping for the family, everything I've

bought is to benefit the family. Well, I admit, too often I splurge on something that really wasn't necessary! But, not so with Jesus, He only "bought" the necessities and then when His "shopping" was done, everything we could possibly need was "in the cart". Then He said, "It is finished!"

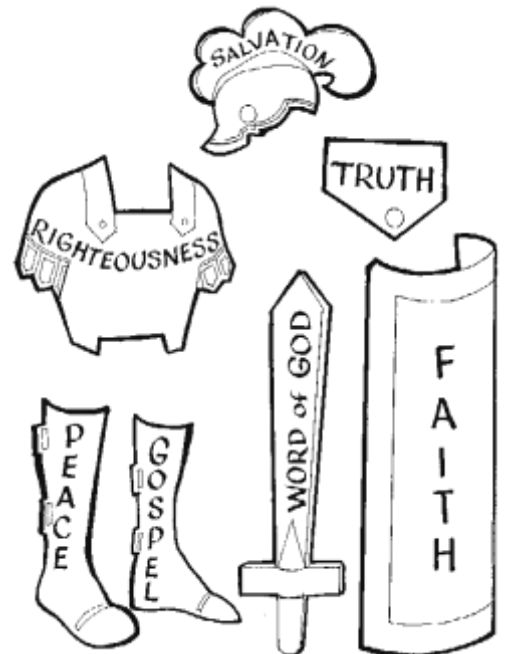
So, with that in mind, let's look at some things that are included.

*"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*  
Eph. 6:11-12.

WOW, He has even provided an armour for us!

We have.....

1. A waist belt truth: that which is true, the fact or facts, a fixed or established principle.
2. A breastplate righteous: doing right, virtuous, behaving justly.
3. Our feet are shod peace: freedom from strife of any kind, condition of quiet, order and security.
4. A shield faith: belief without proof, reliance, loyalty, complete trust in God.
5. A helmet salva- tion: a saving, being saved.
6. A sword: the word of God: the Bible



Think about an



armour for a moment, and when you have a mental picture of it, think, will an armour do us any good if we hang it up so it doesn't get scratched or worn? And then, when the devil comes with his wiles, we are "naked" and without the defense that God has ever so lovingly, through the death of His precious Son, provided for us! We have to get this truth totally settled in our mind, that it is NOT God's responsibility to fight the devil for us- remember, He said, "It is finished!"

I said all of that to say this; who wants marriages to fail? Yes, we all know that it is the devil that is out to wreck homes and so we must commit to wearing this AWESOME armour of God and beat the devil at his own game! Do not hesitate to recognize the devil when something comes between you and your husband, and call it what it REALLY IS, "...for we wrestle not against flesh and blood..."! And Eph. 6:20 says, "...that therein I may

speak boldly, as I ought to speak." The word bold means; daring, brave, courageous, without fear.

Again I say, God didn't give us the armour so we would hang it somewhere to collect dust, He meant for us to get it on and USE it! He gets great pleasure out of watching His children wear it and "...stand against the wiles of the devil"! I have told my husband that I refuse to get up in the morning until I have the whole armour on, although I admit, having a sinful nature, if I'm not very careful, the first thing I know, the devil is coming at me and I have forgotten to put it on! So, we will strive to grow and learn until God calls us home and we hear the welcome words, "...well done, thou good and faithful servant"!

God be with you till we meet again!

*Joy Knepp, Loogootee, IN*

*Phone: (812) 259-2634*

How do you thrive in a sick and perverted world? The desire of my heart bursts and yet is so tied up! How to explain it is a mystery to me. I need to be in a place of continued worship of my Father God, yet I find myself constantly in an ambiguous state of mind whenever I attempt worship.

It seems the only place where I can reach a state of Divine worship is in a place where there is at least one or more TRUE worshipper beside me! When I experience this I know that I am completely satisfied and that I am being fed graciously! The problem is that I usually am not in contact with such worshippers daily which leads me to starvation! Have you ever been really hungry physically...imagine that in a spiritual sense. It makes me become frustrated, weak, unhappy and often angry.

I wonder sometimes why God would put

me in a situation like this when I have an undying need to worship and be influenced by his presence. The situation I am referring to is one in which it seems all the people you know live sinfully in a knowing matter. Surrounded by people who know God and yet they live by the sinful pleasures of hating, unforgiveness, self absorption, disobedience, hypocrisy, and being an idol! How am I supposed to be able to worship when surrounded with these?

Just to clarify the last paragraph I want you to in no way think that I hold myself higher than the least of these. I have and often do participate in such activities. (I'm not proud of this fact but I am forgiven and I am doing better through God) The point is that I long for more and I feel like none of these have that same desire. This is what it makes it so unbearable.....the ignorance, the hypocrisy! It makes me want to scream!

—Mary

Romans 8:16 - *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT: A farmer and his farmhand went duck hunting. The farmer said to his friend, "You're always talking about fighting with the devil. I'm not a Christian, and I never have to fight with the devil." The farmhand answered, "Boss, if you and I shot two ducks, one was wounded and one was dead, which one would you go after first?" He said, "Well, I guess the wounded duck." He said, "That's right. The devil knows you're a dead duck."

If the devil doesn't bother you, it's because he doesn't have to bother you, since you and he are traveling in the same direction. If you turned around, you'd have a collision with him. Right now, are you in collusion with him?

ACTION POINT: Are you a child of God? Then, praise Him that He has given you the power over Satan and placed you on the pathway to see Him face to face!

—Adrian Rogers

### Pennsylvania Deitsh Testament

If you would like to obtain a New Testament with Psalms and Proverbs in Pennsylvania Deitsh, they are available for \$13.95 postpaid from the **Committee for Translation, 3864 Township Road 162, Sugarcreek, OH 44681. Phone 330-852-4663.**



You do not need to send money ahead of time; they will bill you with your order. Your local Christian bookstore may also have them available.

In making this translation, the committee's purpose was two-fold: 1) to adhere as closely as possible to the Textus Receptus Greek text, which is closely associated with Luther's (German) and the Authorized (English) version, the two versions most commonly in use by the Amish, and 2) to make the translation in fluent

everyday Pennsylvania Deitsh as it is spoken in the home.

The translation procedures and principles used in this translation are basically those employed by the Wycliffe Bible Translators, and the exegesis closely follows their series of in-house "Exegetical Helps". The final manuscript was checked for exegetical accuracy by New Testament Greek specialists from the Translation Department of the Wycliffe Bible Translators.

## Is God Male or Female?

—Robert and Beth McCallum



As we open God's Word we find two truths that help to answer this question. The first is that God is a Spirit (John 4:24).

Secondly, God is always referred to in the male form. One example is found in Luke 2:49 where Jesus speaks of God as his "Father".

*And He [Jesus] said unto them, How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

—Luke 2:49

John writes:

*God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. —John 4:24*

Since God is a spirit we understand that He does not have a physical body. However, sometimes picture words are used in Scripture to help us better understand what is being taught. When we read in Isaiah 40:10-12 that God uses His hands and arms to gather his sheep and measure the earth we realize this is a word picture which helps us understand God's character.

Some people are confused because the Bible says that men and women are created in God's image.

Genesis 1:26-27 says, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female created He them."

Let us look at Genesis 2:7 as well. It says,

*"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."*

This is not said of any other part of creation, only of mankind. People were created with a mind, will, emotions, and moral ability unlike animals which act on instinct without a conscience or moral nature. The "image of God" is the spiritual part that man alone possesses. People are the only part of creation designed "in the image of God" with the purpose to have and enjoy a relationship with their Creator.

**God is three in one; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are made up of body, soul and spirit, again, three parts in one.**

Do you see that being made "in the image of God" has nothing to do with our physical appearance? Instead, it has to do with our spiritual nature.

Scripture is where God shows Himself to man and is therefore the only true source of information about God. In looking at what Scripture tells us, there are several truths about the form in which God reveals Himself to man.

Scripture contains approximately 170 references to God as the "Father." One cannot be a father unless he is male. If God had chosen to be shown in a female form, then the word "mother" would have been used. In the Old and New Testaments, words are used over and over again which speak of God in the male form.

Jesus Christ referred to God as the Father several times and in other cases used male words in reference to God. In the Gospels alone, Christ uses the term "Father" in direct reference to God nearly 160 times.

In John 10:30, Jesus says: "I and the Father are one."

Obviously, Jesus Christ came in the form of a human man to die on the cross as payment for the sins of the world. Like God the Father, Jesus was revealed to humanity in a male form.

The New Testament Epistles (from Acts to Revelation) also contain nearly 900 verses, where, in its original writings, the word "theos" is used in direct reference to God. "Theos" is the Greek word for "man". There is a clear pattern of God being referred to with male titles, such as King and Savior.

While God, the Father does not have a human form, He chose a male form for God, the Son. Jesus took a male form while He walked on the earth. The prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament refer to both God and Jesus Christ with male names and titles.

God chose to be shown in this form in order for man to more easily understand who He is. Although God is shown to us in this way, let's not place limitations on who He is or what He can do. We must remember that in His true form He is an All-powerful, All-loving, and Everlasting Spirit.

### For Sale: Farm land in Arkansas

I am a senior citizen with connections to Farm land along a flowing river next to an unpopulated National/State area in Arkansas and am willing to see if I can help a family or two who want to farm in Arkansas.

Please contact my son, Justin, at the (501) 744-4477, as I am outside the U.S. now. There are 800 acres but only about 200 suitable for certain crops. Thank you. Harvey Bell

### Were any of the disciples married?

We know for certain that Peter was married because he had a mother-in-law (Matt 8:14). The Apostle Paul, who was not married, asked the Corinthians whether he also did not have the right to take a believing wife (1 Corinthians 9:5), as did "the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas [Peter]." From this, we can assume that Peter was not the only one to have a wife.

## When I was a child, I thought...

I grew up thinking that husbands and wives were always happy with each other—never had a fuss or a fight. Nor did it ever occur to me that some parents might spank in anger or be abusive to their children. I had no idea that some fathers, uncles, brothers, and even preachers molested little children. I was thirteen and babysitting when for the first time I saw a young married couple fighting. I was astonished that two parents were raising their voices at each other. In a breathless panic I told my mom what I saw. She never skipped a beat, and just simply said, "A lot of husbands and wives fight." Her lack of surprise only shocked me further.

How is it that I was shielded from those realities for so long? Could it be because both of my parents loved God and believed His Word? No one is perfect, and being married there are times you want to talk down to your husband and make him tow the line. You want to give him what he deserves, but what does God say you should do? My mother and father say it is what they learned from God's word that made their marriage different.

My parents knew what I now know, that a child is a book waiting to be written. Every minute of every day is filled with writing on the blank pages of your child's life story. Some people call it "making memories." But memories are not formed just on special occasions. Every moment of a child's life is part of who he will become. Those early years are when we develop our character and form our values.

My parents provided a haven for

me growing up, but they didn't shut me out from life. Quite the contrary, at an early age I learned to work for the things I wanted. I learned to help others in need. My parents gave me tools, ideas, and resources to build things. They praised my hard work and showed my creative projects off to everyone. They delighted in me, and I delighted in praise. I grew to love serving people. I worked hard with my hands and saw profit in it, making a little money. I was so busy learning and developing in life that I did not have time to waste on foolishness. If I did get the "bored face" they would give me a job like washing dishes. I found I liked staying busy and got very creative.

Years later, I am happily married and have an amazing four year old boy and another child on the way. Every day I am conscious of filling the blank pages of my son's life. I know that every paragraph is precious, making a permanent mark in his life. One day he will take the pen and write without me helping him. I pray to God for the wisdom to raise my son in the way he should go, to make a man of truth that will stand for God and righteousness, that will defend the weak, give to the needy, and raise his children to be soldiers of God.

Parents, we are in a race against time with our little ones. Every minute counts. Like my parents before me, I know I am the author of my child's future. I am not just making a happy little boy; I am making the future father of my grandchildren. May they rise up and call me blessed as I do my parents.

—Shoshanna Easling



## Where is God in all this?

"I cry to you God but you do not answer. I stand before you, and you don't even bother to look", screams Job in desperation.

Many of God's people have endured intense suffering; even David, a man after God's own heart.

There are times when the faith of God's people was hanging on a thread. Yes, God's people are tested for His honor and His glory.

Imagine on a certain warm sunny afternoon in Palestine,



there are three people, each hanging on a cross since 9:00am. You notice how the One on the middle cross is covered with blood, spittle, and has whip welts all over Him. You see deep gashes where His flesh stands wide open. You think, "Well, where is

His Dad? Doesn't anyone care for this Man? And at that time He pulls Himself up with His arms and cries out with a loud voice, "MY GOD!!.... MY GOD!!... WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

Then you wait for an answer but there is none. Only silence, except for people going about their business as usual.

You know the Father could have ended the suffering within a split second, yet He silently observed. I believe this is where there was silence in heaven. All of heaven was observing with full knowledge that God could stop this suffering in a heartbeat.

Will God actually allow His Son to go all the way to death, so you and I can be with Him forever and ever. Does He really love you and me that much? Indeed He does!!

Notice, Jesus didn't cry out, "My Father.." He cried out, "MY GOD.." Do you think there was Someone suffering more than just physical pain? Was He disconnected with His father? Do you think His Father was suffering as well?

How can a good God be all-powerful and allow suffering?

1. How do we deal with unanswered prayer?
2. Where is God when we hurt?

How do you think Jesus would answer the questions above? He truly understands our sufferings more than we can imagine. Can't you hear His whisper, "Don't give up...it will all be worth it."

My question to you, dear reader, "Are you willing to trust God when you suffer (unfairly) and it seems He remains silent? Does He care? Oh yes, He cares!!

Ernie Yoder, Tuscola, IL  
(217) 259-1324

**Mission to Amish People**  
**PO Box 128**  
**Savannah, OH 44874**

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Ashland, Ohio  
Permit No. 188

**Current Resident**

## **The Anabaptist Movement: Then and Now**

—author unknown

In 1525, the Reformation was in its infancy. Out of Zurich arose a small group of men and women who desired to recover the New Testament teaching on the church rather than merely accept the new version of Catholic imperialism which was being promoted by Martin Luther and Zwingli. This group was called the Swiss brethren. Today we know them as the Anabaptists.

Their radical teaching attracted many people who were tired of suffering the abuses of the state sanctioned churches, whether Catholic, Lutheran or Swiss Reformed. These seekers came to join the Anabaptists by the thousands. **They took the Sermon on the Mount literally; they looked to the indwelling Christ as the mark of the believer; and they followed the Great Commission: to go into all the world and make disciples of every nation.** Within 30 years of its beginning, the Anabaptist movement had grown to hundreds of thousands of adherents across Europe.

The reaction from the government sponsored churches was brutal. Anabaptists were branded as heretics and hunted down like animals. They were dispossessed of property and evicted from their lands, imprisoned, tortured, sold as galley slaves and killed for their beliefs and uncompromised stand against imperial church power. They

longed for refuge.

At the same time in addition to the persecution of Anabaptists, the Protestant movement also spawned a far-reaching political upheaval of nationalism and the end of feudalism. In the wake of the reformers' teachings, a wave of moral deterioration, persecutions, revolutions and religious wars spread over Europe as Catholics and Protestants battled each other for control. Great predatory armies crisscrossed Europe for over a century and a quarter, leaving behind them a vast destruction of peoples and lands. By the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648, Europe was in ruins. Germany alone had lost 10 million out of a population of only 13 million. Business, art, education, agriculture: all were devastated.

Having a desire to see their lands productive again so that people could be fed, the Ribeaupierres, a great land owning family in the Alsace region of the Rhine River, invited Anabaptists to come and work the farms. The Swiss brethren were only too happy to do this because it meant safety and refuge for them and their families. But it came with a very heavy price: they would not be able to meet in public or to share their faith with those outside their own communion. **They agreed to be silent.** With this agree-

ment, they forfeited their call to evangelism which potentially deprived millions of souls of eternal life.

Today, 350 years later, Anabaptism has lost the evangelistic fire it had in the beginning. However, the Bible says that if we will repent, God will hear us and restore to us that which has been lost. We desire to see the return of radical Christianity and radical evangelism: Christ is the only hope for our time and all times.

With us on this walk are people from Alsace who are prophetically bearing the guilt of their ancestors in requiring the silence of God's evangelists. They are here to repent for that, to ask forgiveness of the Anabaptist descendants, and to proclaim that **the vow of silence is no longer required.** Will we forgive them for offering refuge in exchange for silence? And will we repent before the Lord for the compromise of our calling and our disobedience in this matter, knowing that our silence has denied untold millions down through the centuries the opportunity to know Jesus as Lord and Savior?

And will we once again pick up the calling and the mantle of evangelism to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations? Let us pray.....They will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.