

# MISSION TO AMISH PEOPLE

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Dear Friend,

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About a year ago, someone started building a brand new house in our area. For the first couple of months the whole neighborhood looked on with anticipation as the house began to take shape, but then all of a sudden the building ceased and the house has now stood there for almost a year—*unfinished and incomplete*, while tall weeds have grown up all around it. **Jesus gave a similar illustration in Luke 14 when He said:** *And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*

## Farewell Church Plant



*The highlight of our last Sunday was when each one got up and shared their testimonies*

On June 11, 2006—I preached my last sermon as the pastor of the Mt Gilead house church. It was just over *two years* ago that our family had met at Sam & Laura Schwartz's home for our first church service.

**Some of the highlights that we as a church experienced in those two**

**years were...** 13 professions of faith; 20 baptisms; 23 charter members; 6 people went on a two week missions trip to Africa. In March of 2005 we had our first mission's conference and over \$900 a month was pledged for missions—we took three missionaries on for support. The church approved a doctrinal statement, a constitution and 3 leadership positions. We also started several Sunday school classes and a Wed night prayer meeting. Those were the some of the most exciting times any missionary family and church body could ever experience here on earth.



*Praying over Sam & Bob*

But as the Word of God so clearly teaches us, *...your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.* As a missionary family and a pastor I might also share that it was not always fun and exciting—there were also many tearful and sleepless nights. I personally gained a much deeper love and a better understanding of what pastors do and go through.



*Mary hugs Esther—her Sunday school teacher*

We often had to deal with the *emotional lows* that come upon a person when he/she is forsaken and shunned by the Amish church, their own families and closest friends. During our first year there were at least seven different types of church denominations that showed up at the door with various beliefs in hopes that they would be able to persuade the vulnerable to come their way.

It has seemed to me that these personal hardships and confusion in some of our people's lives, along with the pull of the world eventually led so many to a very low level of commitment to God, pastoral authority and the church. As church planters, we were not the first ones to travel this road of uncertainty. We can read that Jesus faced some of the same difficulties in John 6, where it reads... *From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?* Did the church go away dur-

ing the past 2000 years? No, it is just as strong and mighty as ever. Jesus made a promise to Peter and us that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

Did the church in Mt Gilead continue after our departure on June 11? The answer is—yes, as long as God wants it to continue. God raised up one of the finest family's anybody could ever hope for



*Jonathan - our faithful piano player*



*Changing roles as Pastor*

in our two years of ministering together and they have taken on the lead—*Sam & Laura Schwartz* have given their all and God has blessed them with much wisdom and scriptural knowledge. On our last day at the church, Sam and I took turns reading the account that took place between Elijah and El-isha in 2nd Kings chapter 2 and at that point the pastorate was handed over to Sam. We have also appreciated the commitment and godly leadership that *Bob & Kris Quinn* and *Levi & Miriam Yoder* have had in the church—they are special gifts from God.



*Rachel helped out with the children's classes*

Pastor Sam and I continue to meet every Wednesday morning to pray and talk about ways that we can be better servants for the Lord. Levi & Miriam Yoder both started working for MAP in 2005 and anybody who knows them will tell you that they are both *hall of fame Christians*—They continue to help Sam and the church on Sunday mornings. My plans are to go back and preach at the church from time to time.

### **One of Several Goals For The Rest Of 2006**

Now that our family is free from the responsibilities of leading the church we have some very important goals that we will be working on during the next 6 months. One of our main goals is to raise an extra \$1,000 a month in order to keep the ministry functioning at full capacity. Last month we got a big surprise when the Post Office informed us that we could no longer send *SonLight Club* Bible lessons at bulk rate. We were obviously devastated but finally had to accept their reasoning. After lots of phone calls and meetings with Postal workers we are now paying a postage rate of \$.37 a lesson vs. the precious \$.17. That does not seem like a lot until you figure that we are sending thousands of lessons every month. The same week that we got the notice from the Post Office we also received these testimonies from our students.

**Ben—from KY (Age 11)**... *I took the Lord Jesus as my Savior. The time you sent me Explorers 1, L8. I was touched. Right then I took the Lord Jesus as my Savior.*

**John—PA (Adult)**... *Hello, Greetings in our Saviors name. I completed several course's and I would like also to complete some more. Starting at Light from the Old Testament thru the Holy Spirit Ministry and The Spirit World. The New Testament you gave me I gave to a needy pilgrim and I would like to request two more. Here is \$100.00 to support your ministry and the Bible's and the course's mentioned above. God Bless*

Since our last newsletter a new church and a former Amish business man took MAP on for support. We also had a church increase their monthly support and two Vacation Bible Schools give toward the SonLight Club. **May God bless each one of you for your faithful and generous support to the MAP ministry!**

### **Lydia & Barbara**



In June, Lydia (from Holmes Cty) and Barbara (from KY) moved into our basement. They have both gotten a job and are working on their drivers license. Barbara came home from work one day and said, **I heard something today that I didn't think I would ever hear anyone tell me.** She said, I was just working away at my job when my boss showed up and said, *Barbara, you have to slow down—you are working too hard.*

We have appreciated Jenica Keim and Miriam Miller coming in and starting a Bible study with the girls. One of the girls had grown up in a preachers home and yet she said, I had never opened a Bible until we started having Bible studies with Jenica and Miriam.

**Barbara (age 18) writes**...*The hardest thing I ever did was leave my family. I loved them all very much but I knew I would never be happy staying Amish. There were so many things I could not understand, like the way they date and all the other church rules I didn't agree with. I think the English life is a lot more relaxing then Amish life. You feel freer to talk about anything you want to. During the next year I would like to make a lot more friends and get my driver's license and a car.*

**Lydia (age 21) writes**...*English life is more relaxing and everyone is really nice and helpful. You can pray and talk to God like you please and know that you won't be the talk of the town. I hope I have a good steady job and my own car. And then I want to get my own apartment and continue to go to church and grow stronger. I wish I could get my GED, save some money and go to college to be a nurse. I don't know if my dreams will ever come true.*

**So much more to write but the end is here. We will write to you again in two months. Love and God's very best to YOU!—Joe, Esther, Jonathan & Rachel Keim**

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