



MISSION TO AMISH PEOPLE

Life Transition Ministry
LivingRoom Bible Institute
Prayer/Bible Study Groups
SonLight Club—Amish Voice
Donation Center—Audio & tract
Church Presentations and Workshops

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Happy New Year, Friend

January 2008

Several weeks ago, while spending some private time with the Lord in my morning devotions, God gave me two verses in Proverbs that helped me prepare for the new year. **(PRO 16:9) A MAN'S HEART DEVISETH (PLANS) HIS WAY: BUT THE LORD DIRECTETH HIS STEPS.** Solomon reminds us that man can make plans and have dreams, but in the end he can do no more and no less than what God intends. **(PRO 20:24) MAN'S GOINGS ARE OF THE LORD; HOW CAN A MAN THEN UNDERSTAND HIS OWN WAY?** These passages really come alive when you insert your own name. Don't you feel great, knowing that God is in control of 2008!

Family Update

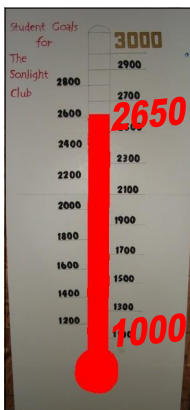
Esther and I celebrated 21 years of marriage last month by attending a 2-day marriage conference in Columbus OH. On the 2nd day of the conference, we were asked to take some personal time and write our spouse a love letter and then go on a date—it was hard not to look back and remember those cold, Sunday night buggy rides, over to Esther's house where we would then get to sit in a kerosene lit living room and talk/date from 11pm—2am in the morning. **Esther's parents would pretend to be sound asleep in the next room, but we knew better than that, because at 2:30 Esther's mom would start pounding on the door, which meant, Joe—you are 30 minutes past your leaving time.**

Jonathan turns 18 this month — for about a year he has been working for an online investment firm. Lord willing, he will be flying to Arizona in February to meet his boss for the first time. **Rachel** got her drivers license right after she turned 16 in October; we now have 4 drivers in the family. Her long term goal is to go to college and become a school teacher.

Thank You for Caring & Sharing in 2007

Once again, I stand in absolute amazement as I look back over 2007 and recount the faithful and generous giving of God's people. Your financial support for MAP just kept coming in, week after week, all year long. Churches gave through their missions program. Grant foundations and businesses gave because God blessed them. Families, individuals, missionary circles, Sunday school classes, and children — they all gave because they love the Lord and they wanted to see souls saved. In 2007, two people stepped up to the plate and paid for the installation of an air conditioner. And when word got out that the ministry received an overwhelming increase of SonLight Club students as a result of our contest, several new volunteers showed up to help, two Sunday school classes gave \$600 and several business men gave \$8,000. In December, Wal-Mart and the Ashland Community Foundation provided \$12,000 toward a copy machine for MAP. The ministry was also able to purchase a 7th computer. **And with that, I stand to my feet and give applause to our beloved Lord and His family. Thank you for giving and giving and giving; may God bless you richly.**

SonLight Club

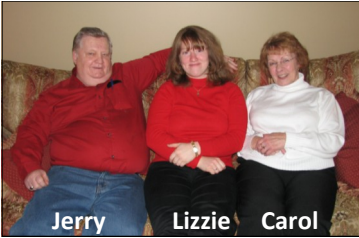


Early last year, many of us began to pray **that God would double our SonLight Club membership of 1,200.** God very clearly answered our prayers and today I am honored to tell you, **the active membership has steadily climbed to 2,650—it continues to climb every week.** Another great blessing from God has been the fact that He has provided the extra funds—it comes from places we would never have dreamed of.

Here are some SonLight Club numbers for all of us to praise God for... In 2007, we mailed out 37,470 Bible lessons, 14,277 newsletters/cards, 2,040 awards (awards included 914 New Testaments); the awards program is designed to be an incentive for students to enroll and stay actively involved in the SonLight Club. The total cost for Bible lessons, postage, and awards for 2007 amounted to \$39,511. **In return for all the dollars and all the prayers and all the hard labor, we are honored to tell you that 149 students wrote us in 2007, to tell us that they received Christ.** This does not account for the hundreds of others who send us testimonies on how the SonLight Club has helped them walk closer to God.

A SonLight Club Testimony from Brian—age 12: *The first lesson I got was when I was 6, I am now 11. The lessons have helped me learn to try to please God, take Jesus as my Savior and not to fear death. If it were not for the SonLight Club I would not have known to take Jesus as my Savior so I want to thank the SonLight Club for improving my life.*

Mentoring That Works



When Esther and I walked away from the Amish culture, 20 years ago, we needed a place to live. **We also needed someone from the English culture to teach us how to survive outside the box, called Amish;** that family happened to be the Gess family. Today, we bring a similar testimony to you of how Jerry & Carol have helped another young lady named Lizzie.

Carol writes... *It was Sunday night, June 24 and the phone rang. It was Joe and he wanted to know if we could house a 20 year old Amish girl called Lizzie. We opened our door to a pretty, red haired girl that changed our lives. Our prayer was that we would show her the love of God and lead her to Jesus. We eventually began to study the "Heaven" Series (a SonLight Club course) and Lizzie attended church faithfully. One day we toured the Bible Museum in Mansfield and Lizzie absorbed all she saw and the Spirit was working in her heart. A few weeks later, following a Sunday eve church service, we realized something was on Lizzie's mind. While questioning her about it, she broke and told of her desire to accept Jesus, and become a Christian. How exciting it was to see a burden lifted and we all rejoiced in her salvation. Lizzie continues to be faithful and is busy serving at Bethel Baptist Church.*

Lizzie writes... *On a beautiful Sunday morning I was all excited about leaving the Amish. I didn't know where I'd be when the evening would come. I went to a place to stay by a wonderful couple, Jerry—n—Carol Gess. I wanted to know more about God—n—Jesus. I attended Bethel Baptist Church and listened to the pastor and my Sunday school class. I worked on my "dating series" books and am currently working on "Heavens series" books. While doing these series, I went with a van load to the Mansfield Bible Museum and it came to my heart that I want to be saved and go to Heaven. On the Sunday morning service the pastor mentioned whoever doesn't know Jesus shall say a prayer with Him. I was one of them. In the evening I felt just like crying, cause I wanted to be saved. I am glad I got saved on October 28, 2007 and want to know more about Jesus. I am still in the same church since I left the Amish and living with the same wonderful couple. Praise God.*

Schrock Family Update



This photo shows my friend Dick giving two of the Schrock boys their very first Bible. Dick was so overjoyed at the boys reaction that he gave the ministry a check to start a Bible fund.

In our previous update we shared the sad truth about Andy, a 23 year old who was asked to leave his family's home after he questioned the bishop about Colossians chapter 2 and other scriptures on salvation. **Andy lived in a barn for several days before finding a home elsewhere.** After several more weeks went by, Andy's parents decided to go against the churches' rules and bring him home again. At that point, the church began to threaten the parents, *"if you don't ask Andy to leave immediately, we will excommunicate & shun you too"*. The parents did not give in and within a few weeks they too were excommunicated from the church.

The father's main income came from a small engine repair business that he ran out of his shop. **And since most of his customers were Amish, he lost his business over night (the Amish came by and took all their small engines away).** **At about the same time, their children were no longer welcome at school and had to be pulled out. The mother was almost in tears one day as she said, Joe, "we will not even be able to go and visit our married children and grand children without getting them in trouble with the church".**

It has not been all bad though. Four weeks ago, the 49 yr old mother picked up a gospel tract that someone had left laying in their living room. The tract had a picture of a present on the front cover and when she got all done reading it, she said to herself, *"I really want that gift"* and immediately asked God for it. I happened to stop by a couple hours later and when I asked her, did you get the gift of eternal life and she got this big smile on her face and said, *"Joe, I know that I was born again"*. **And then she said, "and the first thing that came to my mind was — I am not afraid to die any more".**



I had the most wonderful privilege of coming around this young man, named Paul, and pray over him before he left for full time missionary service in Brazil. He was formerly Amish and had been living with his mom and brothers in New York state, before leaving for Brazil in November.

Paul and his family belong to a small house church and when he left for the mission field, his support level was about half of what he needed. As you think of Paul and his ministry, would you pray for him?

Wait'n for the heavens to fold back and Jesus to break through with all of His angels — Joe for the Team

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Ron Graves, Pastor (President)
John Bouquet, Pastor (Vice President)
Mary Lou Yoder (Secretary)

Forrest Conrad (Bookkeeper)
Tina Duffield (Treasurer)
Jerry & Carol Gess
Esther Keim

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