



Your Missionaries to the Amish



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Dear Friend:

November 2014

As we consider the Thanksgiving and Christmas season, we can't help but think of you. Our journey throughout 2014 has allowed us to serve the Lord **together**. **Together**, we have been obedient to God and His call. **Together**, we have celebrated changed lives. **Together**, we have been blessed and greatly favored of God. What more could we ask for?!

For the past few months, my time has been spent in the following five areas:

1) Updating and preaching in churches, meeting with donors and doing condensed *Amish Awareness* seminars in OH, PA and NY.

- 2) Teaching a former Amish Sunday school class.
- 3) Looking for better ways to house the many young people who are leaving their Amish culture.
- 4) Oversee day to day ministry at the office.
- 5) Mentoring and discipling people, which is one of my favorite things to do in life. The picture shows myself and Wayne, formerly (buggy) Mennonite.



Together, we have shared trials, ministry, tears, excitement and heartaches.

Together! Marching on for the sake of our Savior and the gospel. —The Keims

Jonas Yoder Update

—By Jonas Yoder

Greetings in the name of Jesus. God has answered our prayers and has given us new opportunities to visit, encourage, and disciple several Amish and Mennonite people. I would like to introduce you to two of them.

Benjamin left his Amish community after several years of not getting satisfactory answers about the Bible from his preacher. He now lives in a camper in our backyard. His interests are in music and singing, in which he is already showing much potential. He is also already going with a group of men to the prison for weekly classes. Benjamin has a great heart for the Lord. Pray for him as he seeks the Lord's will for his life.

Nevin is 24 years old. As a result of an accident several years ago, he struggles a lot with depression and anxiety and also with relationships. With support from



Benjamin singing at church— still in his Amish clothes!

his parents, he has been able to stay in a transitional house called the Emmaus House. He stays at the house a couple days at a time and then goes home with his family again for a day. He has found some relief and has a new vision for life. Nevin also has a great heart for serving the Lord. Pray for him that he can receive complete healing physically and mentally. Also pray for his parents as

they learn to understand him better. Pray for us as the Lord continues opening doors of opportunity for ministry. — The Yoders

Melvin Schrock Update

By Melvin Schrock

Hello from Wisconsin! **Thank you** for all the generous donations that came in for the computer and printer. The expenses were more than we had anticipated, but the Lord supplied everything we needed.

We presented MAP Ministry at three different churches in Wisconsin and Minnesota during the past couple months. Another pastor asked us to come and share on how to witness to the Amish, and then to come back next year to tell all about MAP.

In addition to church presentations, I have had some phone conversations with a girl that desperately wants to leave the Amish, but she is not yet eighteen. She is not very well liked at her home, but I was able to share God's word with her, and she seemed hungry for the truth. We remain in contact with her, and she enrolled in Bible Club lessons.

We would love to do a presentation in your church. Contact us and set one up! — The Schrocks

Pieces of the Puzzle

We first learned about Ashley Yoder in 2013. At the time, she was still Amish and living in Holmes County, OH. More than a year went by, and then one day she ended up in my office, wondering if we could help her transition back to the English lifestyle she originally came from. We shared our rules and asked her to pray about it. Three days later she called us, very excited, asking, “How soon can I move into the your home?” We learned that she was adopted and had a desire to reunite with her birth mother. Read on to see how the Lord used people on opposite ends of the country to put the pieces of the puzzle together. —Joe Keim

Barbara Brown, Birth Mother



I'm not sure what day the adoption was signed by me, but I do know that November 14, 1999 was the hardest day of my life. I had to give up Ashley, Andrea, Alyssa,

and Bryan to their aunt for temporary purposes. I knew I did what I had to for their best interests. My children always came first and foremost in my life.

It had been almost 15 long years since I have seen any of them. About three-and-a-half years ago, I, along with my fiancé and a friend, started search for my children. I gave up a few times, but my fiancé kept saying, “Have faith. It will happen.” Then one day, I unexpectedly received an instant message on my phone. The lady who sent the message said that she had a client who was looking for her birth mother. The young woman’s birthday was April 24, 1992.

I told the lady that this had better not be a cruel joke. She assured me that this was for real. I knew right then that the young woman was my daughter, Ashley.

Ashley and I talked on the phone that evening. That very night, we drove from Alliance, OH to Ashland, OH. We visited with Ashley for about five hours and enjoyed every second. I hope that nothing ever tears us apart again. It was the best day of my life, besides the days when they were born. I hope and pray that one day soon I will have all eight of my children together with me. —Barbara Brown

End

Ashley Phelan, Social Worker



This is me at work holding one of the many babies that I have the joy of placing into loving families. I love adoption because I feel like it is such a

beautiful example of the Gospel. We ourselves were adopted into God's family!

I began to have a heart for the Amish when I lived back East a few years ago. As I got to know them, I saw them as friends, and it became my desire that they would know Jesus. After moving to California, I still desired to love and care for the Amish, and as a result became a supporter of MAP. In a recent newsletter, I read about a young lady who was going to be searching for her birth mother. MAP was asking for prayer as she began this journey. I emailed MAP and offered to help, since I work in adoptions. I wasn't sure what I could do, but I knew that at the very least I could offer her some long distance counsel and guidance. I also knew that I could connect her to a search professional whom I trusted and worked with before. I spoke with Joe Keim, who put me in touch with Ashley Yoder. I then put Ashley in touch with Bonnie Redfern, who is a fellow believer and who has had great success in reuniting birth families. It has been such a joy to be a part of this family reuniting.

Ashley Phelan, MS

Social Work Practitioner II

End

Bonnie Redfern, Search Pro



I strongly believe that bringing people together is part of the ministry of reconciliation given to those who follow Christ. It makes perfect sense that one of the ways of fulfilling this work is through connecting people who

have been separated by adoption. At times, I work closely with an adoption agency in central California. One of my colleagues at the agency asked if I would be willing to do a search for Ashley Yoder. A few days later, I received an email from Ashley, expressing her deep desire to be reunited with her birth mother. By providing me with details, I was able to identify and locate Ashley's birth mother using a variety of online resources and public records. What a wonderful surprise to find that her birth mother had been searching for Ashley, as well! God had worked in both of these women's hearts.

I sent a private message to Ashley's birth mother in hopes that she would soon respond. It was evening time when I received her first reply. She said, "I hope this is all true, because this would be a cruel joke." It had been almost 15 years since she had last seen Ashley. I reassured the birth mother that this was not a joke. In fact, I had two message windows opened on my laptop—one with Ashley and one with her birth mother. Ashley sent me questions to ask her birth mother about events that happened before the adoption—events that only her birth mother would know about. My excitement was overwhelming as I facilitated these messages, witnessing the reconciliation and love of Jesus Christ before my eyes. When Ashley was ready, I gave her the link to begin a conversation with her birth

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Bonnie, Continued

mother. As Ashley reached out in love, I received another message from her birth mother. She wrote, "You have made me the happiest woman on earth."

Ashley has shared her joy with me at finding her birth mother, looking at pictures from her childhood, and finding that her birth mother

saved things from Ashley's childhood. Within the next week, I received several messages from Ashley's birth mother's fiancé that confirmed that this was a blessed reunion. He shared that Ashley's birth mother "glows" ... "the house is brighter with happiness" ... "thanks to you and God and Jesus." I am blessed to witness when individuals who

were once apart are reunited to restore relationships. Such courage, motivated by love. May we all be united in Jesus, who adopted us (those who trust in Him) into His family thanks to His death, burial, and resurrection!

—Bonnie Redfern, New Path Center

Reunited!

—By Ashley Yoder

There are certain dates that stand out in a person's life. It may be a wedding, a birth, a death, or some other meaningful day. For me, Ashley Yoder, there are a couple dates that are very meaningful to me and which I would like to tell you about.

June 1, 2001. I was nine years old. It was the first day that I put on the dress and covering that I would be wearing at all times for the next thirteen-and-a-half years. It was the day when I



Ashley's recent baptism!

4 was placed into an Amish home. I was happy, excited, and yet nervous. I was happy and excited because I was going to be with all of my siblings after having been separated for over a year! I was nervous because I had an awful lot of changes to make. I also had a lot of learning to do. I had never been to church on Sunday mornings, but I had been taught that there was a God. My birth mother had told me that God is over all people and takes care of them.

July 29, 2002. Adoption day. This was a happy day for me, and yet deep inside my heart was a hurting spot that would not heal. I was glad to have been adopted, but naturally, I longed to be loved and cared for

by my own birth mother. Even though my name had been legally changed, I thought of my mom constantly and kept her in my heart.

I had many unanswered questions about life—not just about my own life, but about life in general. At that time, I did not really understand what the Bible said about salvation,

but I had a deep desire to know God. Sadly, I did not eagerly pursue that desire until I was seventeen. God was patient with me, though. I was ready for the peace and love of God to fill my empty heart and heal all of my wounds, sores, and broken pieces. I was tired of living in sin and trying to do everything on my own.

Not surprising to those who know the love of God, God's love changed me more than I could have ever imagined. I became calmer and more content than I ever was before. I even had respect for my adopted parents that I had not had before. I was willing to do what I knew God wanted me to do. It was easier to



Ashley and her mom together again!

understand His word; and for the first time in my life, my heart did not hurt anymore. I had my ups and downs, but that is to be expected in this life. Praise God for his healing love and power! I daily thank Jesus for dying that awful death on the cross for me. He took my place upon Calvary's tree!

August 26, 2014. Through Joe Keim's contacts, I was introduced to Ashley Phelan. She gave me the email address of another kind woman named Bonnie Goodrell Redfern. On August 26, 2014, I began emailing some information to Bonnie—my birthdate, sibling's names, and some other things. She soon emailed me some pictures

and asked me if they looked familiar. In that first evening of communicating with her—the connection was made!

After being separated from my mother for almost fifteen years, we were reunited. That very night, my mother came to my house and we visited for several hours. My heart was filled with joy and love. I had finally found my mother! God sure did answer my prayers. He is an awesome God! Never ever doubt God's power! —Ashley

End

There are various ways you can leave something to continue the Lord's work here when you graduate to Heaven:

1. **Trusts:** Set up a trust that may offer tax advantages and allow you to directly give. Trusts come in many forms including: revocable, irrevocable, and living.
2. **Estate Planning:** Choose to name our ministry in your will.
3. **Life insurance:** It is often set up so that the premiums are tax deductible.
4. **Annuities:** Annuities can be set up so that you keep the principle and the ministry receives the interest.



Trained estate and tax planners can assist you in this area. Thanks for considering how you will be a good steward of God's blessings.

Receiving duplicate mailings?

Please note your correct name and address and return all labels to the address above

Moving?

Please send us the new address

Not interested in the MAP Update?

Please let us know and we will remove you from the active list

Burlap, A Barn, and A Bride

—By Joe Keim



Earlier this year, I was asked by Emery and Elizabeth if I would marry them. At the time, they were both Amish; however, in their hearts they knew that they would be leaving the culture, and they desired an English wedding.

After several months of premarital counseling and planning, the big day,

grandparents showed up to celebrate the special day.

While we celebrated the couple's special day, a young man walked up and said, "Joe, do you remember how you stopped by and gave me a study Bible when I was a young Amish boy? Well, I just want you to know, I still use that Bible every day." Later in the day, a young woman in Amish clothes walked up and said, "Joe, do you remember how you came to my family's home ten years ago? My mom was laid up because of a buggy accident and you came to share the gospel with her. While you shared the gospel, some twenty Amish people entered our home to visit mom, and you kept right on sharing the gospel. I was just a little girl at that time, standing in the

October 4th, finally arrived. The wedding was held in the top half of a barn and was attended by about 50-60 Amish, former Amish, and English people in the neighborhood. Attendees sat on hay bales covered with burlap sacks. The aisle runner was also made of burlap sacks. Wagon wheels, buggy lanterns, and horse collars were used for decorations. It was very different, and everyone enjoyed themselves tremendously. Since it was an English wedding, neither set of parents or



background and listening to the gospel for the first time."

Keep sowing the seeds, friends, for we do not know what eternal results God may have in store.



**Get ready! Tell your friends and family!
Save the dates! Stay tuned for more info!**

