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**Dear Friend,**

**September 2002**

We hope that this newsletter finds you doing well physically and spiritually.

Can you believe it!? Summer is disappearing fast; fall is right around the bend and our question is...where did the summer go?

#### **Thank You**

Summer has been somewhat rough for the MAP ministry financially. With the increase of Sonlight Club Bible lessons going out and quite a bit of ministry travel going on, we sometimes had to wonder where the next dollar would come from. Thank you so much for your faithful giving over the summer months. Some of you dear people really came through when you found out that the ministry was struggling financially. God bless you for helping out.

#### **Missouri Trip**

Our family is preparing to leave for Missouri the end of this week where we will be presenting the MAP Ministry to four churches in 10 days. While in the area we want to visit the young Amish couple in LaPlata, MO that got saved when we were out there in the spring. We also want to visit a young former Amish man named Samuel in Columbia, MO, who we have gotten to know over the past few months.

#### **A Blessed Summer**

It has been an exciting summer for the MAP Ministry. We have had a number of former Amish stop by our place for the night to visit and talk about the ministry. They came from Minnesota, New York, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Missouri. We really want to be-

lieve that God is stirring all of our hearts and preparing for something great to happen throughout the Amish communities.

#### **Hunger for God's Truth**

Joe met with a young 16-yr. old Amish person named Levi who just recently got saved and is just so hungry for the Lord. When Joe asked him if he would accept a tape player and some good preaching tapes, he said yes, give me all the resources you can give me to help me know the Lord better. He told Joe that he had never called anyone on the phone in his life but he is sure that he will be calling soon for more tapes and spiritual resources.

#### **Sharing the Gospel**

Joe had the opportunity to share the plan of salvation with an 18-year-old Amish man named Benjamin. Benjamin did not make a decision for Christ but was/is very close. Please pray for another young man named Sammy who has been in jail for some time now and has been very open to hearing the gospel.

#### **Baptism**

If you remember we had written about a young man named Aden in our last newsletter who had traveled to Ashland, OH from Montana to seek help in getting on his feet physically and spiritually. It has been great to see Aden go to church and Bible study on a regular basis. This past Sunday he followed the Lord in baptism at our home church. Our pastor gave Joe the opportunity to baptize Aden - what an honor and a blessing it was.

#### **Leaving the Amish**

Just in the last month there has been a number of young folks leave the Amish. Esther has been very busy helping some of the girls get jobs/clothe/social security cards/drivers licenses, etc.

#### **Wild Beast Feast**

The Wild Beast Feast was a tremendous success. Out of 300 people that showed up for the outreach event, 12 were Amish people. We had 9 people make decisions for Christ and one of them was an Amish person. We have followed up on every one of these that made decisions. We are already looking forward to putting on another one of these events for next year. My hope is that we will see many more Amish people in it next year.

#### **Traveling South**

We spent a full week at a family conference in North Carolina—a time our family needed so very much.

Our family spent the next week at a Missions Conference in Alabama. On our way home, we passed out New Testaments in several Amish communities living in the KY & TN area. God opened the door for some good Bible discussions with a number of Amish people.

#### **Preaching & Sharing MAP**

We praise God for allowing us to minister to 6 churches over the past two months. We have 10 more churches scheduled for September and October. Pray that God would give us the strength we need.

*Turn Page*

### Sonlight Club

We would like to tip our hats and say **thank you** to Kari Carpenter from Wellington, OH, for two great years of helping us out with the Sonlight Club. Kari and the children sent out many a Bible lesson to Amish families throughout Ohio during the past two years, but have come to a point where they need a break. We thank God for bringing us another lady, Joyce Mohrman, to help take over where Kari and the children left off.

We also want to thank Bridgette Carrick for the many hours she puts in every week, picking up the Bible lessons at the Post Office, grading the test sheets, entering the information into the computer,

and sending the lessons back out.

We just received six more Amish directories this month that we want to start using to send out Bible lessons. These directories cover 11 States where Amish live. We have thousands and thousands of Amish families to work with and it is going to take many hundreds of postage stamps. We would like to conclude this letter with **three things** in mind...

1. **THANK YOU** to all of you who have donated postage stamps to the Sonlight Club. Our hearts were touched by the children at First Baptist Church in West Salem who raised lots of postage stamps during

VBS this year.

2. We need many more postage stamps. Would you pray to God and ask Him how you or your church could help us raise the postage stamps?
3. We need more volunteers to help us with the Sonlight Club. You can work out of your homes. If you are interested at all, please call us at (419) 962-1515 and we will explain to you how it works.

May God Bless **you** as **we** serve **together** for **His** glory!

Joe, Esther, Jonathan, Rachel Keim

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### Testimony written by...John Burkholder, 22397 State Hwy 156, La Plata, Mo. 63549—burkholder@missvalley.com

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I grew up in an Old Order Amish community in Pa., believing that if I remained steadfast in the keeping of the ordinances I would surely go to Heaven when I die. As long as I did not commit any of the “big sins”, I should be all right. I went to church every two weeks as was required. I didn't drink or smoke. I was a pretty good boy in public. However, I was a genuine hypocrite. I was a liar, a burglar, and a fornicator. I was just a filthy, rotten, no good “good-for-nothing”.

My father owned a small engine shop and one of the largest apple cider presses in the state of Pennsylvania. That, of course, gave us plenty of opportunities to visit with non-Amish people. Several of our customers were members of Grace Baptist Church. I remember very well when the pastor of that church witnessed to me one on one. However, it did no good at the time. I saw no need for a change. (After all, I was a church member and went to church every two weeks) I read my Bible occasionally, too.

In the spring of 1987, when I was 18, my parents moved to another Amish community in Wisconsin. I was self-conscious. The move to a more conservative community provided a new environment. I was no longer with my very filthy “buddy”. (There were girls in Wisconsin, too.) That thought helped me to clean up my act a lot. I soon met Polly Stutzman, who, two years later, became my wife. After we got married, we raised calves and I had a small woodshop. We made some bad decisions that eventually led to financial problems.

My paternal grandparents lived in Missouri. By 1991, Grandma's health was failing. My parents decided to move to Mo. to help take care of her (and Grandpa). Polly and I decided to move down there, too. My uncle is a carpenter. I went to work for him. He is a very religious man that seems to think he understands the Bible better than the average Amish-man does. We often discussed religious matters, which I enjoyed.

On October 26, 1997, I was ordained a lay minister. At first, it was hard for me to preach, but as I studied the Bible and memorized scriptures, it became easier. Before long, I really enjoyed preaching. I had a little different style of preaching which made me well liked. As a preacher, I studied the scriptures more than I had before. I started having questions about certain inconsistencies. (The shunning cannot be backed up by scripture; and according to 1 Corinthians, Chapter 11, there is just as much emphasis on men as there is on women; therefore men should never wear a

hat if women always have to wear a head covering, etc.) Those questions got me to digging deeper in the scriptures.

In Feb. 1991, my great aunt passed away in another community. My two uncles and one aunt that got saved left the Amish about 15 years earlier were at the funeral too. I listened as two or three Amish preachers confronted my aunt's husband, Ervin. I was ashamed of some of the things they came up with. I also noticed that Ervin stood firmly on the scriptures. The things he said made sense and were indisputable in my opinion. However, in spite of all that, I still did not agree with his “lifestyle” (English clothes, driving cars, etc.)

One evening that spring, I had to use the public phone. Suddenly, I had the urge to call my uncle Joe. When he answered the phone, I told him I really did not know what I wanted, but that I just had an urge to call him. That was just the beginning of many phone calls to my uncles and other ex-Amish. We would discuss scriptures, etc. I would make at least one or two trips to the phone every week.

In the meantime, my parents were also beginning to see the light. They started hosting Bible studies with Pastor Glen Yoder and other ex-Amish. On one such occasion, I asked my aunt's husband, Ervin, about the doctrine of eternal security. He replied that he did not care to discuss that until one understood the doctrine of salvation. He then presented the plan of salvation in a way that was easy to understand.

The following Sunday I preached the plan of salvation in the Amish church. I was so excited! It was so simple. I thought everybody should be able to understand it. However, that Sunday's sermon turned out to be a controversial subject. From that point on the Bible became alive. It was as though the secrets of God were opened up for me. What a wonderful experience!

My wife, Polly, accepted Christ a few weeks after I did. Then everything in our lives changed. I quit praying out of a prayer book. Then I started praying in English. (That was a big step; I was not sure that God understood English.) Eventually we decided that we could no longer live the Amish lifestyle and help police the Amish ordinances; knowing that they had no benefit towards salvation.

While all these things were happening, Polly's parents lived with us. Of course, when they found out what was going on they quickly arranged to move in with one of their other daughters.