

# MINISTRY UPDATE

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## BIG Thank you!

A huge big thank you to all who participated in the \$10,000 matching gift challenge during June and July. Wow! We are still amazed by how willingly people gave toward this challenge.

### Thirty four people gave \$31,404

Testimony: One of our faithful God fearing volunteers, who participated in the challenge said, "Joe, I get \$1100 a month in social security. And out of that, I put \$100 a month back in savings to use in emergencies." Then he added, "I am going to give you 3 months of savings toward the matching gift."

This extra income helped MAP catch up on all the bills. We were also able to replace some of our old computers and a printer that burned up.

The rest of the money has been placed in a savings account to help supplement the added expenses of hiring a Director of Education for MAP. We will have more on this later.

But once again, thank you ever so kindly for giving and giving to MAP. You are treasured and prayed for regularly.

## Leaving A Lasting Legacy

Have you considered making a lasting investment by adding MAP to your will, life insurance, trust, or other financial plan?

If you're interested in joining others who have already made that commitment, let us know. We would love to talk to you about it.

## Dear Friend:

For some reason, it seems like a long time since we delivered a ministry update to your address. But as always, we have a lot to tell you, if you have the time to read it.

In July, our whole family took a week off and went to the Smokey Mountains and Gatlinburg TN area for some rest and fun. We saw real Indians, ate lots of junk food and toured hundreds of gift shops; the gift shops all sold the same stuff but somehow they appeared different to the women in our lives. While the women shopped, Jonathan and I moved from bench to bench in the scorching sun.

With Jonathan living in his own house and Rachel off to Malone University, Esther and I are once again empty nesters.



## September 2010

The family life all happened so fast—one moment we are leaving the hospital delivery room, crying for joy, and the next moment we are crying in sadness, as we watch our two grown adults go out on their own.

James said it so well, when he wrote...*For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. (James 4:14)*

But while we are here on earth, dear friend, remember, it is our generation—our turn to make a

difference. Let's do it with all our heart! Let's stay faithful to what God has called us to do. Don't give up like so many are doing. We have what the world needs and is looking for.

## Moving on to Higher Ground

Years ago, education wasn't such a big deal. MAP did not push it and most of the ones who came here for help did not care much about getting a higher education. The attitude was, help me find a job, a car, an apartment, and I will be all set. That, however, has changed. If you leave the Amish and move here for help and support, you will immediately be pounced upon by a multitude of young people who will not let you skip out on your GED. The attitude now is, we did it and you can too!

For some, getting a GED comes easily and quickly; for others, the GED is the hardest thing they ever accomplished. Yes, there are tears of frustration and discouragement,



life on hold while reaching out with help and encouragement.

Ruth, (photo 1, fifth from left), is one of several teachers who has poured her life into these young people. She writes: *It was a real pleasure to work with each of these. All their tutors agree that we feel privileged to have had a part in this phase of their lives. They honored us by their willing attitudes, their attendance record and their eagerness for success.*

Pray for Lizzie (photo 1, third from left). She will have to re-take her social studies test again; we went ahead and added her anyways since she came so close.

We are grateful to all those who came out and celebrated the accomplishments of these hard working and dedicated people.



## Mentoring Workshop

On Saturday, October 9, 2010, Believer's Fellowship in Goshen IN will be hosting our 2nd annual Mentoring Workshop. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about how to mentor young Christian converts, please sign up. The price to attend is \$49, which includes a workbook that you can take home with you afterwards.

I could not be more excited about this event because mentoring works, and yet, so few know how to do it.

Please do not hesitate to call us if you have questions or are interested in knowing more about the workshop.

## Dear Joe Email

Question: I was wondering if u can still fluently speak Pennsylvania Dutch? or maybe u n ur wife still speak it at home, i have a buddy that left the Amish 4 years ago n says he cant speak Dutch anymore, n i am curious if it's the same for everybody, doesn't really matter, was just wondering...

Answer: You may be surprised to know that even after 23 years, Esther and I can still speak Dutch fairly well, even though our two children are not able to do so. It takes me about 5 minutes to warm up but whenever someone speaks to me in Dutch, I do my best to respond in the same dialect.

For the first few years after I left the Amish, I thought and dreamed in Dutch, however that all changed to English after about 2-3 years.

## Director of Education

After months and months of looking at nearly 100 resumes and interviewing 7 people for the Director of Education position, MAP made a final decision to hire Robert.

Within a few weeks, Robert and his wife Beth will be moving to our area from Virginia, and at that point, Robert will start working out of our office in Savannah.



Robert was raised in a Mennonite setting; he not only shares our burden, but also understands the physical and spiritual needs that MAP faces on a daily basis. During his life, Robert ran a successful business, served as a local pastor and ran a Christian school. Much of that experience will fall into play as he ministers through the MAP ministry.

As Director of Education, Robert will be responsible in the following five areas of ministries:

### 1. SonLight Club

With 5,000 students enrolled in our Bible correspondence program, we are in need of putting together a more advanced curriculum for those who have been with us for 2-3 years. This advanced curriculum will offer a verse by verse study of the Old and New testament.

### 2. Bible School

It has been my burden for several years to establish an on-sight 1 to 2 year Bible school for those who desire to further their Bible education. During this period of time, we would also provide hands on ministry experience, such as teaching, preaching, jail and nursing home ministry, etc. —it's called mentoring.

### 3. Home School

As more and more families leave the Amish culture, both locally and long distance, they are faced with sending their children to either public or private school. Most of the time they want neither, so the parents choose to home school their 5-10 children at home. The problem is, the mother is often unprepared for such a task and soon gets discouraged and all of a sudden school is placed on the back burner and becomes unimportant. The child grows up and at the age 18 finds him/herself unprepared for the real world.

### 4. College

There is a need to come along side some of our young people and help them find the right colleges and connect them with available grant monies, etc.

### 5. Practical Life Skills Classes

Develop and implement life skills classes, equipping formerly Amish people to engage and succeed in the English culture. Many do not know where to start when it comes to life insurance, retirement, living wills, family wills and trusts, funeral and burial planning, etc.

## Wedding Bells



My pastor and I had the privilege of doing Eli and Rachel's wedding at our home church. Since neither one of their parents showed up for the wedding, two adopted parents and many friends stepped up to the

plate and helped out wherever they could.

It was one of the most beautiful weddings ever. Without a doubt it had to do with the fact that they both are giants in the faith.

Hot off the press!!!

Rachel passed her GED test last week.

## Volunteer Appreciation



We would not be able to do the ministry without the help of our faithful volunteers.

Each year, about midway through the year, we do something special with the ones that come out day after day and spend hundreds of hours helping out.

This year we loaded them all up in a van and took them to Amish Country, where we fed them well, toured a cheese house, went to some gift stores and finally ended up at the Amish Door restaurant where we all ate and listened to the Booth Brothers sing. It was one of the best times anybody could ever have. We love our volunteers and so does God! Their heavenly reward will be great!

**Today, I Found God!**



About 2 months ago, I received a call from Stephen, telling me that he was looking around on the internet and found a video of our ministry to the Amish, which, in turn, led him to our web site.

After about 15 minutes of conversation, both of us suddenly realized that we only lived one town apart from each other.

For the next week or two, Stephen and I spent a lot of time on the phone and also in Bible studies. In that time, I learned from Stephen that he had been born and raised in a very conservative Mennonite setting, very similar to the Old Order Amish teachings that I grew up with.

Stephen said to me, "Joe, I left the Old Order Mennonites about 6 months ago and checked myself in at a hospital and for the past 6-months I have isolated myself from the outside world." He went on to explain how he had become very bitter toward his church and family for various reasons that took place in his lifetime. In fact, he said, "for the past two years, my parents and the church send me to various counseling centers in OH, IN and MI, while spending more than \$100,000 to get help for me, and Joe, nothing helped."

One day, as Stephen and I were traveling along in my car, I suddenly realized that the Holy Spirit was really working on Stephen. Up until this point, Ste-

phen had always told me that he thought he was saved, but now all of a sudden he wasn't sure.

I pulled my car off the side of the road, got my Bible out of my glove box and began to share God's plan of salvation. About 15 minutes later, I could tell that the blinding scales were falling from Stephen's eyes. And in their place, big tears of joy started to form and run down his cheeks. All of a sudden, he cried out loud, "I have found the Lord, I have found the Lord! ... for two years, I have prayed fervently that God would help me find Him and just a minute ago, I found Him! ... Now I know that I am saved!"



Ever since that day, four weeks ago, Stephen has been volunteering his days at the MAP Ministry, and Lord willing, he is getting baptized on September 5th.

He has gone to most of his family members, apologizing for his anger toward them, while also sharing the gospel

with every single one of them. He is sure that God has called him to ministry and would like to work for MAP full time. To read Stephen's testimony, "From the Pits of Hell to the Highest Heaven", please go to...

[www.mapministry.org/news/former-amish-testimonies](http://www.mapministry.org/news/former-amish-testimonies)

Stephen is one of three young people who have gotten saved in the past few weeks; two are getting baptized this Lord's Day. It has been exciting to see the Living God of the Universe work in human hearts.

**Online Question**

Dear MAP Ministry: I would like information on becoming a member of the Amish community. Thank You. The world is becoming a more wicked place to live in and I need a place to start over and get away from its wicked selfish system. Please let me know what your requirement is to become a part of your community.

Sincerely —D.

Joe's Answer: I realize that from your side of the fence the Amish culture looks like a great place to belong, and in many ways it is. However, please realize that if you were to cross over, you would find that the Amish also have to deal with selfishness and are going through much turmoil. The best advice I could give you is that you should take an honest look into your own heart, right where you're at, and make any personal changes that you feel need to be made.

**95 Year Old Prays for MAP Daily**



Words cannot describe how blessed we feel to know that hundreds of people pray for MAP and its ministry out-

reaches on a daily basis. Recently, 95 year old Dorothy visited our office so that she could get a better idea on how to pray for us.

*and the board's decisions, for the salvation of many more Amish, for parents of those whose children have gotten saved, for growth and disciplining of new believers, etc. May you know we care and have MAP in our hearts for the glory of God! Be encouraged! God loves you and we do too! — Mel & Martha Shetler*

Having said that, would you add the following couples to your MAP prayer list? They are ones who are considering and praying about a partnership with MAP. All of us are seeking the Lord's direction.

- (a) Paul and Jen— MO
- (b) Bob and Sue—NY
- (c) Ernie and Clara Mae—IL

Another friend and supporter writes

*Dear "MAP," & Joe & Esther, How we pray for you daily, for God's blessing, for wisdom in all your*

**Little Ones Involved in Missions**



I love it when churches get their young ones involved in missions.

That happened twice this summer when two of

our supporting churches in Ohio used MAP as a mission's project in connection with their Children's Bible clubs. And as you can see, these children gave all kinds of goodies, even candy for the volunteers.

Thanks to all of you! It felt great to be on the receiving end. God bless all of you richly!



## My Testimony

— Written by Monroe Raber

### Introduction

*The testimony you are about to read is 4 pages long and will most likely bring tears to your eyes. It was written by Monroe, a young man who left his Amish family in Michigan, moved to Ohio, and in time, started dating an English girl named Tiffany.*

*All seemed well until Monroe was torn between going back to his parents, who are still Amish, or staying with Tiffany, who grew up English. However, in time, Tiffany was able to let go of Monroe, and as Monroe prepares to go back to his Amish family and settle down, God, out of the blue, uses a country preacher in Southern Ohio to preach the gospel, give an invitation and both Monroe and Tiffany go to the altar and cry out for the very salvation of their souls.*

*Finding salvation in the midst of so much turmoil made things even more complicated for the two. However, with the Savior now residing in their lives, they were able to see things in a different perspective.*

*One day, Tiffany went on the internet to see if there might be some help available for what they were going through, and it was then that God directed her to our ministry's web site. Ever since then, Esther and I have had the awesome privilege of taking Monroe and Tiffany through a 26-week Bible study. The two are faithful and drive a good 2-1/2 hrs. one way to our house to do their bi-weekly study. In July, I was invited to help baptize both of them in a river down in southern Ohio.*

*One last thing: What Monroe is about to describe in his testimony happens to thousands of Amish teenagers all over America. Few, if any, could have put it in words like Monroe does. And I might add; I am very thankful that he took the time to write it out, because many former Amish will read this and find comfort in that someone else has traveled the same road they did and can relate.*

And now, here is Monroe...



I was born a typical Amish boy in central Michigan. Growing up, my brothers and I did what normal Amish boys do. Since my dad did construction, and we only had a 1½ acre farm, we got bored a lot. I have 2 brothers, one just older than me and one just younger than me. I'm sure we caused mom quite a few gray hairs, trying to keep up with us mischievous little guys. We had goats for milk, so often times we rode goats, led them around, hitched them to sleds in the winter time, chased cats, climbed trees, rode wagons.

I remember one incident quite clearly. It was a nice winter day so we decided to hitch a couple of young goats to a sled, much like a team of horses. Well, we got them hitched up (using baler twine for harness) but they didn't really want to work together very well. Soon mom called us to lunch so we just tied them up in the barn, intending on resuming our training after lunch. But when we got out to the barn, we were very disappointed. Our beloved sled was torn to pieces—with the goats standing there tied up and looking very innocent! I think that's the last time we tried that. But all in all, life was great, simple, fun, and I was very content.

When I was thirteen, we moved to a more liberal church (fewer rules) in southwest-

ern Michigan. Life became interesting then, adjusting to the new rules, having more modern conveniences such as blinkers and mirrors on our buggies, etc., but things didn't work out. Mom and dad didn't like it there, I guess, so we moved back to the old community with the stricter rules. That's when my rebellious streak came out. I didn't want to give all of those things up. (I only mentioned a few as an example. There were quite a lot of other things that were different, also.) So I started hiding things from my parents: battery watch, harmonica, etc.

About a year later, we moved to the southern part of Michigan. That community had similar rules to the one I grew up in, so the rebellious streak continued. I met some very good buddies there that also didn't like the rules of that church. One thing led to another, and we soon had little hand-held radios with headphones so we could listen to country music for a while when we went to bed, and NASCAR races on Sunday afternoon. Then along came the CD players, DVD players, cell phones and then finally, drinking. Of course, the main purpose for cell phones was to text "English" girls. All of this was kept secret from my brothers, sisters, parents and the church.

I soon became the age of baptism (in that church, the usual baptism age was eighteen). I didn't want to get baptized, I didn't like the rules there and I wasn't at peace with the church. My parents were, of course, very saddened when I told them I had no intentions of getting baptized with the rest of the group my age. Somehow, the ministers found out and talked to my mom and dad. They pretty much stated that I better get baptized or they were

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going to hold my parents responsible. So I did get baptized, very unwillingly, taking it very lightly, to try to keep the peace. And I also did try to straighten up a little and follow the rules more, but I wasn't saved. I didn't have Jesus as my personal Savior and thus my intentions didn't last for more than a couple of weeks. I was back into the same things again, maybe even worse than before.

And then it happened! My mom and Dad found my cell phone at the neighbors' where I had plugged it in to charge. Turns out they had been noticing that I spent a lot of time at the neighbors, where I often had to feed horses, and were getting suspicious about it. They decided to investigate and found my phone. At first, they didn't tell me they found it. They just told me that I wasn't allowed to hang out with my buddies at the Sunday evening singings anymore. I asked them why, but all they would tell me was they found out something that they didn't like about me. I was devastated. I didn't have a clue what they found; I had so many things I wasn't supposed to have. The suspense was terrible.

Then, one day, they told me they had found my phone and were very displeased. The devastation just got worse. They said I would have to give them my phone so they could get rid of it. My rebellion boiled over. I was sick of leading a secret life, I was sick of all the rules, I was sick of being pushed around. I decided that's it; I'm leaving my home and the Amish. I was going to run away.

I called my buddy's brother that had already left the Amish, and asked if he knew of somebody that would give me a home and a job. He called several people, then called back and told me that he

found somebody that would do it; I was tickled! I was leaving! Then one Saturday night, after I had my bath, I went out behind the barn so nobody could hear me call my buddy, and told him I was leaving. I used some very strong cuss words, telling him I was sick of this Amish life and was leaving. After the conversation was over, I went around to the front of the barn to go to the house. I happened to glance in the open barn door as I passed and thought I saw something white (it was pretty dark). So I walked back around the barn and peered around the corner to see what it was. Much to my dismay, my mom and dad walked out of the barn towards the *doddy* house (a house that was right across the driveway, where my grandpa and grandma lived). Soon I heard loud sobs from the *doddy* house, and the tearful voices of my parents blurting out "Monroe is going to leave!"

I was now more devastated than ever! I found out later that my mom got suspicious of me sneaking behind the barn and decided to eavesdrop. She had heard every word I'd said. I didn't want to go face my parents but I knew I had to sooner or later. As I entered the doorway, my mom, who had never hugged me, came over to me, grabbed my arm, and hung on to me like a person who was drowning. A fresh flood of tears came from both me and her when she sobbed "Oh, Monroe! What have we done? Why do you want to leave us?" I couldn't speak. I cried like a baby, but I had to go. I had too much rebellion for even that to break my strong spirit. They talked to me way into the night, trying to get me to change my mind, but I was too stubborn. I left the next evening. My family was heartbroken.

At first, life was great! I loved being English! I could watch TV, ride a bike, and when I got my license, I could drive!

Wow! That was the most thrilling experience of all! I pushed God and my family to the back of my mind and "enjoyed" life.



We went boating, tubing, snowmobiling, four wheeling and all the other fun things I never got to

do. Occasionally, my parents would write to me and let me know what was going on in the family, and always asked when I was coming back. My answer was always, not yet. I was having too much fun.

A little over one year after I left, I met this wonderful girl, Tiffany. She was so nice



and sweet, I fell in love with her almost

instantly. I was definitely living life at its fullest then. Her family accepted me very well and I was very content.

Then my parents invited me home for Christmas. I already had plans, so I told them, I couldn't make it, but would be there the next weekend.

When I finally got there, my parents had a very good talk with me and I broke down. I missed my family. I missed the simple Amish life. I told them I wanted to come home. But then when I told Tiffany I planned on going home, and that I had to

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leave her, she was devastated. It broke her heart. She loved me. I loved her. We cried together long into the night. She tried to be very unselfish about it, saying that she didn't want to let me go, but if she had to, she would, and she would just have to be glad for the short time she had me. That went straight to my heart! I started thinking that I couldn't leave her, so I wrote my parents and told them I couldn't come home. They wrote me back saying they missed me and wanted me back, and also wanted me to make things right with God so I could be with them in heaven. Now I was torn. One week I decided I was going to go back, and the next week I decided to stay with Tiffany.

Finally, Tiffany suggested we go to church, so we did. The pastor was very nice. He noticed something wasn't right and asked us about it. We both tried to explain through our tears what was going on. He tried to help, but since he wasn't from the Amish, he didn't understand my feelings completely.

The next week went by in a daze. I was very confused. One minute I was going to



go back, and the next I was going to stay out with Tiffany. That next Sun-

day, we went to a different church and for the first time since I left the Amish, I felt at home in this church. Even me, a sinner, could feel a very strong presence of God. That night, I believe I told Tiffany I was staying out here in the English world. I'd found a wonderful church and felt like I might be forgiven by God for not obeying my parents and the Amish church. But the very next day, my feelings wavered. I was

homesick again. I broke her heart by telling her I wasn't sure I could stay out here. I hated hurting her like this! I needed help badly, but I didn't know where to turn.

Then my aunt, who had left the Amish some time ago, called me and started witnessing to me. I was desperate. I soaked it all in. She started telling me what it's like to be born again, and instantly, I felt a strong need to be like that, but still wasn't sure what and how I was going to do to achieve that.

One Sunday evening, we had an extra spiritual service at church. Several people went to the altar so we went up to pray for them and God started dealing with me. I knew I couldn't go sit back down without pouring it all out to God. And blessing of all blessings, Tiffany knelt at the altar before I did and gave her heart to the Lord! When I finally knelt after she had risen, I knew what I needed. I poured my sins out to the Lord and asked for forgiveness. The whole church prayed with me. Up to that point, it was the most powerful cleansing feeling I had ever felt. When I rose from my knees, my heart felt light! For the first time I felt forgiven! Free from sin! Words cannot explain the joyous feeling I had at that moment. It was like a huge weight had been lifted off my chest. Somebody could've stole all my money and belongings and not dampened my spirits at all! I had Jesus! I was going to heaven!

It turned out later that God spoke to both of our hearts at the same time, causing us to get saved the same night, without knowing the other was going to do the same. That is still one of the greatest blessings to this day. I serve an amazing God.

The glorious feeling lasted for about a week, but then I wanted to do everything just right, and the old me came back. I felt like I had to go back, obey my parents and

the Amish, to have God's blessing in life. So the indecision came back. Days dragged to weeks. It put quite a strain on our relationship. We finally broke up. I couldn't bear watching Tiffany hurting so badly, and she couldn't handle knowing I might not be there with her much longer.

I tried to move on. I decided to finish my jobs out here in the English world and than go back to the Amish. After about three weeks of not seeing Tiffany, I was at a very low point in my life. God was such a comfort in those times. He gave me peace when no human could. I missed Tiffany so much! I started wondering if I could live without her, and I also had been reading scripture that made me see that my salvation is not based upon what I have done but what Christ had done for me. I really got confused then, so I decided to fast and pray.

After that, I felt very strongly that God was telling me to decide to stay out here and just simply trust Him. So I did, and He delivered. In less than a week I received a package from *Mission to Amish People* with a lot of good spiritual reading. And since Joe Keim had also been Amish and knew what I was going through, he knew exactly how to handle my situation. I received so much encouragement from the package. Tiffany and I set up a meeting with him and discussed our situation with him. He was so very helpful. He got us started in a Bible study that we set up to do every other weekend with him. And what a blessing Joe has been to both of us! He is a great man of God with a great ministry, and my prayer is that God would bless him as he has blessed us.

Things have really fallen into place after I put it all in the Lord's hands and decided to trust in him. Tiffany and I got back together and are doing Bible studies with Joe, which we both really enjoy!

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God has been so wonderfully good to us, and I received a call from my mom and dad a couple of weeks ago. They told me that if it is God's will for me to stay out here, they want to accept it. What a blessing! In fact, my parents are currently searching for truth about being born again. I am trying to be a witness and a help to them. Prayers would be very much appreciated. My prayer is that through all this, my family could get saved. It would all be worth it then.

Tiffany and I got baptized just a couple of weeks ago. It was a wonderful turnout and a very blessed day! So many people showed up to support us, which I was



very thankful for. My cup definitely runneth over. I am a very



blessed person, and I give thanks and praise to God for all the prayers that were sent Heavenward on my behalf. May God bless each and every one of you as he has blessed me. —Monroe

P.S. I would like to close with a couple of pointers that have helped me along the way. First of all, when you get saved, you are born again spiritually. Now you're like a baby. The old has died and the new is born. Put away all preconceived notions that may have been taught by men, look what the bible says exactly, and listen to God through the Holy Spirit. I have found that the only way to have peace with God is to listen to Him and to trust Him with all your heart. And most of all, know that Jesus died for your sins and if you accept Him, you are forgiven. Your sins are cov-

ered by His blood that He shed on the cross and He will be your advocate (lawyer) on Judgment Day (1 John 2:1). You cannot plead your own case based on your good works and without Christ. He already made the sacrifice for you and you just need to accept Him as your personal savior. Today...

—End of Testimony—

Special Note: Back in July, we sent all of our donors a copy of Tiffany's testimony. It was just as awesome and powerful as this one. If you are interested in reading it, please go to our web site at [www.MapMinistry.org](http://www.MapMinistry.org) and do one of the following:

1. Type "Tiffany" in the search bar, located at the top right corner of the home page and it will bring her testimony up —or—
2. Type the following address in your web browser exactly as shown:

[www.mapministry.org/news-and-testimonies/news-and-facts-about-this-and-that](http://www.mapministry.org/news-and-testimonies/news-and-facts-about-this-and-that)

### Switching Cultures is Never Easy

Those who leave the Amish culture, often do so cold turkey. Teenagers often leave in the middle of the night and walk for miles to meet up with an acquaintance, hoping when they get there, someone will take them in and help them become established in their new adventure. Families, on the other hand, are not as able to disappear into the night. Oftentimes, they already own a property of their own and will remain where they are at.

In both situations, the emotions and adrenalin run high, because oftentimes, it means that most of the connections are lost with their Amish roots and security they once knew. In time, however, the adults will find new friends they can lean onto for support; it might be others who traveled the same path or a church group who loves on them.

In a family situation, the children are often expected to make the same changes, with little or no choice. It was not until recently that I noticed a trend among the younger children. Many of them go through severe trauma when they are uprooted from their safe

and secure environment and transplanted into a brand new culture. Unlike the parents, the children are not able to pick up the phone or jump in the car and go meet with supporting friends.



The affects have ranged from children becoming violent to running away and hiding in the woods for hours at a time. Recently, a former Amish father called and asked what he should do with his 10 year old son. He said, my son all of a sudden does not want to have anything to do with prayer and he is very discouraged and does not believe that God even cares about him.

Not long ago, an older teenager called to share how he had recently left the Amish with his girlfriend. Then he added, my girlfriend would like for me to change to English clothes, but so far, I have not been able to get myself to do it. He went on to say, I did make a small change; I started wearing a stocking cap when I go outdoors. My former Amish friend told me, in time, you will even feel more comfortable and walk around in a tee-shirt.

## Amish Preacher's Son Ends Up In Prison

—by Ernie Yoder

Introduction: Ernie comes from an Amish background and lives in the state of Illinois. For the past year, he has acted as a moderator for the *Amish Forum and Discussion Board* that runs adjacent to our web site. Some of our readers will know him as Simon Peter, since that is the name he uses on the board.

Ernie is also involved in a prison ministry, and recently, after he came back from ministering at a prison, he shared the following post on the *Forum and Discussion Board*:

Ernie writes: We had a good day in prison; there is something very wonderful that I would like to share with you. As the inmates came out into the yard where the activities and foods were being served, we met all the inmates and blessed them at the entrance as they came through the entry gate.

After all were sitting on the ground or standing around listening to the music groups, I started walking...slowly walking through the crowd...thinking...Lord, where do I stop?...Who do I talk to? Where is my first divine appointment?...Oh here. I sat down between 2 men and started a conversation with them and a few minutes later, the man on the other side of him, leaned

forward and looked at me and started smiling. He looked at my name tag and then looked at me again and asked, "Kannst du mich verstehe?" (Can you understand me?) That question started a discussion with an Amish convict whose father is an Amish minister.

At 28 years old, Devon told me, being incarcerated was the best thing that could ever happen to him. In fact, he said, "this is where I found Jesus" — He now loves the Lord so much.

Tears just flowed down my cheeks as he shared his story. Devon shared how his father was ordained as an Amish minister even before he (Devon) was born. Yes, he grew up sitting on the preachers bench in church, hearing Dad lead in devotions at home, working with dad at home and yet he didn't get to know Jesus until he ended up in a prison cell. That's where he reached the bottom of the barrel...the end of his resources... and Jesus was there, inviting him to accept the plan of salvation.

Last Christmas his family came to visit him and he shared his love for Jesus with his father. His father was a little cautious about such verbal confessions of God's love. "well...well...sure we believe in Jesus, too". "Great," said Devon. "If you were to appear at the gate of Heaven and Jesus stood there and asked you why He should let you in... what would be your answer?"

His older siblings didn't answer as they didn't know what the answer could be. Devon

looked at each one in turn and all their eyes dropped their gaze as he searched for their answer. Then he looked at his father, and thought, Dad should have an answer since he is a minister. But dad replied, "Well we have tried to stay away from the world...and yes, we believe in Jesus, too."

As I sat there listening to Devon share his testimony, I thought, poor Devon; he who grew up an Amish minister's son and shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with his father, while being held as a convict in a Department of Correction Facility.

This is what pierced my heart. How many of our people, young and old, are hearing the gospel every Sunday in church and yet never hear it in their heart!!? Are we becoming so calloused to the Bible stories and the Gospel that it no longer has any effect on us? And by and by, we hear of the conversion of a gangster or a convict and we hear of their FIRE for the Lord and we consider them a little too radical...we need not go to that extreme with our love for the Lord.

COME ON NOW!!! WHERE IS OUR FIRST LOVE?? Unless we return to our first love for Jesus. He will remove our candlestick (His anointed presence). Can you hear me with your heart?? This is why I wept as he shared his story.

Burdened!!  
—Ernie

