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Your Missionaries to the Amish



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Hello, Friend:

July 2015

Esther and I are currently helping two girls get on their own feet by allowing them to stay in our basement apartment.

Elizabeth has been with us for several months. She has a full-time job and is working at getting her driver's license and GED. Mabel, left, is full-blooded African-American and was born in California.



Mabel | Elizabeth

At just one day old, an Old Order Amish couple in Kenton, OH adopted her. For the next 18 years of her life, Mabel was raised to think, act and live her life as any other Amish child would. She learned the PA Deitsh dialect and went to an Amish school. At the age of 17, she followed tradition by making a vow to the Amish church and becoming a baptized member.

Soon after Mabel joined the church, she decided Amish life was not for her. Within a week after leaving the culture, she ended up in our home. It took us

about one month to get her a Social Security number and a full-time job. As of right now, she is saving money for a car and her own apartment.

Since leaving the Amish, Mabel has received several phone calls and letters from her community. During one phone conversation, her father shared a dream he had about Mabel. In his dream, he was looking out the window of his house and saw black smoke pouring out the front side of a buggy in his yard. He saw Mabel's face in the midst of the smoke. Then the father added, "The Lord revealed to me that you, Mabel, were in hell for leaving the Amish." Her father concluded by warning Mabel that she should not date black men, simply because he does not believe they can be Christians.

A few weeks later, Mabel received a second letter, signed by her bishop, deacon, and two lay ministers. It read:

...we wonder if you think about home and on us as much as we think of you. Often wonder what you are doing and how you feel. The first

night you left, I (Bishop) dreamed about you, and I can remember just what it was. But just wanted to let you know that as far as I see, there still could be a chance for you to come back. I haven't found that there isn't forgiveness for a person who wants to repent from the heart, which I still hope you would before it's too late. We took a vote with the church to put you in the Bann. It was sad; the whole church felt it. But still I'd say that you still have a chance to come out of that, if you fully repent. I know each one has his own choice, and if you make the wrong choice, you know we will wish different. So much out of love.



One of the requirements of staying in our home is that each person meets with us for one hour each week. In that meeting we talk about life. Seeds are planted and watered, and sometimes we get to see God reap.

These kind of phone calls and letters take their toll on those who leave the Amish culture.

Joe, Continued from Page 1

Sometimes, it takes weeks, months, or even years to get over the fears and eternal threats from family and church members back home.

Amish people tend to be superstitious and often place their dependence on various types of signs, wonders and dreams. In some cases, pow-wowing and hexing are

familiar beliefs and are practiced within a family structure or community.

In conclusion, let me just say: Esther and I are very proud of Mabel. She is a positive thinker and blessed with many talents. At first, she was not at all interested in God or church; however, we have tried to love her unconditionally. Through that love and outpouring of help from volunteers at

MAP, she has started asking some questions about salvation and has been attending church on a weekly basis.

A special thank you to all the volunteers who help us with taxi service, driving lessons, donations, GED classes, etc. The Lord is keeping track, and someday soon, your true and well-deserved reward will be handed to you! —Joe Keim

Bible Club—Volunteering Joyfully

—Linda Echelberger and Tina Duffield

Several years ago, our Adult Bible Fellowship (Sunday school) class at our church in Ashland, Ohio, decided to support MAP. That morning, as we learned more about Mission to Amish People and the Bible Club, I felt a stirring in my heart that this is where I was supposed to serve.



Linda

What a blessing it has been to see the Bible Club students begin to understand that it is all about Jesus and not about keeping rules or how to dress. I hope to be able to serve here as long as the Lord allows. —Linda

Tina adds: *It is a great joy to have Linda helping us. She is always willing to do whatever we need her to do, and she does*

it joyfully! We hope that Linda continues to help us and make us all smile for many more years!

Tina continues: I wanted to give an update on the Bible Club. Every year, we have a promotion to encourage the students to faithfully do their

lessons. Prizes are a good incentive for encouragement.

In January, we started the “Ardent Andrew Promotion.” Ardent means intensely devoted or enthusiastic. Andrew was one of Jesus’ disciples who brought others to Jesus. We wanted our students to be

enthusiastic about sending in new names and earning a prize, and then we would be able to send the new names a Bible lesson. We are pleased with how successful the promotion has been. We have received close to 6,000 new names and over 1,600 names that were already students, but just needed to get back into their lessons.

Bible lessons were sent to all of these children, and 1,548 of our students earned a prize. They have done well!!! The total cost for our promotion has been \$4,650, and we still have a month to go. The Bible lessons that we send out are very clear in presenting the Gospel and in teaching the truth of the Bible, so the more our students do their lessons, the more of God’s word they are getting. Keep up the good work, Bible Club students!!!! —Tina Duffield

Quitting My Job So I Could Work

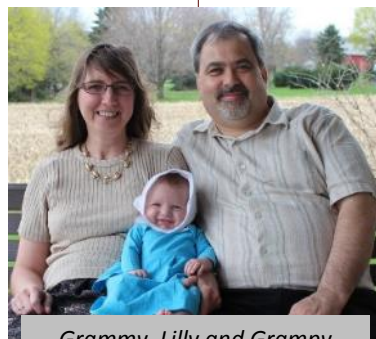
—Esther Keim

As of April 30th, I no longer work a full-time job. There were days and weeks when I just got too overwhelmed trying to keep up with traveling, prayer meetings, Bible studies, weddings, conferences, housing guests, etc.

After working full-time for the past ten years plus trying to do ministry, I finally came to the point where I realized I could no longer keep up with everything. Getting older doesn’t help, either!

God gave me complete peace about letting go of all the benefits and extra income. Even though I do have a part-time job, it is a lot more flexible and less demanding time-wise.

I have been able to travel with Joe for a five-day mission conference and a three-day weekend, plus many weekday meetings and evening counseling sessions in this first month away from my previous job. I have also helped the two girls who are staying with us with



Grammy, Lilly and Grampy

many of their needs. Neither one has a car or a driver’s license. I have been helping them with jobs, setting up bank accounts, shopping, and more, and I am so thankful for my adopted dad (Jerry Gess) and

several others in helping out with transportation as well. One girl works second shift; the other works third shift. They both work at Liqui-Box, my former place of employment, which is a small factory in town that makes bags to hold liquids.

I am looking forward to seeing all that God has in store for the future, as I claim His promise in Philippians 4:19: *My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

Anna: Born Again Again

—Rachel Arnold

Having a birth certificate is something many of us take for granted. For the Amish and former Amish, this is not the case. If a



Anna and Rachel

birth certificate has never been filed, it can take up to a year to obtain one.

A year ago, I met a young lady named Anna. She was born in Michigan and had never had a birth certificate filed. We began trying to track down any medical records she may have had. After searching all over the state of Michigan, Anna and I

had no success finding any record of her birth. Through many phone conversations with the Michigan state department, we were able to use some paperwork from our office

to help Anna.

We filed for a birth record and were denied. We had to then submit the denial letter in order to get a delayed registration of birth. We were denied a second time, because Anna, as far as the state of Michigan was concerned, did not exist.

We submitted letters from Anna's brother and letters from our office, along with the

two denial letters from the state of Michigan. They reviewed Anna's case and sent us to the County Probate Court. From there, Anna and I sat down with the judge via the phone and pleaded her case.

The judge was really considerate of Anna's situation. By talking with Anna, the judge determined that she deserved a birth certificate. The ladies at the courthouse even filed the paperwork for Anna at no extra cost! The process for getting a birth certificate for the Amish is hard. Patience is needed when dealing with other states and their processes. The key is to remind Anna and others in her situation that there is hope.

Samuel, Benjamin, and Prison Ministry

—Jonas Yoder

Hey folks! Warm weather is once again upon us here in Kentucky, making a great time for summer picnics and family vacations! Speaking of which, we recently had the opportunity to attend a family reunion of my Dad's brothers and sisters, many of whom I had not seen for 15-20 years. Those attending were mostly Mennonite who had left the Amish many years ago. Many of them are involved in various missions, including prison ministry and foreign missions. We had a great time of fellowship and watering of family roots! Unfortunately, my Amish aunts and uncles (including my parents and siblings) did not attend.

A highlight in the past month was hosting Samuel and Polly Girod and their family for a Sunday night. Many of you may

know who they are, as Samuel is one of the young men who left the Amish and got saved in Joe's office several years ago. They attended church with us Sunday night and met Benjamin Yoder, a young former Amish man who is staying in our apartment. As Amish often can, they soon



Samuel

made connections through people they both knew in the past, which ended up with an evening at our house with food and fellowship. The main topic of discussion was salvation through faith alone in Jesus. As we discussed it at length, Benjamin came under conviction that he had never fully trusted Jesus alone as his Savior. Right before midnight, he cried out to God for forgiveness and believed in Jesus as his Savior. Surely the angels in heaven rejoiced as another soul was added to the kingdom of God!

On June 6th we had our Returning Hearts celebration at one of the men's prisons

where we had the privilege of bringing about 20 children to see their incarcerated fathers who have spent the last several months reconnecting with their children and families through letter writing and prayer. What an awesome experience to see fathers reconciling with their



Benjamin

children. One father got saved during the event, and another got to spend the day reconnecting and sharing Jesus with his eight-year old daughter whom he hadn't seen in four years. We were blessed to have here for the event a group of ten volunteers

from my sister's church in Tennessee.

I have come to realize that I need more space for my office. My current office is in our apartment, which is quite limited in space and does not allow for much privacy. A 12 x 20 portable building is currently under construction for my new office. Also, our apartment is not fully trimmed and finished. I am able to keep costs to a minimum by doing much of the labor myself, with the help of my boys. Approximately \$5000 is needed to complete these projects. I would like to ask you to consider praying about giving financially to complete these projects.

Thank you for your continued prayer and financial support. We would not be able to accomplish what we do without you!

—Sincerely, The Yoders

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.

Amish Church Buildings

—Joe Keim

Most Amish church services are held in homes or barns, depending on the time of year. That's because the Amish believe it's worldly to meet in church houses like the rest of the world does.



Why does Somerset County have church buildings? Because many years ago, English coal miners needed a place to sleep. At first, the Amish allowed them to stay in their homes, but then decided to build a place

However, in Somerset County, PA, those traditions and beliefs are not the case. Recently, while participating in a mission's conference, Esther and I visited some Amish in that area and were amazed to find three plain looking church houses scattered throughout the community. While there, we learned some interesting facts:



where the miners could live and the Amish could hold church services.

Like some other Amish communities in the U.S., Somerset County deals with a higher-than-normal rate of physically and mentally disabled children. Why? Because of too many cousin marriages. The bottom picture shows two schoolhouses right next to each other. The smaller one in the background is used for disabled children; the bigger one up front is used for all others.



While in the area, it became quite obvious that the large community of Amish in Somerset County, PA are very religious. Members of the church follow a long church list of do's and don'ts that govern every area of their lifestyle. This list of do's and don'ts clouds over the simple message of Jesus Christ that one must be born of the Spirit.

1. Each one of the three church houses in the community look identical from the outside.
2. In the case of this Somerset County Amish community, there are three church houses located in the midst of several districts. Each district has its own set of ministers – one bishop, one deacon and two lay ministers. Since Amish families attend church services every other Sunday, these church houses are used on a rotating schedule.
3. There's an entrance at each end of the church building—one for the men and the other for the women. The women get the open porch entrance; if you look closely, you'll find nails in the wooden siding where the women hang their bonnets before entering the church house.
4. At each location, you will also find an unpainted weathered looking barn for the horses.

Please pray for the non-Amish believers in the area who have a burden to reach this entire community of Amish with the gospel. Later this year, we plan on sending Bible lessons and the Amish Voice to each family. And as always, it is not our desire to pull Amish away from their community. It is, however, our undying passion to reach every child and adult with the gospel, and then disciple them in the Word of God. Please pray! —Joe Keim