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Sweet Fellowship with Former Amish

—by Joe Keim

Dear Friend:

Over Memorial Day weekend, Esther and I traveled to Columbia, MO to attend a reunion of about 150 former Amish who came from various parts of the country. These reunions go on in different states every year. The one in Columbia, MO is probably the oldest one. In the early days, alcohol was served—it has been said that some stayed drunk for three days straight; however, many former Amish have come to know Christ and now these reunions have a totally different atmosphere. We met new people and made new connections.



After the Columbia reunion, we traveled to Bloomfield, IA to spend time with John and Dorothy Wagler. These dear folks have been faithful supporters of MAP since we met in 2010. On Sunday morning, we gave a ministry update at Mark Baptist Church, also a supporting church for the past 13 years. We are so grateful for the generosity of God's people!

On Sunday afternoon, we headed back to the Wagler's home, set up tables and chairs, and put out gospel tracts along with literature that we had brought with us. About 50-60 former Amish showed up

to fellowship and talk about our life journeys.

We spent at least an hour talking about the devastating effects of legalism, and how, in some cases, some Amish border on being cultish. Stories were shared about how some of the former Amish had not seen their family in years. Others shared that they went to visit their family and were told to leave and never come back. Talking about our shared pain is always healing for everyone.



We spent another hour discussing subjects that are brought up and held against those who leave the communities.

- We discussed the head covering chapter in 1 Cor 15.
- We discussed parental obedience, and how the Amish have misinterpreted the Ephesians 6 passage.
- We talked about whether or not a Christian should go to war and/or be involved in law enforcement.
- We talked about the vows that we all made to the Amish church, and then broke when we left.
- We discussed baptism—pouring or immersion.

- We also talked about foot washing. The Amish believe foot washing is a necessity because when Peter didn't want Jesus to wash his feet, Jesus answered, "*If I wash thee not, thou has no part with me*" (John 13:8).
- We briefly touched on divorce and remarriage, a hot and difficult subject that is often debated and held against those who join non-Amish churches.

Former Amish have a difficult time knowing how to respond to their Amish relatives when these subjects are brought up as accusations. It was so good to be able to encourage one another with Biblical answers.

Esther and I spent some time relaxing in Branson, MO before updating Wilson Creek Baptist Church near Springfield, MO—a ministry supporter and sponsor of the Amish Voice for 17 years—they sponsor the entire Swiss Amish community in Seymour, MO!

Sewer Update: We are so grateful for the \$6,000 that has been given toward our \$120,000 sewer project. We finished one fundraiser and have others scheduled. To get involved, go to <https://bit.ly/MapSewer>

Amish Voice: Thanks to all who made new commitments to sponsor the Amish. To learn more, go to <https://bit.ly/AmishVoice>

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Walking by the Spirit —by Martha Burkholder

On January 19th, I awoke and made Ray's tea and my coffee. This particular morning, I started thinking about how the Amish clothes are viewed as so much more important than Jesus. Ray came out of his office and started talking about how he was thinking about the things that the Amish idolized. I just looked at him and said that I was thinking the same thing!

Ray left to eat breakfast with his uncle. I had a hair appointment later that morning to get a Malibu treatment. I was still putting my hair up under a cap or a scarf and wearing my Amish dress when I would leave the house. We had no intention of being English until after we moved.

I didn't want to go to my hair appointment looking Amish, so without much thought, I dressed English, but still put my hair in a ponytail and covered it with a scarf. Just before arriving, I took off my scarf. I walked into the salon feeling nervous, but very spiritual. The lady, who has helped other Amish transition to English, was very nice.

After she was done treating my hair, she realized that I had naturally curly hair and asked me if I wanted to wear it curly. I

decided to try it. I didn't realize at the time that if I went curly, I couldn't just put my hair up and put a cap on. She taught me how to use mousse and scrunch my hair to hold the curls. I walked out of the salon that day with curly hair!

When I arrived home, Ray couldn't believe that I was not wearing an Amish dress, and that my hair was down and curly! I had always been scared about dressing English.

Later, we decided to go out and try out my new look. When we got to the end of the driveway, two of our children passed and saw us. That was supposed to happen, I guess. We got groceries and ate dinner. Suddenly, Ray asked if he should get a haircut! He went over to the barber shop and got a haircut. The next evening, he took off his beard. We are now English and had not made plans to do it!

A couple of days later, we realized that we were being led around by the Holy Spirit that entire day and didn't even really think about it. I had been getting convicted of these idols for a while before this happened.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the spirit" (Galatians 5:25).



From Amish to Airplanes

Henry Schrock, former Amish, attended and graduated from Mission to Amish People's GED classes. This month he graduated from Aviation School.

CLASS OF '22

It's hard to imagine that less than four years ago, I took my first flight lesson, and four years before that I was still Amish driving a horse and buggy with little in the way of education and no real goals in sight. I struck out on my own to pursue an education and a career, and with the love and support of so many that I met along the way, it has brought me to this day.

Yesterday I graduated with an Associate's degree in Aviation Technology / Professional Pilot. It has been an epic journey with so many highs and lows, delays, and sleepless nights, but it is all worth it.

As I continue to develop my experience and teach the next generation of pilots, I look forward to getting the necessary flight hours and reaching my goal of flying for the airlines.

