

**THE AMISH OF SOMERSET COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**A Study of the Rise and Development of the  
Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches**

**A THESIS**

submitted to

**THE HARTFORD SEMINARY FOUNDATION**

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of  
**Master of Sacred Theology**

**Alvin J. Beachy**

**Hartford, Connecticut**

**May 14, 1952**

**TABOR COLLEGE LIBRARY**

**HILLSBORO, KANSAS 67863**

**810073**

## PREFACE

Though the Amish have been in America since the early eighteenth century, the history of the Amish Church in this country remains largely unwritten. The Amish people do not believe in higher education, and consequently they have produced little in the way of literature except family histories.

If the story of the Amish Church in America is ever written, it will need to be done by someone who is familiar with the Amish and yet at home in academic circles. The material for such an over-all history of the Amish Church in the United States would have to be laboriously gathered from state and county histories, old letters, a few rare church documents and from the memories of older people. A unique chapter in American church history waits upon the person who will undertake the exacting task of writing it.

The material for this history of the Amish in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, has been found in many and devious places. It is here presented as a connected story for the first time.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE . . . . .	11
 CHAPTER	
I. THE EUROPEAN BACKGROUND . . . . .	1
A. Early Leaders, Their Faith and Fate . . . . .	1
B. The Radical Anabaptists . . . . .	7
C. The Peaceful Anabaptists . . . . .	10
D. Introduction of the Strict Ban . . . . .	17
II. THE AMISH DIVISION OF 1692-1693 . . . . .	20
A. Jacob Amman, Founder of the Amish . . . . .	20
B. The Controversy Begins . . . . .	22
C. Amman's Investigation Tour . . . . .	23
D. Attempts At Reconciliation . . . . .	25
1. The first attempt at reconciliation . . . . .	26
2. The second attempt at reconciliation . . . . .	26
3. The third attempt at reconciliation . . . . .	27
4. The three minor attempts at reconciliation . . . . .	30
a. The Amish excommunicate themselves . . . . .	30
b. A counsel against reconciliation . . . . .	31
c. The final attempt at reconciliation . . . . .	31
E. Summary and Evaluation . . . . .	33
III. AMISH IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA AND EARLY SETTLE- MENTS IN SOMERSET COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA . . . . .	34
A. Early Amish Settlements in Eastern Pennsylvania . . . . .	34
B. The First Amish Settlement in Somerset County, Pennsylvania . . . . .	36
1. The growth of early settlements in the northern part of Somerset County . . . . .	39
2. The decline and disappearance of the Conemaugh and Glade congregations . . . . .	46
C. The River Congregation . . . . .	53
1. Early history . . . . .	53
2. Early life and ministers of the River congregation . . . . .	55
3. The years of growth and expansion . . . . .	63
4. The division of 1895 . . . . .	66

IV.	DAUGHTER COLONIES OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY AMISH. . .	76
A.	The Holmes County, Ohio, Settlement . . . . .	76
B.	The Indiana Colonies . . . . .	81
C.	The Johnson County, Iowa, Colony . . . . .	85
D.	The Moultrie and Douglas Counties, Illinois Colony . . . . .	89
V.	THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BEACHY AMISH MENNONITE CHURCHES . . . . .	94
A.	Major Reasons for the 1927 Division . . . . .	94
B.	Minor Reasons for the Division . . . . .	112
	1. The organization of Sunday School . . . . .	115
	2. The introduction of electricity . . . . .	116
	3. Automobiles are allowed . . . . .	117
C.	The Division, a "Fait Accompli" . . . . .	118
D.	The Influence of the Beachy Amish Congregation Upon the Old Order Amish Churches . . . . .	121
	1. The immediate effect in the local community . . . . .	121
	2. The effect in other Old Order Amish communities . . . . .	123
E.	Summary . . . . .	136
VI.	AMISH THEOLOGY . . . . .	140
A.	The Possibilities of Monastic Influence . . . . .	140
B.	The Similarities of Anabaptism to Monasticism. . . . .	143
C.	The Differences Between Anabaptism and Monasticism . . . . .	146
D.	Anabaptism versus Pietism . . . . .	149
E.	Summary of Monastic, Anabaptist and Pietistic Influence on the Amish . . . . .	150
VII.	AMISH WORSHIP AND ORDINATION CHARGES . . . . .	153
A.	A Typical Amish Worship Service . . . . .	153
B.	Sources of Amish Forms of Worship . . . . .	155
C.	Amish Church Music . . . . .	160
	1. The origin of Amish hymns . . . . .	160
	2. The origin of Amish hymn tunes . . . . .	161
D.	Amish Ordination Charges . . . . .	164
E.	Other Forms of Amish Worship . . . . .	168
	1. Amish baptismal vows . . . . .	168
	2. The Amish Communion service . . . . .	170

3. The highest confession . . . . .	171
4. Amish weddings and marriage vows . . . . .	172
F. Conclusion . . . . .	174

#### APPENDIX

I. SOME EARLY AMERICAN AMISH MENNONITE DISCIPLINES	175
II. AMISH ORDINATION CHARGES . . . . .	182
III. OTHER FORMS OF AMISH WORSHIP . . . . .	185
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	188

## CHAPTER I

### THE EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

#### A. Early Leaders, Their Faith and Fate

To those unfamiliar with the long sweep of Amish history the appearance of these strangely clad, unlettered folk in the very midst of our sophisticated American culture, is an insolvable enigma. Any attempt to understand or interpret the American Amish ends in misunderstanding and in misinterpretation, if it does not begin with the story of their European origin.

The Amish of the United States and Canada are, like the Mennonites, the spiritual descendants of the Anabaptist Movement, which began in Switzerland as early as 1523. There were several Anabaptist or Mennonite formulations of the Faith, the one to which the Amish still adhere having been written at Dort, Holland, in 1632. This is known among the Amish and Mennonites of the present day as the Dortrecht Confession. No attempt is here made to cover every aspect of faith and conduct with which that confession deals. It is, however, not erroneous to say that the following six points are the main and distinctive features of Anabaptism.

1. A separated church to consist only of those who are mature enough to come to some intellectual grasp of the truth proclaimed in the Christian message; and who unite with the church because they have been personally persuaded of the truth of that proclamation, i.e., salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

2. Since infants can have no intellectual grasp of the Christian message, it follows that they ought not be baptized into the church as infants.

3. Only the baptized believer was allowed to become a member of the church, which meant that the church was a purely voluntary society made up of those who were united by their common faith in Christ. This logically implied the complete separation of Church and State, and the renunciation of violence and bloodshed as a means of winning converts to the Christian Community.

4. The Lord's Supper was entirely divorced from any resemblance to the Roman Catholic Mass by the declaration that it was a memorial meal only, nothing more and nothing less.

5. The Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and life.

6. From the very first, Anabaptist leaders insisted that church members should lead an exemplary life, and that those who did not should be subject to discipline as outlined

in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew.

It was through a difference of opinion on how rigidly erring members should be dealt with that most of the internal difficulties in the Anabaptist Movement arose during the early years, as can be seen by later developments.

The question as to what extent an excommunicated member of the church may have social contact, even with a marriage partner, is a major cause of division among the Amish of America to this day.

When it is recalled that these reforms relative to the separation of Church and State were advocated in Switzerland as early as 1523, it is not difficult to understand why those who made the proposals were greeted on all sides with accusations of heresy. This was nearly a quarter of a century before The Religious Peace of Augsburg, which gave to the world the famous dictum, "Cuius regio eius religio". The era of religious toleration had not yet dawned.

Before it could do so the Anabaptists in Switzerland and all over Europe had to endure a night of horrible persecution.

The first among the leaders of the Swiss Brethren, as the Anabaptists were known in Switzerland, were well trained University men. Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz, who were among the many who later suffered persecution at the hands of the state churches, had Ulrich Zwingli's promise that he would recommend them respectively for the chairs of Greek and Hebrew in the new theological school that was being planned for Zurich.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. Horsch, John, The Mennonites In Europe, (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1942), p. 31.



were at that time still nominal Roman Catholics, although it is probable that by this time all three men had grave doubts concerning that mighty institution of medieval times. "Conrad Grebel was converted to the Anabaptist viewpoint under the preaching of Zwingli early in 1521.<sup>2</sup> We do not know when Manz was won to the company of the Brethren. We know that he was born about 1490 in Zurich and that he was educated in the higher schools. His writings show that he had a good working knowledge of both Latin and Greek and that he had made a specialty of the study of Hebrew.

Other early leaders of the movement were George Blaurock, a former cleric from Chur, who joined the movement in 1524, and Wilhelm Reublin, a priest at St. Alban's Catholic Church in Basel, who denounced holy objects on June 13, 1522. He was banished from Basel in 1522 for preaching a sermon against infant baptism. In addition to these men there were such figures as Ludwig Hetzer, a learned Hebraist, and Baltasar Hubmaier, a famous theologian and former University professor who declared himself opposed to Zwingli's views on infant baptism in 1525.<sup>3</sup>

Grebel, who had been converted under Zwingli's preaching, at first unquestionably accepted the latter's leadership.

2. Ibid., p. 19.

3. Smith, C. Henry, The Story of the Mennonites, (Berne, Indiana, 1941), p. 1-18.

Zwingli preached against the celebration of the Roman Catholic Mass and against the custom of clerical support through a system of involuntary tithes. But soon it became apparent to Grebel and others that Zwingli talked much about reform while he did little. They then became impatient and went their own way. Had Zwingli abided by his decision of January, 1523, "that in matters concerning divine wisdom and truth", he could, "accept no one as witness and judge except the living Scriptures and the spirit of God which speaks out of the Scriptures"<sup>4</sup>, Grebel, Manz and Blaurock would undoubtedly have remained by his side. Unfortunately Zwingli did not abide by this decision, for in October of 1523 he decided to allow the civil council to determine the speed and extent of religious reform in Zurich. Grebel could not abide by this decision, and after several disputes he and his companions were forbidden to preach against the practice of infant baptism by the city council. They may, no doubt, be rightfully accused of being impatient and overly zealous, but as Bender says,

The decision of Conrad Grebel to refuse to accept the jurisdiction of the Zurich Council over the Zurich Church is one of the high moments of history, for however obscure it was, it marked the beginning of the modern "free church" movement. It was an historical action which, in effect, demanded the separation of church and state, though certainly without conscious awareness of its far-reaching implications. By it

---

4. Bender, Harold S., Conrad Grebel 1498-1526, Founder of the Swiss Brethren, (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1950), p.94.

Grebel and the Swiss Brethren who gathered around him in the ensuing years planted the seed out of which has come, through the influence of the Anabaptists in Holland and England, the modern Protestant commitment of freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, voluntary church membership, and separation of church and state.<sup>5</sup>

Some few days after the baptism disputation of January 17, 1525, two mandates were issued by the city council which compelled Grebel and his companions either to obey or defy the civil authority. Parents who had refused to baptize their children were given eight days to comply, and failure to do so meant banishment for the entire family. The Brethren, Reublin, Castelberger and Hatzer, who were not citizens of Zurich, were commanded to leave the city within eight days and all further disputations were forbidden.<sup>6</sup>

If the council wanted to see what would happen as a result of their last move, they had not long to wait. It was "probably on the night of January 21, 1525,"<sup>7</sup> at a meeting held for Bible study and prayer that Grebel baptized Blaurock upon the latter's request, and then Blaurock baptized a number of others present. This was the first open break with the organized state churches of the day. The movement now spread rapidly throughout Switzerland and central Europe, but it was soon to meet with the fiercest of opposition. The methods of the Spanish Inquisition were not

---

5. Ibid, p. 99-100.

6. Ibid, p. 132-135.

7. Smith, op.cit., p. 18.

any more cruel than were those employed by all of the state churches in their attempts to liquidate this new heresy.

On January 5, 1527, Felix Manz was drowned in Lake Zurich, and on the same day George Blaurock was stripped to the waist and whipped out of town as an alien. Hubmaier was burned at the stake in Vienna in the same year. Blaurock was executed at Innsbruck in 1529, and Hätzer was beheaded in Constance, while Grebel died in 1526, probably from the effects of a long imprisonment in the tower of Zurich.

For a full century and more, not only in Switzerland, but all over south Germany, Austria and Moravia, up and down the Rhine and the upper Danube, wherever they were found, Anabaptists had to pay the supreme price for their faith. They were left to rot in prison, broken on the rack, thrown into rivers and lakes, burned at the stake, beheaded and buried alive.<sup>8</sup>

#### B. The Radical Anabaptists

This loss of intellectual leadership through persecution and death had far-reaching consequences for the new movement. Once it was a strong missionary movement. Now it asked of the world only that it should be left alone. Its adherents, once the fiery trial of persecution was lifted, were a subdued group which was known for centuries as "Die Stillen im Lande". As Smithson says, "The removal

---

8. Ibid, p. 20.

of these leaders allowed men of inferior gifts and outlook to assume control of the movement in certain quarters with disastrous consequences.<sup>9</sup> One of these disastrous consequences is known in Anabaptist history as the Münsterite movement. We find the first faint echoes of this aberration in the teachings of Thomas Muntzer, who advocated that the peasants should make war against the princes. These first faint echoes were soon fanned into a mighty flame by Melchoir Hoffman, an unlettered furrier, who had spent some time with Luther at Wittenberg.

Hoffman came to Strasburg in 1529 and attached himself to the Anabaptist movement in the same year that it was outlawed throughout the empire. Dosker describes Hoffman as:

A man of a nervous temperament with a burning imagination .....soon at the very forefront of the throng of visionists, who imagined they saw in the clouds of the distant horizon, the picture of their deliverance and glory. Christ was coming, the Millenium fast approaching, the days of their warfare were almost over. Oh, to be ready with the lamps trimmed and burning when the bridegroom came!

This furrier, untaught by man, began now to create from the Scriptures and from his hypersensitive imagination, an eschatological structure which for a few years was to cast its shadows over all northern Europe. Strasburg was to be the "New Jerusalem", descending from God out of heaven; the two witnesses were to appear, and of these two he was the first, even Elijah.<sup>10</sup>

Dosker traces the wanderings of this man with the burning spirit and the bemuddled brain from one end of Holland

9. Smithson, R. J., The Anabaptists--Their Contribution To Our Protestant Heritage, (London, 1935), p. 113-114.

10. Dosker, H. E., The Dutch Anabaptists, (Chicago, 1918-1919), p. 49.

to the other. Wherever he went he preached, prophesied, and baptized people by the thousands. Among his converts was John Trypmaker, who accompanied Hoffman on much of his journey through Holland. By 1533 Hoffman thought it was time that he should return to Strasburg for the expected Millenium while Trypmaker remained in Holland to encourage the saints there. Upon Hoffman's arrival in Strasburg he was apprehended and imprisoned for the remainder of his life.

Among those led astray by the fanaticism of Hoffman during his wanderings through Holland was a man by the name of Jan Matthys. After Hoffman's imprisonment Matthys claimed to have received a revelation that the city of Münster, just across the Dutch border, should be the New Jerusalem rather than Strasburg as Hoffman had prophesied. Thus began a veritable march on the city of Münster, mostly by the Dutch Anabaptists, headed by the arrival in the city of Matthys himself in company with Jan van Leiden, another of Hoffman's converts. Several attempts by these radical Anabaptists to take the city by storm were repulsed, but by March 2, 1534, the city was completely under their control.

The Catholic Bishop had been driven from the city, and those who had not gone with him submitted to baptism in order to escape with their lives. Matthys immediately ordered

that all food should be brought to a common storehouse, and as the divinely appointed "Enoch" he shot the man who dared to laugh at his high handed orders.

On the first day of April, 1534, the ousted Catholic Bishop laid siege to the city, which continued until the winter of 1534-1535. On the fourth day of the siege the self-appointed "Enoch", Jan Matthys, in obedience to a divine revelation, stepped outside the city walls to dispell the attackers, but he was killed and his remains were returned to the city in a basket. Jan van Leiden, who had accompanied Matthys into the city, now proclaimed that he was King David and promptly instituted polygamy by marrying the widow of his former chieftain. After several attempts at insurrection from within which were ruthlessly suppressed by the new king, the city was finally starved into surrender. The leaders were at once tortured and executed, while their remains were hung in iron cages from the tower of St. Lambert as a warning to other "would-be" revolutionaries.

### C. The Peaceful Anabaptists

Obbe Philips, who was one of the early leaders of the Anabaptist Movement in Holland, had been baptized by Matthys, a disciple of the fanatical Hoffman. In later years this

---

11. Ibid, p. 47-94.

troubled him so much that he withdrew from the Anabaptists, though he had never given his wholehearted support to the Münsterite fanatics. Not until after the Münster tragedy, however, were the Dutch Anabaptists ready to accept the saner leadership which they found in a man like Obbe and his brother, Dirk. Obbe had been trained as a physician and Dirk as a Franciscan monk. Neither Obbe nor his brother had given their consent or support to the wild schemes of the Münsterites, and now that the folly of the movement had been fully demonstrated, the Anabaptists of Holland turned to them for leadership. They openly renounced violence and bloodshed, and in an effort to rid themselves of the stigma which the Münsterite episode had given to the term "Anabaptist" throughout Europe, sought a new name. The name they chose for themselves was "Doopsgezinde", while they were known to outsiders as "Obbenites".

It was not long before the leadership of these peaceful Anabaptists passed into the hands of Menno Simons, a converted Roman Catholic priest. Of Menno's early life and training we know very little. He himself tells us "in the year 1524, being then in my twenty-eighth year, I undertook the duties of a priest in my father's village, called Pingjam, in Friesland".<sup>12</sup> Menno tells us that two other priests were

---

12. Simons, Menno, The Complete Works of Menno Simons, translated by J. F. Funk and Brother, (Elkhart, Indiana, 1871), p. 3.



the parish at the same time, one as his senior, the other as his junior. Both his partners had some knowledge of the Scriptures, but Menno tells us he himself remained utterly ignorant of the Scriptures for the first two years of his priesthood because he feared such knowledge would mislead him.

The year following his ordination to the priesthood found Menno doubting the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. He says:

As often as I handled the bread and wine of the Mass, it occurred to me that they were not the flesh and blood of the Lord. I thought that it was the suggestion of the devil, that he might lead me off from my faith. I confessed it often--sighed and prayed, yet I could not be freed from this thought.<sup>13</sup>

It was this doubt that finally drove Menno to a study of the New Testament. Here he says he had not gone far until he discovered that they had been deceived. He declares that his conscience, which had been greatly troubled by the sacramental viewpoint, was now relieved "without any human aid or advice; though I was encouraged by Luther in the belief that human authority cannot bind to eternal death."<sup>14</sup> Though not informed by Menno how he obtained Luther's books, we know from the following that they were being circulated in Holland during Menno's time.

---

13. Ibid, p. 3, col. A.

14. Ibid, p. 3, col. B.

About three or four years after he entered the service of the hierarchy as a priest in Pingjum, the authorities confiscated a number of Lutheran books which were found in the possession of the priests at Witmarsum. The account of the general treasurer of the Friesian government shows that between October 1, 1527, and September 30, 1528, a certain sum was paid to an officer of the law who had opened boxes belonging to the pastor and the vicar of Witmarsum and taken from them the books of Martinus Luther and others of his persuasion.<sup>15</sup>

After this newly found freedom from the intellectual tyranny of Rome, Menno's preaching took on an evangelical fervor which gained him considerable reputation, but he did not yet renounce the Roman Church. The transition from the old to the new was for him a gradual one which may be traced in a series of events. The first of these was the execution of a man named Sicke Snyder at Leuwarden for having submitted to rebaptism. Menno says that it sounded strange to hear a second baptism spoken of, and though he now searched the Scriptures on this point he could find nothing that validated the church's established practice of infant baptism. When a consultation of several of the church fathers, together with a review of the writings of Luther, Bucer and Bullinger, revealed that there was disagreement among all in regard to infant baptism, Menno came to the conclusion "that we were deceived  
<sup>16</sup>  
in relation to infant baptism".

15. Horsch, John, Menno Simons--His Life, Labors and Teachings, (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1916), p. 19.

16. Simons, op.cit., p. 4, col. A.

Shortly after Menno had come to this new conviction, he was moved to the more lucrative position of parish priest at Witmarsum. It was while he was serving in this parish that the second in the series of events which was finally to result in his open break with Rome occurred. It has been seen that the Münsterite fanaticism was widespread in Holland from 1529 to 1535. A group of these fanatics settled in Menno's parish, and he felt obliged to speak against their errors though torn by doubts in relation to his own connection with the established Church of Rome. Some 300 of these people took refuge in the Old Cloister near Bolsward, and on April 5, 1535, the place was besieged by troops and taken by storm. One hundred thirty of the inmates fell in battle and the rest were nearly all executed. Among those who lost their lives in this manner was Menno's own brother.

The sight of the sufferings of these misguided but devout people, who had the courage of their conviction even unto death, moved Menno deeply. His own description of the moral struggle that now raged within his soul is touching in the extreme. For a time he found it necessary to carry on a two-front war. He now openly preached against the Mass and infant baptism, while he "also faithfully warned every one in relation to the abomination of

...concerning kings, polygamy, dominion, the sword,

Menno tells us that this went on for about nine  
...after which:

...merciful Lord granted me his fatherly Spirit, aid and  
...; then I voluntarily renounced all my worldly honor  
...reputation, my unchristian conduct, masses, infant  
...baptism, and my unprofitable life, and at once willingly  
...submitted to distress and poverty, and the cross of Christ.<sup>18</sup>

Thus we know from Menno's own writing that his open  
break with Rome came some time during 1536. John Horsch  
set the probable date as January 30, 1536. Not long after  
this date he received baptism from the hands of Obbe Philips,  
for all sources indicate that he was baptized by Obbe,  
though opinions vary as to the exact date.

Still another event was to occur before Menno be-  
came the recognized, respected and persecuted leader of  
the peaceful Anabaptists of Holland. He tells us that  
about one year after his open break with the established  
church he was secretly engaged in study and writing when  
seven or eight persons who were of one heart and soul in  
the faith with himself came and asked him to become their  
leader. Menno was greatly troubled by this request, sensing  
on the one hand his limited talents, and on the other, the  
unrelenting character of the opposition he knew he would  
encounter. Above these, however, he saw the need of a

---

17. Ibid, p. 5, col. A.

18. Ibid, p. 5, col. B.

leader for "these God-fearing, pious children, for I saw plainly that they erred as innocent sheep which have no shepherd".<sup>19</sup> Menno asked for a season of prayer when the problem might be placed before the church and the guidance of God sought. But after

the persons before mentioned, did not desist from their supplications, and my own conscience in some degree made me uneasy (although in weakness) because I saw the great hunger and need.....I surrendered myself, soul and body to the Lord, and committed myself to his grace, and commenced in due time, according to the contents of his holy word, to teach, and to baptize, to labor in the vineyard of the Lord with all my limited talents, to build up his holy city and temple, and to repair the dilapidated walls.<sup>20</sup>

Thus we see that it was nearly 1537 before Menno assumed the leadership of the small group of Anabaptists, hitherto known as Obbenites. A period of ten or twelve years had passed before the seed of doubt which Menno had first felt as he officiated at Mass had sprung into the flower of open renunciation of the whole Roman Catholic system. When the break came it was complete and final as had been Grebel's break with Zwingli in Zurich. As in Grebel's case, Menno was soon a fugitive from justice, destined to spend the remainder of his life with a price on his head, while those who granted him asylum did so at the peril of their own lives.

---

19. Ibid. p. 6, col. A.

20. Ibid. p. 6, col. A and B.

#### D. Introduction of the Strict Ban

From Grebel's time on the Anabaptists had insisted upon the right of church discipline by the believing community. Only so could a pure church be kept pure. J. C. Wenger in his Glimpses of Mennonite History states that

there was no organic connection between the Swiss Brethren in the south founded by Conrad Grebel in 1525 and the Obbenites in the north founded by Obbe Philips in 1534; so far as we know Obbe at that time had never heard of the Brethren in Switzerland.....The doctrines of the Obbenites and that of the Swiss Brethren were similar simply because both groups made a determined effort to reject tradition and make the Scriptures the sole norm of faith and practice. On two points there was a divergence however.

(1) The Obbenites held to a strict form of shunning (see article XVII of the Dortrecht Confession of Faith), while the Swiss Brethren interpreted such Scriptures as I Corinthians 5:11 as referring to the Lord's Supper.<sup>21</sup>

The second point of divergence which Wenger mentions is the peculiar view of the Incarnation which was held by the Obbenites, but that is not the subject of this study. The strict interpretation of the "ban" which was based upon I Corinthians 5:11 by the Dutch Anabaptists forbade the members of the church to have any social contact with a member who had been excommunicated or placed under the "ban". The Swiss Brethren, on the other hand, took the position that an excommunicated member should not be

---

21. Wenger, J. C., Glimpses of Mennonite History, (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1946), p. 75

allowed to participate in the Lord's Supper; otherwise such a person remained in full social contact with whatever social unit he was normally a part.

The reason for the more strict interpretation of the "ban" among the Obbenites or Mennonites, as they were known later, was the black name which the Münsterite episode had given to the Anabaptists all over Holland. Dosker says that their "abhorrence of violence was so great that they would not recognize as brother anyone who had been baptized at Münster."<sup>22</sup> Wenger states that

Obbe Philips, whose break with Melchiorism took place in 1534, placed under the "ban" all who were affected by the Münsterite error and insisted that they be avoided (shunned). Indeed this was the origin of shunning among the Dutch Anabaptists".<sup>23</sup>

From the very first this strict interpretation of the "ban" caused trouble among the Dutch Mennonites. It was no easy matter to deny to husband and wife the normal relationships of the married life because one or the other had been placed under the "ban". Menno's own position on this question was in favor of the strict interpretation. In this position he was supported by Dirk Philips, the younger brother of Obbe, who remained a faithful coworker of Menno's throughout his life. In fact his book, Enchiridion oder Handbuchlein von der Christlichen Lehre und Religion, is a favorite with the Amish in America

---

22. Dosker, op.cit., p. 106.

23. Wenger, op.cit., p. 69.

today because of its strict teaching on the "ban". Nonetheless, the dissension brought about by this difference of opinion darkened the closing days of Menno's life.

Two parties developed in the church. Those in favor of the strict interpretation of the "ban" became known as the "hard banners", while those who favored the most lenient position were known as the "soft banners". "The great problem was how strictly shall the 'ban' be observed."<sup>24</sup>

---

24. Ibid, p. 80.



## CHAPTER II

### THE AMISH DIVISION OF 1692-1693

#### A. Jacob Amman, Founder of the Amish

Among the Swiss Brethren it is not known that the practice of church discipline through the use of the strict "ban" caused any dissension prior to 1693. Several of the Swiss Brethren ministers from the region of Alsace had signed the Dortrecht Confession in 1660, and some of them were therefore aware of this strict interpretation of the "ban" as found in Article XVII of that confession.<sup>1</sup> However, there is no evidence that any attempt was made to enforce this "ban" strictly before the division of 1693. H. E. Dosker quotes M. Brons as saying that

The first instance of the use of the "ban" in Switzerland occurred at Zollikon when the brethren there decided to use it in the case of a brother who had fallen into sin after baptism.<sup>2</sup>

No date is given for this incident, so it is impossible to tell whether or not the events of 1693 to 1697 were in any way connected with it.

---

1. Gascho, M., "The Amish Division of 1693-1697," Mennonite Quarterly Review, XI, (October, 1937), p. 235. Mr. Gascho in this article has presented the first scholarly study of this unfortunate division. It is based entirely on original sources and is therefore the basis of this chapter.

2. Dosker, op.cit., p. 189.

In 1693, however, a rash young man by the name of Jacob Amman attempted to introduce the strict observance of the "ban" into the life of the Swiss Brethren churches. Almost nothing is now known in regard to this man's background or education. From extant letters which were exchanged during the controversy he is referred to as a young man by his opponents, while he refers to them as grayhaired.<sup>3</sup> From the information gleaned from this correspondence it can safely be said of Amman that he was possessed of a spirit of impatience and intolerance which is often typical of youth. Beyond that we know only that Jacob Amman was married and that he had two children, a son and a daughter. We know that he had a daughter because the records in the state archives show that

An adult daughter of Jacob Amman was baptized and admitted into the official state church at Wimmis in the Republic of Bern in the year 1730. This document also mentions that Jacob Amman was an Anabaptist minister who was a native of the Erlenbach Commune located in the Simme Valley south of Thun. It also reveals the fact that he had died before this time outside of the Republic of Bern. Jacob Amman's daughter was given four Thallers (\$50) by the state when she joined the state church. The state was considered as her godfather.<sup>4</sup>

That Jacob Amman also had a son we know from the fact that a psalm book once belonging to Jacob Amman contains

---

3. Gascho, op.cit., footnote, p.252.

4. Gratz, D. L., "The Home of Jacob Amman", The Mennonite Quarterly Review, XXV, No. 2, Coshen College, Coshen, Indiana, (April, 1951), p. 137.

a note written by his son, Baltz Amman, mentioning the fact that he inherited the book from his father Jacob. "It further states that Jacob Amman was no longer living. The note is dated October 4, 1741."<sup>5</sup>

### B. The Controversy Begins

Oddly enough the controversy over the strict "ban" which ended in a division that continues to the present time began with an altogether different matter. For some unknown reason Jacob Amman introduced the custom of observing Communion twice a year instead of annually as had previously been the practice among the Swiss Brethren. This caused dissension, particularly in the congregation of Hans Reist, who later became prominent as Amman's chief opponent in the controversy over the strict "ban".<sup>6</sup> Reist was not able to resolve the controversy himself and called upon two other ministers, namely, Niklaus Moser and Peter Giger, for help.

When Ammann heard that these two ministers were going to Reist he asked them to find out what Reist believed concerning "Meidung". Reist's answer was, "What enters the mouth does not defile the man, but what comes out of the mouth." From this time on we do not hear any more of the communion trouble. Instead "Meidung" became the main

---

5. Ibid, p. 137.

6. Gascho, op.cit., p. 245.

issue of the controversy between Ammann and Reist.<sup>7</sup>

### C. Amman's Investigation Tour

How long the dispute had been under way before the strict "ban" became the chief issue is not known. It had, however, continued over a long enough period to produce some sympathizers for Amman's views. Apparently Amman was not satisfied with the answer which Reist had given, for shortly thereafter he gathered around him Uli Amman, Christian Blank and Niklaus Augspurger, who with him made "a tour of the churches to find out just what the ministers in Switzerland believed about 'Meidung'."<sup>8</sup>

The itinerary of the four self-appointed investigators took them to the following congregations: the congregation of Niklaus Moser near Friedersmatt, the congregation of Peter Giger near Reutenen, the congregation of Hans Reist near Utigen, and the congregation of Peter Habegger and Gollgrab Peter near Eggiwyl. From

---

7. Ibid, p. 254. Mr. Gascho's use of the term, "Meidung", is the expression used by the Amish for "ban". More correctly, "Meidung" is descriptive of the treatment accorded to a person who has been placed under the "ban". The English equivalent is "shunning" or "avoidance". Note: The most generally accepted spelling of Amman's name is with only one "n". Gascho has followed the German spelling, and where his translations are quoted directly, the German spelling appears.

8. Ibid, p. 254.

each one of these ministers Jacob Amman demanded to know what his belief was in regard to the strict "ban". When he asked the question of Peter Habegger and Gollgrab Peter, they replied that they thought it would be well if the entire swiss ministry could be gotten together for a careful study of the Scriptures before they ventured to express an opinion. Amman agreed to the conference but wanted it to be held within eight days, while Peter Habegger suggested that it should be held within three weeks. Finally a compromise of two weeks was agreed upon, and the place of meeting was scheduled to be in Niklaus Moser's barn. When the ministers assembled within the allotted two weeks, a fairly large number was present, but Hans Reist, who appears to have been Amman's chief protagonist, did not come to the meeting.<sup>9</sup>

Among those present were Niklaus Moser, Peter Schwartz, Peter Giger, Hans im Wiler, Jakob Ammann, Uli Ammann, Niklaus Augspurger, Christian Blank, Peter Zimmerman, Peter Habegger, Peter im Gul, and Jakob Schwartz. There were also at least three women there. While they were awaiting the arrival of Hans Reist and others, Peter Geiger mentioned the scripture, "What enters the mouth does not defile a man, but what goes out of the mouth." Ammann replied that that had nothing to do with the question. Then Peter Giger quoted, "If ye bite and devour one another, see that ye be not consumed one of another,"

---

9. Ibid, p. 256.

and begged of Ammann that he would not bring about a division in the church. When they had waited some time for Hans Reist and certain others, they sent one or more of the women out to ask them to come, but the women brought back the word that since it was harvest these men found it to be an inconvenient time and that they could not come. By this time Jakob Ammann seems to have been quite impatient and interpreted the absence of these men as an indication of their indifference. Then he brought forth a letter on which were listed six charges against Hans Reist. When he had read these charges he declared Hans Reist to be excommunicated. This created quite a stir. One woman fell on her knees before him and begged him to be patient. However, he then turned toward Nikolaus Moser and again asked his opinion on "Meidung". Moser answered that he had not asked the opinion of his congregation and that he could not speak for them. J. Ammann then asked Peter Giger again and Giger replied that he would not give his opinion until the ministers were all present. Upon these answers Ammann excommunicated them charging them with falsehood. Then he turned to Peter Habegger, Jakob Schwartz, and Peter im Gul, and asked them if they accepted "Meidung". When they did not he excommunicated them. Upon this Peter Zimmerman said, "There you have it," and the meeting broke up, the Ammann party leaving the building without shaking hands.<sup>10</sup>

#### D. Attempts At Reconciliation

In the manner described above, the "Amish" wing of the Mennonite Church came into existence. Whether Jacob Amman thought that peace and harmony among the Swiss Brethren would be restored in this way, it is impossible to tell. If such were his expectations, they had to be quickly revised, for as the news of his action spread, protests began to come, not only from the ministers in

---

10. Ibid., p. 256-257.

Switzerland, but also churches in Alsace and in the Palatinate wrote expressing their concern and urging reconciliation.

1. The first attempt at reconciliation.

The first attempt at reconciliation was made when those who had been expelled by Amman wrote the Amish a note, asking them to confess that they had gone too far.

This request was made three times, but the only answer received was that the "Amish" would have nothing to do with them unless they adopted "Meidung". When the news of this went out some men went to Jakob Ammann, but he refused to listen to them. Again Peter Giger and Hans Zaugg went to Jakob and Uli Ammann and asked for a conference at which lay-members might be present. It was only after the third petition that Ammann expressed his desire to be there. When his group arrived at the meeting no lay-members were present. Nothing was accomplished at this meeting, for after Jakob Ammann spoke, he refused to stay to hear either Niklaus Moser or Peter Giger.<sup>11</sup>

This first attempt at reconciliation between the estranged parties themselves, with no one present to act as mediator, ended in failure. It ended in failure because Amman had no wish to arbitrate or to compromise.

2. The second attempt at reconciliation.

The "would-be" mediators in this instance were some ministers from the Palatinate, who on October 16, 1693,

---

11. Ibid., p. 259.

"wrote to the Amish asking them to seek a reconciliation with those whom they had excommunicated."<sup>12</sup> Amman replied to the Palatinate ministers with a long letter in which he defended his course of action and chided them for listening to schismatics and sinners. In addition to this he threatened the Palatinate ministers themselves with excommunication.

It was also about this time (November 22, 1693) or a little later that Jakob Ammann sent out his Warnungs-Schrift, a short letter or broadside in which he asked all church members to report to him that they accepted his view on the three controversial issues or to prove to him that he was wrong. They were asked to do this by February 20, 1694, and if they did not report by March 7 they were to be excommunicated.<sup>13</sup>

Thus ended the second attempt to heal the only major division that had occurred among the Swiss Brethren from the time that Grebel had broken with Zwingli in 1523. Instead of the longed for restoration of harmony which they sought, the Palatinate ministers had only succeeded in bringing about the threat of a still greater division.

### 3. The third attempt at reconciliation.

It was no doubt in the hope that this threat could be prevented from becoming an actuality, that the Palatinate

---

12. Ibid., p. 260.

13. Ibid., p. 261. Also included in the controversy, but with less significance, were the questions whether one should teach that all true-hearted persons will be saved and whether those who speak falsehoods should be expelled from the church. Footwashing, uniformity of dress, and Communion twice annually also became issues.



ministers asked for a conference in which both sides of the dispute might be heard and the difference resolved if possible. This meeting was held in the mill at Ohnenheim in Alsace in the second week of March, 1694.

Present were ten men from Switzerland, nine of whom were ministers, and seven from the Palatinate. The number of "Amish" present is not known. Here the Palatines begged the "Amish" not to continue acting so rashly. The "Amish" on the other hand insisted that the three issues of the controversy be accepted by the others. The "Amish" would not yield on any point, and neither would the Swiss who opposed them. Those from the Palatinate conceded that persons who speak falsehoods should be expelled from the church, and that no-one should teach that all true-hearted persons will be saved. But on the question of "Meidung" they would not agree with the Amish..... When no agreement could be reached the "Amish" left the meeting. The following day the Swiss ministers decided to agree with the Palatines after it appeared that there might be another division. Then the two groups drafted a statement giving the reasons why they could not agree with Jakob Ammann and signed it. The date of this document is March 13, 1694.<sup>14</sup>

A copy of the abovementioned statement is here included, because it shows conclusively that the strict "ban" was the real reason for the controversy and that its introduction by Amman was an innovation among the Swiss churches.

"A statement by us ministers and Bishops from the Palatinate and Switzerland concerning the article in which we, the undersigned, are not able to agree with Jakob Ammann. This is the reason, because he is introducing avoidance in everyday eating and drinking, taking it from I Cor. 5.

---

14. Ibid., p. 261.

Not only because he practices it himself, but all those who do not wish to confess it with him, he casts out of the congregation and paints them as untruthful, apostate sectarians, and heretical spirits. This is also the reason that we can not, neither wish to hold him and those affiliated with him as brethren and sisters. Since from our understanding of 'Meidung,' we do not confess that the apostle was writing about everyday (äusserlich) eating in I Cor. 5, but about (eating) the passover (Oster-Lamm), which is Christ offered for us. Therefore he says, 'Let us keep the feast, not with old leaven,' so therefore we confess that those who commit the vices concerning which the apostle writes, namely a person who permits himself to be called a brother, and is a fornicator and such as is described further, him should we expel, the evil one, and should not eat the bread of the remembrance of the body and blood of Christ with him, but on the other hand we should admonish him as a brother, II Thess. 2, and when he is once and then a second time admonished and does not heed the admonition, but remains apostate and a heretic, no one should listen to or accept his complaints, and should withdraw himself from him as much as is possible, and as much as serves toward his upbuilding. This is for the signature of the following ministers and bishops from Switzerland and the Palatinate."<sup>15</sup>

The name of Hans Reist leads the list of those who signed the above document. This statement was a compromise between the views of the Swiss ministers and those of the Palatinate--a compromise which was arrived at in the hope that it would keep the division from spreading and prevent the formation of a new division. The latter hope was realized, as no third party to the dispute arose, but the former hope was not, for Amman in accord with his threat in his Warnungs-Schrift excommunicated most of the Palatinate ministers.

---

15. Ibid., p. 262.

the entire community of Mennonites in southern Germany and in Switzerland was divided into two factions that were destined to remain separated for a long time. ....The meeting at Ohnenheim in 1694 was intended to be a peace conference, an attempt at reunion and reconciliation; but it served only to increase the bitter feeling that existed between the opposing factions.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4. The three minor attempts at reconciliation.

##### a. The Amish excommunicate themselves.

After this eventful meeting of 1694 there were other and less significant attempts at reconciliation. The first of these occurred in 1698, just four years after the ill-fated venture at Ohnenheim in the mill. At that time the Amish placed themselves under the "ban" for having acted without the consent of their congregations. Apparently they expected that their opponents would overrun each other in their eagerness to receive them, but such was not the case. The Amish had shown themselves so stubbornly unyielding on a number of occasions that it was but human nature for the opposite side to feel a measure of rejoicing in the self-humiliation of the Amish.

After some time had elapsed and no one had come rushing

---

16. Ibid., p. 262-263.

Note: Although the Swiss churches are here referred to as Mennonite churches, the Swiss Anabaptists to this day think of themselves as Brethren, though they have intimate associations with the Mennonites on the continent of Europe and those in America.

to the rescue, the Amish themselves took the initiative. They indicated that they would like to be received into the church again, and their opponents said that they were willing to receive them. However, as the negotiations progressed, the Amish insisted that the opposite side agree on the strict "ban" as well as the other issues of the controversy, and that they also admit their failures. When this was refused, the truce talks of 1698 came to an end.<sup>17</sup>

b. A counsel against reconciliation.

One year after the negotiations of 1698 came to an unsuccessful conclusion, there was another attempt at reconciliation by at least some of the Amish. This we know from a letter written in 1699 by Hans Gut, in which he advised against it. The Amish had too often demonstrated their inability to compromise on any issue. And again in 1700 some Amish ministers placed themselves under the "ban", but as before nothing was gained by this move.<sup>18</sup>

c. The final attempt at reconciliation.

Eleven years later on January 21 there was one last attempt by the Amish to heal the breach which they themselves had made. On January 21, 1711, a group of Amish ministers from the Palatinate and the upper Palatinate

---

17. Ibid., p. 265.

18. Ibid., p. 265.

came to Heidelberg in Alsace "wanting to make peace with the brotherhood there, provided they be allowed to practice "Meidung" and feetwashing."<sup>19</sup> It is not surprising to find that the brethren at Heidelberg were hesitant to accept this proposal. It did vary from earlier proposals in that there was no insistence that the other side also adopt these practices, only the request that they, the Amish, be allowed to continue them. Despite this degree of mellowing, the brethren at Heidelberg wrote to Switzerland for advice before they received the applicants into fellowship. When the reply came from Switzerland, it was in the form of a negative. Apparently the Swiss doubted the sincerity of the Amish after the numerous attempts at reconciliation had all failed. After the advice was received, however, the brotherhood at Heidelberg acted contrary to it and accepted Uli Amman and Hans Gerber into fellowship. It will be remembered that Uli Amman was one of the men who had accompanied Jacob Amman on his initial tour of inspection.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the last recorded attempt at reconciliation occurred just one year before the Amish emigration to America began;

---

19. Ibid., p. 266.

20. Ibid., p. 266.

an emigration which by 1875 had almost totally depleted the Amish population on the continent of Europe.<sup>21</sup>

#### E. Summary and Evaluation

It is impossible to evaluate Amman's motives across more than two centuries of history. The ashes of men's bodies yield no psychological knowledge even when the place of their burial is known, which is not the case with the remains of Jacob Amman. It is possible to say that whatever Amman's motives may have been, he acted ignorantly of the historical reason for the strict "ban" in Holland. His attempt to transplant to Switzerland a custom which had arisen in Holland in response to an historical situation, when that situation did not exist in Switzerland, has had a long train of unhappy consequences, the end of which is not yet in sight.<sup>22</sup>

---

21. Bender, H. S., "The Mennonites in the United States," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, XI, No. 1, (January, 1937), p. 73.

22. It cannot be proved that Jacob Amman learned of the strict "ban" from the Dutch Mennonites. However, both Menno Simons and Dirk Philips wrote in favor of this view, and the works of both men are standard equipment for the religious library of every Amish home in America. With the tenacity with which the Amish cling to the old, it is not likely that they were introduced to these authors by anyone except Jacob Amman.

## CHAPTER III

### AMISH IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA

#### AND

### EARLY SETTLEMENTS IN SOMERSET COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

#### A. Early Amish Settlements in Eastern Pennsylvania

Opinions vary as to the exact date for the beginning of the Amish immigration to America. Milton Gascho gives the date as 1712,<sup>1</sup> while John A. Hostetler estimates that the immigration began about 1710.<sup>2</sup> The late C. Henry Smith found 1714 to be the year which marked the arrival of the first Amish in the New World.<sup>3</sup> While opinions vary as to the date on which the immigration began, there is no difference of opinion as to the reason for its beginning. The Amish, like their Anabaptist cousins, the Mennonites, came to this country in quest of the religious liberty that was denied them in their native Switzerland during most of the first quarter of the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The Amish were glad to seek relief in the New World from this religious persecution,

---

1. Gascho, op.cit., p. 266.

2. Hostetler, J. A., "A Brief History of the Amish," Mennonite Historical Bulletin, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, IX, No. 2, (April, 1948), p. 2.

3. Smith, C. H., The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania, (Norristown, Penna., 1929), p. 225-228.

4. Smith, op. cit., p. 144-156.

and they were among the large group of German-speaking immigrants who landed at Philadelphia in the years before the Revolution.<sup>5</sup> The largest number of Amish immigrants to arrive in the City of Brotherly Love came between the years 1725 and 1750.<sup>6</sup> By 1754 the French and Indian Wars had almost stopped the immigration except for a few late-comers, and it was not resumed on a large scale until the close of the Napoleonic wars, almost a century later.<sup>7</sup> The Amish chose Pennsylvania because of the generous offer of William Penn's land agents. In fact Penn's colony was a haven of refuge for many religious minority groups. After the colonies had won their independence, the state of Pennsylvania practiced religious toleration to a greater degree than any other state in the Union. It is now known that twenty-three religious sects or denominations were flourishing in pioneer Pennsylvania. Among these were the Amish, the Baptists, the Mennonites, the Moravians, and the Schwenkfelders.<sup>8</sup> The Amish settled

---

5. Strassburger, R.B., Pennsylvania German Pioneers, (Norristown, Penna., 1934, I, p. viii.

6. Hostetler, op.cit., p. 2,

7. Smith, The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania, op.cit., p. 238.

8. From a paper prepared by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Public Instruction, for the Pennsylvania Federation of Junior Historians, p. 1. This paper urges as a fruitful topic for research, "Minority Groups and Their Contribution to Pennsylvania".



first in eastern Pennsylvania in what is now Berks County. "After the Amish began to arrive in greater numbers, they settled in Chester, Lebanon, and Lancaster counties."<sup>9</sup>

B. The First Amish Settlement  
in  
Somerset County, Pennsylvania

It will be remembered that a very bitter feeling had been generated between the Amish and the Mennonites before the two groups left their European home. The ocean voyage did not remove that bitterness, and in the New World the Amish sought to remain a people apart. As the immigrants continued to come and the native population continued to grow, the Amish were forced to seek new frontiers in order to maintain their desired isolation and secure the less expensive land. Both these factors account for the fact, They (the Amish) did not seem to follow the Mennonites and other Germans down the Cumberland and Shenandoah valleys, but followed up the Juniata and established their first daughter colony near the headwaters of the Ohio, in what is now Somerset county.<sup>10</sup>

The probable date for the arrival of the first Amish on what was then the western frontier of the Pennsylvania

---

9. Hostetler, op.cit., p. 2.

10. Smith, op.cit., p. 244.

Colony is 1767.<sup>11</sup> At that time the area which now comprises Bedford, Blair, Fulton, Huntingdon, Northumberland, Somerset and Westmoreland counties was still Indian territory.<sup>12</sup> A report by a Rev. Captain Steele gives considerable support to an ancient tradition that there were some white settlers in the vicinity of this first Amish settlement in Somerset County as early as 1762 or 1763. A report by Captain Steele which is dated 1768 states that in that year

Steele and his fellow commissioners learned that in that part of Somerset County in which are now the townships of Stony Creek, Brother's Valley, Summit Mills and Elklick, there were some settlers who were there before the Indian title was extinguished.<sup>13</sup>

The territory now including Somerset County was opened for settlement by the Penns on February 23, 1769.

The public was informed that on April 3, 1769, at 10:00 a.m. Their land office would be open to receive application from all persons inclined to take up lands in the new purchase, upon the terms of five pounds sterling per hundred acres, and one penny per annum for quit rent.<sup>14</sup>

If 1767 is the correct date for the arrival of the first Amish settlers in Somerset County, they were there two years before the territory had been officially opened for settlement. This date seems to be fairly reliable,

---

11. Ibid., p. 244.

12. Blackburn, H.E., Koontz, W.H., and Welfley, W.H., History of Bedford and Somerset Counties, Pennsylvania, (New York, 1906), I, p. 1-7.

13. Ibid. II, p. 51.

14. Ibid. II, p. 17.

as it is the date given by various sources. An excerpt from a biographical sketch of Christian Blauch (now Blough) found in the Gnaegi family history presents a vivid picture of life on the frontier in northern Somerset County in 1767. The sketch states that at the time Christian Blauch settled in what is now Brother's Valley Township one-half mile north of Berlin, Pennsylvania, there were only a few scattered cabins. Then the account proceeds as follows:

Outside these cabins the valley between the Allegheny and Negro mountains was a vast howling wilderness. Christian Blauch selected the place where the buildings now stand, pitched his tent and commenced to fell the primeval forest, surrounded by Indians, bears, wolves, and other wild animals.<sup>15</sup>

If at first Blauch found in his new home only wolves, bears and Indians as neighbors, he had not long to wait until he was joined by other Amish settlers from eastern Pennsylvania. The records do not show when the largest number of Amish arrived on this new frontier, but it is known that they were there in some force before the Revolution. The fact that they did not actively participate in the war for independence has been noticed by county historians.<sup>16</sup>

---

15. Gnagey, E., A Complete History of Christian Gnaegi, et al., (Elkhart, Indiana, 1897), p. 136-137.

16. Cassady, J.C., The Somerset County Outline, (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1932), p. 171.

There is no record that the Amish who lived in what is now Somerset County before the Revolution (the county was not organized until 1795)<sup>17</sup> suffered any persecution because of their refusal to bear arms. Doubtless they were so far out on the frontier that their existence there passed relatively unnoticed. Farther east where they were more numerous, they were not so fortunate. An old tradition says that so many men were imprisoned that the women were forced to till the fields. This tradition further states that a group of Amish men in Reading, Pennsylvania, had been sentenced to be shot and that the execution was stayed only because Rev. Henry Hertzell, a pastor in the German Reformed Church, interceded for them.<sup>18</sup>

1. The growth of early settlements in the northern part of Somerset County.

Possibly because of this freedom from persecution on the frontier, the Amish began to move west in fairly large numbers at the close of the Revolutionary War. The first resident Amish bishop of Somerset County was a Christian Yoder. This Christian Yoder was the son of another man who bore the same name and was sometimes

<sup>17</sup>. Blackburn, Koontz and Welfley, *op.cit.*, I, p.1-7.

<sup>18</sup>. Mast, C.Z., A Brief History of Bishop Jacob Mast and Other Mast Pioneers, (Elverson, Penna., 1911), p. 691.

referred to as Schweitzer Christian in order to avoid confusing his identity with that of his son.<sup>19</sup> Schweitzer Christian, as his name implies, came from Switzerland. He arrived in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in 1744 and lived there until 1776. In that year he moved with his wife and four children to what is now Somerset County, and bought a large tract of timberland near where the town of Pugh now stands for the sum of \$968. The deed for this property was dated October 9, 1775. There were no roads and the nearest neighbors were five miles distant.<sup>20</sup> The first wife of Schweitzer Christian died shortly after the family arrived in Somerset County. He then married Barbara Hooley and eleven children were born to this union. The birth date of the Christian Yoder who became the first resident Amish bishop of Somerset County is given as 1758.<sup>21</sup> The year of his ordination to that office is not known. However, Amish men are not ordained to any office in the church before they are married. It is not likely that Christian Yoder was married before his twentieth birthday, and not probable that he was ordained as bishop before he was thirty. The probability is rather

---

19. Swartzendruber, D. B., letter dated March 20, 1950, Kalona, Iowa.

20. Blackburn, Koontz and Welfley, op.cit., III, p. 116-117.

21. Hostetler, J.A., "Amish Pioneer of Somerset County," Mennonite Historical Bulletin, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, X, No. 4, (October, 1949), p. 1.

that he was older and that it was near the turn of the nineteenth century before the Amish settlement in Somerset County could boast of a resident bishop. This settlement later became known as the Glades settlement.

From 1767 to about 1800 then the Conemaugh congregation, which had been started by the settlement of Christian Blauch, and the Glades congregation, which was started by the settlement of Schweitzer Christian, had to look to the older Amish settlements for such spiritual ministry as they received. This spiritual ministry of the pioneer days was provided by Bishop Jacob Mast. Bishop Mast is said to have landed at Philadelphia on the ship, Brotherhood, on November 3, 1750. He had been a native of Switzerland.

Bishop Jacob Mast proved himself a leader of considerable ability promoting the welfare of the Church with all the vigor that he was able to muster. He had charge of all the Amish Mennonite settlements in America during the greater period of his bishopric. The settlements at that time were confined to the colony and later the state, of Pennsylvania. He had three districts west of the Susquehanna River which he generally visited on horseback. They were known as Kishacoquillas Valley congregation in Mifflin county and the Claydes and Conemaugh congregations in Somerset and Cambria counties.<sup>22</sup>

Probably these visits from Bishop Mast were no longer necessary by the turn of the century, the Glade and Conemaugh congregations having by that time ordained ministers and

---

22. Mast, op.cit., p. 696.

bishops from among their own number. (See Appendix on the Discipline of 1809).

Who the first resident minister or bishop of the Conemaugh congregation was is not known. But at a conference of the three Amish congregations in Somerset County (the third was located in the southern end of the county and will be discussed later) held somewhere in the county on March 18, 1837, those who signed as ministers of the Conemaugh congregation were Jacob Oesch, Christian Miller, Joseph Miller and Jonas Yoder.<sup>23</sup> No Amish congregation would be blessed with five ministers unless it be of more than average size. The Conemaugh congregation probably reached the peak of its population around 1850. The first half of the nineteenth century saw the colony grow rapidly. Jonstown, made famous by the flood of 1888, was founded by Joseph Shontz or Jons in 1800.<sup>24</sup> Mr. Jons was of the Amish persuasion. He is perhaps the only Amish man to give his family name to

---

23. Bender, H. S., "Some Early Amish Disciplines", The Mennonite Quarterly Review, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, VIII, No. 2, (April, 1934), p. 93-95.

24. Johnstown Centennial, 1800-1900, History of the Centennial Celebration of Johnstown. Published by authority of the Centennial Committee. P. 33.

what later became a thriving American city. Today the great-grandson of this Amish pioneer is the minister of the Unitarian Church in the city of Hartford, Connecticut.<sup>25</sup> The Amish were in Johnstown and its vicinity in sufficient numbers to give their name to one of the city's suburbs. Even after the congregation had become almost extinct, this suburb was known for a long time as "Der Amish Hivel". This was so known, because at one time it was practically all owned by Amish people.<sup>26</sup>

The pattern of growth was much the same for the Glades congregation as it had been for the Conemaugh congregation. At the ministers' conference of 1837 those who signed their names as ministers of the Glades congregation were Christian Yoder, Sr., Christian Yoder, Jr., Abraham Miller, Jacob Swartzendruber, and David Yoder.<sup>27</sup> A table giving the return of taxables in Brother's Valley township for the year 1783 and 1784 shows that at that time there were nineteen family heads in the area who bore Amish names. Among the names recorded on this list are Bondrager,

---

25. From a personal interview with the Rev. Payson Miller, April, 1950.

26. Shetler, S. G., "Bishop Moses B. Miller", Gospel Herald, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, XXII, No. 18, (August, 1929), p. 379-380.

27. Christian Yoder, Sr., was the son of Schweitzer Christian, the immigrant of 1744, while Christian Yoder, Jr., was the son of Christian Yoder, Sr. Swartzendruber letter, op.cit. Also, Bender, "Early Amish Disciplines", op.cit.



Gnagey, Hostetler, Livengood, Miller, Mishler, Stutzman, Schrock, Troyer and Wenger.<sup>28</sup> The Amish then as now had large families, and the presence of these nineteen families in the region by 1784 probably means that more than a hundred people were living in the area at that time who were known by their speech and manner of dress as "Amish".

There is some indication that there may have been more than one congregation in the Glade region at one time. The Jacob Swartzendruber who signed as one of the ministers of the Glade congregation in the Conference of 1837 later removed to Johnson County, Iowa. In the year 1949 the late D. B. Swartzendruber of Kalona, Iowa, was searching for some information that would enable him to write a biography of his grandfather, Frederick Swartzendruber. In the course of this search a note was discovered which had been written by his great-grandfather, Jacob, one of the ministers who had signed as a minister in the Glade congregation in the conference of 1837.

This note was written in German and reads as follows:

Habe im Jahr 1860 eine Reise gethan mit Joseph Oesch. Erstlich nach Canada, darnoch in Konistoga, von dort in Beckweh und in Tuscarwas Valley, hernach in die Kishacoquillas Valley, von dort in die drie Klatzer (Glades) Gemeinen, von dort in Ohio in Holmes Co., und dort in

---

28. Blackburn, Koontz and Welfley, op.cit., II, p. 139-143.

Elkhart Co., Ind. Und dort habe ich eine andre Haus Mutter genommen, nemlich Mary Miller, dem Daniel Miller seine hinter lassene Witwe; dem Völligen Diener früher wohnhaft in der Klatzer Gemeinde.<sup>29</sup>

Jonas B. Miller, minister at Grantsville, Maryland, insists that there never were three Amish congregations in the Glade region. Jacob Swartzendruber, however, had lived there and served for a while as one of the ministers, so he should have been familiar with the region. A brief description of Somerset County published in 1843 states that in that year the county's population was chiefly of German descent and that German was the prevailing language. The sketch goes on to say that in 1830 the population was divided into the following religious sects: the Lutherans having seventeen churches; the German Reformed, twelve; the Methodists, eight; the Mennonites, five; the Baptists, four; the Amish, four; the Presbyterians, two; and the Roman Catholics, one.<sup>30</sup> It would appear then that in 1830 there were at least two congregations in the Glades, for the only other Amish settlement in the county lay in the southern end between what are now the towns of Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, and Grantsville,

29. Swartzendruber letter, op.cit., March 20, 1950.

30. Day, S., Historical Collections of the State of Pennsylvania, (New Haven, Connecticut, 1843), p. 616.

Maryland. Another possibility would be that the 1843 publication considered the southern settlement as two congregations as well as the northern settlement.<sup>31</sup> The full solution to this problem will perhaps yield to further research. In any case it is evident that by 1830 the Amish were in Somerset County in sufficient numbers to be recognized by both county and state historians. The predominantly German-speaking population probably accounts for the fact that the first successful newspaper published within the county was published in the German language. This paper known as Die Westliche Telegraph made its first appearance in 1812. The printing house which printed the paper also printed books, among them an edition of the German Quanto Bible, which made its appearance in 1813. A statement from the preface of the Bible says that it was the first Bible published in western Pennsylvania.<sup>32</sup>

## 2. The decline and disappearance of the Conemaugh and Glade congregations.

Few Amish congregations which were once flourishing

---

31. The southern settlement is at present divided into two sections known as the Upper and Lower settlements.

32. Hause, M., A Somerset County Historical Notebook, (Somerset, 1945), p. 11.

disappear completely, but such has been the case with both the Conemaugh and Glade congregations. No satisfactory explanation has as yet been found for their disappearance. One of the factors which led to the break-up of the Conemaugh congregation was the lure of cheaper and more fertile land in the West. The first Amish settlers left this area for the region of Elkhart and LaGrange Counties, Indiana, in the spring of 1841.<sup>33</sup> By 1875 the families in the Conemaugh congregation had become so few in number that the practice of worshipping in the homes of the various members had become a burden. The meeting came to the same home too frequently. Earlier there were enough families so that no one family was required to have the meeting more than once or twice a year. As the number of families became fewer through emigration, death and failure to win the rising generation, some of the Conemaugh congregation proposed the building of a meetinghouse. There was some opposition to the proposal, but this was successfully overcome and two meetinghouses were erected. One was built on the farm of Isaac Kaufman near Davidsville in Somerset County and became known as the Kaufman Meetinghouse. The second one was built on the farm of Bishop Moses B. Miller

---

33. Bontrager, E.J., letter dated June 6, 1950, Shipshewanna, Indiana. Mr. Bontrager is a highly respected Old Order Amish Bishop of LaGrange County, Indiana.

near Geistown in Cambria County and became known as the Miller Meetinghouse.<sup>34</sup> These meetinghouses were built in 1875 and were, so far as is now known, the first Amish meetinghouses in America east of the Ohio River. Bishop Miller served the church from the time of his ordination as bishop in 1848 until his death in 1902. The fact that the Amish persisted in using the German language in their preaching services, except at funerals, caused many of the children of Amish parents to unite with the Mennonite Church.<sup>35</sup> So ends the story of the Conemaugh Amish congregation. The last bishop of the congregation died in 1902. It is not known when the last surviving member of the congregation died. It is hoped that further research will reveal more definitely when and why the congregation expired.

When an attempt is made to find an adequate reason for the disappearance of the once thriving Glade congregation or congregations, as the case may be, reliable information is even more scanty than in the case of the Conemaugh congregation. The reasons given by the various

---

34. Shetler, op.cit., p. 379-380.

35. Ibid., p. 380.

traditions are these: one, that the congregation became very lax in morals; two, that the larger part of the congregation moved westward in search of cheaper and more fertile land; three, that many of the young men either enlisted or were drafted into the armed forces during the Civil War and thus became lost to the Church; and four, that so many of the congregation were being won to the Church of the Brethren, that the leaders of the group decided to leave and start a new community where they would again be isolated from other denominations. Some support can be found for each one of these traditions. In support of the first tradition is the ninth item of agreement in the Discipline of 1837 which reads as follows:

With regard to the excesses practiced among the youth, namely that the youth take the liberty to sleep or lie together without any fear or shame, such things shall not be tolerated at all. And when it takes place with the knowledge of the parents and something bad happens on account of it, the parents shall not go unpunished.<sup>36</sup>

It will be remembered that this discipline was drawn up at a conference of all the Amish ministers then serving congregations in Somerset County. Such an item would not have been considered by the conference unless the issue had confronted the churches in a real and troublesome

---

36. Bender, op.cit., p. 93-95.

manner. That this iniquitous practice of "bundling" (courtship in bed) was particularly troublesome in the Glade area is attested to by an epistle written by Jacob Swartzendruber and addressed to the Amish ministers' conference of 1865. Swartzendruber had served in the ministry of the Glade congregation for several years after which he moved to the vicinity of Grantsville, Maryland.<sup>37</sup> Jacob Swartzendruber apparently tried to correct this evil in the Glade congregation, and when the other ministers either could not or would not support him he moved out.<sup>38</sup> In the epistle of 1865 Swartzendruber remonstrates against the levity which existed in Amish communities while men were dying on the battlefield during the Civil War.<sup>39</sup>

In support of the tradition that many of the families moved to the West much evidence can be found. In the obituary file of the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, one finds many notices like the following:

- 
37. Swartzendruber letter, op.cit., March 20, 1950.  
 38. Bender, H. S., "An Amish Bishop's Conference Epistle of 1865", The Mennonite Quarterly Review, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, XX, No. 3, (July, 1946), p. 225-226.  
 39. Ibid., p. 229.

Died Oct. 12 in Lagrange County, Ind. Bishop Joseph Miller, aged 68 years, 10 months and 27 days. He was born in 1808 in Somerset Co., Penna., and in 1833 was chosen minister. In 1841 with his family and three other families he came to Elkhart Co.<sup>40</sup>

Through checking these files it was found that the Glade congregation had lost a number of settlers not only to Indiana but also to Iowa. However, these are not so numerous that they satisfactorily account for the total disappearance of the mother colony. The remaining two traditions must therefore also be examined.

The third tradition which says that many of the young men served in the regular army during the Civil War can be only partially supported. There were some who did serve in the army, but they were all draftees, and they were few rather than many. The names of these men are, furthermore, the only indication that they were Amish, but this is usually evidence that is reasonably reliable. The names of the men who are known to have served as soldiers during the war between the States are as follows: Christian Berkey, John Hershberger, Joseph Miller, Tobias D. Yoder and Jeremiah Yutzi.<sup>41</sup>

The fourth and last tradition finds some support in that a number of people who bear names of Amish origin still

40. Obituary Column, Herald of Truth, Elkhart, Indiana, XIV, No. 11, (November, 1877), p. 181.

41. Blackburn, Koontz and Welfley, op.cit., II, p. 262-265.



live in the vicinity of Berlin, Pennsylvania, but they have become members of other churches. An outstanding example of one of these is Jacob B. Schrock. Schrock served at least one term and possibly more as a State Senator. He states that his ancestors came to that area in about 1772, and that they were devout Amish people.<sup>42</sup>

The total weight of all four traditions put together does not seem to explain adequately the total disappearance of a once thriving Amish community. Exactly when the Glade congregation breathed its last as an organized group is not known. The last resident bishop of the Glade congregation was Abner Yoder, who moved to Johnson County, Iowa, in 1866.<sup>43</sup> In 1865 Bishop Yoder had attended a conference of Amish ministers in Holmes County, Ohio, at which time he signed his name to the discipline drawn up at the conference as a minister in the Glade congregation in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.<sup>44</sup> Possibly it was at this conference of 1865 that Abner Yoder learned of the Amish settlement in Iowa and decided to cast his lot with the new pioneers. Abner Yoder was the grandson of Christian Yoder, Jr., who had also served as a bishop in the Glade congregation, but probably not until the death of

---

42. Schrock, J. B., letter dated May 5, 1950, Berlin, Pennsylvania.

43. Bender, op.cit., footnote, p. 225.

44. Ibid., p. 225.

his father, Christian Yoder, Sr., in 1838.<sup>45</sup> Christian Yoder, Sr., and Christian Yoder, Jr., both signed their names as ministers of the Glade congregation in the Discipline of 1837.<sup>46</sup> Thus, for a period of one year at least, and possibly longer, father and son served as ministers in the same congregation.

The last surviving member of the Glade congregation was Benedict Yoder, grandson of Schweitzer Christian, the immigrant who first settled in the Glades in 1776. Benedict was born in 1817 and lived until 1910, when he died at the age of ninety-three.<sup>47</sup>

### C. The River Congregation

#### 1. Early history.

The River congregation received its name from the fact that it was located near the Castleman River in the southern end of Somerset County. The river received its name from Jacob Castleman, a hunter and trapper "who had his camp along the river on what is now either the John or Jacob Saylor farm".<sup>48</sup> It is impossible to tell from

45. Bender, op.cit. Mennonite Quarterly Review, VIII, No. 2, (April, 1934), p. 95.

46. Ibid., p. 95.

47. Hostetler, op.cit., p. 1 and 3.

48. Blackburn, Koontz and Welfley, op.cit., II, p. 65.

existing records when the congregational life of the Amish in this area was first organized. It is, however, known that individual Amish families entered Elk Lick and Summit townships at a very early date. It will be remembered this general area was opened for settlement by the Penns on April 3, 1769.<sup>49</sup> A farm which now lies between Salisbury and West Salisbury was sold to Peter Livengood by William St. Clair in 1773. The deed to Livengood states that St. Clair had applied for his warrant to survey the tract on April 12, 1769. This was just nine days after the land office opened.<sup>50</sup> Tradition says that this Peter Livengood was an Amish preacher, but this has not been substantiated.<sup>51</sup> Another interesting tradition connected with the Livengood family is that a daughter Elizabeth was born to them before they had had opportunity to erect a permanent dwelling place. This daughter later married Jacob Brenison and was still living in 1870 when her age was given to Michael F. Smith, Esq., a census officer, as ninety-eight. This would fix the date of Peter Livengood's arrival in Elk Lick township as 1772.<sup>52</sup>

---

49. Ibid. II, p. 17.

50. Ibid. , p. 69.

51. Ibid., p. 502.

52. Ibid., p. 71-72.

Other early settlers in this area were Christian Gnaege and Jacob Saylor. Gnaege came from Switzerland and entered a tomahawk claim for 500 acres of land about two miles south of the present town of Meyersdale in 1774. "A surveyor's plot of 1784 shows that Gnaege's neighbors at that time were John Hochstetler, Michael Miller, John Yotter, Christian Berkey and Joseph Farney."<sup>53</sup> Jacob Saylor, whose name appears among those of the early settlers died in 1796. His will which is one of the earliest to be recorded in Somerset County leaves to his son John the family Bible and "the old Menno Simon book; which was printed in 1575".<sup>54</sup>

## 2. Early life and ministers of the River congregation.

By the turn of the century the Amish in Elk Lick and Summit townships appear to have been fairly numerous. There is not much evidence of any organized congregational life in the area until 1809. In that year Benedict Miller was ordained to the ministry in the Amish church. Benedict was the first Amish minister to be ordained in Elk Lick township. He was the son of a Jacob Miller, who had come from Berks County before 1787.<sup>55</sup> On Whit Monday in the year 1813 Benedict Miller was ordained as bishop of the

---

53. Smith, op.cit., p. 245.

54. Blackburn, Koontz and Welfley, op.cit., II, p.65.

55. Ibid., p. 502.

Amish church in Elk Lick township<sup>56</sup>, and thus became, so far as is now known, the first resident bishop to serve the River congregation.

After Benedict's ordination the River congregation seems to have expanded rapidly. When the Amish ministers of Somerset County held their 1837 conference, two other men signed with Benedict as ministers of the River congregation. They were Yost Yoder and Hannes Gingerich.<sup>57</sup> Family traditions which are well established give us some revealing glimpses of the character of the first Amish bishop of Elk Lick township. Part of the growth of the community during the first half of the nineteenth century is accounted for by the fact that the European Amish had started to immigrate again to America. At the close of the Napoleonic Wars some of these found their way to Somerset County and the River congregation. The following account of the arrival of Wilhelm Bender from Hesse-darmstadt shows that these immigrants did not always arrive under the most favorable circumstances. It also gives us a character portrait of Bishop Miller.

---

56. Shetler, op.cit., p. 379.

57. Bender, op.cit., Mennonite Quarterly Review, VIII, No. 2, (April, 1934), p. 95.

Wilhelm, the oldest son of the second marriage, it was decided, should go to America before he reached the age when young men must enter military training. But the family was very poor. Passage to America was beyond their means, and Wilhelm became a "redemptionner." Peter Kinsinger, an Amish friend who was coming to America, paid Wilhelm's passage. When they landed at Baltimore, they came in contact with the proprietor of a nursery who paid to Kinsinger, the amount of Wilhelm's passage, with the understanding that Wilhelm would stay as a "redemptionner" and work out the sum he had paid for him. Kinsinger came west on the "National Trail," now United States Route 40, and joined the Amish settlement in Somerset County, Pennsylvania and Garrett County, Maryland, while Wilhelm, a boy of about fifteen years of age, was left near Baltimore, a stranger in a strange land.

When Kinsinger arrived in Somerset County, and the brotherhood learned of Wilhelm in Baltimore, bound out as a "Redemptionner," the Amish Bishop, Benedict Miller, took steps to have him redeemed and brought to Somerset County. One of the daughters of Bishop Miller said "that boy may become a husband for one of us." She spoke more truly than she knew. Miller went personally to Baltimore on horseback, paid the redemption money, and brought Wilhelm to his own home. About eight years later, in 1838, Wilhelm Bender and Katharine Miller (the girl who said the above) were married.<sup>58</sup>

Other traditions regarding Bishop Miller for which no written evidence has been found state that after the Amish settlement was started in Holmes County, Ohio, (see Chapter IV), he frequently visited that colony on horseback and ministered to them. On one of these journeys he is said to have spent the night in a tavern in Wheeling, West Virginia, which was operated by German-speaking people. When the proprietor learned that his guest was a minister, he asked him to preach, and it is

---

<sup>58</sup>. Bender, C. W., Descendants of Daniel Bender, (Berlin, Pennsylvania, 1948), Foreword, p. 1.

said that Bishop Benedict complied with the request.<sup>59</sup> It is also said that Benedict Miller had read his Bible through three times by December 14, 1836, and that he possessed both English and German copies of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>60</sup>

From these glimpses it is possible to learn that Benedict Miller was a man of large sympathies and rather broad interests. It is also possible to learn that during his years of active ministry the River congregation had spread from Elk Lick township in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, across the state line into what is now Garrett County, Maryland. Many of the homes of these early Amish settlers were located in the vicinity of what is now the village of Grantsville, Maryland. Benedict died in the spring of 1837 or 1838, the accounts vary, and was buried on the farm which he then owned. His grave may still be seen on the farm which is now owned by Amos Yoder, a short distance west of Springs, Pennsylvania. The grave was marked with a simple sandstone slab, and the wind and weather have all but erased the inscription which it once bore.<sup>61</sup>

---

59. From a personal interview with the widow of the late S. S. Miller, a grandson of Benedict, in July, 1950. At that time Mrs. Miller was in her ninety-sixth year.

60. From the card files of Dr. Alta Schrock, Coshen College, Coshen, Indiana, July, 1950.

61. Ibid.

After Benedict Miller's death the spiritual oversight of the River congregation passed into the hands of Jonas Beachy, who then lived on the farm which is now owned by Noah M. Beachy.<sup>62</sup> It is not known whether this Jonas Beachy had been previously ordained to the ministry in the River congregation, but it is more than likely that he had. Since, however, he is listed as Miller's successor in various sources,<sup>63</sup> and since Miller died not later than 1838, it may be safely assumed that Jonas Beachy was ordained to the office of bishop of the River congregation shortly after that date.

Very little is known about Bishop Beachy. The records show that he was married to Sara Gnaegi either in 1812 or in 1816, the accounts vary, and that he became the father of eleven children.<sup>64</sup> The sources concur in fixing the date of his death as October 23, 1878, at which time he was nearly eighty-seven years of age. There is left to posterity at least one item of historical fact which indicates that Bishop Beachy was a man of considerable physical vigor. This item has come down

---

62. Hershberger, Mrs. M.E., letter dated February 17, 1950, Salisbury, Pennsylvania.

63. Blackburn, Koontz and Welfley, op.cit., II, p. 503.

64. Gnagey, op.cit., p. 69. This gives the date of the marriage as 1816 and the date of his birth as November 5, 1791, while Samuel Peachey gives the date of the marriage as 1812 in A Memorial History of Peter Bitsche, (Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1892), p. 54.



through the generations in the form of a baptismal certificate which is now in the possession of Bishop C. W. Bender of Salisbury, Pennsylvania. The baptismal certificate has been framed and covered with glass, so that it is well preserved after more than one hundred years. It is written in German and reads as follows:

Diesen beiden Ehegattere als: Peter Petersheim und seiner ehelichen Hausfrau Susana eine geborene Millerin ist eine Tochter zur Welt geboren, den 20ten Tag Februar im Jahr unseres Herrn 1830. Diese Tochter ist geboren in der Klets (Glades) in Somerset County, im Staat Pennsylvania in Nord Amerika, und is getauft worden und erhielt den Namen Susana den 7thn Tag October im Jahr unsers Herrn, 1849, von Herr Jonas Bitsche.<sup>65</sup>

From the above it is clear that Bishop Beachy had travelled from his home in the southern end of the county to the Glade settlement in the northern end of the county in order to conduct baptismal services. No doubt this distance of nearly forty miles was covered on horseback over unimproved roads. At the time of Bishop Beachy's death he lived on Keyser's Ridge nearly fifteen miles west of the village of Grantsville. It has not been clearly established that he moved to Keyser's Ridge before 1849. If he had, then the visit to the Glade settlement was a greater test of his physical strength.

Bishop Beachy continued to serve the church until

---

<sup>65</sup>. Copied from the original by the writer on July 14, 1950.

the time of his death in 1878, according to information received from his granddaughter, Mrs. Katharine Hershberger.<sup>66</sup> This information is apparently reliable, as the obituary of his successor, Joel J. Miller, states that Miller was ordained by lot and chosen as bishop on November 13, 1887.<sup>67</sup> This would leave a ten-year period between the death of Beachy and the ordination of Miller, when the River congregation appears to have been without a resident bishop. However, there is one other source which indicates that Joel Beachy, a brother to Jonas, was ordained as bishop in 1854.<sup>68</sup> This would indicate a period of about twenty-five years when the River congregation appears to have had two bishops. Though it cannot be positively stated from the evidence now available, 1850 or 1853 probably marks the time when the River congregation had grown too large for supervision by one man, and it was decided to divide the settlement into two districts, using the Mason and Dixon Line as a natural geographic division. Whether this division was made at this time or not cannot now be positively

---

66. Hershberger letter, op.cit., February 17, 1950.

67. Obituary Column, Cospel Herald, Scottsdale, Penna., XVIII, No. 36, (December, 1915), p. 501.

68. Gnagey, op.cit., p. 174-175. An obituary reprint from a newspaper states that Joel Beachy was ordained as deacon in 1851, as minister in 1853 and as bishop in 1854.

established, but it is a fact beyond dispute that such a division did at one time exist after the abovementioned dates. In 1865 at a large gathering of Amish ministers in Holmes County, Ohio, two ministers from the River congregation affixed their names to the discipline there drawn up. They were Joel Beachy and Daniel Hershberger.<sup>69</sup> It is known that sixteen years later this Daniel Hershberger was an associate of Bishop Manassa Beachy, who was then bishop on the Pennsylvania side.<sup>70</sup> No doubt Hershberger represented the Pennsylvania Amish and Joel Beachy the Maryland Amish at the Conference of 1865. Joel Miller may have been ordained as bishop after Joel Beachy became physically unable to perform the duties of a bishop for those on the Maryland side of the Mason and Dixon Line. Joel Beachy died in 1894,<sup>71</sup> while Joel Miller continued to live until 1915.<sup>72</sup> Manassa Beachy, who was a son of Jonas Beachy, served as bishop on the Pennsylvania side for a number of years, but since the date of his ordination has not been found, it is impossible to tell how

---

69. Bender, op.cit., Mennonite Quarterly Review, VIII, No. 2, (April, 1934), p. 95.

70. Hershberger, S. E., letter dated February 23, 1950, Grantsville, Maryland.

71. Gnagey, op.cit., p. 175.

72. Obituary Column, op.cit., Gospel Herald, p. 591.

long he served in that capacity. He died on June 5, 1895, at the age of fifty-seven.<sup>73</sup> Though the Bible which he owned is still in existence and well preserved, it contains no notation in regard to the date of his ordination. However, Amish men are not ordained to the ministry before they are married, and it is not often that a man is ordained as bishop until he has served as a minister. Probably Manassa was at least thirty years of age before he was ordained as bishop, which would mark the date of his ordination as 1867, and he may well have been older. It is established that he was serving as bishop in 1885, when the Daniel Hershberger who attended the Conference of 1865 with Joel Beachy died. The obituary states that Bishop Manassa Beachy had charge of the funeral services.<sup>74</sup>

### 3. The years of growth and expansion.

The period from 1850 to 1881 had been one of steady growth for the River congregation. Until the year 1881 the congregation had followed the practice of holding the worship services in the homes of the various members. In 1881 this practice was discontinued, and four plain

---

73. Obituary Column, Herald of Truth, Elkhart, Indiana, XXXII, No. 13, (July, 1895), p. 207.

74. Ibid., XXII, No. 13, (July, 1885), p. 205.

meetinghouses were erected in which the worship services were thereafter held. There have been numerous traditions as to why this was done, but the simple fact is that the community had grown so large that it was a burden upon any one member of the brotherhood to have the service in his home. This burden was added to by the fact that in those early days

A meal was always served by the owner of the house before the people went home, and as oftentimes several hundred people were present, all of whom were welcome to come to the tables, whether members of the church or not, it is easy to see that to have preaching at one's house was quite a tax on the resources of such as were so honored.<sup>75</sup>

There are also well-founded traditions which say that the practice of serving meals was discontinued approximately ten years before the meetinghouses were built and that it was discontinued because so many outsiders who were not members of the church came simply for the meal.<sup>76</sup>

Jonas B. Miller, minister at Grantsville, Maryland, is of the opinion that the real reason for building the meetinghouses was that large numbers of the congregation were absenting themselves from the church services, particularly when it was held in the smaller homes in order to avoid the overcrowded conditions. When the ministers

---

<sup>75</sup>. Blackburn, Koontz and Welfley, *op.cit.*, II, p. 503.

<sup>76</sup>. From the card files of Dr. Alta Schrock, Coshen, Indiana, copied by the writer in July, 1950. Dr. Schrock received this information from an aged woman who claims to have been present when the last meal was served at an Amish church service in Somerset County about 1870.

saw this, they determined to do something about it, and accordingly the meetinghouses were built.<sup>77</sup> All four of the meetinghouses were of the simplest possible construction, and all were built in the same year. They were scattered throughout the Castleman River region in such fashion as to be centrally located for the northern and southern ends of the settlement. Of the two meetinghouses in the southern end of the settlement one was erected about a mile north of Grantsville in Garrett County, Maryland. This became known as the Miller Meetinghouse, because it was located on the farm of Jacob S. Miller. The other meetinghouse in the south end of the settlement was erected near the Cross Roads schoolhouse and became known as the Hershberger Meetinghouse, because it stood on or near the farm of Daniel Hershberger, a minister in the congregation. Today this is known as the Flag Run Meetinghouse.

Of the two meetinghouses in the north end of the settlement one was located near the village of St. Paul, and the other near the village of Summit Mills. All four structures remain standing and are in use at the present

---

<sup>77</sup>. From a personal interview with Jonas B. Miller, minister at Grantsville, Maryland, on July, 1949.

time. After the erection of these four meetinghouses in 1881, it would appear that the River congregation should have forged ahead in another period of growth. Unfortunately differences of opinion led to strife and division only fourteen years later.

#### 4. The division of 1895.

This unfortunate incident is now known among the Amish of this region as "the split of 1895". The exact reasons for this division remain something of a mystery, even though it occurred during the life span of many who are yet alive. Probably the reasons were multiple in nature and originated as a result of personality clashes among the ministers. It is an established fact that some of the young people had started attending "a sort of teachers' normal school"<sup>78</sup> at Springs, Pennsylvania, in preparation to teach in the public schools. This school was conducted by Daniel H. Bender, a Mennonite minister, who became very popular with the young Amish folk. Among his students were a young man who later became Bishop C. W. Bender of Salisbury, Pennsylvania, and a companion, Milton E. Hershberger, deceased husband of the informant.<sup>79</sup>

---

78. Hershberger letter, op.cit., February 17, 1950.

79. Ibid.

This new interest in education on the part of the rising generation raised a storm of protest among some of the older more conservative people. These now approached Bishop Joel Miller and his co-minister, Jacob S. Miller, and petitioned them to forbid the continuance of this practice. This the two ministers, who both lived in Maryland, refused to do, since they saw nothing harmful or sinful in attending a Normal School which was conducted by a Mennonite minister.<sup>80</sup>

It is also an established fact that before the controversy ended in division, the matter of having Sunday School had become an issue. Sunday School classes had been started not only on the Maryland side, but also on the Pennsylvania side, which appears to have had most of the conservatively minded people. As the dispute wore on, the conservatively minded folk demanded that Sunday School classes should be discontinued and attendance at the Normal Schools forbidden, as their price for the restoration of harmony.<sup>81</sup> That

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Miller, J. B., interview, op.cit., July, 1949. In this interview J. B. Miller stated that in the summer of 1894 some young people on the Pennsylvania side had secured the permission of Bishop Manassa Beachy to conduct Sunday School classes. These were then voluntarily discontinued on the Pennsylvania side during the school year of 1894-1895, but not on the Maryland side.



these two items were at the center of the trouble in 1895 is further substantiated by the fact that they remain prominent in the memory of two present-day Amish bishops, who were then in their boyhood. They are Lewis M. Beachy, Oakland, Maryland, and Alvin M. Beachy of Topeka, Indiana. Both men are sons of the deceased Bishop Manassa Beachy and were young men when the division occurred. They both recall Sunday School and attendance at high schools or Normal Schools as the chief source of trouble. Lewis M. Beachy is of the opinion that there was also some difficulty over the interpretation of the "ban" and some questions concerning dress, such as the cutting of the hair and the trimming of the beard among the men of the church. But he states that these were not the real cause of the trouble.<sup>82</sup>

By the fall of 1894 the feeling had become so bitter that no Communion Service was held in the Castleman River district. The following spring on June 2, 1895, Bishop Joel Miller decided not to withhold the blessing of the Communion Service from his congregation for a longer period of time. On the abovementioned date

---

<sup>82</sup>. Beachy, Alvin M., letter dated March 3, 1950, Topeka, Indiana. Beachy, Lewis M., letter dated March 6, 1950, Oakland, Maryland.

services were held at the Miller Meetinghouse (later Maple Glen), and about sixty-three members partook of the Lord's Supper.<sup>83</sup> In order to avoid any further aggravation of the strife Bishop Miller strictly observed the boundry line of the districts and allowed no one from the Pennsylvania side to participate in the Communion Service. But the Pennsylvania brethren were unyielding. They would not have Bishop Joel to conduct their Communion Service unless and until he instituted the reforms which they had requested; and their own bishop, Manassa Beachy, was too ill to lead them. On June 5, 1895, he died. His obituary states that "he had been sick for some time and was deranged".<sup>84</sup>

Thereafter the Pennsylvania brethren were without a shepherd of the flock, but they would not have Joel Miller assist them. Instead they asked two men from a distance to come and conduct their Communion Service. The two men who came were Joseph Witmer of Davis County, Indiana, and Cornelius S. Beachy from Midland, Virginia. On June 26, 1895, these two ministers conducted a

---

83. From memorandum compiled by Joel J. Miller and copied by Jonas B. Miller, his son, in 1934 at Grantsville, Maryland. Made available to the writer through the courtesy of the latter in July, 1949.

84. Obituary Column, op.cit., Herald of Truth, (July, 1895), p. 207. The letter written by L.M. Beachy of Oakland, Maryland states that Manassa was paralyzed before his death, which may indicate that he had a stroke.

Communion Service for the Pennsylvania Amish in the Flag Run Meetinghouse. They were not as considerate as Miller had been four weeks earlier, for they now declared the boundary between the districts to be null and void and allowed thirty-four members formerly numbered with the Maryland congregation to participate in the service.<sup>85</sup>

In the fall of 1895 on the third day of November Joel Miller's congregation again held a Communion Service at the Miller Meetinghouse, and this time they did not so rigidly honor the boundary line of the two districts. As a result of this more lenient policy fifty-five people who were formerly numbered with the Pennsylvania side were admitted to the Communion Service of the Maryland congregation.

The Pennsylvania brethren again retaliated by calling ministers Witmer and C. S. Beachy to conduct the Communion Service for those who were dissatisfied with Miller's leadership. This service was held November 17, 1895, in the Flag Run Meetinghouse, at which time Moses D. Yoder, who had formerly been a minister on the Maryland side, was ordained by the visiting ministers as bishop in the Pennsylvania district of the River

---

<sup>85</sup>. Miller, Joel J., memorandum, op. cit., July, 1949.

congregation.<sup>86</sup> Thus the River congregation, which had endured for more than a century and had survived the hardships of pioneer days as a true "community in Christ", found itself a "house divided".

The Pennsylvania Amish continued to have full fellowship with the Old Order Amish in other areas of the United States, while Miller's congregation became independent and remained so until 1912. In that year Miller and his congregation affiliated with the Conservative Amish Mennonite Conference. The second annual meeting of this Conference was held at the Maple Glen Meeting-house near Grantsville, Maryland, on May 27 and 28, 1912.<sup>87</sup> The congregation has been active in the Conference since that time and has grown in strength. A complete history of the Amish in the Castleman River region should devote more space to the growth and development of the Conservative Amish Mennonite Conference than the present work allows.

After the division of 1895 the Pennsylvania Amish were faced with a new problem, namely, what should be

---

86. Ibid.

87. History of the Amish Mennonite Conference (Conservative), (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, 1925), p. 2. No author indicated on this pamphlet, which is a compilation of the proceedings of the Conference, covering the period from 1910 to 1925.

their attitude toward members who left their congregation to affiliate with the Miller congregation, but against whom no other offense could be charged? Earlier practice in Somerset County, as seen by the Discipline of 1809, had been to regard as apostate persons all members who left the Amish Church to join other churches, and all such were to be considered as subjects for the "ban".<sup>88</sup> Apparently there was some difficulty in enforcing this decision, for the first article of the Discipline of 1837 reads:

It is noted that decline has set in because the ordinance of God in the matter of the ban is greatly neglected. Decided that separation and shunning are to be practiced toward all disobedient ones without regard of person, whether man or woman.<sup>89</sup>

The Pennsylvania Amish were now confronted with a situation that had not previously existed in the county and was not covered by earlier practice. Previously there had been only one Amish Church in the Castleman River region. After 1895 there were two. Earlier disciplines had dealt with those who left the Amish Church to unite with other denominations, usually the Mennonites, but not with a situation such as the Pennsylvania Amish now

---

<sup>88</sup>. Bender, *op.cit.*, Mennonite Quarterly Review, VIII, No. 2, (April, 1934), p. 90-93.

<sup>89</sup>. Ibid., p. 93-95.

confronted. There is reliable evidence that at the time of M. D. Yoder's ordination to the office of bishop he wanted the old ruling to apply in the new situation, and that Joseph Witmer, who ordained him, would not consent to this. However, after Witmer returned to his home in Indiana, he was frequently consulted by Yoder, and his advice was so interpreted by Yoder to the congregation that he succeeded in getting their unanimous vote that all who left the Pennsylvania Amish to join the congregation led by Joel Miller near Grantsville, Maryland, should be placed under the strict "ban".<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup>. This information is gleaned from the file marked "Letters of Importance", found among the personal effects of Moses M. Beachy after his death in 1946. He was bishop of the River congregation from 1916 to 1946. In one letter dated April 19, 1923, J. F. Swartzendruber from Kalona, Iowa, writes that he had heard Witmer say both in private and in public that he had opposed the use of the strict "ban" against those who left the Pennsylvania Amish to join the Miller congregation when there were no other charges against them. He further states that Witmer was much distressed when he learned that Yoder had acted contrary to his advice.

Another letter dated May 4, 1920, was written to the late R. M. Beachy of Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, by the above Swartzendruber of Kalona, Iowa. The letter which is written in German was a reply to a letter which R. M. Beachy had addressed to him earlier. Beachy's letter is no longer extant, but it is plain to see from Swartzendruber's letter that Beachy had asked him either to confirm or deny the report that Witmer had not agreed to the strict "ban" at the time of M. D. Yoder's ordination. Swartzendruber confirms this report with great emphasis in the following words:

Naturally this ruling could not well be applied to those who were members of Miller's congregation from the beginning of the strife that ended in division, so it was

---

"Ja ich kann volles Zeugnisz geben zu de<sup>m</sup> was du schreibst dasz Peter Breneman euch erzählt hat. Ich hörte Witmer dasselbe zweimal sehr kräftig vor des Versammlung sagen. Natürlich zu zwei verschiedenen mal, und zuvor hat er mir dasselbe in einem privat Gespräch, sehr kräftig und eifrich gesagt, in gegenwart von anderen mehr."

A third letter written by the abovementioned Beachy to Mr. and Mrs. Jonas Kaufman at Arthur, Illinois, on March 1, 1925, refers to a visit which he and his first wife had with the Peter Breneman's while on a trip to Iowa in 1905. The letter states that during the course of conversation Breneman, an Amish minister, asked Beachy who had introduced the strict "ban" among the Amish of Somerset County, Pennsylvania, whereupon Beachy informed him that they had done it themselves. This seemed to come as a surprise to Breneman, who said that Witmer had been severely criticized for this action while on a visit to Iowa, at which time he denied any responsibility for the action taken and said that the unanimous vote of the congregation had been secured nearly a year after he had last visited the Pennsylvania district of the River congregation.

R. M. Beachy was able to confirm this denial of Witmer from a previous conversation with Joseph Kemp of Indiana, who had come to Somerset County to visit. Kemp then asked how they, the Pennsylvania Amish, conducted themselves toward those who joined the Miller congregation. Beachy replied that ban and avoidance are to be observed in all such cases. Kemp then asked who instituted this and was told by Beachy that since Witmer had served them for some time in the capacity of bishop, he must have been responsible. Kemp then shook his head and said, "I know Witmer. If you will investigate that matter, I think you will find that Witmer did not advise you to take such steps." A record of this conversation together with other events was also found in the M. M. Beachy file. Apparently R. M. Beachy had intended to write a brief history concerning the Division of 1927, but was prevented from completing it by ill health.

agreed that only those who left after a certain date should be considered subjects for the strict "ban".<sup>91</sup>

From the available evidence it appears that M. D. Yoder won the congregation to his point of view either by deliberate misrepresentation or else through serious misunderstanding of the advice received from Witmer through correspondence. In either case he had temporarily swung the congregation to his point of view. But a peace secured in this manner was destined to be short lived, as later events were soon to reveal.

---

91. From a personal interview with Miss Annie M. Beachy of Salisbury, Pennsylvania, in July, 1950. Eldest daughter of the late M. M. Beachy, Annie was born in 1895, and recalls that the bitterness caused by the division was still a topic of conversation when she was a young girl.



## CHAPTER IV

### DAUGHTER COLONIES OF THE SOMERSET COUNTY AMISH

#### A. The Holmes County, Ohio, Settlement

Before going on to the later events referred to in the last sentence of Chapter III, it seems appropriate to discuss briefly the role which Somerset County, Pennsylvania played in the westward migration of the Amish. Not only was Somerset County the first daughter colony of the old Berks County settlement, but it was also the starting point for the later westward migrations of the Amish.<sup>1</sup> The Amish pioneers who settled in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, were a restless lot. The virgin forests of the Somerset County hills had scarcely been brought under cultivation until these pioneers were on the march again, this time westward into the Ohio Territory.

It has not been possible thus far to identify positively the first Amish to arrive in Ohio. It is known from various sources that in the year 1808 a Jacob Miller, sometimes referred to as "Yockle" Miller, and his two sons,

---

1. Smith, C. H., The Mennonites, (Berne, Indiana, 1920), p. 216.

Jacob and Henry, settled in Holmes County, Ohio, near the present village of Sugarcreek.<sup>2</sup> This date and the characters mentioned in it are well established, but the identity of Jacob Miller, father of Jacob and Henry, remains shrouded in mystery. One tradition says that at the time he left for Ohio he was already a minister in Somerset County. Another tradition says that he was a bishop in Somerset County. The only Jacob Miller in Somerset County who is known to have been a minister settled near the present village of Springs in 1781. This Jacob Miller was the father of Benedict Miller, who later became bishop of the River congregation. There is no written evidence that Benedict's father had ever been a bishop in Somerset County, and it is therefore possible that the Jacob Miller who went to Ohio in 1808 with his two sons, Jacob and Henry, was also the father of Benedict.

An earlier reference to Benedict Miller cited a tradition which refers to him as riding to Holmes County, Ohio, on horseback to minister to the Amish community there. This would not have been necessary if the elder

---

2. Ibid., p. 216. See also, Gungerich, J. D., "Einige forkünden der ersten Amische Ansiedlung in Ohio," Herald der Wahrheit, (November 15, 1912), p. 306. Published at Scottdale, Pennsylvania.

Jacob Miller had himself been a bishop. Another tradition connected with Benedict Miller states that he himself had planned to remove to Ohio, but that he was ordained to the office of bishop in the River congregation before he was able to carry out his plans. After his ordination it is said that he felt he should remain at his post of duty, and he told the elder Jacob and his two sons to proceed without him.<sup>3</sup>

A note from L. A. Miller of Arthur, Illinois, gives the information that the elder Jacob assisted his two sons in the erection of two rude log cabins, after which he returned to Somerset County on horseback and then again returned to Ohio. In the fall of 1808 he returned to Somerset County and the following year moved to Ohio himself. L. A. Miller states that this Jacob Miller was his great-grandfather on his mother's side, and identifies him as "Bishop Yockle Miller".<sup>4</sup> Whoever this Jacob Miller may have been, he was apparently the officially appointed leader of an exploration party that had been sent out by the Amish of Somerset County in the summer of 1807 to locate a place for a colony in Iowa.

This party travelled down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh

---

3. From the card files of Dr. Alta Schrock, Goshen, Indiana, July, 1950.

4. Miller, L. A., letter dated April 8, 1950.

and up the Mississippi to Iowa where observations on several sites were made but no decision reached upon a place for settlement. On their return the party travelled overland through Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. They passed through present-day Holmes County and were impressed by its fertile valleys, its springs of clear cold water and the general resemblance of the region to their home in Pennsylvania enticed them.<sup>5</sup>

Apparently the findings of this exploration party resulted in Jacob Miller's decision to move to Ohio the following year.

In the spring of 1810 Susanna Miller, daughter of Jacob Miller, became the first child to be born of Amish parents in the state of Ohio. In the winter of 1811 on January 12 there was born to Mr. and Mrs. Jonas Miller, who had come from Somerset County a year earlier, a son whom they named Moses. Moses Miller was the first male child to be born of Amish parents in Ohio. In 1835 this same Moses Miller was ordained as a minister in the Amish Church, and twelve years later he was ordained a bishop in the same denomination.<sup>6</sup>

Although the pioneer settlers were harassed by the Indians for some years after permanent settlement began, the hills and valleys produced abundant crops and famine was unknown. Among the early arrivals in Holmes County were Jonas Miller, Jacob and Joseph Mast, Charles Yoder and

---

5. Fletcher, L. R., "The Amish People of Holmes County, Ohio; A Study in Human Geography," an unpublished Master's Thesis, Ohio State University, p. 8-9.

6. Gungerich, op.cit., Herald der Wahrheit, (November 15, 1912), p. 306.

Jacob Stutzman, members of the Amish faith from Somerset County, Pennsylvania.<sup>7</sup>

The first Amish church service in Ohio was conducted at Shanesville in Tuscarawas County by Jacob Miller in 1810.<sup>8</sup> There is no indication in our sources as to what type of church service the one referred to above was. Only one of our sources states positively that this Jacob Miller was a bishop at the time he moved to Ohio. If he was not a bishop, then it is possible that the Amish bishop, Benedict Miller of the River congregation, did occasionally visit the Ohio colony to administer Communion or perform marriages or any of the other duties usually assigned to a bishop in the Amish Church. As the bishop residing nearest the new colony, he would logically have been the man to whom the colony would have appealed if a situation should have arisen with which the local ministers were unable to cope. While the records of those early years of the Amish in Ohio are very fragmentary, the results of their pioneer efforts are still bearing fruit. Today the colony which was started by Jacob Miller and his two sons has grown until it now numbers approximately 3500 people and embraces the eastern third of Holmes County and

---

7. Fletcher, op. cit., p. 42. Source given as Karsh, H. P., in Standard Atlas of Holmes County, Ohio.

8. Ibid., p. 9.

adjacent parts of Wayne, Stark and Coshocton Counties.<sup>9</sup>

### B. The Indiana Colonies

Fortunately the records of the first settlement of the Amish in Elkhart and Lagrange Counties, Indiana, have been better preserved than those of the Holmes County, Ohio, settlement. As frequently happens among the Amish, this is due to a keen interest in family history. The Amish have produced more family histories than any other type of literature since their arrival in America. It is to this interest in personal family history and to the larger interest in general Amish Mennonite history that the writer is indebted for much of the information which here follows.

It was in the year 1840 that the action was taken which was later to result in the coming of the Amish to Elkhart and Lagrange Counties, Indiana. In that year the Conemaugh Amish congregation located in the vicinity of the present city of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, sent four men to the West on a tour of investigation.<sup>10</sup> These men were Daniel S. Miller; Joseph Miller, a minister; Nathan

---

9. Ibid., p. 11.

10. Bontrager, E. J., letter dated April 2, 1950, Shipshewanna, Indiana. Bontrager states that Daniel Miller was a brother to Joseph Miller, signed as minister of the Conemaugh congregation in the Discipline of 1837.

Smiley and Joseph Speicher.<sup>11</sup> These four explorers followed much the same route that had been followed by the exploration party of the River congregation in 1807. Like their kinsmen in 1807, these Amish men of 1840 went first to Pittsburgh, where they took a boat down the Ohio River.

They went by boat all the way to Cairo, Illinois, whence they proceeded along the Mississippi to Burlington, Iowa. Then they travelled by foot through Henry, Washington and Johnson Counties in Iowa. Returning through Illinois they stopped at a small town called Chicago, where they crossed Lake Michigan and entered the St. Joseph River by boat. The latter part of their trip to Indiana they made on foot. The land around Coshen appealed strongly to them. With a favorable report on Elkhart County, Indiana, they returned to Somerset County, Pennsylvania.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of the report brought back by these four explorers four families left the Conemaugh congregation in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, to settle in Elkhart County, Indiana, in the spring of 1841. Bishop Eli J. Bontrager of Shipshewana, Indiana, tells the story of their journey in such an interesting fashion that it seems best to let him tell it in his own words.

The first Amish in the settlement in Elkhart and Lagrange Counties came from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, from near Johnstown. Johnstown was founded by a certain Joseph Johns or (Schantz). The daughter of this Joseph

---

<sup>11</sup>. Johns, I. S., "Early Amish Settlers in Indiana and Clinton Frame Church History," Mennonite Historical Bulletin, III, No. 3, Scottdale, (September, 1942), p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>. Ibid., p. 1.

Johns became the mother of the heads of two of the first four families that settled here, viz., Joseph and Christian Bontrager.

On June 3, 1841, four families left their former homes to settle in Indiana. They were Joseph Miller and family, his brother Daniel Miller and family, consisting of his second wife and several stepchildren besides his own, deacon Joseph (known as Sep) Bontrager and family, and his brother Christian and family, a total of twenty-four souls.

They came with four two-horse wagons and three one-horse rigs. They had to pass to the north of the almost impassable Black Swamp through southern Michigan, passing through White Pigeon and through Middlebury to Coshen, Indiana, where they settled temporarily. They later settled farther east in Lagrange County. The following spring eight more families came from the northern part of Somerset County to this new settlement. In the fall of this year, 1842, eight families arrived from Holmes County, Ohio.

In the following years many more came from the vicinity of Johnstown and from Ohio, so that by 1876 there were three districts. A desire for cheaper and more level land was the main cause for emigration from Pennsylvania to Indiana, although some disagreements within their colony was a minor cause.

In 1890 there was still a small colony of Amish left in the Johnstown vicinity consisting of about a dozen members, including one minister, and he was an ordained bishop. (See footnote 13.) Several years later the colony was extinct through death and a few leaving the country.<sup>13</sup>

I. S. Johns in the article referred to above states that the original party stopped for one week in Holmes County, Ohio, after which they proceeded to Goshen over

---

13. Bontrager, E. J., letter dated June 6, 1950, Shipshewanna, Indiana, when he was in his eighty-third year. It is known from the earlier study of the Cone-maugh congregation that the bishop referred to in this letter was Moses B. Miller.



the route indicated by Bontrager. According to Johns this party of twenty-four souls arrived in Goshen on June 29, 1841, after twenty-six days of travel.<sup>14</sup>

The Bontrager letter stated that these first settlers remained only temporarily at Goshen. This is supported by the obituary of Joseph Miller, which says that he died in Lagrange County, Indiana, on October 12, 1877. The account goes on to say that he was ordained as bishop in 1848,

which office he faithfully fulfilled until his end, in teaching, establishing new congregations, and ordaining ministers in the vineyard of the Lord. He was the first Amish preacher in this section.<sup>15</sup>

This original Amish settlement in Indiana has since grown to be one of the larger ones in the United States, even though many Amish of this settlement became Mennonites when the Amish Mennonites and the Mennonites of the Indiana-Michigan Conference merged in 1917.<sup>16</sup> The Old Order Amish in this area are at present divided into thirty-one districts and number about 2790 baptized adults.<sup>17</sup>

---

14. Johns, op. cit., p. 2.

15. Obituary Column, op. cit., Herald of Truth, XIV, No. 11, p. 181.

16. Johns, op. cit., p. 2.

17. Bontrager, E. J., letter dated August 29, 1951, Shipshewanna, Indiana.

### C. The Johnson County, Iowa, Colony

In the first westward movement of the Amish from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, the pioneers were largely supplied by the River congregation. In the second westward migration of the Amish from this territory the pioneers were supplied by the Conemaugh congregation. These were given in such large numbers that their migration was a major contributing factor to the extinction of the colony in about 1900. In the third westward migration of the Amish from Somerset County, the River congregation again provided the earliest settlers. Some of these had, however, moved to the River congregation from the Glade congregation in northern Somerset County to what is now Johnson County, Iowa. Among these Johnson County, Iowa, pioneers was Joseph J. Swartzendruber from Allegheny County, Maryland. Allegheny and Garrett Counties, Maryland, were an integral part of the Amish settlement in the Castleman River region, though they lay south of the Mason and Dixon's line.

In the summer of 1845, four years after the Elkhart and Lagrange Counties, Indiana, settlement, Joseph J. Swartzendruber and his half-brother, Daniel P. Guengerich from Fairfield County, Ohio, went on a land exploration

trip to the Iowa territory. They travelled by steamboat as far as Keokuk, Iowa, and then overland to the vicinity of Kalona where they bought some land.

Joseph Swartzendruber then became discouraged and in the fall of 1846 went back to Grantsville, Maryland, his old home. The following winter he married. His mother-in-law did not want them to move away while she yet lived, so they settled on the Forks Mountain in Maryland and cleared a farm which caused much hard labor. His Hickory Grove tract in Iowa lay idle till in the year 1856 when he moved to Iowa and occupied it.<sup>18</sup>

The first Amish church in Iowa was formally organized in the spring of 1851 with twenty-seven members. Eleven families from Maryland (Castleman River region) had moved into the settlement in that year.<sup>19</sup> The organization of a congregation in 1851 was made possible by the arrival of Jacob Swartzendruber, who had signed the Discipline of 1837 as a minister of the Glade congregation in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.<sup>20</sup> This Jacob Swartzendruber had been ordained as a minister in the Amish Church at Menger- inghausen, Waldeck, Germany, in 1826 when he was only twenty-six years old. He served as a minister there until 1833 when he emigrated to Somerset County, Pennsylvania,

18. Guengerich, S. D., "A Brief History of the Amish Settlement in Johnson County, Iowa," The Mennonite Quarterly Review, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, III, No. 4, (October, 1929), p. 243-245.

19. Ibid., p. 243-245.

20. Bender, op. cit., Mennonite Quarterly Review, VIII, No. 2, (April, 1934), p. 95.

as a married man.<sup>21</sup> Here he remained until 1840 when he moved to the vicinity of Grantsville, Maryland, and became a minister in the River congregation. In 1851 he moved to Johnson County, Iowa, where he resided at the time of his death in 1868.<sup>22</sup> In 1852 Jacob Swartzendruber was ordained bishop of the Amish in Johnson County, Iowa, and thus became the first Amish bishop to be ordained in the state of Iowa.<sup>23</sup> From the time of his birth in Germany in 1800 until the time of his death in Johnson County, Iowa, in 1868, Jacob Swartzendruber had thrice become a pioneer for the sake of his religious convictions.

In 1866 Abner Yoder, who had formerly been a bishop in the Glade congregation in Somerset County, also joined the Iowa settlement.<sup>24</sup> Thus for a period of two years Jacob Swartzendruber, who had served as minister in the

---

21. Bender, op. cit., Mennonite Quarterly Review, XX, No. 3, (July, 1946), p. 222.

22. Ibid., p. 222.

23. Swartzendruber letter, op. cit., March 20, 1950. Note: The H. S. Bender publication referred to above says that the Amish Church in Johnson County, Iowa, was organized in 1864. However, D. B. Swartzendruber was a great-grandson of Jacob, and the information he sent was gathered from personal notes left by his great-grandfather. The earlier date would seem to be the correct one for the establishment of the Amish Church in Iowa.

24. Bender, op. cit., Mennonite Quarterly Review, XX, No. 3, (July, 1946), p. 225.

Glade congregation under the leadership of Christian Yoder, Sr., as bishop, and later under his son Christian Yoder, Jr., labored in Iowa with Abner Yoder, great-grandson of the Amish bishop under whom Swartzendruber had begun his ministry in America.<sup>25</sup> There is evidence that these two men knew each other well and they occasionally conferred with each other on matters of importance. Swartzendruber in his epistle of 1865, addressed to the Amish ministers' conference in Holmes County, Ohio, wished to have Abner Yoder's opinion on certain questions that are dealt with in the epistle.<sup>26</sup> Abner Yoder continued to serve as bishop of the Amish in Johnson County, Iowa, until his death in 1883.<sup>27</sup>

Today this Amish colony in Iowa, which in 1851 had twenty-seven members, has grown in size until it consists of six districts and about 1000 baptized adults.<sup>28</sup> Besides the Old Order Amish in the area, there are several thriving congregations of the Conservative Amish Mennonite Conference and one congregation of the newly formed "Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches".

---

25. Swartzendruber letter, op. cit., March 20, 1950.

26. Bender, op. cit., Mennonite Quarterly Review, XX, No. 3, (July, 1946), p. 225.

27. Ibid., p. 225.

28. Miller, J. M., letter dated August 2, 1951, Kalona, Iowa.

D. The Moultrie and Douglas Counties, Illinois, Colony

In the first and second westward migrations of the Amish from Somerset County the River and Conemaugh congregations supplied the pioneers for the new frontiers. In the third westward migration the Glade and River congregations shared in furnishing the pioneers, apparently the largest number coming from the River congregation. The second and third migrations were fatal to the Conemaugh and Glade congregations, or at least contributed to their extinction at a later date. The River congregation survived to provide pioneers for a fourth westward migration and remains in existence at the present time, though the original tree has been split into three different branches.

The fourth westward migration of the Somerset County Amish began in 1864 when two men in the River congregation tired of the rather strenuous labor which this region had always exacted from those who would be successful farmers. These two men were Bishop Joel Beachy of Grantsville, Maryland, and Moses Yoder of Summit Mills, Pennsylvania.<sup>29</sup> Grantsville is at the extreme southern end of the territory

---

29. From an unpublished manuscript giving an account of the Moultrie and Douglas Counties, Illinois, settlement written by L. A. Miller of Arthur, Illinois in 1922, and sent to the writer by request in March, 1950. .

covered by the River congregation, while Summit Mills is in the northern end of the settlement. It will be recalled that Joel Beachy had been ordained a bishop on the Maryland side of the River congregation in 1854. Moses Yoder was the son of Yost H. Yoder, and Yost H. may have been the minister who signed his name to the Discipline of 1837<sup>30</sup> along with Benedict Miller and Hannes Gingrich as ministers in the River congregation. The latter, however, is a conjecture for which no written evidence has been found.

When Beachy and Yoder started westward in June of 1864, Beachy was thinking of Wisconsin as a possible home and Yoder, of Missouri. It was not until their return that they decided to settle in the state of Illinois. They arrived at Pana, Illinois, on a Sunday where they rested. During the day they walked from Pana to Onega, Illinois, and noticed that the country appeared to be fertile. On Monday they took a train to Mattoon, Illinois, and from there walked a distance of fourteen miles to Arcola. Here they met Joel Smith, who took them on a tour of the county. The two men liked what they saw of the terrain, but decided not to make any purchase until

---

30. Miller, L. A., letter dated March 8, 1950, Arthur, Illinois.

they had seen the same territory in late summer.<sup>31</sup>

Their tour of investigation over, Beachy and Yoder returned to their homes in Pennsylvania and Maryland where they remained until September. In the same month they returned to Illinois along with two other men, Daniel Miller and Daniel Otto, both from Summit Mills, Pennsylvania. On this second trip they travelled west of Arcola to the west side of the river to the region known as the "West Prairie". Here Daniel Miller bought 160 acres which he rented to Daniel Otto, and then returned to Somerset County, Pennsylvania. In November of the same year he returned to pay for the purchase which he had made, and then decided to buy the Henry Cosler farm in addition. Moses Yoder, Daniel Miller and Daniel Otto, with their families, settled permanently in this new locality in the spring of 1865, arriving in Illinois on March 3 of that year.<sup>32</sup>

Bishop Joel Beachy never moved to Illinois permanently. It is not known whether he returned at all after this second exploration trip of 1864. He died at his old home near Grantsville, Maryland, on June 8, 1894, at the age of seventy-eight.<sup>33</sup> His body was buried in the family

---

31. Miller, L. A., manuscript, op. cit., p. 1

32. Ibid., p. 1-2.

33. Gnagey, op. cit., p. 174-175.



cemetery where his grave may still be seen on the farm now owned by Irvin E. Yoder of near Grantsville, Maryland.

While Joel Beachy himself never moved to Illinois, his son, Daniel, did. The time of his removal to the present-day Arthur, Illinois, is not known. It is known that he was ordained as a minister there in 1881 and as a bishop in 1885. In 1922 he was the oldest minister and bishop then living in the community.<sup>34</sup>

By 1927 only two of the first Amish immigrants to Illinois remained alive,<sup>35</sup> but the colony which they had founded had grown to be larger than the colony from whence they had come. Emigrants had kept coming to this new Amish colony from various places in such large numbers that it was necessary to divide the settlement into two districts in 1888. One district was known as the D. J. Beachy or Moultrie County district, while the other was known as the D. J. Plank or Douglas County district. By December 7, 1902, it was found necessary to divide the Douglas County district a second time, and the same was true for the Moultrie County district in 1906. In 1922

---

34. Miller, L. A., manuscript, op. cit., p. 4.

35. Obituary Column, Herald der Wahrheit, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, (April, 1927), p. 240. Obituary of Daniel M. Yoder, son of Moses Yoder, immigrant of 1865 from Summit Mills, Pa. Daniel was born July 22, 1852, in Pennsylvania and came to Illinois when a lad of thirteen. Levi Yoder, a brother, and Mrs. Ben Schrock are mentioned as the two remaining immigrants in 1927.

the northern half of Douglas County district was again divided. The colony had grown from three families to eight districts in a period of less than sixty years.<sup>36</sup> Today there are eight districts in this territory which are served by eight bishops, eight deacons and sixteen ministers.<sup>37</sup> The exact number of baptized adults is apparently unknown.

The capacity of the Somerset County Amish for pioneering is truly remarkable. When it is remembered that their pioneering days lasted for more than half a century, 1808 to 1865, during which time the Somerset County Amish were pioneers in Ohio, Indiana, Iowa and Illinois, the wonder is not that two congregations in Somerset County should have become extinct, but rather that any should have survived. One congregation did survive, however, and it was also to play a pioneering role among the Amish of America, though it did so without changing its geographical location. This congregation has since become the mother of the various Beachy Amish Mennonite churches that are scattered through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa and Virginia. The story of their rise and development will be the theme of Chapter V in this study.

---

36. Miller, L. A., manuscript, op. cit., p. 3.

37. Miller, L. A., letter dated August 3, 1951.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BEACHY AMISH MENNONITE CHURCHES

#### A. Major Reasons for the 1927 Division

The events which led to the division of 1927 on the Pennsylvania side of the River congregation had their origin in the incidents of 1895 and 1896. After the division of 1895 Bishop Moses D. Yoder, leader of the conservative wing, gained the unanimous consent of his congregation to place under the strict "ban" all who left to join the Maryland or Miller congregation after a certain date. It has already been noted that Yoder was able to persuade his congregation to take this position, only because he either deliberately misrepresented the advice received from Bishop Joseph Witmer through correspondence or because he grossly misunderstood this advice.

In support of Bishop M. D. Yoder's position it should be said that the weight of earlier tradition, both within the state of Pennsylvania and in Somerset County, was on the side of the strict "ban" for all who left the Amish to unite with any other denomination. This had been the

first article in the Discipline of 1809.<sup>1</sup> In the Discipline of 1837, which was drawn up at a conference consisting only of the ministers of the Amish congregations within Somerset County, the importance of the strict "ban" as a means of maintaining a vigorous church, also receives first place. The conference noted that decline had set in because of the neglect of God's ordinance in the "ban", and decided that thereafter the "ban" should be observed without regard of person whether man or woman.<sup>2</sup> Apparently the ministers who attended the 1837 conference felt that there had been a tendency to be too lenient when cases arose where women became subjects for the strict "ban".

There are also references to other Amish ministers' conferences held in Somerset County at which very strict action was taken in regard to receiving members into the Amish Church from other denominations. Jacob Swartzen-druber in his epistle addressed to the Amish ministers' conference of 1865 refers to a ministers' conference held in the Glades, at which Amish ministers from Lancaster County were also present.<sup>3</sup> While no records of this 1830

---

1. Bender, op. cit., Mennonite Quarterly Review, VIII, No. 2, (April, 1934), p. 90.

2. Ibid., p. 93.

3. Bender, op. cit., Mennonite Quarterly Review, XX, No. 3, (July, 1946), p. 222.

conference have been found, it is almost certain that in 1830, or perhaps a little earlier, an Amish ministers' conference was held in the Glade congregation which Amish ministers from Lancaster County also attended. This is known from an autobiography of David Beller, an Amish minister, who lived in Lancaster County from the time of his birth in 1786 until his death in 1871. Beller's autobiography was written in 1862. In this he refers to a ministers' conference which was held in the Glades (Kletzt) approximately thirty-four years earlier, which would have been around the year of 1828.<sup>4</sup> This may be the conference to which Jacob Swartzendruber referred in his 1865 epistle. Herein he mentions Christian Yoder, Sr., whom this study has revealed to have been the first resident Amish bishop of Somerset County and the author of the resolution which forbade the reception of Mennonites into fellowship in the Amish Church unless they were first rebaptized.<sup>5</sup>

Bishop Moses D. Yoder may have been aware of this

---

4. Beller, D., autobiography, written in 1862 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Now in the Mennonite Historical Library, Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio, among the private papers of the late C. Henry Smith.

5. Bender, op. cit., Mennonite Quarterly Review, XX, No. 3, (July, 1946), p. 222.

tradition of strictness among the Amish in the Somerset County of the past and possibly felt that he was contending for the "faith of the fathers" by reinstating the "ban" in his congregation. Whatever his method or motive may have been, his success was destined to be rather short-lived. He had been ordained as bishop of the Pennsylvania district of the River congregation in 1895, and by 1916 ill health forced him to pass the reins of leadership to a younger and more tolerant man. This man was Moses M. Beachy, third son of Bishop Manassa Beachy, who had preceded Yoder as the spiritual leader of the Pennsylvania Amish in the Castleman River region. Moses Beachy had been ordained as a minister in Yoder's congregation in 1912, and four years later was ordained to the office of bishop. Moses D. Yoder now became a sort of "bishop emeritus" until his death in 1927, but the actual leadership of the congregation was in the hands of Bishop M. M. Beachy after 1916.

The storm which had probably been brewing from 1905<sup>6</sup> when R. M. Beachy discovered that Yoder had misinterpreted or misunderstood the advice from Witmer concerning the strict "ban" broke soon after the new bishop came into

---

6. From the file marked "Letters of Importance," found among the personal effects of Bishop M. M. Beachy after his death in 1946, near Salisbury, Pennsylvania.

power. Fortunately the records of that storm are fairly clear. The incident which brought the storm into the open was the removal of a Mr. and Mrs. John D. Yoder from Bishop Beachy's congregation to the Maryland or Miller congregation, which in 1912 had affiliated with the Conservative Amish Mennonite Conference. They were called back to a congregational meeting to give explanations for their withdrawal, and gave as their reason the use of the strict "ban" against those who left to join other churches when there was no other accusation against them.<sup>7</sup> The exact date of their withdrawal is not known, but the first attempt to heal the dispute which arose as a result of their removal was made in 1925. However, the difficulty had existed at least two years prior to the first attempt to resolve the differences.

A letter written on April 19, 1923, by Bishop J. F. Swartzendruber of Kalona, Iowa, to Bishop M. M. Beachy reveals that the latter had previously written to Swartzendruber in the same month for advice on how to deal with the troublesome situation. It also reveals that Beachy had written to Swartzendruber prior to this, and that on

---

7. Yoder, M. J., memoranda on Division of 1927, Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, p. 1. Made available to the writer through the courtesy of Mr. Yoder in July, 1949. In 1950 this was published as "Facts Concerning the Beachy A. M. Division."

the first inquiry the latter evaded the question.<sup>8</sup> In the letter of April 19 Swartzendruber explains that his reason for evading the question earlier was the unanimous vote of the congregation secured while M. D. Yoder was bishop to place under the strict "ban" all who left to join the Maryland or Miller congregation. Swartzendruber knew his Mennonite and Amish history well enough to know that the strict "ban" had been the cause of much strife during the days of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips. He contends in this letter that Article 16 of the Dortrecht Confession intended to do away with the avoidance of those whose only offense was going to another faction. Swartzendruber states in this letter that, so far as he knew from the study of history, the use of the strict "ban" against those whose only offense was to join another denomination had always wrecked failure and havoc wherever tried.<sup>9</sup> The fact that Bishop Beachy's congregation had formerly voted unanimously to place under the strict "ban" all who left to join the Maryland congregation troubled Swartzendruber and he did not see how this earlier vote of the congregation could be entirely set aside. It had, he

---

8. Swartzendruber, J. F., letter dated April 19, 1923, Kalona, Iowa. With the "Letters of Importance" found among the personal effects of M. M. Beachy after his death in 1946. Made available to the writer by Milton M. Beachy of Salisbury, Pennsylvania.

9. Ibid.



felt, been the vote of a group of believers who were obeying their conscience. But Swartzendruber was also aware that one's conscience may change over a period of years, and the advice which he gave to M. M. Beachy on an attached sheet to the April, 1923, letter is a fine combination of Christian charity and common sense. A full copy of the attached sheet is here included for that reason.

True Christian love, charity and forbearance demands of us that we respect and regard our neighbors' rights, conscience and convictions as much as our own; and yet our conscience is not infallible, it is as much as we are taught or educated; if this teaching is infallible then our conscience is--and only then is it a safe dictator to follow, but everybody believes himself to be right, and will sometimes change theories and convictions.

Now, this being the case, I think a safe and sane way would be to give the liberty and let each one follow the dictates of his or her own conscience; letting those that think they would do wrong if they would not avoid them, avoid them, and on the other hand, those that feel that they did wrong if they did avoid them; do not insist that they should.

Be patient and bear one with another, come together and commune together, and give the Holy Spirit a chance to educate and work in our hearts, bring us closer together, as we grow in grace and knowledge in the will of the Lord.

If I understand that unanimous voice of the church, this would not interfere with it at all, since they all agreed to it, but there was no provision made whatever, if they should change their convictions which is likely to occur with the best of us.

Now, dear brother, you may not be able to hold the church

together by following the above method, but if you take this stand you can feel that you did your duty in trying to compromise. Compromising is not always best, but in this case it would be, and is the only thing that will hold the church together.

I well know you are in close quarters, and to do this you must take a firm stand, be easy, mild and loving. By all means do not use harsh words and expressions, trying with the help of God to be an example of mildness, forbearance, meekness and humility; and induce the members to the same.

Matters may look dark to you and I take from your letter that you fear you would not accomplish much. It is right that this feeling should come; but I think with the above plan you can feel yourself on safe ground and on the Lord's side, and if the church has not drifted away from God too far through selfishness, the Lord will bless your efforts, and may work wonders which will surprise you. Let the Lord do it and only use you as an instrument in his hand.<sup>10</sup>

As time went on and the local ministers were unable to resolve this dispute themselves, Amish ministers from other localities were called in to help solve the difficulty, namely, Ben Beiler and Gideon Stoltzfus from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Eli J. Bontrager from Shipshewanna, Indiana, and Joseph Schrock from Arthur, Illinois. These four men came to Somerset County some time during the year 1925 at the request of Bishop M. M. Beachy and his co-ministers, Noah M. Yoder and Joseph J. Yoder. Two of these four men, Stoltzfus and Schrock, have since died,<sup>11</sup> and Beiler is presumably dead, as letters

---

10. Ibid.

11. Bontrager, E.J., letter, op.cit., dated March 2, 1950.

addressed to him have brought no reply. Bishop Bontrager, however, is alive and working actively in the Old Order Amish Church in Lagrange County, Indiana. An extant letter which he wrote to D. J. Swartzendruber of Oakland, Maryland, in either 1926 or 1927 clearly indicates the advice that was given to the Somerset County Amish by these four men on their 1925 visit. In this letter to Swartzendruber Bontrager says that he had received

quite a long letter from A. M. Beachy (at that time a minister in the River congregation) some time ago in which he stated that he rather thinks we would be called back to make our work or advice plain, as there seemed to be some misunderstanding.<sup>12</sup>

Bontrager then goes on to say that he can hardly see how their advice could have been misunderstood, though he supposes that they could have made it plainer. He informs Swartzendruber that he is sure the four men who were called were all agreed that a blanket "ban" for all who left the Pennsylvania congregation to join the Maryland congregation was no longer workable. Their counsel, he says, was to consider each case separately, and then decide what should be done in a particular case, rather than to abide by one ruling which was to be applied in every case.

---

12. Bontrager, E. J., letter found in file marked "Letters of Importance" among personal effects of M. M. Beachy after his death in 1946. This letter is a copy of the original and bears no date, but Bontrager in a letter of August 29, 1951, confirmed himself as writer in '26 or '27.

This advice was to be carried out in the following four steps:

1. In every case that arises which seems to need attention, the ministers should first confer with each other to see if it is their judgment that something should be done.

2. If the ministers themselves think something should be done, then they should first come to a decision among themselves as to what that action should be.

3. Only after the ministers had agreed among themselves should they bring a particular case before the congregation, with their own decision or opinion regarded as a recommendation for the course of action taken by the congregation.

4. If the ministers themselves cannot agree, nothing should be said to the congregation, such lack of agreement among the ministers probably indicating that the case was not serious enough to demand the attention of the entire congregation.<sup>13</sup>

Bontrager and the other three ministers were apparently aware of the earlier unanimous vote of the congregation to place under the "ban" all who left to join the Maryland congregation; and they were also troubled by it.

---

13. Ibid.

They were aware that the four steps of procedure as outlined above might possibly mean some deviation from the method prescribed by the unanimous vote obtained while Moses D. Yoder was still bishop; but they refused to accept any responsibility for the changes that might occur, as the following lines from the letter plainly show:

We said that we would not want to give them an opinion with any certain cases, or change their ways of dealing or deciding certain cases. But to take all cases as I have outlined above, and naturally by proceeding like that, it may automatically change some of their foregone conclusions in such matters as their former way of dealing with such as choose to worship with some other congregation. But in case they agree to deal with such cases as they formerly did no change will be made. And that is what we meant by not changing it. But if by dealing with the cases as we have advised, they come to a different decision than formerly or cannot decide to make a decision at all, that will change it. But we will not. We leave it to them.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the advice given to the Somerset County, Pennsylvania, Amish by these four visiting brethren was very similar to that given to Bishop M. M. Beachy by J. F. Swartzendruber of Kalona, Iowa, in his letter of April 19, 1923. Later events prove that the course outlined by the advice received from these two quarters was the course which M. M. Beachy tried to follow in clearing up the difficulties that had arisen in connection with the "John D. Yoder" Case, as it came to be known. However, he was

---

14. Ibid.

prevented from following this course of action by his co-ministers, Noah M. Yoder and Joseph J. Yoder, who were inclined to favor the strict position of the "bishop emeritus" Moses D. Yoder. These men wanted Mr. and Mrs. John Yoder to be placed under the strict "ban", but as the congregation refused to give its unanimous consent, Bishop Beachy refused to comply with their request.<sup>15</sup>

In his letter of 1926 or 1927 to Swartzendruber of Oakland, Maryland, E. J. Bontrager quotes A. M. Beachy as saying that Noah M. Yoder insisted that the advice of the four visiting ministers had been to deal with those who left to join other congregations exactly as they had before, i.e., place them under the strict "ban", and that to do differently they would need the unanimous vote of the congregation. Bontrager says, "It never occurred to me that any one could so construe this."<sup>16</sup>

Bishop Beachy tried for a full year to win his fellow ministers to the more tolerant view outlined in the J. F. Swartzendruber letter and to that given in the advice of the four visiting brethren. When he finally saw that his co-ministers intended to be as unyielding as Jacob Amman himself had been, he decided to proceed as the

---

15. Yoder, M.J., memoranda, op.cit., p. 1.

16. Bontrager, E.J., letter, op.cit., dated 1926 or 1927.

congregation had been advised to, without the consent of Noah and Joseph Yoder or of Moses D. Yoder. On October 31, 1926, he made known his decision to the congregation.<sup>17</sup> Fortunately a summary of what he said on that date, as well as the reaction of his fellow ministers to his intended course of action, has been preserved. That summary is included here with such editing as seemed necessary for the clear conveyance of the thought contained in the original for those not familiar with Pennsylvania German idioms.

On October 31, 1926, Mose took the privilege to state how he intended to "keep house" (see footnote) or lead the church. He stated that he was blamed very much for not punishing the disobedient, and that he knew many things had gotten into the church during M. D. Yoder's time which were not permitted earlier; and that the same was true during his father's and Joel Beachy's time as bishops. He also stated that M. D. Yoder did not punish one party that he knows of and wondered why allowing some things to go unpunished was so much worse than it had been previously. He also said that in his father's time as well as before there were some prohibitions that were not obeyed, but the offenders went unpunished. He said the men who were called to deal with the John D. Yoder case refused to touch it and he calls the case closed. Why not leave it to them and to God in regard to changing churches, he asked, rather than to place them under the ban and still leave it to them and to God, since we have no direct Scripture for such action? He said that he would try to keep the church in order so far as other ordinances were concerned, and that now was as good a time as any for those who had things that were forbidden to get rid of them. He did not elaborate on what these were but mentioned that some of the men were cutting their hair rather short, and that the women were wearing

---

17. Yoder, M.J., memoranda, op.cit., p. 1.

rather short fringes on their bonnets. He said that things which were just as good one way as another, we should keep as we had them before. He said that in these tedious times he thought it best not to impose severe punishment upon anyone, and that Eli Bontrager had told him and L. M. Beachy that they would cause a split in the church unless they allowed the John D. Yoder case to drop. Mose said he would rather be a little too easy than to punish without a right to do so and drive people away from the church. He said he wonders how many who were members of the church would be worthy of keeping under the ban those who left, if they examined their own lives closely. He said that he thought we should be careful and that the other ministers might express themselves if they wished.<sup>18</sup>

The reaction of Bishop Beachy's co-ministers to the above proposal was decidedly in the negative. M. D. Yoder, who by this time was very feeble, simply stated that he did not understand the proposal. Noah M. Yoder, who was the son of M. D. Yoder, stated that in his opinion Bishop Beachy was far from following the instructions of the four visiting ministers by bringing this matter before the congregation. He also said that he had not known that the presiding bishop intended to bring the matter before the congregation, and that he did not know what he himself should say. He said that the congregation probably thought that the ministers had counseled over the matter and were in agreement with the procedure as outlined by the bishop, which was not the case.

---

18. Ibid., p. 2. An Amish bishop is frequently referred to as the "householder" or "housefather".



Bishop Beachy then asked N. M. Yoder not to say that he did not know the matter was to be brought before the congregation, as he had told them during the time the ministers were in the councilroom on that very day. (See footnote.) Under questioning from Bishop Beachy, N. M. Yoder then admitted that this was true. Joseph J. Yoder then said that the visiting brethren had been hindered from doing anything with the Yoder case while they were present. Bishop Beachy replied that he had insisted that the visiting ministers should first clear up that case, and that thereafter he would be willing to consider anything necessary for the peace and progress of the church. When the visiting brethren refused to commit themselves on the John D. Yoder case, Bishop Beachy refused to allow any other matters to come up for consideration.<sup>19</sup>

Noah M. Yoder was right when he insisted that the presiding bishop was not acting in accord with the advice of brethren Beller, Bontrager, Schrock and Stoltzfus by presenting his view to the congregation. Beachy must have known his co-ministers well enough by that time to realize that they would never agree to his proposals. His

---

Note: The ministers' council meeting or "Abrath" is an integral part of every worship service. While the congregation sings hymns, the ministers retire to a separate room and there plan the order of service for the day.

19. Yoder, M.J., memoranda, op.cit., p. 2.

announcement to the ministers as to what he intended to tell the congregation on October 31, 1926, seems to have been in the nature of a declaration of intended action, rather than an attempt to gain a unified approach.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that Beachy's co-ministers, by their refusal to compromise, had driven him into a corner where he had either to accept the decision which the congregation had made while M. D. Yoder was bishop or to strike out in a new direction. His decision to appeal directly to the congregation was, therefore, not hasty or ill considered, but rather the action of a man who refused to be maneuvered into a position where his own conduct, as well as that of his congregation, should be determined by a decision of the past which time had proved unwise.

At the conclusion of the October, 1926, meeting Bishop M. M. Beachy announced that after the next church service, which was to be held in the Flag Run Meetinghouse on November 14, there would be a council meeting (see footnote) of the members to decide whether or not the congregation should hold a Communion service. C. J. Swartzen-druber from Kempsville, Virginia, and D. J. Swartzendruber

---

Note: A council meeting consists only of those who are baptized members and is usually held after a worship service.

from Oakland, Maryland, were the visiting ministers at the November 14 service to assist in the conduct of the council meeting. At the close of the church service, after those who were not yet members of the congregation had been dismissed, Bishop Beachy again addressed himself to the congregation.

He mentioned many things as he outlined to the congregation the manner in which he intended to "keep house". He again mentioned that some men were cutting their hair too short, and that some of the women were wearing gloves in the summer time. He said that these things had been prohibited before and that they should remain so now. He said that since the automobile would draw the line with the Old Order churches he could not allow them, nor short dresses and waists among the women of the congregation. Women's shawls, however, which had previously been worn in three-cornered style, might now be worn four-cornered, since that would not interfere with their fellowship with the Old Order churches.

After Mose had thus expressed himself to the membership, the vote was taken on whether or not they wished to observe the Communion service. But before the vote was taken Mose again told the members that he did not intend to place Mr. and Mrs. John D. Yoder under the ban, and that the people must use their own judgment in their attitude toward the Yoders. He said that so far as he was concerned they had the liberty to unite with the other church if they cared to do so.<sup>20</sup>

To the proposed course of action as outlined by Bishop Beachy above Noah and Joseph Yoder would not agree. Joseph Yoder intimated that he thought there were other issues than the use of the strict "ban" which should be investigated

---

20. Yoder, M.J., memoranda, op.cit., p. 2.

before going ahead with the Communion service. Under the circumstances he said that he felt it would be wrong to continue with plans for the Lord's Supper, and he was supported in his position by Noah M. Yoder. Despite the non-cooperative attitude of his co-ministers, Bishop Beachy proceeded to take the vote of the congregation on whether or not they wished that a Holy Communion Service should be observed. Ten of the brethren said that under the circumstances they would not participate. Thirteen of the brethren said they were neutral on the question, and twenty-one of the brethren expressed a desire for the Memorial Meal. Among the women there was no objection whatever to holding the Communion service as proposed by the bishop.<sup>21</sup>

Though a clear majority of the congregation had expressed themselves in favor of the Communion service, none was announced by the bishop for the fall of 1926. The stalemate was allowed to continue until the following spring. Then on April 3, 1927, at a council meeting held after a worship service in the Flag Run Meetinghouse Bishop M. M. Beachy reiterated what he had said earlier in regard to how he thought he ought to "keep house". At this meeting the vote of the membership was not taken nor was

---

21. Ibid., p. 3.

there any announcement of the Communion service. One week later on April 10, 1927, an additional church service was held at the Summit Mills Meetinghouse, and at that service Holy Communion was announced for Sunday, April 17, at the same place. When the worshippers came together for this occasion, they were prevented from observing the Lord's Supper as had been announced because of dissatisfaction among the group, notably those who still wanted the strict "ban" applied to all who left to join the Maryland or Miller congregation. However, Bishop Beachy announced that on the following Sunday, April 24, 1927, a Communion service would be held at the Flag Run Meetinghouse. When this service was finally held, only sixty-three members participated or slightly more than half the membership.<sup>22</sup>

#### B. Minor Reasons for the Division

From the presentation of the foregoing events it is clearly evident that the major reason for the differences that finally led to division was the insistence of Joseph and Noah Yoder that the strict "ban" be used on all who left to unite with the Maryland congregation. This is

---

22. Ibid., p. 11.

true also in the opinion of Eli J. Bontrager, who says in a letter of March 2, 1950,

As it was some twenty-five years ago that we were called to Somerset County, matters seem a bit hazy now. However, I think your informant was right that the real cause of the trouble was the strict "ban".<sup>23</sup>

There were, however, minor differences which came in- to the open only after the Communion service of April 24, 1927. Possibly Bishop Beachy felt that the opposition had indicated by their absence that they had no intention of compromising their views on the strict "ban". There- after he apparently gave up hope of a reconciliation and allowed some innovations which he had previously tried to hold in check.

At the November 14, 1926, meeting which was held in the Flag Run Meetinghouse the Bishop was still trying to keep his congregation in full fellowship with the Old Order Amish churches and stated that he could not permit the use of automobiles, because that would alienate the Old Order group.<sup>24</sup> After April, 1927, he abandoned this idea, and we begin to see what some of the other issues were that had been constantly in the background but which were not previously discussed. Bontrager in the letter

---

23. Bontrager, E.J., letter, op. cit., March 2, 1950.

24. Yoder, M.J., memoranda, op. cit., p. 2.

referred to above also says, "To say that the "ban" was the real or only cause of the division is probably not quite correct."<sup>25</sup> He states further that when the four ministers, Beiler, Bontrager, Schrock and Stoltzfus, were in Somerset County, Noah M. Yoder had intimated to him that there were other issues besides the strict "ban", but that what they were did not become clear to him until after the split. Bontrager goes on to say that in his opinion what N. M. Yoder wished to convey was this: that M. M. Beachy wanted unrestricted use of electricity, automobiles and perhaps a few other things.<sup>26</sup> This is also the opinion of Bishop Joseph J. Yoder of Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, who says in a letter of March 3, 1950,

According to my estimation and knowledge by going through that sorrowful split, the best I can give as the cause of it was that the more liberal class was dissatisfied with the former church rules, in not only one matter or other, but in a number of different affairs wanted more liberty, until it came to a split; and the changes made at that time and since is plain evidence of the cause.<sup>27</sup>

Probably neither Bontrager nor Yoder are quite fair in saying that Beachy wanted unrestricted use of electricity and the automobile prior to the Communion service of 1927. After that date, however, innovations occurred in Bishop

---

25. Bontrager, E.J., letter, op. cit., March 2, 1950.

26. Ibid.

27. Yoder, J.J., letter, March 3, 1950, Meyersdale, Pennsylvania.

Beachy's congregation with such swiftness that it seems incredible to suppose they had not been under contemplation by some of his members beforehand.

1. The organization of Sunday School.

The first of these innovations was the organization of a Sunday School. On May 8, 1927, just a little more than a month after the April Communion service Bishop Beachy and his followers had a meeting at the Flag Run Meetinghouse for the specific purpose of organizing Sunday School.<sup>28</sup> The fact that many of the younger generation were growing up without a reading knowledge of German had long been a matter of concern to Moses M. Beachy. He reasoned rightly that the German language would have to be abandoned in the Amish worship service if the young were not instructed therein, and this was his chief reason for wanting to start the school. When the Sunday School was first started, it was held on Sunday afternoon, but the meetings were quickly shifted to the forenoon of the alternate Sundays on which no church service was held except on special occasions. By May 22, 1927, this had become the established practice at both the Summit Mills and Flag Run Meetinghouses, and has remained so since that time.

---

28. Yoder, M.J., memoranda, op.cit., p. 11.



## 2. The introduction of electricity.

The exact date on which Bishop Beachy gave his official consent to the use of electric lights and motors by the members of his congregation is not known. At the council meeting held in the Summit Mills Meetinghouse on November 28, 1926, Beachy had told the congregation that he and Gideon Brennaman, later a minister in the conservative wing, had had some trouble about electric lights and motors, but that this disagreement had been settled.<sup>29</sup> Nothing is said as to the manner in which this disagreement was settled, but the very fact that it was mentioned as early as 1926 indicates that by that time some members of the congregation had begun to make use of these modern conveniences. Among these was Bishop Beachy's son, Noah M. Beachy, who lived in a house that had been wired for electricity by a former owner. He used an electric motor to drive his domestic water pump.<sup>30</sup>

Since no date can be found when official permission was given for the use of these conveniences,<sup>31</sup> it is

---

29. Ibid., p. 3.

30. From the writer's memories of boyhood days.

31. Yoder, M.J., memoranda, op.cit., p. 12. Yoder in his memoirs after the summer of 1927 writes: "I made no notations of events in the church for several years; I do not remember the date we took the voice of the church to allow electric lights. Mose said the things we need for our welfare should be our guide, and the ministers should be reasonable in their dealing."

presumed that they came into use shortly after the Sunday Schools were an established fact. At least the use of electrical conveniences was the second of the innovations practiced by the "Beachy Congregation", as it was later known.

3. Automobiles are allowed.

The reader will recall that at the November 14, 1926, meeting Bishop Beachy had specifically stated that he could not permit the use of the automobile, as that would alienate the Old Order Amish churches from his congregation. This would indicate that while automobiles were not generally owned by members of the congregation in 1926, there was at least some agitation that they should be permitted to own them. On June 26, 1927, at a council meeting held at the Summit Mills Meetinghouse the members were asked if they were willing to do without automobiles for the present, and a majority indicated that they were. But by August of the same year this agitation had taken the form of open rebellion. Yoder's memoirs reveal that on August 21, 1927,

They asked a few of the brethren to agree to put away their cars and not make trouble all the time. One did not agree to this whereupon they gave him two weeks to think it over.<sup>32</sup>

From the above it can be seen that by August, 1927,

---

32. Ibid., p. 12.

there was more than one automobile in the possession of those who were members of Beachy's congregation, and one brother was not at once willing to dispose of this modern method of transportation. Whether the congregation succeeded in persuading him to put away his horseless carriage within the next two weeks is not known. In any case he had only to wait a little more than a year until the horseless carriage was no longer taboo for any member of the "Beachy Congregation". Some time during the month of February, 1929, the congregation voted unanimously to allow the use of the automobile to its members.<sup>33</sup>

### C. The Division "Fait Accompli"

If developments were rapid among the followers of Beachy after April 24, 1927, they were no less so among the followers of Joseph and Noah Yoder. These two men called Amish ministers from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and Holmes County, Ohio, at which time they held services in the home of Amos J. Yoder near Springs, Pennsylvania. The men called were Ben Beiler and Gideon Stoltzfus from Lancaster County, and Abraham Yoder and Jacob Stutzman

---

33. Ibid., p. 12. Note: J. B. Mast, editor of the published memoranda gives the date as December, 1928, but the writer is of the opinion that the later date is correct.

from Holmes County. Most of Beachy's followers were not present at this meeting, and he himself was away on a trip to the West.

At the close of the service Abraham Yoder asked the members to remain seated while the ministers retired to a separate room. The members were then asked to come to this room one at a time and express their dissatisfaction with Bishop Beachy's leadership. However, since the meeting had either not been generally announced or else because Beachy and his followers deliberately absented themselves, the visiting ministers could get only one side of the dispute. They then called another meeting for Friday afternoon of the same week and requested Samuel E. Hershberger and Edward Yoder, two of Beachy's loyal members to be present.<sup>34</sup>

These two men were called into counsel at separate times by the four visiting ministers and asked to give their views on the dispute. Death has sealed the lips of Edward Yoder, and twenty years of time have dimmed the memory of Samuel Hershberger so that he says,

I would be unable at present to say just what the questions were, or what answers were given. I remember quite well that I told them about forty of the members were not

---

34. Ibid., p. 11.

present at their meeting.<sup>35</sup>

While it has not been possible to get behind the scenes to discover what actually happened on that Friday afternoon meeting at the Amos Yoder home, it is known that the Yoder ministers were advised by the visiting brethren not to withdraw from Beachy's leadership immediately. Following this meeting three of the visiting ministers returned to their homes, leaving only Abraham Yoder of Holmes County, Ohio, to assist this conservative group.

On June 2, 1927, a church service was held for Abraham Yoder and also Harry Maust, an Amish minister from Arthur, Illinois, who chanced to be passing through the community. At this service members from both of the disputing sides were again present. But four weeks later on June 26, 1927, Noah M. and Joseph J. Yoder decided to ignore the advice of the visiting ministers and held an independent worship service in the Summit Mills Meetinghouse on the very day Bishop Beachy had announced that the service would be held in the Flag Run Meetinghouse. The Yoder ministers took this action on the very date that Beachy's congregation voted by majority to do without the automobiles for the present, which shows that at that

---

<sup>35</sup>. Hershberger, S. E., letter dated December 30, 1949, Grantsville, Maryland.

time Beachy was still trying to effect a reconciliation.<sup>36</sup>

It appears then that Noah M. and Joseph J. Yoder must bear much of the responsibility for the final division. It was they who with their followers withdrew and not Beachy who expelled them. Furthermore, their withdrawal came at a time when Beachy was still in the mood to compromise where the use of automobiles was concerned. Perhaps, however, the attempt to fix responsibility for past events is useless. In any case, after June 26, 1927, the break between the two opposing factions was complete.

The Amish colony which had been planted in the Castleman River region, perhaps as early as 1768, was now divided into three separate units, where prior to 1895 there had been only one. Jacob Amman, though he had long been dead, yet spoke. His strict teaching on the "ban" and the attempt of the Yoders and their followers to enforce it were the chief cause of the 1927 division.

#### D. The Influence of the Beachy Amish Congregation

##### Upon the Old Order Amish Churches

##### 1. The immediate effect in the local community.

Due to the manner in which the worship services of the Somerset County, Pennsylvania, Amish had been conducted

---

36. Yoder, M.J., memorandum, op. cit., p. 11.

prior to the division of 1927, the after effects of the division were not at once so apparent as one might suppose. There were two meetinghouses in the area, and the pattern of holding worship services on alternate Sundays only, meant that as rule the meetinghouses were used just once a month. Noah M. and Joseph J. Yoder simply announced that their group would meet in the Summit Mills Meetinghouse on the same day that Beachy had announced services in the Flag Run Meetinghouse; and by this procedure they set the pattern which has prevailed since that time.

The two divergent groups continue to this day to use the same meetinghouses, but never do they meet together in the same meetinghouse on a given Sunday. The Beachy congregation continues to use both meetinghouses for Sunday School on alternate Sundays, while the "Yoder congregation", as it is now known, persists in the old tradition of a church service once every two weeks, with the alternate Sundays free for visitation. Amish families usually visit their neighbors on these alternate Sundays.

Disputes of such long duration, however, are not engaged in without leaving some scars. In some instances the division in the church also divided families, and as

usual the accusations were many and bitter. Gradually, however, relations between the two groups became less strained, and they now live in the same community, perhaps, more harmoniously than before the actual division took place. Bishop Joseph J. Yoder in his letter of March 3, 1950, was reluctant to discuss the issues of the 1927 division, lest some of the old ill feeling should be aroused thereby.

In numerical strength the two congregations are now about equal. In 1950 the congregation which is now led by Bishop Yoder consisted of fifty-three families with a total of 154 communicant members,<sup>37</sup> while the Beachy congregation of which Eli D. Tice of Grantsville, Maryland, is now bishop consisted of forty-four families with 155 communicant members.<sup>38</sup> The present ministers of the Yoder congregation are Bennie A. Fisher, ordained in May of 1928, Noah J. Yoder, son of Joseph J. Yoder, ordained in May of 1940, and Joseph J. Yoder, ordained as minister in May of 1915 and as bishop of the Yoder congregation on October 13, 1929.<sup>39</sup>

## 2. The effect in other Old Order Amish communities.

It was in those Amish communities which lay far beyond

---

37. Yoder, J.J., letter, op. cit., March 2, 1950.

38. Yoder, M.J., letter, May 5, 1951, Meyersdale, Pa.

39. Yoder, J.J., letter, op. cit., March 2, 1950.



the boundaries of Somerset County, Pennsylvania, that the movement started by Bishop M. M. Beachy in 1927 was destined to make its deepest impressions. At first glance it seems strange that Beachy and those who shared his views should not simply have transferred their membership to the Maryland congregation, but for most of them this represented too radical a change. By 1927 the Maryland congregation had undergone a considerable transformation compared to what it had been in 1895 when the original division took place. The men were permitted to wear barbershop hair cuts if they wished, and most of the younger men in the congregation were clean shaven. Though German was still in use, there were also sermons in English at almost every worship service.

In 1927 all the married men in Beachy's congregation were wearing the traditional Amish hair cut and the full beard. German was the only language used in preaching except at funerals, and all singing was in German and in unison. To have abandoned all this at once would have seemed sacrilegious to most of the people. So Beachy and his followers worked out a sort of "via media", in which they retained most of the former modes of dress, even though the use of the automobile and electrical appliances were now permitted. Also the German language and unison

singing were maintained in the worship services of the church. Those who bought cars were asked to paint them black if they were not already that color. Young men were requested to let their beards grow after marriage, and the German language continued to be the accepted medium of worship at all except the funeral services. In fact, the ministers of the Beachy congregation appear to have been more watchful than before for manifestations of worldly pride in personal apparel and home decorating schemes. A letter written by Norman Beachy, a minister from Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, to Bishop M. M. Beachy in May of 1935 is interesting in this connection. The letter says in part,

There is a new style coming in with window curtains parted in the middle, which used to be forbidden, and I see no reason why we should allow them now.<sup>40</sup>

By being thus watchful, lest the use of modern conveniences bring more compromise with the so-called worldly styles in dress, Bishop Beachy and his congregation built a bridge over which other dissatisfied groups of Amish people could walk to greater freedom without having to make so drastic a change as to kill the spirit of adventure before the first step was taken. It should be added

---

40. Beachy, N.M., letter dated May 31, 1935, Meyersdale, Pennsylvania. With the "Letters of Importance" found in the file of M.M. Beachy after his death in 1946.

here that neither Bishop Beachy nor his followers foresaw the results of their course of action in 1927, nor did they deliberately plan that way in order to attract other Amish groups. The group of Amish congregations that are now known as the Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches appealed to Bishop Beachy for help in a spontaneous and unsolicited manner.

After the 1927 division the Beachy congregation was an isolated group, cut off from fellowship with Old Order Amish churches in other areas. They had no relations with any other Amish congregations for a period of about three years. Within that length of time the news that there was an Amish group in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, which permitted the use of the automobile and electrical appliances, had Sunday School but retained the German language and much of the traditional Amish style in non-conformity of dress, had travelled by way of the grapevine into other Amish communities.

The first Amish group to make contact with the Beachy congregation in Somerset County was the group led by Bishop John A. Stoltzfus from Bird in Hand, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The followers of Stoltzfus had formerly belonged to a group of Amish in Lancaster County who were known as the "King People". They were so named

because their leading bishop was a man by the name of Isaac King. King and his followers had broken away from the strict Old Order Amish in Lancaster County on the question of the "ban" and the use of electrical conveniences in the home, but they retained the horse and buggy as the approved means of transportation and also continued the practice of holding their worship services in the homes of the various members.

Bishop Stoltzfus and his group now allowed the use of the automobile and purchased an abandoned Brethren Meetinghouse near Weavertown, Pennsylvania, in which their worship services have since been held. Because of the location of their meetinghouse this group is now known as the Weavertown congregation.<sup>41</sup> Only after the Beachy and Weavertown congregations had become independent did they learn of each other's existence. Once this acquaintance was formed a sort of alliance soon developed between the two congregations, and by 1930 frequent visits were exchanged by both ministers and lay people of the two communities.<sup>42</sup>

These two congregations then remained alone until

---

41. Baughman, C. G., "The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County," Pennsylvania German Society, Norristown, Pennsylvania, XLIX, (1942), p. 283-285.

42. Yoder, M.J., letter, March 27, 1950, Meyersdale, Pa.

nearly eight years later when a group of Amish people in Mercer County, Pennsylvania, became dissatisfied with the Old Order Amish and withdrew to form a separate congregation.<sup>43</sup> This group had received some help from Bishop John A. Stoltzfus of the Weavertown congregation prior to 1937 and 1938. However, during these two years due to critical illness in the home Bishop Stoltzfus was unable to absent himself from home for long periods of time, and consequently the Mercer County or Cochrannton congregation called upon Bishop M. M. Beachy for help. He performed three wedding ceremonies for members of this congregation, the last one on May 12, 1938. On May 13, 1938, he assisted in an ordination service when Valentine Yoder, the present bishop of the Cochrannton congregation, was ordained to that office. In 1950 this congregation had sixty communicant members in which twenty-five families were represented.<sup>44</sup>

One month after the ordination of Valentine Yoder, M. M. Beachy and his co-ministers were requested to come to Madison County, Ohio, to assist a small group of Amish people who had become dissatisfied with the Old Order Amish Church of that area. They first travelled to Madison

---

43. Ibid.

44. Yoder, V.P., letter, April 23, 1950, Cochrannton, Pa.

County, Ohio, on June 3, 1938, where they organized a small congregation in the vicinity of Plain City, Ohio. As there were no ordained ministers among this group, the Somerset County ministers periodically drove to Ohio to conduct worship services for the newly formed congregation until the month of October in 1938.<sup>45</sup> On the eleventh day of that month M. M. Beachy ordained two young men from the local congregation as ministers, Emery Yutzky and Robert M. Kaufman, both from the vicinity of Plain City, Ohio.<sup>46</sup> This group was without a resident bishop until April 25, 1949, when Elden L. Troyer was ordained to that office.<sup>47</sup> In 1950 there were fifty-eight communicant members in this congregation, in which approximately twenty-five families were represented.<sup>48</sup>

By the fall of 1939 the knowledge that the Beachy congregation in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, was willing to help other groups, if requested to do so, had travelled as far as Miami and Howard Counties, Indiana. In the fall of that year M. M. Beachy assisted a small group in Miami County in forming a congregation. Several years before this date the Conservative Amish Mennonites had organized a congregation in this area, which soon after ceased to

---

45. Yoder, M.J., memoranda, op. cit., p. 12.

46. Troyer, E.L., letter, May 1, 1950, Plain City, O.

47. Yoder, M.J., letter, op. cit., March 27, 1950.

48. Troyer, E.L., letter, op. cit.

exist. It had, however, existed long enough to ordain a minister, and when the congregation disintegrated the minister was left without a charge. This minister, Levi Sommers from Amboy, Indiana, affiliated with the newly formed Beachy Amish congregation, and was given charge of the group in the summer of 1940. This congregation was without a resident bishop until May 8, 1949, when Ezra Miller of Amboy was ordained to that office. In 1950 the congregation had forty-nine communicant members in which nineteen families were represented.<sup>49</sup>

Approximately one year later an Amish congregation located within the vicinity of Kempsville, Virginia, affiliated with the growing number of Beachy Amish congregations. This congregation had been started about the turn of the century, and many of the first Amish there had come from the River congregation in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. In 1940 a struggle over the ownership of automobiles, which had long been brewing, was resolved when most of the older or original settlers who were objecting to the automobiles moved farther north to the vicinity of Staunton, Virginia. This virtually left the newcomers in power in the old colony, and they lost no time in seeking affiliation with the Beachy Amish congregations. Repeated

---

49. Miller, E., letter, May 4, 1950, Amboy, Indiana

requests for information as to the size of the congregation were unanswered.

In April of 1940 Beachy Amish congregations were again spreading westward. At that time Bishop D. O. Burkholder, who had been ordained as a minister and bishop in the Old Order Amish Church near Nappanee, Indiana, became dissatisfied and withdrew from the group. Several attempts were made by Burkholder and the other Old Order ministers of the area to gain a reconciliation. At Burkholder's request the ministers of the Beachy Amish congregation in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, were present when the third and final attempt at reconciliation was made. It developed that this attempt was vain. The Old Order ministers withdrew from the conference table and on April 28, 1940, silenced D. O. Burkholder, that is, they forbade him any longer to preach in the Old Order Amish Church. The Old Order ministers took this action without the full knowledge or consent of their congregation.<sup>50</sup>

Once the Old Order ministers had thus disposed of Burkholder, he was free to pursue his own course, and this he did speedily. M. M. Beachy reinstated him in the ministry, and he and his followers started an independent

---

<sup>50</sup>. Burkholder, D. O., personal interview granted to the writer in October, 1950, at Nappanee, Indiana.



Amish congregation in the midst of the Old Order Amish stronghold. Burkholder's followers built a meetinghouse about one and one-half miles northwest of Nappanee, Indiana, and in 1950 this congregation had a membership of sixty-seven in which nearly twenty-three families were represented.<sup>51</sup>

By 1941 the Beachy Amish were again making their influence felt in the state of Ohio, this time in Holmes County. Services were first held there in 1941 with the help of Bishop M. M. Beachy. Abner Schlabach, who had been ordained a minister in the Old Order Amish Church in Holmes County, Ohio, served the new congregation as minister until the time of his death in 1948. After his death the congregation was without a minister for a full year but received some assistance from a Beachy Amish congregation in Stark County, Ohio, which had been organized in June of 1947.<sup>52</sup> In the fall of 1949 Bishop Eli D. Tice, successor to Bishop M. M. Beachy, ordained Jeremiah Schlabach as minister in the Holmes County, Ohio, congregation. A short time later he had as co-minister, Tobe J. Byler, a former Old Order Amish minister in Holmes County, who affiliated with this Beachy Amish congregation

---

51. Ibid.

52. Otto, S. J., letter, August 1, 1951, Canton, Ohio.

located at Bunker Hill near Berlin, Ohio. In 1950 this group consisted of eighteen families in which there was found a total of ninety children. The congregation at that time was without a resident bishop.<sup>53</sup>

After 1941 there was a period of five years when no new congregations were organized. Then in January, 1946, a young Amish man and his wife who were living near Middlebury, Indiana, became dissatisfied with the Old Order Amish church in that vicinity and affiliated with D. O. Burkholder's group near Nappanee, Indiana, about twenty-five miles southwest of their home. These two people were Mr. and Mrs. David Bontrager, who continued to attend services at the Nappanee meetinghouse until Ascension Day, 1947, when fifteen other Amish families living in the vicinity of Middlebury decided to have services in their own homes. There was no ordained minister in this group, and Bishop D. O. Burkholder and his co-minister from Nappanee preached and held Communion services for these fifteen families.

In the summer of 1947 this group, which then consisted of thirteen families (two apparently returned to the Old Order Amish), decided to build a meetinghouse in

---

<sup>53</sup>. Schlabach, J., letter, May 2, 1950, Fredericksburg, Ohio.

their own community. This structure was built about five and one-half miles east of Goshen at a cost of approximately \$10,000. The first service was held on November 7, 1947. About one month earlier David O. Bontrager, the young Amish man who with his wife had joined the Nappanee congregation in 1946, was ordained as the bishop of this area by D. O. Burkholder at the relatively young age of thirty-one. In 1950 this congregation had ninety-five communicant members which represented forty families. There were also approximately 115 children who were not yet members of the church.<sup>54</sup>

The summer of 1946 also marked the beginning of a Beachy Amish congregation near Kalona, Iowa. Here Moses Yoder and John Helmuth were ordained as ministers by Bishop D. O. Burkholder of Nappanee, Indiana, in June of that year.<sup>55</sup> This congregation was without a resident bishop until 1948 when Bishop Jonathan Miller, who had been silenced by the Old Order Amish, was reinstated by D. O. Burkholder and given charge of the Kalona congregation.<sup>56</sup> At present the congregation has a membership of

---

54. Bontrager, D. O., letter dated April 21, 1950, Middlebury, Indiana.

55. Miller, J., letter dated August 3, 1951, Kalona, Iowa.

56. Mast, J. B., "Facts Concerning the Beachy A. M. Division of 1927," Meyersdale, Penna., (1950), p. 19.

fifty people in which twenty-two families are represented.<sup>57</sup>

On June 22, 1947, a Beachy Amish congregation was organized in Stark County, Ohio, by Bishop Eli D. Tice of Grantsville, Maryland. During the first year of this congregation it was under the care of Joc D. Miller, a minister who had been ordained in the Old Order Amish Church as early as 1910. On May 6, 1948, Alvin Witmer was ordained as a minister by Bishop Tice, who also on October 12, 1948, ordained Samuel J. Otto to the same office. The following spring on May 8 Otto was ordained as bishop by Tice. In 1951 this congregation had a communicant membership of ninety in which thirty-four families were represented.<sup>58</sup>

In 1948 there was a call for help from a group of Old Order Amish in Montgomery County, Indiana. The first two ministers of this congregation were Jacob D. Gingerich and William Yoder, who were ordained by D. O. Burkholder on June 27, 1948. On October 28, 1949, Benjamin S. Wagler was also ordained as a minister by Burkholder. Though this is the youngest of the four Indiana congregations, it has grown to be the largest. In 1950 this

---

57. Miller, J., letter, op. cit.

58. Otto, S. J., letter, op. cit.

congregation consisted of 114 communicant members among which forty-two families were represented. In 1950 this congregation was yet without a resident bishop.<sup>59</sup>

#### E. Summary

When it is remembered that the total Old Order Amish population of the United States is probably in the neighborhood of 25,000 people (of whom some 10,000 are baptized adults), the twelve congregations of Beachy Amish Mennonites that are scattered through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa and Virginia seem almost negligible in comparison. Yet within twenty years this group has grown large enough to affect the religious life of over one thousand people who were formerly numbered with the 25,000 Old Order Amish.

In all the areas where Beachy Amish congregations have been organized the leaders have kept the pattern which was set by M. M. Beachy in 1927. They have allowed modern conveniences such as automobiles, tractors for field work as well as belt work, and all types of household electrical appliances. At the same time they have retained most of the typical Amish non-conformity to modern styles of apparel, both for women and men. They

---

<sup>59</sup>. Gingerich, J.D., letter, April 25, 1950, Montgomery, Ind.

have kept the German language as the accepted medium of worship, both in preaching and in congregational singing. The only two exceptions to this are at funerals where English may be preached and at the "singings" of the young people of the church where English hymns may be sung.

Wherever a Beachy Amish congregation has been planted in the midst of a solidly Old Order Amish community, it constitutes a bridge over which those who become dissatisfied with the strictness of the Old Order group may walk into a larger freedom without having to discard many of the social habits to which they have become attached.

The Beachy Amish congregations have, however, made one change that in the long view of things is destined to be tremendously significant. Wherever they have gone they have carried the Sunday School and the meetinghouse. In all the Sunday Schools the New Testament in German has been the textbook for the adult classes, while the younger children learn their German alphabet.

The first result of this has been to revitalize the worship service for the younger generation as they become familiar with the language in which it is conducted. The second result has been the awakening of a zeal to

evangelize those who are ignorant of the Gospel, even though they do not belong to Amish communions. This is something altogether alien to the Old Order Amish, who quote Matthew 10:5-6 as being specifically directed against the missionary enterprise. The study of the New Testament in isolated passages may permit one to form such an opinion, but members of the Beachy Amish congregations who read the New Testament in its entirety have also discovered the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20. In three of the Indiana congregations this evangelistic zeal has expressed itself in the form of a worship service on alternate Sunday evenings when special attention is paid to the children in the congregation who are not yet members of the church.<sup>60</sup>

The total significance of this movement cannot yet be measured, but it is obvious that for the first time the Old Order Amish are confronted with a homogenous group in their own midst who have successfully adopted most of the modern conveniences without themselves becoming worldly. The Old Order people will have more and more difficulty explaining that fact to the young of the church. The Yoder congregation in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, has taken the desperate measure of forbidding

---

60. Letters from Bontrager, Burkholder, Gingerich.

its members to work for outsiders, except for such neighborly deeds as threshing and silo filling.<sup>61</sup> Human nature is such that those who know it well can confidently predict the failure of such methods wherever tried.

Whatever the effect of the Beachy Amish Mennonite congregations upon the Old Order Amish may finally be, it is interesting to note that for the second time in a century the Amish of Somerset County, Pennsylvania, have furnished the midwest states with something new. From 1808 to 1865 it furnished settlers for new frontiers. From 1927 to 1949 it provided the spiritual leadership which gave birth to the Beachy Amish Mennonite congregations which often appear in the very areas where the pioneers had gone a century earlier.

---

61. This action was taken either in 1949 or 1950. When the writer visited the community in 1950 this ruling had created considerable comment in the neighborhood.



## CHAPTER VI

### AMISH THEOLOGY

No movement within Christian history can be understood apart from the theological beliefs which first gave rise to it. In this the Amish people of present day America are no exception. Those who try to interpret them in ignorance of their religious heritage usually see either a group of religious fanatics or else the "plain people", who are "harmless as doves" in their quaintness without in any manner being as "wise as serpents". The fact of the matter is that the average American Amish are not "fanatics" nor do they wear their peculiar garb simply for the sake of providing photographic material for roving camera fans. The American Amish are as they are and do as they do because of certain basic religious convictions which have their origin in a conscious resistance to the secularization of life.

#### A. The Possibilities of Monastic Influence

In manner of dress the Amish women especially often bear a strange resemblance to the garb of some orders of nuns within the Roman Catholic Church. Some American

authors have felt, not without justification, that life within the contemporary Amish community is often like unto life within the walls of a Franciscan monastery.<sup>1</sup> There is some evidence that monastic asceticism may have influenced some present day Amish practices in an indirect manner. It is a well established fact that Dirk Phillips, whose writings are still popular among the Amish, spent some time in a Franciscan monastery.<sup>2</sup> Whether or not he ever took monastic orders remains open to question. His strict teaching on the "ban", like the great monastic rules, was designed to rid the Christian Community of all unholy living. Dirk felt that there were three reasons why the members of the Christian Community should have nothing to do with one whose guilt as an unrepentant sinner was an established fact:

Darbei lehret er ausdrücklich dass die Glaubigen nicht sollen zu thun haben mit demjenigen der sich ein Bruder nennen lasset, und ein Hurer ist, oder Geitziger, oder Ehrer der Bildern, oder ein Schelter, oder ein Säufer, oder ein Rauber, mit solchen sollen die Christen keine Gemeinschaft haben, (1 Cor. 5. b. 2 Thes. 2. b.) und auch nicht essen, dann sie müssen die absonderen und darnach meiden, und das um drei furnehme Ursachen willen; die erste ist, auf das die Gemeind der fremden Sünden nicht theilhaftig werde, und das nicht ein wenig Sauertig den ganzen Teig verssure; (1 Joh. 1. b. Gal. 5. c.

---

1. Musselman, G. P., Pennsylvania Germans, (Princeton, 1942) p. 64-65. He states that "to this day the life lived out by the Plain Germans of Pennsylvania has a Franciscan flavor."

2. Horsch, op. cit., The Mennonites in Europe, p. 215.

1 Cor. 5. a.) die andere ist, auf dass derjenige der gesündigt hat, schamroth, und in seinem Fleisch gestrafet werde und der Geist selig werde in dem Tag des Herrn Jesu; (2 Thes. 3. b. 1 Cor. 5. a.) die dritte ist, auf das die Gemeind Gottes von wegen der Bösen nicht gelästert werde, und um ihret willen vor dem Herrn keine Schuld trage. Ezech. 20. b. Rom. 2. c. Jos. 7. a.<sup>3</sup>

The Amish Disciplines of 1809, 1837 and 1865 were all attempts to keep Dirk Philips' teaching on the "ban" relevant to their time, and it is true that these bear some rather striking resemblances to the great monastic Rules of St. Basil and St. Benedict. The monastic practice was to forbid everything in the way of personal attire that did not provide either for warmth or modesty. This was also the broad intention of the rules laid down in the Amish disciplines referred to above. The aim of both the monastic rule and the Amish discipline was to keep the church "unspotted from the world".

It was Jacob Amman, however, who introduced uniformity of dress among his German Swiss followers, rather than Dirk Philips or Menno Simons in Holland. About Amman's early life and training nothing has thus far been discovered. Thus it is impossible to establish a direct connection between monastic asceticism and Amish separateness from the world. While this connection has not yet been

---

3. Philip, D., Enchiridion oder Handbuchlein von der Christlichen Lehre und Religion, (Lancaster, 1811), p. 261.

historically established, and possibly may never be, it is at least interesting to note the similarity and differences between the two movements.

#### B. The Similarities of Anabaptism to Monasticism

Monasticism had its origin in protest against a church that had become too worldly. As Workman has observed,

The abandonment of early chiliastic conceptions led the church eventually to accept the world as it was. Rather than resisting the worldliness of the world, the church came to terms with it. The ultimate effects of Constantine's acceptance of Christianity as the official religion of the state were to lower the ideals of Christianity itself. In Harnack's phrase "The stalwart Christians whom Diocletian had killed had been replaced by a mixed multitude of timeservers and half converted pagans." Rich outward pomp and ceremony involved poverty of spirit and strife for official position. The followers of Damasus in 366 won their struggle against Ursinus at a cost of 137 lives. Once Christians had laid down their lives for the truth; now they slaughtered each other to secure the prizes of the church.<sup>4</sup>

Anabaptism, of which the Amish are the most authentic living expression, also had its origin in protest against a Reformation that did not go far enough in separating the church from the world. Conrad Grebel in Switzerland, Obbe and Dirk Philips and Menno Simons in Holland were leaders

---

4. Workman, H. B., The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal from the Earliest Times Down to the Coming of the Friars, A Second Chapter in the History of Christian Renunciation, (London, 1913, 1st ed.), p. 6-8 (a condensation).

of a peaceful Anabaptism that could not feel at home in the worldliness of the state churches. Menno Simons in his later years wrote of the life of worldly ease enjoyed by the ministers of the state churches, "while our recompense must be fire, sword and death."<sup>5</sup>

It is common knowledge among church historians that Luther's rediscovery of justification by faith led to antinomianism among some of his followers. This should not be surprising, for it was the misunderstanding of this doctrine that gave rise to a party of libertines among the Galatian Christians where Paul first proclaimed this great Christian truth. It seems to be a perversion of the human spirit to interpret justification by faith to mean salvation by faith only, which neither Luther nor Paul taught. The Anabaptists placed great emphasis upon an exemplary life as the only sure sign of a saving faith. In Menno Simons' opinion no man was a Christian who was proud, haughty, selfish, unchaste, lustful, disobedient, thievish, defaming, backbiting, bloodthirsty or revengeful. And this was true, in Menno's opinion, even if such a man were baptized a hundred times or kept the Lord's Supper daily; for it is not the ordinances or rites such as

---

<sup>5</sup>. Smith, op. cit., The Story of the Mennonites, p. 100.

baptism and the Supper, but a true Christian faith that has the promise of life.<sup>6</sup>

This emphasis upon a temperate and chaste life has led more than one church historian to see in Anabaptism a revival of monastic asceticism within the Evangelical Movement. Otto D. Zöckler in his great work on Askese Und Mönchtum is of the opinion that this ascetic tendency began early in the Reformation Movement, and that the proponents of Anabaptism saw in the doctrine of justification by faith the danger of unshackling the lusts of the flesh. Because of this fear, he thinks, they protested and prohibited some of the innocent pleasures of life. He mentions Münster's fanatical denunciation of Luther as a "beer drinker", and says that after the movement started by Münster was finally stopped in 1535, the tendency toward asceticism lived on in the smaller sects. He says:

Zu ihnen gehört neben den Schwenkfeldtschen "Bekennern der Glorie Christi" auch die Partei der Mennoniten. Einen asketischen Zug lässt auch sie auf mehreren Punkten ihrer Lebenshaltung und ihres theologischen Systems mit aller Deutlichkeit hervortreten. Die Wiederherstellung des Fusswaschungsritus als eines Gebrauchs von "fast gleicher Wichtigkeit" wie Taufe und Abendmahl, die Untersagung des Eids und des Kriegsdiensts sind nicht die einzigen asketisierenden Elemente in ihrem Gemeinwesen. Auch ihr nüchternes Verhalten in Bezug auf Kleiderschmuck und auf Ausstattung der Wohnungen gehört hieher; nicht minder ihre

---

6. Ibid., p. 115.

schroffe Abwehr derartiger neuer Gewohnheiten und Genüsse wie beispielsweise das Tabakrauchen.<sup>7</sup>

While Zöckler is right in seeing close similarities between monastic asceticism and Anabaptist renunciation of the world, there were nevertheless important differences between the two.

### C. The Differences Between Anabaptism and Monasticism

Monasticism renounced property and exalted personal poverty, while the Monastic Orders themselves sometimes became very wealthy. In the early stages of monasticism personal bodily filth was sometimes looked upon as a mark of virtue. It was an index to one's degree of detachment from the present temporal scene. The total denial of normal bodily appetites within the Monastic Communities led to an almost Gnostic dualism in the monk's view of the material world, not to mention the denial of normal human affection for friends and family.<sup>8</sup>

Anabaptism, on the other hand, regarded the material world as the gift of the beneficent God. The world and the

---

7. Zöckler, O. D., Askese Und Mönchtum, (Frankfurt, A. M., 1897), p. 574.

8. Cave, S., The Christian Way, (New York, 1949, 1st American ed.), p. 55. He quotes Cassian's Institutes (V. xxxii), "After an interval of fifteen years he received a pack of letters from his parents and friends and burnt them without opening them, in order that he might not be distracted by reading letters from those who loved him."

things in it were to be used by His children, but they were not to abuse these gifts. Amish preachers of today frequently say, "Wir sollen die Welt brauchen aber wir sollen sie nicht misbrauchen."<sup>9</sup> Anabaptist's never renounced property as such, but property was held in proper perspective, because it was seen as belonging to this present temporal world. The Anabaptist attitude toward the world was almost identical with that which Oscar Cullmann describes as the primitive Christian one.

Der Glaubige lebt in einer Welt, von der er weiss, dass sie vergehen wird, aber dass sie jetzt noch im Rahmen der Heilsgeschichte gottgewollt und von Christus beherrscht ist. Insofern er weiss, dass sie vergehen wird, verneint er sie; insofern er weiss, sie ist der gottgewollte Rahmen der heilsgeschichtlichen Gegenwart, bejaht er sie.<sup>10</sup>

Far from advocating celibacy and the denial of the tenderest ties of human friendship, the Anabaptists were devoted to their families. Many of the writings in Von Bracht's Martyrs' Mirror are letters of encouragement to the families of condemned men and women. These letters breathe a tenderness of affection that serves not only to show how much the Anabaptists were devoted to their families, but also indicate their devotion to Christ, whom

---

9. From the writer's memory of boyhood days in the Amish Church.

10. Cullmann, O., Christus und die Zeit, (Zollikon-Zürich, 1946), p. 188.



they would not deny for the sake of their loved ones. It is simply impossible to conceive of an Anabaptist in prison, throwing letters from his family into the fire, lest these should turn his heart away from God. Nearly all the Anabaptist martyrs were supported in their trials, not only by the Fellowship of Believers, but also by the fellowship of their own families. Amish thought to this day is tinged with a strong martyr psychology. The Amish demand for Von Bracht's Martyrs' Mirror has necessitated a reprint within the last year.

Dr. Robert Friedmann has also seen the basic difference between monastic asceticism and Anabaptist renunciation of the world. In an article titled "Anabaptism and Protestantism" he deals with the theological problem of the freedom of the will, and concludes that this problem, so central in other forms of Protestant thought, is only marginal in Anabaptism. He says,

Infants and children have no sin, but only an inclination to it. Adults are standing under permanent temptation, but through the grace of rebirth can fight it, together with like-minded brethren, and endeavor to conquer it, that is, to withstand and forsake it. To this end one thing matters most: the conscious separation from the world, and the refusal of compromises. In this regard Anabaptism almost converged toward monasticism, yet in contrast to it stays in the world carrying on a normal life with family and profession.<sup>11</sup>

---

11. Friedmann, R., "Anabaptism and Protestantism," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Goshen, XXIV, 2, (Jan., 1950) p. 20.

#### D. Anabaptism versus Pietism

Dr. Friedmann goes on to say that while no Anabaptist writer would make the claim to be sinless or no longer able to sin, as some of the Pietists occasionally did, they regarded rebirth and baptism as meaningful only when they were followed by concrete attempts to walk in the narrow way.

Once a Christian is on this way he no longer worries about sin. He is trying under God to obey his commandments. Amish sermons often close with the typical form: "Dass Gott der Herr mit uns zufrieden sei." Such a man is certain that God will not allow him to fall out of his grace.<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Friedmann has here touched upon something that is very basic in Amish thought. Amish theological thinking was not greatly influenced by the strongly individualistic emphasis which is best expressed in the so-called "gospel song". Amish sermons do not express anxiety for individual salvation so much as they stress the necessity of obeying the standards accepted by the brotherhood. Anxiety for personal or individual salvation is not lacking, but it takes place within the Fellowship of Believers. Again, this anxiety is not lacking because the Amish do not know the radical nature of sin, but because they believe the God who first called them to come apart from the

---

12. Ibid., p. 20.

world will be able to lift them again, should they fall into sin after they have started to walk the straight and narrow way, provided they come in true repentance. The doctrine, "Once in grace, always in grace," has never found acceptance among the Amish, nor are they concerned about being able to designate the day and hour of their conversion as some groups of Anabaptist origin have been.

Dr. Friedmann has correctly observed that,

The Amish originated at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth century (1693-1699) and still show marked characteristics of the period of their origin. On the one hand they manifest a thorough loyalty to old Anabaptist traditions, in their biblicism, their simplicity of life, and their strict discipline, thus representing the most conservative wing of the whole Mennonite body. They manifest this traditional genius also by their obedience to the teachings of Menno Simons and Dietrich Philips, whose works are still cherished among them and handed down from generation to generation. Particularly is this the case with Enchiridion, Dietrich Philips' Handbook of the Christian Doctrine and Religion of 1564, with its strict teaching on the ban and avoidance which has found so much response among the Amish congregations.<sup>13</sup>

#### E. Summary of Monastic, Anabaptist and Pietistic

##### Influence on the Amish

To sum up the similarities and differences between monasticism and Anabaptism then, both were in agreement that the life of the Believer must be different from the

---

13. Friedmann, R., Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries, Its Genius and Its Literature, (Scottsdale, 1949) p. 244.

life of one belonging to the world. The monk sought to live out his life in isolation from the world, while the Anabaptists strove to remain in the world and yet not be of it. Monasticism saw the religious life as binding only on the few who took monastic vows, while Anabaptism included the entire Community of Believers in the duty to follow Christ.

The Amish in America today retain this awareness of the necessary tension between the life of the church and the life of the world to a very marked degree. Because of their isolation from all higher education they were not affected by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century beliefs in the inevitability of progress. For them J. B. Bury's admirable work on The Origin of the Idea of Progress need never have been written, for the Amish people live in a world where faith in Providence is still alive. The Amish individual remains a pilgrim who is on a journey through a world that is destined to pass away, because it is set in constant opposition to the holy and loving will of God. His pilgrimage leads on to a world where there is no more pain nor death, for "the former things are passed away." In this the present day American Amish closely represent the Anabaptists who were their spiritual

ancestors. Many of the insights of those early Anabaptists are valid to this day, for as Dr. Friedmann says,

To be aloof from the world and serve as the salt of the earth or to be in harmony with the world and at the same time lose the opportunity to influence the world: this alternative must ever be faced by earnest Christians. The pendulum of history never stops.<sup>14</sup>

It is unfortunate that in so many instances this tension between the life of the church and the world expresses itself only in the clothes which the Amish wear and not in their daily walk and manner of life. There are, of course, many sincere Christians among the Amish people of America, but in too many instances Amish non-conformity has become a fossil from which the spirit which once gave it life has long since fled.

Pietism has often led to an excessive individualism among those who were affected by it. The Amish of America are closely knit social groups in which there is often too little opportunity for expression of individual desires. Pietism, too, has often been accompanied by great emotional upheavals, which is certainly not true of the way the American Amish get their religion.

---

14. Ibid., p. 64.

## CHAPTER VII

### AMISH WORSHIP AND ORDINATION CHARGES

#### A. A Typical Amish Worship Service

The present day Amish worship service is characterized by a simplicity which seems barren and severe to those who view it from the outside. There is no instrumental music, and the hymns are sung in unison and in German. There are no stained glass windows and no cushioned pews. The entire service is conducted in German or Pennsylvania German, interspersed with many English words and phrases. Men and women sit on opposite sides of the meetinghouse, and it is not unusual for a worship service to last from two and one-half to three hours.

At every Amish worship service two or three hymns are sung before the first sermon of the day is preached. The first sermon is followed by a period of silent prayer while the congregation is in a kneeling position. At the close of this period of silence the congregation rises and remains standing while the deacon reads the first Scripture for the day. The congregation is then seated, and the second sermon begins. After speaking for thirty minutes or more, the minister who preaches the second sermon

reads another chapter of Scripture. He is then seated and asks his fellow-ministers to express themselves and to correct anything he has said which might be erroneous. Following this expression of the other ministers, which is known as "zeugnis geben", the second minister of the day, who is known as the "Gemeinhalter", again speaks briefly. At the conclusion of these remarks the congregation again kneels, while the "Gemeinhalter" reads a long prayer in German.

At the close of this prayer the congregation rises to receive the benediction, which frequently takes the following form:

Zum ende und beschluss befehle ich mich und euch Gottes Gnaden hand an Er walle uns darinnen leiten und führen zum glick selig's ende, und das in und durch Jesum Christum. Amen.

These words usually follow the farewell greeting at the close of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians:

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with an holy kiss. All the saints salute you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

At the sound of the words "Jesum Christum" all members bend their knees. This genuflection is what they consider to

---

1. II Corinthians 13:11-14.

be the literal fulfillment of the command, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."<sup>2</sup> At the close of the benediction the congregation is again seated, and a final hymn is sung. After this the bishop announces the time and place of the next worship service always with the words, "So, Der Herr will und wir leben."<sup>3</sup> With this the meeting is dismissed.<sup>4</sup>

#### B. Sources of Amish Forms of Worship

To the casual observer the Amish service of worship seems to proceed with very little forethought. The fact of the matter is that the Amish follow a well defined calendar of Scriptures. It has been impossible to determine when these calendars first originated, but it seems likely that they were brought to America from Europe. If so, they have probably been in continuous use since the early eighteenth century with very few changes from their earliest appearance. Following is the calendar of Scriptures used by the Beachy Amish Mennonite congregation in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. It should be remembered as this calendar is read that the Amish hold church

---

2. Philipians 2:10.

3. James 4:15.

4. This description of an Amish worship service is drawn from the writer's memory of the Amish services as they were conducted in Somerset County during his boyhood.



services only on alternate Sundays.

Luke 1 and 2 (Christmas)  
 Matthew 2 and 3 (First Sunday after Christmas)  
 Matthew 4 and 5  
 Matthew 6 and 7  
 Matthew 8 and 9  
 Matthew 10 and 11  
 Matthew 12 and 14 (At time of seeding)  
 Matthew 13 and John 15  
 Matthew 26 and 27 (Easter)  
 John 8 and Galatians 5  
 Acts 1 and 2 (Pentecost)  
 Acts 3 and 4 (Harvest)  
 John 4 and Revelation 14  
 Luke 12 and 13  
 Luke 14 and 16  
 Luke 17 and 18  
 Luke 19 and Romans 12  
 John 3, Romans 6, Acts 8:5-40 (Baptism)  
 Matthew 19:1-11, I Cor. 7, Eph. 5 (Wedding)  
 Romans 13, Titus 3, Ephesians 1 (Thanksgiving)  
 Matthew 18 and I Corinthians 5 (Council meeting)

Scriptures read at the Communion service are:

Luke 22:1-33, I Corinthians 1:10-24, I Corinthians 11:  
 1-2 and 17-34, John 13:1-18.

Other Scriptures sometimes used are:

Hebrews 11 and 12, Matthew 24 and 25, John 10,  
 Ephesians 4, John 14, I Corinthians 13.<sup>5</sup>

The person who made the above information available  
 to the writer says:

I do not know when this order was first used or where it  
 originated. However, it is not strictly followed in our  
 church. Sometimes other Scriptures are chosen to fit the  
 occasion or the sermon subject.<sup>6</sup>

In the Mennonite Quarterly Review, April, 1941, John  
 Umble of Goshen College has published some interesting

---

5. Beachy, M.J., letter, Nov. 21, 1949, Salisbury, Pa.

6. Ibid.

Amish service manuals. These indicate that these Scripture calendars stem from the European phase of Amish history. They have been copied and recopied by Amish ministers in the long centuries between then and now. As new communities were started in America these calendars were carried from the old to the new communities by the pioneer settlers. A list of the Scriptures used in the Amish church of Kalona, Iowa, published in the Mennonite Historical Bulletin, January, 1949, shows them to be identical with those used by the Somerset County, Pennsylvania, congregation of Beachy Amish. No doubt this calendar was carried to Iowa by the first Amish settlers who, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, came from the Castleman River region.<sup>7</sup>

One thing which immediately arrests the attention of those familiar with the long sweep of Amish history is the fact that all of these Scriptures are taken from the New Testament. Most of the chapters read through the year are taken from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Only a few are taken from the Pauline epistles, and there is only one selection from the book of Revelation. This is true to the best Anabaptist tradition, which has always

---

7. Swartzendruber, D. B., "A List of Scriptures Used in Amish Services", Mennonite Historical Bulletin, Scottsdale, X, No. 1, (January, 1949), p. 2.

seen two levels of inspiration in the Old and New Covenants, and ever since the "Münsterite" episode has scrupulously avoided any attempt to interpret the signs and numbers of what some one has called The Most Grotesque Book in the Bible.

John C. Wenger in an article titled "John Calvin and the Swiss Brethren" shows how the most learned of the Reformers dealt with the Anabaptist view on the non-swearing of oaths and the Anabaptist attitude toward the Old Testament. In January of 1546 Calvin engaged in debate an Anabaptist who had been arrested probably for the non-swearing of the oath. Calvin asked him if the Law did not give us guidance for life. "Thereupon he advanced the horrible dogma of the Anabaptists that the Old Testament has been abrogated."<sup>8</sup>

The Amish, who have clung to this old Anabaptist tradition of seeing two distinct levels of inspiration between the Old and the New Testaments, have something to teach all groups of Anabaptist origin. Too often these groups have turned their backs upon the results of modern Biblical scholarship, thus robbing their young people of an approach to the Christian religion that is both

---

<sup>8</sup>. Wenger, J. C., "John Calvin and the Swiss Brethren," Mennonite Historical Bulletin, Scottsdale, IV, No. 3, (September, 1949), p. 1-2.

intellectually respectable and emotionally rewarding. In some instances the Amish themselves have failed to understand the genius of their Anabaptist background. Because of their tendency to shy away from all forms of higher education they have resisted the discoveries of modern science, and in some areas they have started parochial schools as an attempt to resist teaching which they consider heretical.

Two statements from the constitution and by-laws of the Amish Mennonite Parochial School Association of the Castleman River District, Somerset County, Pennsylvania, and Garrett County, Maryland, will serve to show how the Amish of this area have fallen into the error of making the Bible a book of science with which all other books must agree.

The schools shall give the Bible, as the Word of God, its proper place in each course of study, taking it as the highest authority. They shall encourage the students to make it their constant guide, their Book of books, and its precepts their rule of life. The interpretation of all knowledge shall be in the light of the Scriptures as the inerrant Word of God.<sup>9</sup>

Literature and text-books shall be selected which are in accordance with the Word of God, or as nearly as can be obtained. In case of text-books differing in teaching from the Bible in parts, the Word of God shall be accepted

---

9. Constitution and By-Laws of the Amish Mennonite Parochial School Association, Castleman River District, Pennsylvania-Maryland, Article II, Section 2, p. 1.

and taught as authority and truth.<sup>10</sup>

Were the Amish of this area consciously aware of their Anabaptist heritage, they would not be driven to such extremes to defend the cosmology of a pre-scientific age.

### C. Amish Church Music

#### 1. The origin of Amish hymns.

One of the strangest parts of Amish worship to the outsider are the hymns and the hymn tunes which the Amish use. Because the hymns are written in German and the majority of them have never been translated into English, it is something of a surprise to learn that the Amish in their Ausbund possess probably the oldest Protestant hymnbook in existence. The hymns which appear in the Ausbund were written by a group of Swiss Mennonites who were imprisoned for their faith in the castle of Passau on the Bavarian frontier between 1535 and 1537.<sup>11</sup>

This collection was first printed during the middle of the sixteenth century, since which time twelve editions appeared in south Germany and Switzerland, the last issue being printed at Basel in 1838. This book became the adopted hymnal of the Swiss and south German Mennonites for several hundred years. When the first Palatines

---

10. Ibid., By-Laws and Safeguards, Sec. 1, p. 5.

11. Smith, op. cit., The Story of the Mennonites, p. 779.

came to Pennsylvania they brought this book with them, as did also the Swiss Mennonites and the Alsatian Amish in Ohio and Illinois in the early nineteenth century. The first American edition was printed at Germantown in 1742. It has appeared in eleven American editions since, the last appearing at Elkhart in 1913.<sup>12</sup>

As A. J. Ramaker has observed,

These hymns mirror more accurately the Christianity of the century than any other historical account could sketch it. They are historic songs. On the one hand we see entrenched authority, knowing no other way of holding on but by brutal force, on the other the innocent victims suffering for conscience sake and leaving the issue with God.<sup>13</sup>

Ernest Corell in an article titled, "An Appraisal of Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature," has the following to say of the hymns that are still sung by the Amish:

And here is the renowned hymnbook, The Ausbund, which reaches from the sixteenth century dungeon in the Bavarian fortress of Passau right into present day American Amish congregations. How many people today realize the unique fact that there is still in use in America a 1922 edition of a hymnal composed by genuine Anabaptists and handed down through approximately 350 years, unchanged both in words and in tune. More faithfully than the blood descendants of these early martyrs, The Ausbund conveys the holy spirit of Anabaptist beginnings.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. The Origin of Amish hymn tunes.

If the words of the Amish hymns are strange, the

---

12. Ibid., p. 779.

13. Ramaker, A. J., "Amish Mennonite Hymns," Mennonite Quarterly Review, Scottdale, III, No. 2, (April, 1929), p. 105.

14. Corell, E., "An Appraisal of Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature", Mennonite Quarterly Review, Scottdale, IV, No. 4, (October, 1930), p. 297.

tunes to which they are sung are stranger still. The real origin of these tunes is apparently lost in the dust of antiquity, but Mary Oyer in the Mennonite Historical Bulletin, March, 1944, makes the suggestion that these Amish hymn tunes may go back a thousand years to the plain song of the early church. She says that while the songs which are now in The Ausbund were being formulated,

Palestrina (1526-1594) was the foremost church musician (born the year after the founding of the Mennonite Church), offering to the Catholic Church a wealth of music for worship, and composing some of the very first part music which is at all pleasing to the present day musical ear. But the Swiss Brethren did not adopt this important innovation. In fact, even today in the Amish Church part singing is still unheard of. The leader begins and the congregation joins him in unison. Their music reflects rather the plain song or chant of the early Christian church.

The early plain song was characterized by a general lack of rhythm with no regularly accented notes. The notes were held long, in fact just as long as the singer deemed necessary.<sup>15</sup>

As Miss Oyer further observes, Amish hymn tunes show their greatest similarity to the plain song in their lack of rhythm. The leader sets tempo or speed at which a hymn is sung, and the more conservative Amish groups take pride in singing so slowly that fifteen minutes are required for the singing of the "Loblied", the traditional second hymn

---

15. Oyer, M., "Music in the Amish Church," Mennonite Historical Bulletin, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, V, No. 1, (March, 1944), p. 3.

in every Amish worship service.<sup>16</sup> J. W. Yoder in his Amische Lieder has done valuable work in transcribing these tunes for the first time. The work is limited, however, in that it deals with the hymn tunes as they are sung in the Amish settlement of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, and as these tunes have been handed down by ear from one generation to the next, they vary considerably from one Amish community to another.

The Ausbund itself is a thick heavy book, and few of the hymns it contains are really sung by the Amish congregations. By 1892 the need for another smaller hymnbook which would contain the favorite hymns from The Ausbund, as well as some selections from other hymnals, was felt by many of the Amish congregations. A committee had been at work on the solution of this problem sometime before that, and in 1892 the committee, headed by S. D. Guengerich of Amish, Iowa, presented the results of their labors to the Amish congregations under the title, Unparteiische Liedersammlung. There are 317 hymns in this book but no musical notes. There is an index of melodies for the various hymns as well as a list of suggested hymns for various sermon themes. This book in its several editions

---

16. The Yoder congregation of the Castleman River District, Somerset County, Pennsylvania, considers this one of its distinguishing features.



is now used by many of the Amish congregations, but the most conservative among them still cling to The Ausbund.

#### D. Amish Ordination Charges

Nowhere does the entirely congregational character of Amish church polity become more apparent than in the manner in which their ministers are ordained. An Amish congregation that is fortunate enough to have a resident bishop is completely autonomous. All ministers are ordained by lot from the membership of the local congregation. A resident bishop can ordain other ministers and deacons, perform marriages, conduct Communion services, and, when necessary, excommunicate those who will not abide by the discipline of the church.

There are four levels of ministry in the Amish Church, the highest being that of bishop. Contrary to practice in other denominations, however, an Amish bishop has no authority beyond his own congregation, except as he is called to other localities to act in an advisory capacity. The bishop's duties differ from that of a minister of the Book in that he conducts the Communion service, performs marriage ceremonies, and in case of necessity ordains other ministers. A minister of the Book, the

second level of ministry, is charged with the duty of preaching at home and in other Amish congregations. A third level of ministry is that of the deacon, who usually does not preach except in an emergency. His usual duties are to read the first Scripture of the day in the Amish worship service and carry the purse for the poor. Another level of ministry is a combination of the duties of deacon and bishop and is known as "Völligen Armen Diener". This office is seldom held by anyone in the Amish Church today, because the combined duties would be too heavy for a man who has to earn his living by farming, as do all the other members of his congregation. A free translation of the ordination charges to the various levels of ministry within the Amish Church is here included.

For the Ordination of a Full Minister or Bishop

In the name of the Lord and the Church, it is requested of you that you serve in the office of bishop.

You shall declare and proclaim the bitter suffering and death of our Lord.

You shall observe the breaking of the Bread, and according to Christian teaching, distribute both Bread and Wine to the members of the congregation.

And when there are people who wish to unite with the church, you shall instruct them in the Christian faith and baptize them.

You shall also punish the disobedient and sinful in accordance with the decision of the congregation.

And when there are brethren and sisters who wish to unite in marriage, you shall join them in holy matrimony according to the divine ordinance.

And when you become aged and infirm you shall ordain another man to take your place.

You shall also ordain ministers, and you shall assist in establishing bishops where it is necessary or requested by the church.

To this end God will strengthen and enlighten you with His gracious Holy Spirit, doing everything in and through Jesus Christ. Amen.

For the Ordination of a Minister of the Book  
or Teacher

In the name of the Lord and the Church, it is requested of you that you serve in the office of minister of the Book or teacher.

You shall proclaim and promote the Word of God, pray with the church in this and surrounding communities, and you shall also preach and teach.

You shall also help to protect and establish what is good and punish and hinder what is evil.

When the Lord's Supper is observed, you declare and portray the story of the patriarchs if it is requested of you.

To this end God will strengthen you and enlighten you with His gracious Holy Spirit, doing everything in and through Jesus Christ. Amen.

For the Ordination of a Deacon

In the name of the Lord and of the Church, it is requested of you that you serve in the office of deacon (literally a servant of the poor).

You shall be mindful of the needs of orphans and widows.

You shall receive alms, and upon the counsel of the congregation distribute them to the members who are poor and

needy.

When there are members of the church who wish to unite in marriage, you shall serve them according to the Christian ordinance.

You shall also serve with water at baptismal services and with bread and wine at the Lord's Supper.

You shall also read the Scriptures for the other ministers, and you shall assist in counselling with the congregation, according to the Christian teachings of Jesus Christ.

To this end God will strengthen and enlighten you with His gracious Holy Spirit, doing everything in and through Jesus Christ. Amen.

For the Ordination of a Person as Bishop and Deacon

In the name of the Lord and the Church, it is requested of you that you serve in the dual role as bishop and deacon.

You shall receive alms and distribute them after consulting the congregation.

You shall diligently attend to the preaching and note whether the Word of God is properly taught or falsified.

When strife and contention arise in the congregation, you shall diligently seek the cause of it and strive to make peace according to the Word of God and Christian discipline.

You shall also help to establish bishops, and when circumstances necessitate, you shall also establish ministers of the Book.

To this end God will strengthen and enlighten you with His gracious Holy Spirit, doing everything in and through Jesus Christ. Amen.<sup>17</sup>

---

17. These ordination charges were made available to the writer through the courtesy of Bishop Eli D. Tice, Grantsville, Md.; the English translation is that of the writer. For the original German see Appendix II.

In the Amish Church the ordination to all levels of the ministry is by lot. In most cases an individual is first ordained a minister of the Book before he becomes a candidate for ordination as a bishop. One who has been present at an Amish ordination service never forgets the solemn hush of the waiting congregation. As the men who are in the lot step forward, each one selects a book from a number of hymnbooks or Bibles that have been placed on a table. One of these books will contain a slip of paper with an appropriate verse of Scripture written upon it, and the man who draws this book is then and there ordained as the new minister. The atmosphere thus created is one of tense expectancy not encountered in any other Protestant worship service, with the exception of some Mennonite congregations.

#### E. Other Forms of Amish Worship

##### 1. Amish baptismal vows.

Another unusual service within the Amish Church is that of baptism. Amish young people do not as a rule become members of the church until they are fourteen or sixteen years of age. Baptism is always preceded by three or four months of instruction. This instruction is given

by the ministers during the "Abrath" of the regular Sunday morning worship.

The Amish take their baptismal vows seriously, but are careful not to attach any sacramental significance to the rite of baptism. The baptismal vows which here follow are taken while the candidates are in a kneeling position. After the candidates are baptized by sprinkling or pouring, they are received into the church through the right hand of fellowship and the greeting of the holy kiss.

Do you believe and confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Do you believe and hope that you are uniting with a church of God which is a Christian one, and do you promise that you will be obedient both to God and to the church?

And do you renounce the devil, the world, and the lust of the flesh, and say "Yes" to Jesus Christ and His Church?

And do you promise to abide by the discipline of the church of God, to share in its counsel and work, according to Christ's word and teaching?

And do you promise to remain true to your accepted faith, to live by it and to die by it, with the help of God?<sup>18</sup>

As can be seen from the above vows, the Amish have retained the full significance of adult baptism and voluntary church membership. Some of the more liberal groups of Anabaptist origin have developed, under the influence

---

18. Ibid. For the original German see Appendix III.

of the revival movement, a child evangelism emphasis which borders on infant baptism.

## 2. The Amish Communion service.

Probably the most unusual aspect of the observance of the Lord's Supper in the Amish Church is the length of the service. It frequently begins at nine o'clock in the morning and seldom closes before four o'clock in the afternoon. In accordance with the custom instituted by Jacob Amman, the Amish still observe Communion twice annually. Generally these two services are held on Easter Sunday and in late September or early October. Following is the order of worship and the Scriptures read at a typical Amish observance of the Lord's Supper.

The bishop shall open the service.

Another minister shall make a further introduction, using the first eleven chapters of Genesis as the basis of his remarks.

Another minister shall then relate the history of the patriarchs, and it is desirable to bring this part of the service to a close by noon. This minister shall then read Luke 22:1-33.

Another minister shall then read I Corinthians 10:1-25.

The bishop shall then expound the Scriptures which tell the story of our Lord's suffering and death.

After this the bishop shall read I Corinthians 11:1-2 and 17-34. Then he shall read John 6:47 to the end of the chapter. After this he shall lead in prayer and then break and distribute the bread to the members of the

congregation.

After the breaking of the bread, the bishop shall lead in another prayer, and a fellow-minister shall distribute the cup.

The bishop shall then lead in a prayer of thanksgiving and read John 6:1-18.

He shall then remind the congregation of the duty to wash feet and give alms. After this he may give opportunity for testimony.<sup>19</sup>

After one reads the above order of worship, it is not difficult to see why it takes a long time to observe the Lord's Supper in the Amish Church. In recent years some Amish congregations have divided this service into two distinct parts by declaring a thirty-minute recess.

### 3. The highest confession.

A church that is made up of baptized adult believers is thereby a voluntary association of like-minded people. A church that is so constituted must make some provision to deal with those who become members but who at a later time may violate the standards which that church has adopted as its own. Should a church member fall into grievous sin and continue therein in an unrepentant manner, he would be excommunicated in most if not in all Amish churches.

If, however, a church member falls into sin and later repents of the evil which he committed, he may be restored

---

19. Ibid. For the original German see Appendix III.



to fellowship by making what the Amish call "the highest confession". While this confession is sometimes abused and perhaps at other times unwillingly extracted, its original function was to keep the church pure.

The words of this confession show a strong sense of Christian solidarity. An adult believer who falls into sin involves not only himself but also the brotherhood to which he belongs. To be restored to fellowship he must confess his sin to the brotherhood which he has offended as well as to God. The confession which here follows is made on bended knees before the members of the congregation who have shared in deciding what penalty should be imposed for a particular offense.

Do you confess before God and the church that you deserve this punishment which you have brought upon yourself?

And do you confess that you deeply regret that you have grieved God and the church, and do you entreat God and the church to be patient with you?

And do you promise with the help of God more faithfully to abide by the covenant of your faith and baptism than you have in the past?

In the name of Christ and the church the right hand of fellowship is extended to you; arise, and be a loyal member of the church.<sup>20</sup>

#### 4. Amish weddings and marriage vows.

The Amish demonstrate their Christian solidarity not

---

20. Ibid.; for the original German see Appendix III.

only on such sorrowful occasions as those mentioned above, but also on such joyful occasions as weddings.

The intention of a young couple to get married is always announced at the close of a worship service on the Sunday preceding the date that marriage is to be performed. This is no mere reading of a ceremony but a full length church service which all members of the congregation may attend. Marriage is restricted to those who are members of the church and is solemnly entered into as a covenant between two believers who promise God and the church that they will endeavor to keep their marriage on a Christian level. The ceremony which is here included shows this plainly.

Do you believe the ordinance of marriage to be divinely ordained?

And do you believe that this woman, our sister, is ordained of God to be your wife?

And do you believe that this man, our brother, is ordained of God to be your husband?

And do you promise your wife before God and the church that you will care for her in bodily sickness or under any other circumstances which may arise between Christian marriage partners, as is becoming to a Christian husband?

And do you promise your husband before God and the church that you will care for him in bodily sickness or under any other circumstances which may arise between Christian marriage partners, as is becoming to a Christian wife?

Do you both together promise that you will love and care

each for the other, and that nothing shall separate you until God Himself separates you through death?<sup>21</sup>

At the conclusion of this ceremony the couple is asked to join hands while the bishop declares that they are now man and wife. No ring is used in the ceremony as the Amish do not wear jewelry of any type.

To the credit of the Amish it must be said that divorce is virtually unknown among them. The family in closely knit community groups continues to be the real foundation of their entire church life.

#### F. Conclusion

The Amish in America today have much to teach a Christendom that too often comes to terms with the world when it ought to resist the terrific inroad of the secular mind. On the other hand, modern Protestantism has much to teach the Amish, who are too often shackled by a dead externalism. Each group has need of a corrective which the other can supply, if only a medium can be found to bring about a closer relationship between the two.

---

<sup>21</sup> The wedding vows were made available to the writer through the courtesy of Dr. Alta Schrock, Goshen, Indiana, who copied them from Bishop Joseph J. Yoder of Meyersdale, Pa. Joseph Yoder in turn had copied them from Moses D. Yoder, who had copied them from Joel Beachy. This is an illustration of the way Amish service manuals pass from one generation to the next.

## APPENDIX I

### SOME EARLY AMERICAN AMISH MENNONITE DISCIPLINES

Translated and Edited by Harold S. Bender

#### THE DISCIPLINE OF 1809

First: That all those of our members who leave us to join other churches shall be treated as apostate persons according to the word of the Lord and his ordinance, and shall be separated and shall be recognized as subjects for the ban.

Second: Permission shall be given to "admonish" at a funeral in our brotherhood, but not outside.

Third: We have no basis in scripture for excluding any member from taking part in the council of the church.

Fourth: That shunning shall be exercised toward banned persons according to the teaching of Christ and the apostles with respect to eating and drinking, life and work ("Handel and Wandel") until they are again received by the church.

Fifth: Anyone who transgresses the rule of shunning in weakness or ignorance can be reconciled by confession to the church that he has erred; whoever transgresses intentionally but is not stubborn about it when admonished, can be reconciled by a "full" ("hoechst") confession but whoever stubbornly refuses to hearken to admonition shall be excommunicated from the church.

Sixth: Whoever swears an oath knowingly and frivolously shall be excommunicated; but whoever swears out of inexperience shall be required to make a "full" confession.

Seventh: In regard to cutting of the hair and beard, it is decided that no one shall be accepted as a member in the church unless he manifests the full fruit of obedience,

and all those who are already in the church and are not willing to be obedient to this regulation shall be dealt with according to Christian discipline ("Ordnung").

Eighth: It is decided that jury service shall not be tolerated or permitted for brethren in the church.

Ninth: Proud dresses, proud trousers, hats, and combs in the hair, and similar worldly clothing shall not be tolerated in the church. (Hats and combs were prohibited for women.--Ed.)

In conclusion: All the above articles shall be observed and practised according to Christian discipline and patience.

Acknowledged and signed by us: Michael Lapp, Johannes Blanck, David Yoder, Christel Stoltzfus, Johannes König, Christian Yoder, Christian Hertzler, Hannes Yoder, Hannes Beiler, Christian König, Christian Zug, Joseph Kurtz, Hannes Lapp, Peter Blanck, Christian Miller, Christian Stutzman, Jacob Miller, Daniel Zug, Christian Zug, Isaac Yoder, Jacob Stutzman, Daniel Miller, Abraham Müller

### THE DISCIPLINE OF 1837

First: It is noted that decline has set in because the ordinance of God in the matter of the ban is greatly neglected. Decided that separation and shunning are to be practiced toward all disobedient ones without regard of person, whether man or woman.

Second: It is noted that there is awful pride in clothing, namely with respect to silken neck-cloths (Haistoecher) worn around the neck, so that mothers tie silken neck-cloths on their children, and make high collars on their children's shirts and clothing, and the mothers permit their daughters to wear men's hats and go with them to church or other places, or that even the mothers have them themselves. Decided that such things shall not be among us.

Third: Decided that there shall be no display in houses, namely when houses are built, or painted with various

colors, or filled with showy furniture, namely with wooden, porcelain, or glass utensils (dishes), and having cupboards and mirrors hung on the wall, and such things.

Fourth: Decided that worldly offices are not to be held, namely, serving on juries, or holding elections to elect officials.

Fifth: Decided that excessive driving of sleighs or other vehicles is not to be, and also that vehicles are not to be painted with two colors, as has already occurred too much.

Sixth: Decided that those who marry outside are no longer to be received again so lightly into fellowship, unless they bring their marriage partners with them into Christian discipline, and are received after true repentance and change of heart has been shown.

Seventh: Decided that when two persons marry, both of whom are outside the church, and they desire to be received into fellowship, the ministers shall make plain to them the obligations of Christian marriage according to the ordinance of God, and when they are received they shall promise before God and the brotherhood to fulfill the obligations of Christian marriage according to Christian ordinance.

Eighth: Decided that the Sabbath is to be kept holy, that business is to be conducted on the six days of the week according to the ordinance, and Sunday is to be kept to the honor of God, except in case of emergency.

Ninth: With regard to the excesses practiced among the youth, namely that the youth take the liberty to sleep or lie together without any fear or shame, such things shall not be tolerated at all. And when it takes place with the knowledge of the parents and something bad happens on account of it, the parents shall not go unpunished.

Tenth: Decided that the tailors are not to make new or worldly styles of clothing for members of the church, but are to follow the old style and such as is indicated by the ministers and older people of the church.

Eleventh: Likewise, the cabinetmakers are not to make such

proud kinds of furniture and not to decorate them with such loud or gay ("scheckich") colors.

Twelfth: In conclusion, all the above-mentioned articles are to be observed according to Christian discipline and patience.

Signed by us, ministers of the following congregations.

Conemaugh Congregation: Jacob Oesch, Christian Miller, Christian N. ssli, Joseph Miller, Jonas Yoder

Glade Congregation: Christian Yoder, Senior, Christian Yoder, Junior, Abraham Miller, Jacob Swartzendruber, David Yoder

River Congregation: Benedict Miller, Jost Yoder, Hannes Gingrich

## THE DISCIPLINE OF 1865

Holmes County, Ohio, June 1, 1865

My dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, I would wish that the dear Lord may direct us by his good and holy spirit, that we may hold fast in the truth which we have accepted unto a blessed end, that we may not do that which is harmful to our salvation ("Seeligkeit") and contrary to the word of the Lord, and may help to uproot every plant which the heavenly father has not planted. However, in the present time there is becoming manifest a spirit which tries to give the impression that this or that is of no importance and has no value for good or for bad. It is for us to consider whether this spirit is from God, or whether it is a spirit of error. So we and the ministers named below were gathered together in the name of the Lord and became agreed on the following points.

First: When such things become manifest which we recognize to lead to pride and display and lead away from God, and are harmful to the church, they are to be rooted out, and are not to be tolerated in the church.

Next: Decided not to allow attendance at worldly conventions,

or fairs, or yearly fairs, or to take part in them, or to enroll our material possessions in companies (insurance?), or to put up lightning rods on our buildings. Likewise, decided not to allow gayly-colored ("scheckich"), striped, or flowered clothing made according to the fashions of the world, or parting the hair of man or woman after the worldly styles, or cutting the beard according to worldly styles, or carrying hidden on one's person photographic pictures of human likenesses or hanging them on the wall to look at in our houses. Likewise it is not allowed to wear overcoats made of oilcloth or rubber or other overcoats made according to the worldly styles, likewise false shirt-bosoms, likewise merchandising after the worldly fashion, for the Saviour drove such out of the temple. Likewise, luxurious vehicles according to the world's pride and vanity.

Also it is considered altogether improper to hold the council of the congregation with open doors, and permit outside persons to sit in the council, but council is only to be held with the members of the church. Also it is considered good that the ministers go into the council room ("Abrath") before the meeting, as our forefathers did, and we are not satisfied when it is omitted. The apostle says, "Remember your teachers, who proclaimed to you the gospel." We also consider that spiritual songs and spiritual tunes are to be used in the worship in the congregations and not notes, or fast tunes ("Spring-Weisen") which belong to the world.

Also we consider it to be improper for a Christian to mix the creatures of God, such as horse and donkey, by which mules arise, because the Lord God did not create such in the beginning. Likewise we do not consider it edifying for members of the church to occupy worldly offices, especially those in which force is used, and military positions, or criminal offices. Also, it is considered improper to decorate the houses with all sorts of unnecessary and luxurious things such as gayly-colored ("scheckich") walls, window curtains and large mirrors, and pictures and such things.

The above-mentioned points we consider to be right and good and in accordance with the word of the Lord and our confession of faith, and as we have been taught and instructed by our forefathers, and we intend to stay by the same as we



promised when we were received into the church by baptism. And all those who confess the same with us, and work together, and manifest the same by deeds, we are willing and ready to recognize as brethren and sisters and to give them the hand and kiss of fellowship, and to serve with them in word and teaching, and to maintain spiritual unity with them. For the Saviour says, "Whoever doeth the will of my father in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." And the gate is pictured to us as strait and the road as narrow, but is not therefore ever closed, but stands open for all repentant souls, and as it says in Luke 14:33, "No one who is not willing to deny everything can be my disciple."

Decided and signed by us, as follows:

Holmes County, Ohio: Levi Miller, Noah Miller, Moses Bitsche, Elias Miller, Christian Schlabach

Middletown, Ohio: Moses J. Miller, Christian D. Yoder, Moses H. Miller, Solomon Miller

Dauti Creek (Holmes County, Ohio): David A. Troyer, Daniel D. Miller, Shem J. Miller, Jeremiah Miller

Sugar Creek (Holmes County, Ohio): Moses Wenger, Peter Bitsche, Jacob J. Miller, David D. Troyer

Perru, Indiana: Johannes Schmucker, Moses Hershberger

Upper Canada (Waterloo Co., Ont.): Johan Jantzi, Johan Bender, Johan Gascho

Bremen, Marshall Co., Ind.: David H. Hochstetler, Johannes J. Schlabach

Glade (Somerset Co., Pa.): Abner Yoder

Martin's Creek (Holmes Co., Ohio): Jacob Yoder

Wayne County, Ohio: Immanuel Hochstetler

Casselman's River (Somerset Co., Pa.): Joel Bitsche, Daniel Hershberger

Barns (Berntz) (Elkhart, Ind.): Johannes L. Miller, Joseph

Hochstetler

Lagrange (Indiana): Joseph Miller, Tobias Yoder, David  
D. Miller

---

Note: These Disciplines were published in The Menno-  
nite Quarterly Review, VIII, No. 2, April, 1934. The 1837  
Discipline is of special interest in connection with this  
study, since it was formulated by Amish ministers then  
living in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. The Discipline  
of 1865 is of interest because it was signed by Joel Bitsche  
(Beachy) and Daniel Hershberger, two men who were then  
ministers in the River congregation.

## APPENDIX II

### AMISH ORDINATION CHARGES

#### VOLLIGEN DIENST ODER BISCHOF AMT

So wird dir in dem Namen des Herrn und der Gemeinde der Völligen Dienst zum Buch oder Bischof's Amt anbefohlen.

Das du des Herrn bitttern leiden und sterben verkündigen und fortragen sollst.

Und sollst das Brodt-brechen halten nach Christe lehr und Vorbild, mit Brot und Wein mit der Gemeinde.

Und so es menschen gibt die sich wollen in die Gemeinde stellen so sollst du sie der Christlichen Glauben lehren und sie taufen.

Und du sollst die Ungehorsamen und Sünder strafen mit rat der Gemeinde, und so sie wahre Busse und besserung des Lebens beweisen sollst du sie wieder aufnehmen mit rat der Gemeinde.

Und wo Brüder und Schwestern sind in der Gemeinde die sich wollen verheiraten, so sollst du die zusammen geben nach die gottliche ordnung.

Und so du alt und schwach wirst, sollst einem mann nach dir verordnen für deinem platz.

Du sollst auch Diener ansetzen, und sollst hilfen Völligen Diener bestätigen wo es nötig ist und von der Gemeinde gefordert.

Und dazu wolle dich der Herr stärken und erleuchten mit seinem Heiligen und gutem Geist, und das alles in und durch Jesum Christum. Amen.

#### DIENST ZU DEM BUCH ODER LEHRER AMT

So wird dir in dem namen des Herrn und der Gemeinde anbefohlen der Dienst zum Buch.

Das du das Herrn wort verkündigen und vortragen sollst, und

sollst mit der Gemeinde hin und her beten, reden und lehren.

Und sollst helfen das gute beschützen und versorgen, und das böse bestrafen und verhindern.

Auch sollst du zur zeit des Aben-mahls von der Alt-Fäter vortragen und verkündigen, won es an dich gefordert oder an dir begeret ist.

Und dazu wolle dich der Herr stärken und erleuchten mit seinem Heiligen und gutem Geist, und das alles in und durch Jesum Christum. Amen.

#### DIENTST ZU DENN ARMEN

In dem namen des Herrn und der Gemeinde, wird dir anbefohlen der dienst zu denn Armen.

Das du sollst sorg tragen für Witwen und Waisen.

Und sollst almosen einnehmen und austheilen mit rat der Gemeinde, den Armen und noth-dürftige Glieder in der Gemeinde.

Und wann Glieder in der Gemeinde sind, die in denn Ehe-stand treten wollen, so sollst du ihnen dienen nach Christlicher ordnung.

Auch sollst du mit wasser dienen bei der Taufe, such mit Brodt und Wein bei dem Abend-Mahl.

Auch sollst du dem Diener die Schrift lesen, und hilfen rat in der Gemeinde, nach der lehr Jesu Christe.

Dazu wolle dich der Herr stärken und erleuchten mit seinem Heiligen und gutem Geist, und das alles in und durch Jesum Christum. Amen.

#### VÖLLIGEN ARMEN DIENTST

In dem namen des Herrn und der Gemeinde, wird dir denn Völligen Dienst zu den Armen anbefohlen.

Das du sollst sorg tragen für Witsen und Waisen.

Und sollst almosen einnehmen und austheilen mit rat der Gemeinde.

Und sollst acht haben ob des Herrn Wort recht gelehrt oder verfälschet ist.

Und wenn sich streit und zank begibt in der Gemeinde, so sollst du fleisig darnach gehen und Frieden machen noch das Herrn Wort und Christlicher Ordnung.

Und won Brüder und Schwestern in der Gemeinde sich wollen verheiraten so sollst du ihnen aufrichtig dienen nach Christlicher ordnung.

Und sollst auch hilfen Völligen Diener bestätigen, und so es die noth fordert, so sollst du auch hilfen Diener des Worts bestätigen.

Und darzu wolle dich der Herr starken und erleuchten mit Seinem Heiligen und gutem Geist, und das alles in durch Jesum Christum. Amen.

---

Note: These ordination charges were copied from the forms now in the possession of Eli D. Tice, Grantsville, Maryland, successor to Bishop Moses M. Beachy, who died in 1946.

### APPENDIX III

#### OTHER FORMS OF ANISH WORSHIP

##### TAUFE

Glaubet und bekennet ihr das Jesus Christus Gottes Sohn ist?

Glaubet und hoffet ihr das ihr euch zu eine Christliche Gemeinde des Herrn stellet, und versprechet Gott und der Gemeinde gehorsam zu sein?

Und saget ab dem Teufel, der Welt, und die Lüstigkeit Eueres Fleisches, und saget Christo und Seiner Gemeinde zu?

Und versprechet ihr die Ordnung in der Gemeinde des Herrn zu beleben, und wollet handhaben, raten und arbeiten nach Christe Wort und Lehr, und bei der angenommenen Wahrheit zu bleiben, dabei zu leben dabei zu sterben mit die Hilfe des Herrn?

Auf deinem bekenneten Glauben welchen du bekennet hast, wirst du getauft in dem Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes, und des Heiligen Geistes. Amen.

In dem Namen des Herrn und der Gemeinde wird dir die Hand dargeboten stehe auf und sei ein getreuer Bruder (Schwester) in der Gemeinde.

##### SCHRIFTEN UND RECEL ZU DEM ABENDMAL

Der Bischof macht ein Anfang.

Ein anderer macht weiter ein Einleitung, I Mose bis 12 Capital.

Und darnach ein Gebet.

Einen anderer verkündigt die Alt-Vater und ist schicklich aufzuhören bis 12 Uhr dan leset er Lucas 22, 1 zu 33 Verse.

Ein anderer leset I Cor. 10: 1 zu 25 verse.

Der Bischof dann die leidens geschichten und der todt verkündigen.

Dann leset er I Cor. 11: 1 und 2 verse dann 17 verse bis zum end, darnach Joh. 6: 47 bis zum end.

Darnach führt er ein gebet und dann das Brodt brechen.

Darnach ein gebet und ein mit Diener theilet den kelch.

Darnach führet er eine danksagung, dann leset er Joh. 13, bis zum 18. verse.

Er vermahnet such von fusswaschen so wohl als von almosen einlegen dann gibt er zeugnis.

#### DAS HOCH BEKENNTNIS

Bekennst du vor dem Herrn und der Gemeinde, das du diese strafe verdienet hast, die du über dich selber geführt hast?

Und bekennst du das es dir leid ist, das du Gott und die Gemeinde betrubet hast, und sprichst Gott und die Gemeinde un geduld an?

Und versprechst du deines Glaubens-Bund und Taufes-Bund mit die hilfe des Herrn besser zu beliben als geschehen ist?

In dem namen des Herrn und der Gemeinde, wird dir die hand dargboten stehe auf und sei ein getreuer Bruder (Schwester) in der Gemeinde.

#### VERHEHLICHUNG

Bekennst ihr diese Ordnung, die euch vorgetragen ist, fuer eine gottliche Ordnung?

Und glaubest du das diese unsere Schwester dir von Gott zum Eheweib verordnet ist?

Und glaubst du das dieser unser Bruder dir von Gott zum

Ehemann verordnet ist?

Und versprichst du deinem Eheweib vor dem Herrn und der Gemeinde, das du Sorge für sie tragen willst, es sei in leiblicher Krankheit, oder irgend andere Fallen was sich zwischen Christlichen Eheleuten begeben mag, wie es einem Christlichen Ehemann zusteht?

Und versprichst du deinem Ehemann vor dem Herrn und der Gemeinde, das du Sorge für ihn tragen willst, es sei in leiblicher Krankheit, oder irgend andere Fallen was sich zwischen Christlichen Eheleuten begeben mag, wie es einer Christlichen Eheweib zusteht?

Versprecht ihr eide mit einander das ihr Lieb und Leid fuer einandertragen wollt und das euch nichts von einander scheidet bis der liebe Gott euch durch den Tod von einander scheiden wird?

---

Note: The first three items in Appendix III were also copied from forms now in the possession of Bishop Eli D. Tice, Grantsville, Maryland. The wedding vows were copied from a form now in the possession of Dr. Alta Schrock, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

---



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

#### Primary Sources

- Bender, Christian W.      Descendants of Daniel Bender  
(Berlin, Pa., Berlin Publishing  
Co., 1948).
- Bender, Harold S.      Conrad Grebel 1498-1526. Founder  
of the Swiss Brethren, (Goshen,  
Ind., The Mennonite Historical  
Society, 1950).
- Blackburn, E. Howard,  
Welfley, William A.,  
and Koontz, William H.      History of Bedford and Somerset  
Counties, Pennsylvania, I, ed. by  
Wm. H. Koontz, (New York, Lewis  
Publishing Co., 1906).
- Day, Sherman      Historical Collections of the  
State of Pennsylvania, (New Haven,  
Conn., Durrie and Peck, 1842).
- Dosker, H. E.      The Dutch Anabaptists  
(Chicago, The Judson Press, 1918-  
1919).
- Friedmann, Robert      Mennonite Piety Through the Cen-  
turies, Its Genius and Its Litera-  
ture, (Goshen, Ind., The Mennonite  
Historical Society, 1949).
- Gnaezy, Elias      A Complete History of Christian  
Gnaegi and A Complete Family Regis-  
ter of His Lineal Descendants and  
Those Related to Him by Intermar-  
riage. From the Year 1774 to 1897  
(Elkhart, Ind., Mennonite Publish-  
ing Co., 1897).

- Hause, Mary      A Somerset County Historical Notebook, compiled from newspaper columns of Mary Hause, (Somerset, Pa., Somerset County Historical Society, 1945).
- Horsch, John      Menno Simons--His Life, Labors and Teachings, (Scottsdale, Pa., Mennonite Publishing House, 1916).
- Horsch, John      The Mennonites In Europe, (Scottsdale, Pa., Mennonite Publishing House, 1924).
- Philip, Dietrich      Enchiridion oder Handbuchlein von der Christlichen Lehre und Religion, tr. into German in 1811 from the original Dutch written in 1564, (Lancaster, Pa., Joseph Ehrenfried, 1811).
- Simons, Menno      The Complete Works of Menno Simons, tr. by J. F. Funk and Brother, (Elkhart, Ind., J. F. Funk and Brother, 1871).
- Smith, C. Henry      The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania, (Norristown, Pa., Pennsylvania German Society, 1929).
- Smith, C. Henry      The Story of the Mennonites, (Berne, Ind., Mennonite Book Concern, 1941).

#### Secondary Sources

- Cassady, John C.      The Somerset County Outline, (Scottsdale, Pa., Mennonite Publishing House, 1932).
- Cave, Sydney      The Christian Way, 1st American ed., (New York, Philosophical Library, Inc., 1949).
- Cullmann, Oscar      Christus und die Zeit, (Zollikon-Zurich, Evangelischer Verlag, 1946).

- Mast, C. Z. A Brief History of Bishop Jacob Mast and Other Mast Pioneers, (Scottsdale, Pa., Mennonite Publishing House, 1911).
- Musselman, G. Paul Pennsylvania Germans. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1942).
- Smith, C. Henry The Mennonites, (Berne, Ind., Mennonite Book Concern, 1920).
- Smithson, R. J. The Anabaptists--Their Contribution to Our Protestant Heritage, (London, James Clark & Co., Ltd., 1935).
- Strassburger, Ralph B. Pennsylvania German Pioneers, I. A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia from 1727 to 1808. ed. by William John Hinke, (Norristown, Pa., Pennsylvania German Society, 1934).
- Wenger, John C. Glimpses of Mennonite History, (Scottsdale, Pa., Mennonite Publishing House, 1946).
- Workman, Herbert B. The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal from the Earliest Times down to the Coming of the Friars. A Second Chapter in the History of Christian Renunciation, 1st ed., (London, Charles H. Kelly, 1913).
- Zückler, Otto D. Askese Und Mönchtum, (Frankfurt, A. M., Heyder & Zimmer, 1897).
- New Testament, King James Version.

PeriodicalsPrimary Sources

- Baughman, Calvin George "The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County", Pennsylvania German Society, XLIX, (1942), p. 1-294.
- Bender, Harold S., tr. and ed. "An Amish Bishop's Conference Epistle of 1865," Mennonite Quarterly Review, XX, (July, 1946), p. 222-229.
- Bender, Harold S., tr. and ed. "Some Early American Amish Mennonite Disciplines," Mennonite Quarterly Review, VIII, (April, 1934), p. 90-98.
- Friedmann, Robert "Anabaptism and Protestantism," Mennonite Quarterly Review, XXIV, (January, 1950), p. 12-24.
- Gascho, Milton "The Amish Division of 1693-1697," Mennonite Quarterly Review, XI, (October, 1937), p. 235-266.
- Gratz, Delbert L. "The Home of Jacob Amman," Mennonite Quarterly Review, XXV (April, 1951), p. 137-139
- Guengerich, Samuel D. "A Brief History of the Amish Settlement in Johnson County, Iowa," Mennonite Quarterly Review, III, (October, 1929), p. 243-248.
- Hostetler, John A. "Amish Pioneer of Somerset County," Mennonite Historical Bulletin, X, (October, 1949), p. 1 and 3.
- Johns, Ira S. "Early Amish Settlers in Indiana and Clinton Frame Church History," Mennonite Historical Bulletin, III, (September, 1942), p. 1.
- Shetler, Samuel G. "Bishop Moses B. Miller," Gospel Herald, XXII, (August, 1929), p. 379-380.

- Swartzendruber, Daniel B. "A List of Scriptures Used in Amish Services," Mennonite Historical Bulletin, X, (January, 1949), p. 2 and 4.

### Secondary Sources

- Bender, Harold S. "The Mennonites in the United States," Mennonite Quarterly Review, XI, (January, 1937), p. 68-82.
- Correll, Ernst "An Appraisal of Two Centuries of American Mennonite Literature," Mennonite Quarterly Review, IV, (October, 1930), p. 290-302.
- Gungerich, J. D. "Einige forkünden der ersten Amische Ansiedlung in Ohio," Herald der Wahrheit, (November 15, 1912), p. 306.
- Hostettler, John A. "A Brief History of the Amish," Mennonite Historical Bulletin, IX, (April, 1948), p. 1-3.
- Oyer, Mary "Music in the Amish Church," Mennonite Historical Bulletin, V, (March, 1944), p. 3.
- Ramaker, A. J. "Amish Mennonite Hymns," Mennonite Quarterly Review, III, (April, 1929), p. 93-131.
- Wenger, John C. "John Calvin and the Swiss Brethren," Mennonite Historical Bulletin, IV, (September, 1949), p. 1 and 2.

### Miscellaneous

### Primary Sources

- Beachy, Alvin M. Letter, March 3, 1950, Topeka, Ind.
- Beachy, Annie M. Personal interview, July, 1950, Salisbury, Pa.

- Beachy, Lewis M. Letter, March 6, 1950, Oakland, Md.
- Beachy, Milton J. Letter, November 21, 1949, Salisbury, Pa.
- Beachy, Norman M. Letter, May 31, 1935, Meyersdale, Pa., found among the personal effects of M. M. Beachy in 1946.
- Beachy, Rufus M. Letter, March 1, 1925, Meyersdale, Pa., to Mr. and Mrs. Jonas Kaufman, Arthur, Ill. Found among personal effects of M. M. Beachy in 1946.
- Beachy, Rufus M. Letter, May 4, 1920, Meyersdale, Pa., found among the personal effects of M. M. Beachy in 1946.  
auto
- Beiler, David Unpublished biography written in 1863, Lancaster Co., Pa., now in Mennonite Historical Library, Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio.
- Bontrager, David O. Letter, April 21, 1950, Middlebury, Ind.
- Bontrager, Eli J. Letter written in 1926 or 1927, Shipshewanna, Ind., found among the personal effects of M. M. Beachy in 1946.
- Bontrager, Eli J. Letter, April 2, 1950, Shipshewanna, Ind.
- Bontrager, Eli J. Letter, June 6, 1950, Shipshewanna, Ind.
- Bontrager, Eli J. Letter, August 29, 1951, Shipshewanna, Ind.
- Burkholder, D. O. Personal interview, October, 1950, Nappanee, Ind.
- Fletcher, L. R. "The Amish People of Holmes County, Ohio; A Study in Human Geography," Master's Thesis, Ohio State University

Gingerich, Jacob D.	Letter, April 25, 1950, Montgomery, Ind.
Hershberger, Mrs. Milton E.	Letter, February 17, 1950, Salisbury, Pa.
Hershberger, Samuel E.	Letter, December 30, 1949, Grantsville, Md.
Hershberger, Samuel E.	Letter, February 23, 1950, Grantsville, Md.
Johnstown Centennial Executive Committee	Johnstown Centennial, 1800-1900, History of the Centennial Celebration of Johnstown, (Johnstown, Pa., 1900).
Miller, Ezra	Letter, May 4, 1950, Amboy, Ind.
Miller, Joel J.	Memoranda of events leading to the division of 1895 in the River congregation.
Miller, Jonas B.	Personal interview, July, 1949, Grantsville, Md.
Miller, Jonathan	Letter, August 3, 1951, Kalona, Ia.
Miller, L. A.	Letter, March 8, 1950, Arthur, Ill.
Miller, L. A.	Letter, April 8, 1950, Arthur, Ill.
Miller, L. A.	Letter, August 3, 1951, Arthur, Ill.
Miller, L. A.	Unpublished manuscript giving an account of the Moultrie and Douglas Counties, Illinois, settlement, written in 1922, Arthur, Ill.
Miller, Payson	Personal interview, April, 1950, Hartford, Conn.
Ministers of the Conservative Amish Mennonite and Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches	Constitution and By-Laws of the Amish Mennonite Parochial School Association, Castleman River District, Penna.-Md., (1948)

Otto, Samuel J.	Letter, August 1, 1951, Canton, O.
Schlabach, Jeremiah	Letter, May 2, 1950, Fredericksburg, O.
Schrock, Dr. Alta	Card files of data for the writing of an historical novel of the Castlemans River region Amish, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.
Schrock, Jacob B.	Letter, May 5, 1950, Berlin, Pa.
Swartzendruber, Daniel B.	Letter, March 20, 1950, Kalona, Ia.
Swartzendruber, J. F.	Letter, April 19, 1923, Kalona, Ia., found among the personal effects of M. W. Beachy in 1946.
Troyer, Elden L.	Letter, May 1, 1950, Plain City, O.
Yoder, Joseph J.	Letter, March 3, 1950, Meyersdale, Pa.
Yoder, Menno J.	Memoranda on Division of 1927 in River congregation, Meyersdale, Pa. Published in 1950 as "Facts Concerning the Beachy A. M. Division", and edited by John B. Mast, Weatherford, Okla.
Yoder, Menno J.	Letter, May 5, 1951, Meyersdale, Pa.
Yoder, Menno J.	Letter, March 27, 1950, Meyersdale, Pa.
Yoder, Valentine P.	Letter, April 23, 1950, Cochranton, Pa.
	Baptismal certificate of Susana Petersheim, found in the home of Christian W. Bender, Salisbury, Pa.
	Amish ordination charges, courtesy of Bishop Eli D. Tice, Grantsville, Md.



Secondary Sources

History of the Amish Mennonite Conference (Conservative), (Scottsdale, Pa., Mennonite Publishing House, 1925).

List by Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction, suggesting topics of research for the Pennsylvania Federation of Junior Historians

Obituary Column, Gospel Herald, XVIII, (December, 1915), p. 591.

Obituary Column, Herald der Wahrheit, (April, 1927), p. 240.

Obituary Column, Herald of Truth, XIV, (November, 1877), p. 181.

Obituary Column, Herald of Truth, XXXII, (July, 1895), p. 207.

Writer's memories of boyhood days among the Amish people.