

THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BEACHY AMISH MENNONITE CHURCHES

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A. *Major Reasons for the 1927 Division*

The events which led to the division of 1927 in the (Casselman) River, Pennsylvania, Old Order Amish 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 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 1809.¹ 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.² 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 Swartzendruber 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.³ While no records of this 1830 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 Beiler, an Amish minister, who lived in Lancaster County from the time of his birth in 1786 until his death in 1871. Beiler's autobiography was written in 1862. In this he refers to a ministers' conference which was held in the Glades (Klatz) approximately thirty-four years earlier, which would have been around the

* The present article is a sequel to the previous one by the same author in the October, 1954, *Review*, pp. 263-92, entitled "The Amish Settlement in Somerset County, Pennsylvania." The author completed his study in 1950. Meanwhile the Beachy movement has spread so that in 1955, instead of the twelve congregations with 1,000 baptized members there are at least twenty-one congregations with 1,500 members.—H. S. B.

¹ H. S. Bender, "An Amish Bishop's Conference Epistle of 1865," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, VIII (1934), 90.

² *Ibid.*, 93.

³ Bender, *op. cit.*, *MQR*, XX (1946), 222.

year 1828.⁴ 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.⁵

Bishop Moses D. Yoder may have been aware of this 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 was Moses M. Beachy, third son of Bishop Manassa Beachy, who had preceded Yoder as the spiritual leader of the Pennsylvania Amish in the Casselman 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 since 1905⁶ 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 power. Fortunately the records of that storm are fairly clear. The incident which brought the storm into the open was the withdrawal 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. The couple was called back to a congregational meeting to explain 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.⁷ 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 before this, and that on the first inquiry the latter evaded the question.⁸ 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 Dordrecht 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

⁴ D. Beiler, 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.*, *MQR*, XX (1946), 222

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, Pa.

⁷ M. J. Yoder, memoranda on the division of 1927, Meyersdale, Pa., 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.”

⁸ J. F. Swartzendruber, 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, and made available to the writer by Milton M. Beachy of Salisbury, Pa.

history, the use of the strict ban against those whose only offense was to join another denomination had always brought failure and havoc wherever tried.⁹ 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 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 a page attached to the letter of April, 1923 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 it 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.¹⁰

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 Shipshewana, Indiana, and Joseph Schrock from Arthur, Illinois. These four men came to Somerset County sometime during the year 1925 at the request of Bishop M. M. Beachy and his coministers Noah M. Yoder and Joseph J. Yoder. Two of these four men, Stoltzfus and Schrock, have since died,¹¹ and Beiler is presumably dead, as letters addressed to him have brought no

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

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

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 indicated 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.¹²

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. 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 have 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.¹³

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. 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 agreed 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.¹⁴

¹² E. J. Bontrager, 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 Aug. 29, 1951, confirmed himself as the writer in '26 or '27.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

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 prevented from following this course of action by his coministers, 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.¹⁵

In his letter of 1926 or 1927 to D. J. 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.”¹⁶

Bishop Beachy tried for a full year to win his fellowministers 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 coministers intended to be as unyielding as Jacob Ammann himself had been, he decided to proceed as the congregation had been advised to, without the consent of Noah Yoder and Joseph Yoder or of Moses D. Yoder. On October 31, 1926, he made known his decision to the congregation.¹⁷ 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 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 trying times he thought it best not to impose severe punishment upon anyone, and that Eli Bontrager had

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

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

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

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.¹⁸

The reaction of Bishop Beachy's coministers 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.

Bishop Beachy then asked N. M. Yoder not to say that he did not know the matter was to be brought before the congregation, since he had told them during the time the ministers were in the council room 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 pace and progress of the church. When the visiting brethren refused to commit themselves on the John D. Yoder case, Bishop Beachy refused to commit themselves on the John D. Yoder case, Bishop Beachy refused to allow any other matters to come up for consideration.¹⁹

Noah M. Yoder was right when he insisted that the presiding bishop was not acting in accord with the advice of the brethren Beiler, Bontrager, Schrock, and Stoltzfus by presenting his view to the congregation. Beachy must have known his coministers well enough by that time to realize that they would never agree to his proposals. His 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 coministers, 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 counsel meeting (see footnote) of the members to decide whether or not the

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2. An Amish bishop is frequently referred to as the "householder" or "housefather." Note: The ministers' counsel 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 M. J. Yoder, memoranda, *op. cit.*, 2. Note: A counsel meeting consists only of those who are baptized members and is usually held after a worship service.

congregation should hold a communion service. C. J. Swartzendruber from Kempsville, Virginia, and D. J. Swartzendruber from Oakland, Maryland, were the visiting ministers at the November 14 service to assist in the conduct of the counsel 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.²⁰

To the proposed course of action as outlined by Bishop Beachy above, Noah Yoder 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 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-co-operative attitude of his coministers, Bishop Beachy proceeded to take the vote of the congregation on whether or not they wished that a 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 communion service. Among the women there was no objection whatever to holding the communion service as proposed by the bishop.²¹

Though a clear a majority of the congregation had expressed themselves in favor of the communion service, no service was announced by the bishop for the fall of 1926. The stalemate was allowed to continue until the following spring. Then on April 3, 1926, at a counsel 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 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 communion was announced for Sunday, April 17, at the same place. When the worshipers 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

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

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

finally held, only sixty-three members participated or slightly more than half of the membership.²²

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 the 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 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.²³

There were, however, minor differences which came into 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. Thereafter he apparently gave up hope of a reconciliation and allowed some innovations which he had previously tried to hold in check.

At a meeting held on November 14, 1926, 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 no permit the use of automobiles, because that would alienate the Old Order group.²⁴ After April, 1927, he abandoned this idea. Now some of the other issues emerge that had been constantly in the background but which had not previously been discussed. Bontrager in the letter referred to above also says, "To say that the ban was the real or only cause of the division is probably not quite correct."²⁵ 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, and 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.²⁶ 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.²⁷

Probably neither Bontrager nor Yoder is 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 Beachy's congregation with such swiftness

²² E. J. Bontrager, letter, *op. cit.*, March 2, 1950.

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

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

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

²⁶ *Ibid.*

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

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 a Sunday school.²⁸ The fact that many of the youth were 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.

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 counsel meeting held in the Summit Mills meetinghouse on November 28, 1926, Beachy had told the congregation that he and Gideon Brenneman, (later a minister in the conservative wing), had had some trouble about electric lights and motors, but that this disagreement had been settled.²⁹ 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, whose house had been wired for electricity by a former owner and who used an electric motor to drive his domestic water pump.³⁰

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

2. AUTOMOBILES 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

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

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁰ From the writer's memories of boyhood days.

³¹ M. J. Yoder, memoranda, *op. cit.*, 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."

agitation that they should be permitted to own them. On June 26, 1927, at a counsel meeting held at the Summit Mills meetinghouse, the members were asked if they were willing to do without automobiles, 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.³²

From the above it can be seen that by August, 1927, 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." Sometime during the month of February, 1929, the congregation voted unanimously to allow the use of the automobile to its members.³³

C. THE DIVISION COMPLETED

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 in Amish ministers from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and Holmes County. They held services in the home of Amos J. Yoder near Springs, Pennsylvania, but 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 perhaps 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.³⁴

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 present at their meeting.³⁵

While it has not been possible to get behind the scenes to discover what actually happened at 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.

³² *Ibid.*, 12.

³³ *Ibid.*, 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.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁵ S. E. Hershberger, letter dated Dec. 30, 1949, Grantsville, Md.

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 time Beachy was still trying to effect a reconciliation.³⁶

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 on the use of automobiles. Perhaps, however, the attempt to fix responsibility for past events is useless. In any case, after June 27, 1927, the break between the two opposing factions was complete.

The Amish colony which had been planted in the Casselman River region, perhaps as early as 1768, was now divided into three separate units, where prior to 1895 there had been only one. Jacob Ammann, 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 causes 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 Amish had been conducted 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 a 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 visiting friends. 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

³⁶ M. J. Yoder, memoranda, *op. cit.*, 11.

were many and bitter. Gradually, however, relations between the two groups became less strained, and they now live side by side, 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,³⁷ while the Beachy congregation of which Eli D. Tice of Grantsville, Maryland, is now bishop consisted of forty-four families with 155 communicant members.³⁸ The present (1950) ministers of the Yoder congregation are Bennie A. Fisher, ordained in May, 1928, Noah J. Yoder, son of Joseph J. Yoder, ordained in May, 1940, and Joseph J. Yoder, ordained as minister in May of 1915 and as bishop of the Yoder congregation on October 13, 1929.³⁹

2. THE EFFECT IN OTHER OLD ORDER AMISH COMMUNITY

It was in those Amish communities which lay far beyond 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 haircuts 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 haircut 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 middle way, in which they retained most of the former modes of dress, even though the use of the automobiles 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 so. 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. A letter written by Norman Beachy, a minister from Meyersdale, Pennsylvania, to Bishop M. M. Beachy in May, 1935, is interesting in this connection. The letter says,

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.⁴⁰

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

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

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

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

By being thus watchful lest the use of modern conveniences bring more compromise with the “worldly” styles in dress, Bishop Beachy and his congregation built a bridge over which other dissatisfied Amish groups could walk to greater freedom without having to make so drastic a change as to kill the spirit of initiative before the first step was taken. It should be added here that neither Bishop Beachy nor his followers foresaw the results of their course of action in 1927, nor did they deliberately plan it in order to attract other Amish groups. The several Amish congregations that are now known as the Beachy Amish Mennonite churches appealed to Bishop Beachy for help spontaneously and unsolicited.

After the 1927 division the Beachy congregation was an isolated group, cut off from fellowship with Old Order Amish churches in other areas. It 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 nonconformity of dress, had traveled 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,” so named because their 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 Church of the 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.⁴¹ Only after the Beachy and Weavertown congregations had become independent did they learn of each other’s existence. 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.⁴²

These two congregations then remained alone until 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.⁴³ This group had received some help from Bishop John A. Stoltzfus of the Weavertown congregation before 1937. However, during 1937 and 1938 because of illness in the home, Bishop Stoltzfus was unable to absent himself from home for long periods of time, and consequently the Mercer County (or Cochran) 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 of Valentine Yoder, the present bishop of the Cochran congregation, to that office. In 1950

⁴¹ C. G. Baughman, “The Old Order Amish of Lancaster County,” *Pennsylvania German Society*, Norristown, Pa., XLIX (1942), 283-85.

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

⁴³ *Ibid.*

this congregation had sixty communicant members in which twenty-five families were represented.⁴⁴

One month after the ordination of Valentine Yoder, M. M. Beachy and his coministers were requested to come to Madison County, Ohio, to assist a small Amish group who had become dissatisfied with the Old Order Amish Church of that area. They first traveled to Madison County, Ohio, on June 3, 1938, where they organized a small congregation in the vicinity of Plain City, Ohio. Since 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 October 11, 1938.⁴⁵ On the eleventh day of that month M. M. Beachy ordained two young men from the local congregation as ministers, Emery Yutzy and Robert M. Kaufman, both from the vicinity of Plain City, Ohio.⁴⁶ This group was without a resident bishop until April 25, 1949, when Elden L. Troyer was ordained to that office.⁴⁷ In 1950 there were fifty-eight communicant members in this congregation, in which approximately twenty-five families were represented.⁴⁸

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 traveled 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 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.⁴⁹

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 request for information as to the size of the congregation have remained unanswered.

In April, 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 was made. It

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

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

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

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

⁴⁸ E. L. Troyer, letter, *op. cit.*

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

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 congregations.⁵⁰

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 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.⁵¹

By 1941 the Beachy Amish were again making their influence felt in 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, 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 1947.⁵² In the fall of 1949 Bishop Eli D. Tice, successor to Bishop M. M. Beachy, ordained Jeremiah Schlabach as minister in the Holmes County, who affiliated with this Beachy Amish congregation 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.⁵³

After 1941 there was a period of five years when no new congregations were organized. Then in January, 1946, David Bontrager, a young Amishman, and his wife, 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. They 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 cominister 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 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 Amishman 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.⁵⁴

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.

⁵⁰ D. O. Burkholder, personal interview granted to the writer in October, 1950, at Nappanee, Ind.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

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

⁵³ J. Schlabach, letter, May 2, 1950, Fredericksburg, Ohio.

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

Burkholder of Nappanee, Indiana, in June of that year.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶ At present the congregation has a membership of fifty people in which twenty-two families are represented.⁵⁷

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 Joe 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.⁵⁸

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 Bishop 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 congregation consisted of 114 communicant members, among whom forty-two families were represented. In 1950 this congregation was yet without a resident bishop.⁵⁹

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 13,000 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 2,000 persons 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 nonconformity to modern styles of apparel, both for women and men. They 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.

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

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

⁵⁷ J. Miller, letter, *op. cit.*

⁵⁸ S. J. Otto, letter, *op. cit.*

⁵⁹ J. D. Gingerich, letter, April 25, 1950, Montgomery, Ind.

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 been organized they have 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.⁶⁰

The total significance of the Beachy Amish 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 this fact to the young of the church. The Yoder congregation in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, has taken the desperate measure of forbidding its members to work for outsiders, except for such neighborly deeds as threshing and silo filling.⁶¹ 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.⁶²

⁶⁰ Letters from Bontrager, Burkholder, Gingerich

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

⁶² A development that has taken place since 1950 is that the Beachy and Yoder congregations no longer worship in the same meetinghouses. The Beachy congregation has built a new meetinghouse between the villages of West Salisbury and St. Paul, Pennsylvania, and now all of their services are held there. The new meetinghouse, though constructed along simple lines, is equipped with electric lights, indoor toilets, public address system, and has a full basement where the women of the church may meet for sewing and the children for Sunday school classes.

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