THE AMISH, EVANGELIZING

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Introduction.

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." (Matt. 9:37, 38). A concern that grew out of this passage has prompted me to write on this subject.

Within the last decade many individuals in the Amish church have awakened to the need of evangelization. As the vision enlarged and the burden increased efforts have been put forth in order to enlist more activity in the life of missions to win lost souls to Christ. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10)

It has been my privilege to attempt to sum up the activities which have resulted from this new (new, for the Amish denomination) vision. With this information, I trust, we will be better able to evaluate the progress which has been made and possibly help us understand what further steps could be taken in this work of soul-winning.
In a certain respect human beings are too much like coal. When they are laid out in the open, unprotected, they are unlikely to continue burning. The Christian who should be burning with spiritual fire all too easily becomes complacent with normally moderate conditions, and conforms to his surroundings.

It is my contention that since the beginning of the Amish church it has contained, of a certainty, some sincere Christians. I like to think that at times most of them were truly born again. Certain individuals in the history of the Old Order Amish church have been referred to whose lives seemed to bear a true testimony. But, coal, when it is inactive, cools off.

A. Vision

More than a decade ago some caught the vision of the existing needs in the world. For some this vision traces its roots back to days in G.P.S. Camp. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Yes, we are responsible for the welfare of our fellowmen. For many this was the first time they became aware that souls outside of, as well as in, the Amish church need to be brought to a knowledge of God's saving grace. The great commission is as strong an imperative today as it was in the Apostolic Age. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."  

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1 The Holy Bible, KJV, Genesis 4:19.
2 Ibid., Matthew 28:19.
had been certificated as part of the known world but we must keep in mind the fact that the present world or entire earth is far greater than was the known world during Roman rule.

II. Maniaci

A Catholic convert, Russell Maniaci, was very instrumental in assisting the development of this new vision. He wrote letters, in duplicate copy, to leaders of the Amish churches, expressing his deep concern and pointing out the call in the scriptures to obey God's commandment. To these he had some favorable responses. As early as 1949 Mr. Maniaci maintained this correspondence. By December 1951, he edited the first issue of the Mission Endeavor Bulletin. In this publication he continues to express his heart-felt concern for the lost and bascs his assertions on the Word of God. This paper now published articles and testimonies by other interested Christians.

II. Growth

A. Fellowship

Many sensed the need of more fellowship in order to grow more steadfast in faith. Mid-week meetings were a partial answer to this. In localities where there were no Sunday schools, and church services once in two weeks, some held their meetings on Sundays. These meetings included,

3 Having been discouraged, Maniaci left the Catholic Church, and began studying the Bible. He heard about the Amish and wrote to a brother in Iowa. After some correspondence and personal contact with a minister in Michigan, R. Maniaci became converted. He joined the Mennonite Church and from there, as best he could, aided the Amish mission movement.

4 Maniaci, Letter #1 to F. Stoltzfus, September 2, 1949.

5 Mission Endeavor Bulletin.
basically, singing, study of the scriptures and prayer. Although it has been the practice of the Amish to use a prayer book, reading prayers of the Anabaptist forefathers, almost without exception in public worship, almost unanimously the brethren realized the value of spontaneous prayers and made adjustments accordingly. Some cottage meeting work developed from these activities.

In the last few years local fellowship meetings have been held once or twice a year. These were localized to one state as a rule. Informal fellowship and a scheduled program were generally featured on these occasions.

B. Mission Conferences

Russell Manisci was very instrumental also in the development of the first Amish Mission Conference held in August, 1950. For three days meetings were held at the home of Jonas Gingerichs' at Kalona, Iowa. Out of this first conference grew a mission board, which later became known as the Mission Interests Committee. At this conference thirty-two people consecrated their lives.

The Second Annual Conference was held at Ottawa, Michigan, September 2-4, 1951, at the home of Chris Steuffers. In 1952 the third conference was held at the Clinton Christian Day School, near Goshen, Indiana. The Fourth Amish Mission Conference was held at Hutchinson, Kansas in 1953. And the Fifth Annual Conference was held at the Clinton Christian Day School in August, 17-19, 1955. At these meetings motions were made for the establishment of mission outposts.

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Evangelistic Campaigns

Evangelistic services held in the various communities had a rebuilding effect upon many of the young Christians. David Miller from Oklahoma has been an effective servant of the Lord in this respect. For two weeks, he held daily services in Holmes County, Ohio, during 1953. He had one set of meetings at about the same time in Pennsylvania.

Teen campaigns by evangelists: Andrew Jantzi, George R. Brunk, and Byron Augsturger were also very effective in convincing the reality of sin.

Mission Projects

Many young people became inspired to zealous action. One result of their efforts was that of mission projects. Most of them amounted to vegetable gardening. The Lord very definitely blessed this activity and caused the yield to be manifold. The proceeds were used for the support of a mission program.7

2. Youth Organizations

One session of the Annual Conferences is generally devoted to the young people. I am not aware of any formal organization. However, there are annual fellowship meetings held by the Amish Mennonite youths. Possibly there are small organizations in the different localities, which I am not familiar with.

III. Outreach

A. Millcreek Home

In 1953 the Amish brethren were invited by Boone County

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Officials to come to Arkansas to operate an Old Peoples' Home. This request was made after they had observed the work of experimentally at Beul Haven near Cassville. The board looked upon this favorably and volunteers filled in the places. At present, Eldi Melkunis from Hutchinson, Kansas are in charge of the home. The rest home, called Hillcrest Home, has been enlarged; the number on the staff has doubled and so has the number of guests.

B. Red Lake Indian School

In 1955 the Amish were invited by both the Red Lake Chamber of Commerce and by Irwin Shantz to come to Red Lake, Ontario, and open an Indian school. They indicated that if the Protestants don't make it possible for these Indian children to go to school the Catholics will. In August of 1956, excavation was begun for the basement of a two-classroom school for the Indians. Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Graber moved to Red Lake to open the school and carry on the chief responsibilities. This family still remains there while various workers—single and married—have served short terms of service. A number of the Indians have very eagerly accepted this opportunity for education. Enrollment has been up to 46. At the present it is


4Irwin Shantz is the leader of admission program operating in northern Ontario. Under his supervision are at least eight stations.


7Naomi Ryle taught the lower grades for 2 years and was able to give this information.
C. Good Will Rescue Mission

An Amish couple, Alvin and Madeline Roth, have been supervising the Good Will Rescue Mission at London, Ontario since 1951.13

D. I-W Service

Through the I-W program many young men have had opportunities to witness for Christ, our Saviour. For the individual with a concern for lost souls this was a very real challenge.14 Many of the boys have left a good testimony.

E. Voluntary Service

A number of the Amish young people have been serving in various places on a voluntary basis.5 The Mennozite Central Committee, Akron, Pennsylvania; Laurelville Camp; a mission in Gulfport, Mississippi; and teaching Summer Bible school are some areas. Other areas in which they serve are: Puerto Rico, PAI service in Germany, Hope Rescue Mission at South Bend, Indiana, York Brothers' Homestead, and Prairie View Mental Hospital.16

F. Publications

Steps were taken at the annual conference in 1952, to publish a paper which would serve as a medium for making announcements, as well as for letters and articles by the

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brotherhood. The first issue was published April 7, 1953, and was called Witnessing. The purpose of this paper is to broaden our world view, or vision of the world's need. 17

As was mentioned before, the Mission Indian Bulletin was published by Russell Evanishi for the purpose of enlightenment.

Monthly newletters are sent out from the mission bases.

IV. Effects

A. On the mission field

Although this area has not been growing as rapidly as one would desire to see it grow, yet one must admit that comparative progress has been made within the last ten years.

A testimony from the Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce read like this:

The Red Lake District Chamber of Commerce wishes to express its appreciation for your considerable efforts to improve the conditions of our native Indian population.

Your school and settlement is an outstanding indication of your sincere efforts to further the educational and social welfare of the Indians.

It will always be the pleasure of the Chamber to assist you and your supporters whenever called upon in your work. The Chamber would be pleased if you will pass along to all those behind your committee our best wishes for your continued success and good faith.

Signed, E.E. Price, President

Several people have been converted as a result of this work at Red Lake.

The Hillcrest Home is highly spoken of. Even there the workers do not confine themselves to the Home, but go out in Christian service when opportunity permits. Frequently they are invited to give programs at local churches, which gives them an excellent opportunity to give their testimony.

B. In the home communities

This evangelistic movement has, thus far, touched chiefly on individuals, largely resulting in a separation from the O.C. Amish Church. Many have had to either give up their convictions or else leave the church. This explains the fact that the present mission program is neither sponsored nor supported by the O.C. Amish church, but by those who have had to separate from this group because of their convictions.

Throughout the Old Order Church one finds individuals with a missionary zeal and vision who endeavor to bring their Amish brethren to greater enlightenment. One is not without discouragements in this work. And I am convinced that it takes whole-hearted commitment and continual re-dedication to the will of God, as God requires in all of our service to Him. Only as God leads the way and by his Spirit prepares the hearts of men can we witness effectively. But Jesus said: "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13). This is the secret of all true evangelism.

Our chief motive for mission work is an expression of our deep love for Christ who first loved us and paid the price for our redemption. Christ said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 10:39).

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July 30, 1940

Writing a Christian line,
Many years and places for Multiplication
May your according to your faith,
'But every heart of man is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ (Eph. 4:7)
your letter in hand. and I feel
some what at a loss to give you the
information you asked for.
I know this is rather hard to determine
but the first Jewish Mission Conference
was held in Centerville church. I do
Think in Sept. of 1949 this was much
brought about by R. Manke a convert
Catholic who got in contact with
the Mission when he came out of the
Catholic Church. A Mission Group
was organized but as you know most
of the help either to give up their
conversions or leave the club as the
about all of the original board members
are affiliated with other church group
but this has led to possibly "The
Lakes Indian School." Hill brand home."
I was recently inspired to

prayerly prepare for the spiritual challenge before me but I felt this

is not the foundation I seek. I often thought that our church

as a whole would get the vision

and standards for the renewed church

that would become the spiritual home

of individuals in the church.

I think some of our focus has left

the goal of helping others (while some

have not) and I think the work you

are doing (the teaching school) is the

way we can help others. There are

many avenues that are open for
to reach other than the

I attended one of the mission

suppers in 1981 and if you do that

I could end you at least for part of

of the program we had.

Sincerely,

(Roy DeLoach)
Dear Sister in Christ,

A greeting of grace

Peace in Jesus our Lord.

Having been connected with the mission movement in the Amish Church for not quite a number of years, I having any "chronicles" of my own to return to I am not certain, of how much help I can be to you in the way as requested by you in your letter of the 27th.

I shall refer your letter to Harvey Graber at New Hope, I know that he gave a talk at Goshen College on this subject and would likely have the information you seek.

I also suggest you write to Bro. Russell Maniaci at Col. York, IN, He had some history given
IN THE "FINISH MISSION END"

R. MARINACI WAS VERY INSTRUMENTAL IN ORGANIZING THE FIRST MISSION CONFERENCES. THE DATES ARE NOT AT MY HAND.

ALSO SUGGEST YOU WRITE TO

JOSEPH GINGERSICH, ROCHESTER, IOWA

WHO WAS ALSO INSTRUMENTAL WITH MARINACI BEING ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION OF THE "MISSION INTEREST'S COMMITTEE" KNOV as ROC FOR SHORT (in keeping with our abbreviations)

AS TO MORE THIS IS INDIANCED

BY A SLOGAN "FIERY ARMS QUICKLY HERE" IN THE EARLY DAYS (41-51)

"WE ARE WITH MissioNARIES ON A MISSION FIELD" RECOGNIZING IT AS A FACT THAT THE O.C.H. WAS NOT MISSION MINDED THEREFORE THEY WERE A MISSION FIELD - THEN FOR THE PRIMARY MOTIVE WAS TO NOT ONLY RENEW THIS ZEAL BUT SEEK OUT THE "LOST" "UNSAVED" WITHIN FOR THIS AMON LIKE JONE MILLER OF THOMAS, OKLA, WAS PREPARED OR

...
The Poor Boy's Guide to the Sciences

as it were for the common

was evidenced. He seemed to re-mere

Bock knew it. He was there in focal

Consequence, without much of ad-

Crew are in the latter category

or object was present.

Such a change is that at Hill.

in 1958. It follows

of course, she

As to the creation of the

Effectiveness of the

Orchestra.
AS A GOAL ONE WILL HAVE
to say that, so far the pro-
gram is 'as yet a failure for
so far it has only turned out
cosmically it seems to me it nearly al-
ways becomes where the work is per-
curated in power, whether in the
Church or in the world.

That only individuals are touched
and moved largely resulting in a
separation or "coming out of
these or like precious faith."

To sum up it would seem that
the primary objective has been
achieved by God's grace and direction
but not entirely in the manner
that many of the original leaders
had envisioned. This is likely
so because of sentimental inclu-
sions towards our own group
and a lack of understanding of
how the work in spirit of the
local works in human society.

As to the achievement of the sec-
ondary objectives, success is being
realized in souls are being brought from
darkness to light. But as yet we
Yost & Annie Miller
Ridon, Ohio

ARE SHORT OF OUR GOAL OR RATHER WHAT SCRIPTURALLY MUST BE OUR GOAL IN MISSIONARY WORK & EVANGELISM. THIS IS TO ESTABLISH A CHURCH ON THE FIELD OF LABOR. AT NO RATE HAS THIS YET BEEN ACCOMPLISHED.

THANK YOU FOR WRITING AND MAY THE SPIRIT OF THE FUTURE DIRECT YOU IN THE WRITING OF THIS GREAT RENEWAL OTHER STUDIES IN PREPARATION FOR FURTHER SERVICE IN CHRIST

Yost Miller