

HL TERM PAPER

THE AMISH, EVANGELIZING

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Practical Theology 201

Eastern Mennonite College
Harrisonburg, Virginia

July 11, 1960

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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.

I. Origin

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 C.P.S. Camp. "Am I my brother's keeper?"¹ 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."² Perhaps at one time the Gospel

¹The Holy Bible, KJV, Genesis 4:9.

²Ibid., Matthew 28:19.

had been carried to most 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.

B. Maniaci

A Catholic convert, Russell Maniaci³, 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.⁴ 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 bases his assertions on the word of God. This paper now published articles and testimonies by other interested Christians.⁵

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,

³Having 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.

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

⁵Mission 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 Maniaci 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.⁶

The Second Annual Conference was held at Nottawa, Michigan, September 2-4, 1951, at the home of Chris Stauffers. In 1952 the third conference was held at the Clinton Christian Day School, near Gosher, 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.

⁶Russell Maniaci, Mission Endeavor Bulletin, I (December, 1957).

C. Evangelistic Campaigns

Evangelistic services held in the various communities had a stabilizing 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 week of meetings at about the same time in Pennsylvania. Tent campaigns by evangelists: Andrew Jantzi, George R. Brunk, and Myron Augsburg were also very effective in some Amish to see the reality of sin.

D. 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

E. 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. Hillcrest Home

In 1953 the Amish brethren were invited by Boone County

⁷Naomi Lantz, "Project Work In Lancaster Co.", Witnessing, V (January, 1957), p. 2.

officials to come to Arkansas to operate an Old Peoples' Home. This request was made after they had observed the work of Menno Nisly at Rest Haven near Cassville.⁸ The board looked upon this favorably and volunteers filled in the places. At present, Eld Helmuhs 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 Shantz⁹ 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.¹⁰ In August of 1956, excavation was begun for the basement of a two-class room school for the Indians. Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Graber moved to Red Lake to open the school and carry on the chief responsibilities.¹¹ 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 46.¹² At the present it is

⁸David L. Miller, "Would You Like to Witness," Witnessing, I (July-August, 1953), p. 7.

⁹Irwin Shantz is the leader of admission program operating in northern Ontario. Under his supervision are at least eight stations.

¹⁰Elan Hochstetler, "Red Lake Indian Project," Witnessing, IV (July, 1956), p. 2.

¹¹Lloyd Gingerich, "Red Lake News," Witnessing, IV (October, 1956), p. 7.

¹²Naomi Byler taught the lower grades for 2 years and was able to give this information.

slightly lower.

C. Good Will Rescue Mission

An Amish couple, Alvin and Madeline Roth, have been supervizing 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.¹⁵ The Mennonite 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, PAX service in Germany, Home Rescue Mission at South Bend, Indiana, Froh 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

¹³Mission Endeavor Bulletin, II (May, 1955).

¹⁴Ezra Paul Beachy, "The Christian Witness Through I-W Service," Witnessing, II (March-April, 1954), p.8.

¹⁵Roy Schlabach, Letter. (June 30, 1960).

¹⁶Mahlon Wagler, "W.I.C. Concerns," Witnessing, III (July-August, 1955), p. 10.

brotherhood. The first issue was published April, 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 Endeavor Bulletin was published by Russell Maniagi for the purpose of enlightenment.

Monthly newsletters 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:¹⁸

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. Pine, President

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

¹⁷ Andrew A. Miller, "An Explanation", Witnessing, I (May-June, 1953), p. 6.

¹⁸ Lloyd Gingerich, "Sidelights on Red Lake", Witnessing, V (August, 1957), p. 3.

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.O. Amish Church. Many have had to either give up their convictions or else leave the church.¹⁹ This explains the fact that the present mission program is neither sponsored nor supported by the O.O. 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).

¹⁹Yost H. Miller, A Letter, (June 29, 1960).

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HL TERM PAPER

July 30, 1960.

Greetings in Christian love.

May grace and peace be multiplied unto you according to your faith.

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." (Eph. 4:7)

Your letter on hand, and I feel some what at a loss to give you the information you asked for.

1. Origin. This is rather hard to determine but the first Amish Mission Conference.

was held in Centerville Mich. I think in Sept. of 1949. This was much

brought about by R. Manica a converted Catholic, he got in contact with the Amish when he came out of the Catholic Church. ~~and a~~ ^{Mission} board

was organized. but as you know most of those had either to give up their convictions or leave the ch. so

about all of the original board members are affiliated with other ch. groups but this has led to possibly "Red Lake Indian School." "I'll Create Some."

1. W. Service in Hospitals etc.

Personally I feel we have a great challenge before us but I feel there is no little I can do about it. I have often prayed that our church as a whole would get the vision and burden for the unsaved multitudes. This would revive the spiritual ardor of individuals in the Ch.

I think many of our boys have left a great testimony in W. Service (while some have not) and I think the work you are doing ~~the~~ (teaching school) has a far reaching effect. There are many avenues that are open for the ones who have the vision.

I attended one of the mission conferences in India in 1954 and if you be interested I could send you at least part if not all of the program we had.

Prayerfully we remain,
Roy Schubert.

C

HI TERM PAPER

Host & Fannie Miller

Aidron, Ohio

June 29-60

DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST:

A GREETING OF GRACE &
PEACE IN JESUS OUR LORD,

HAVING BEEN CONNECTED WITH
THE MISSION MOVEMENT IN THE
METHODIST CHURCH WHO NOT QUITE
A PIONEER & NOT HAVING ANY
"CHRONICLES" OF MY OWN TO REFER
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 REX LAKE,
I KNOW THAT HE GAVE A TALK AT
GOSHEN COLLEGE ON THIS SUBJECT AND
WOULD LIKELY HAVE THE INFO IN HIS
FILES

ALSO SUGGEST YOU WRITE TO
BRO RUSSELL MANIACI AT ELKHART,
IND. HE HAD SOME HISTORY GIVEN

(2)

IN THE "FAMIST" MISSION END-
EADUOR.

R. MANIACI WAS VERY INSTRUMENTAL
IN ORGANIZING THE FIRST MISSION
CONFERENCE. THE DATES ARE NOT
AT MY HANDS.

ALSO SUGGEST YOU WRITE TO
JONAS GINGERICH KALONA, IOWA
WHO WAS ALSO INSTRUMENTAL WITH
MANIACI BRINGING ABOUT THE ORG-
ANIZATION OF THE "MISSION INTER-
ESTS COMM" KNOWN AS MIC FOR
SHORT (IN KEEPING WITH OUR ABBREVI-
ATED AGE)

AS TO MOTIVE THIS IS INITIATED
BY A SLOGAN FREQUENTLY HEARD
IN THE EARLY DAYS (47-51)-

"WE ARE EITHER MISSIONARIES OR
A MISSION FIELD? RECOGNIZING IT
AS A FACT THAT THE O.D. CH. WASNT
MISSION MINDED THEREFORE THEY
WERE A MISSION FIELD - THEREFORE
THE PRIMARY MOTIVE WAS TO NOT ONLY
RENEW THIS ZEAL BUT SEEK OUT
THE "LOST" & UNSAVED WITHIN, FOR
THIS AMAN LIKE DAVID MILLER OF
THOMAS, OKLA. WAS PREPARED OF

Host & Fannie Miller

THE LORD BEHIND THE SCENES
AS IT WOULD BE FOR THE WORK THAT
WAS EVIDENTLY NECESSARY TO BE DONE.
BRO. KAUF ~~HOWEVER~~ HAS NO FORMAL
CONNECTION WITH ~~M.I.C.~~ THE VARIOUS
MISSION CONFERENCES UNTIL THE
ONE AT HUTCHINSON IN 1953. RIGHT
AFTER THE NOW HISTORIC HOLMES
CO. CAMPAIGN

OF COURSE THE SECONDARY
OBJECTIVE WAS THAT OF MOVING
OUT TO THE FIELD, WHICH OUR LORD
SAYS IS "THE WORK".

SUCH WORK AS THAT AT HILL-
CREST & LATER AT REX LAKE OF
COURSE ARE IN THE LATTER CATEGORY

AS TO ~~THE~~ ^{AN} EVALUATION OF THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS PROGRAM
WILL DEPEND VERY MUCH ON ONE'S
VIEW POINT OR UNDERSTANDING AS
TO WHAT THE WILL OF THE LORD IS,
IF WE VIEW IT FROM THE IDEA
THAT THE ENTIRE CHURCH IS TO
BECOME REVIVED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN

③

~~THE~~ 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
(as it seems to me) it nearly al-
ways does where the word is prea-
ched in power, whether in the
church ^{or} in the world

that only individuals are touched
& moves largely resulting in a
~~the~~ separation or "coming out" of
those of "like previous faith."

to sum up it would seem that
the primary objective has been
achieved by God's grace & direction
but not quite in the manner
that many of the original leaders
had envisioned. This is likely
so because of sentimental inclina-
tions towards our own group
& a lack of understanding of
how the word & spirit of the
love works in human society
if let loose as has been done.

as to the achievement of the seco-
ndary objective. Science is being
removed & souls are being freed
darkness to light. But as yet we

⑤

Host & Fannie Miller

Madison, Ohio

ARE SHORT OF OUR GOAL OR
RATHER WHAT SCRIPTURALLY
MUST BE OUR GOAL IN MISSION-
ARY WORK & EVANGELISM. THIS
IS TO ESTABLISH A CHURCH ON
THE FIELD OF LABOR. AT NO PLACE
HAS THIS YET BEEN ACCOMPLIS-
HED.

THANK YOU FOR WRITING
AND MAY THE SPIRIT OF THE
HOLY DIRECT YOU IN THE WRIT-
ING OF THIS TERM PAPER &
OTHER STUDIES IN PREPARATION FOR
FURTHER SERVICE

IN CHRIST

YOST MILLER

