

CHILDHOOD AND BELIEF AMONG THE
BEACHY AMISH,
KENNEDYVILLE, MARYLAND

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By

Jonathan C. David,

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Kennedyville, Maryland

OUTLINE

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On first attending a Sunday morning service at Harmony Christian Fellowship in August 1983, I felt a special Christian warmth that is rare in these times. Over the entrance of the meetinghouse were two Biblical quotations, 1) "Jesus said 'Come unto me,'" and 2) "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise Cast Out." (Mathew 2:8, and John 6:37). I was not just interested, but moved. My subsequent work with this Beachy Amish congregation has been motivated by an intense desire to understand the nature of their fellowship. With the advice of my professor, I decided to focus my attention on the children of the community, since the health, viability, and belief patterns of a social group are seen clearly among the children.

I. Before writing about how the adults of this Beachy Amish community raise their children, before writing how the children work, study and play, I must explain in short the nature of the Beachy Amish history and beliefs. The Beachy Amish developed ultimately from the Anabaptist movement that began simultaneously with the Protestant reformation in Switzerland and Southern Germany in the early sixteenth century. Protestant movements rebelled against the Catholic church, but left Christian salvation up to each individual of their movements. Anabaptists took these reforms further by emulating the early church, as described and developed by Saint Paul in the later books of The New Testament. A basic Anabaptist belief is that baptism must be a personal choice of a mature adult; the church thus as a whole is considered a community of the redeemed. The reformation movement led to a bloody war in

1525 A.D. Once religious leaders had questioned the authority of the Catholic church, German peasants responded by rising up against the feudal hierarchy, which was closely allied to the Church. During the following Peasant War, Martin Luther supported the ^{political} ~~religious~~ status quo, while the Anabaptists supported the peasantry. From that time onwards, Anabaptists--those who followed Menno Simons, those who followed Jacob Amenn, and others in the movement--have maintained a belief in separation of their higher religious law from the civil law. They have maintained a belief in non-violence and non-participation in war.

Further, as a reaction against the Catholic church, and as a belief in the ultimate authority of God, they maintain no full-time church hierarchy. ^{Today of the Beachy Church} The men who perform these functions have their names submitted to the congregations. Those men who receive more than five votes (in a congregation of this size) become eligible for the position in question. ^(i.e. Deacon, Minister, Pastor, Bishop) The nominees' names are written on slips of paper and inserted into songbooks. Elaborate procedures are taken to insure that no man interferes with the selection (One man from the ministry ^{The Bishop}) will chose one of the five books, containing one of the names. The man thus chosen by lot, represents the Lord's choice for the position. (Harry Yoder and Steven Stoltzfus gratefully supplied me with this information).

The Beachy Amish established themselves in 1927 in Garret County Maryland. Having left the Old Order Amish, they originally maintained much of the typical Amish non-conformity to the modern world, while allowing their members certain modern conveniences, such as automobiles, tractors, and electrical appliances. At first,

they maintained religious services in German, while changing the location of services away from individual homes, as the Old Order Amish practice, to meetinghouses or churches. They began Sunday schools, so that all members might become familiar with the Gospel. The new familiarity with the Gospel opened the way for their for their zeal to evangelize, as they became familiar with new interpretations of Jesus's word (Mathew 28: 19, 20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:/ Teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.' Amen."). (Beachy, pp.118-141). According to Harry Yoder, Pastor of the Harmony Christian Fellowship, by the middle years of the 1950's, they began preaching in English, in their attempt to reach beyond their community. Yet the Beachy Amish maintain the essence of the Amish Mennonite Anabaptist tradition. As Steven Stoltzfus told me, the central idea of the community is that the church itself is a body of the redeemed.

II. The second occasion that I attended the Sunday service, I spoke at great length with Harry Yoder, a man I consider remarkable and compassionate. After returning to Philadelphia, I called him to ask if I could speak to him further. "Certainly," he said, there would be no problem. I had no idea at the time that he was Pastor of the congregation. We spoke again at length. Mr. and Mrs. Yoder had grown up in an Old Order Amish community in Ohio. They had joined the Beachy Amish in 1955. Mr. Yoder maintained that the Amish should not separate themselves from others to the extent that

they do, since the Christian message is for all. Perhaps they mistake their lifestyle for holiness. Mr. Yoder told me that the Beachy church believes that anyone who has faith and leads a moral life will not be turned away from heaven. (Epistle of John, Chapter 1: 1-10). Yet the Old Order Amish say that one who has faith and leads a moral life can only hope for salvation. The Beachy church became evangelistic since they want to reject no one. They do practice Separation from the "world." Since there is much wickedness in the World, their Separation--particularly observable in their dress-- is a Witness to their beliefs.

The Beachy Amish Church believes that there is a Kingdom of Light and a Kingdom of Darkness. (Hostetler, J. interviewed on Dec. 6, 1983). Darkness does not admit a bit of Light, nor does Light admit any Darkness in its domain. These opposites correspond to Heaven and Hell. Heaven, for mankind is the union of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God. Hell represents eternal withdrawal of the Spirit of God from an individual following death. These opposites also correlate with the difference in man between the spirit and the flesh. (Throughout the following paper, I will refer to the Spirit of God with a capital "S," designating the Holy Spirit. I will refer to man's spirit with a small "s." The previous statements concerning the nature of Heaven and Hell, of Light and Dark, was gleaned from a sermon by Rev. Andy Mullet, a Beachy evangelist Pastor from Lot, Texas, Nov. 13, 1983).

Since the Fall of Man from the Garden of Eden, all men have been born with a sinful nature. As Steven Stoltzfus quoted to me from The Book of Romans, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Yet God gave to the world his only son, who led the life of an ideal man (God's Spirit made Flesh), who sacrificed

himself that others might have everlasting life (John 3:16).

While being crucified, he felt the experience of being forsaken by God (Mark 15: 34. "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?). On deciding to proceed with the sacrifice, following this between man and God, period of being/ he became Jesus, the Son of God incarnate, separate from man (This interpretation is derived from a sermon delivered at communion service, Oct. 30, 1983, by Bishop Glick).¹

The Beachy Amish model much of their religious practice on the practices of the early church, as defined by the Apostle Paul. Those within the church, 'being many, are one in the body of Christ, and every one members of one another,' (Romans 12:5). Paul further beseeches the brethern, in the name of Jesus, 'that ye all speak the same thing, and that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement," (I Corinthians 1:10). The Beachy church does not interpret these verses to mean that every member of the church should agree on all things; yet they agree that the church is a redemptive community to which all members have willingly joined themselves by making a free decision to be baptized into the Christian faith.

Throughout the waning months of the summer, the major topic of discussion within the Fellowship was the need of Christians to avoid self-righteousness, since ultimately only God can judge a man. The congregation as a whole focused its attention on various passages of The Book of Romans (such as Romans 10:1-17) to make this point clear to itself again and again.

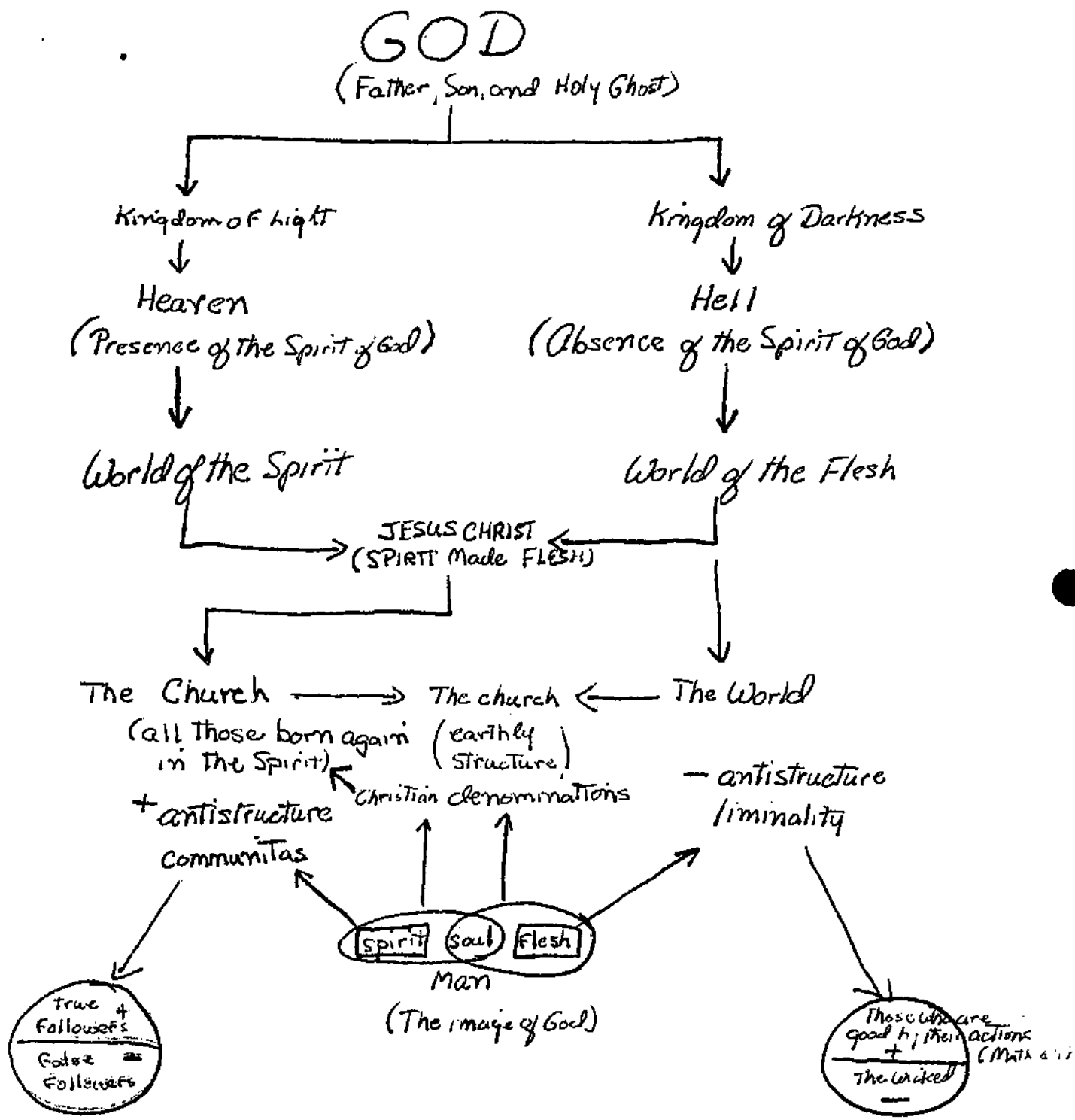


CHART I

Though The Bible is the word of God, it establishes only an outline of the Christian way. The Beachy Amish recognize that their community beliefs based on The Bible as their own interpretation, as relative truth. They cheerfully resolve the apparent contradiction between their Separation from the world and their willing acceptance of any others who are Christians. While the Beachy Amish are a church, a denomination, those of any Christian background who have been born again in the Spirit, are accepted as members of the Church.

Just as there is a complete and lasting opposition between Light and Dark, Heaven and Hell, the spirit and the flesh, there is also an opposition between the Church and the world. For the Beachy Amish, the organization of their church mediates between these opposites. Mankind is of the flesh and the spirit; the church organization maintains a way in which the believers can be of the world, while not in it; furthermore, through the rite of communion it gives them periodic union with the Spirit of God. While we may experience this union only periodically (I Corinthians 13: 12, 'For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. '), the Christian ideal is the union of man's spirit with the Holy Spirit (Romans 8: 16, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:').

Though there is an utter division in man between the flesh and the spirit, Mr. Yoder, and subsequently Mr. Steven Stoltzfus related that man's Soul links the two. The Soul is the seat of emotions. These emotions may be expressed through the Flesh toward

other humans. Yet the soul and the spirit in combination relate man to God. Mr. Yoder related to me that triads such as this are found throughout The Bible. Just as the Godhead is considered three in one, so also is man. This is the true meaning of Genesis I : 27, that God created man in his own image. Similarly, the temple of the Isrealites was tripartate.

III.A. During the second week of November, the Harmony Christian fellowship held a series of Revival Meetings. Reverend Andy Mullet ministered to the congregation. On the evening of November 11, Reverend Mullet delivered a sermon emphasizing that the ideal Christian "be conformed to the image of his Son...(Romans 8:29). Members of the church should all strive to be 'little Jesuses,' for this is the road to salvation. Yet, since the fall of man, because of the original sin, we all have been born with a sinful nature. God created families, he said, for us so that those who are older and have found The way can lead children in the path toward salvation. To lead children away from the flesh, adults should beat them when necessary. Yet they should only beat them with love and prayer. As a selection from the Book of Proverbs reads, 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, yet the rod of correction will drive it far from them.'

During the course of my stay that weekend, I asked Mr. Harry Yoder about this attitude that children need such severe guidance. We spoke of the fascination of watching children play. Mr. Yoder said that often when he and his wife go to the grocery store, he will not help with the shopping, but instead will watch parents with their children. Many times he sees parents let their children

run freely, without guidance until suddenly and unpredictably they will crack down on the youngsters. In contrast, the Beachy community practices a constant gentle restraint. The child should know the boundaries of correct behavior at all times.

A new born child brings joy to its family and to the community. Aside from childbirth within the community, the Beachy community adopt children of any age frequently. As soon as a mother recovers from giving birth, she returns to church service regularly again, with the child. From this early age, parents begin to teach their child to sit quietly and peacefully in the House of Fellowship. These young children are dressed no differently than children outside the congregation. They usually stay with the mother during the hour of Sunday school (9:30-10:30), but during the church service itself, they may sit or be held by either parent (men and women sit on opposite sides of the aisle of the church; facing the minister, the men sit on the right, and the women sit on the left).

When a child has learned the meaning of prayer--somewhere near the age of two or three, girls begin to wear a "covering," or net bonnet (I Corinthians 11:6, 'For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.'). Since man has been created in the image of God, he is the glory of God; yet woman is created in the image of man. The covering expresses in moderation, the modesty that is thus appropriate for women. Girls begin to wear dresses of any color, but never of patterned material. The dresses reach to mid-calves. Women wear any sturdy, functional shoe, but never high heels.

At the same age, boys begin wearing formal suits like older men. These suits are generally of a dark color, without pattern. The jacket has no collar, and by church regulation, is fastened with hook-and-eyes. While at this age, the child may continue to sit either with its father or mother during church service, boys almost without exception will sit with their fathers; girls most commonly will sit with their mothers, yet some may opt to sit next to their fathers.

Every year, the congregation elects a head of the Sunday school. The congregation also selects the Sunday school teachers for each age group. As previously stated, everyone attends Sunday school among the Beachy congregations. They divide the age groups of the classes into kindergarten-1, kindergarten-2, pre-school, ages 6-8, ages 8-16, the youth group comprising all young people over the age of sixteen who are not married, married women, and married men. Women often lead the Sunday school classes of the younger aged children, while young married men lead the youth group and the groups of married men and married women. Males and females meet together in Sunday school until marriage. After marriage, husbands and wives meet separately.

Sunday school teachers ask the younger children to memorize a verse from The Bible at every meeting; they are expected to know its meaning. Older children learn more than one verse at a time. The youth group and the adult groups focus on perhaps half of a chapter of a book of the New Testament. Each person reads one verse in rotation, then the leader asks the group the meaning of each verse. The intent is to instruct, not to test.

While there is no exact age at which a confession of faith

is required, most often young people make this decision between the ages of eight and sixteen. I believe that most would agree that the young ideally make this confession between the ages of twelve-fourteen. Confirmation into the church takes approximately six months. First a child announces to his or her parents the choice. Parents must attempt to see if the child understands the seriousness of the decision. Next, the child and the parents inform the ministry of the choice. Third, the child must make a Confession of faith in front of the congregation. Fourth the new "member" undergoes a period of instruction, during which he or she meets with the ministry every Wednesday evening. The instructors teach the new member from books such as The Beginning of Christian Life and The Mennonite Confession of Faith. Next the new member or members complete their instruction by answering a questionnaire to see how well they have understood the teachings.

When the prospective members have completed their instruction, the ministry takes council with the church to see if there are any objections to the new member. If no one objects, the Bishop who oversees the congregation baptizes the new member, or members, pouring water over their heads in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Before the congregation, the Bishop asks each new member questions concerning Amish Mennonite Anabaptist theology. After answering these questions, the young person or persons have become full members of the church.

At puberty, girls begin to wear the "cape dresses" which they will wear for the rest of their lives. The body of the dress remains the same as those that she had been wearing since young; it will often be of cheerful color, but never of patterned material. It will be collarless, long sleeved, and will reach to

mid-calf in length. It has a stitched, belt-like waist, and it fastens up the back. At puberty, the cape is added. This cape is a separate cloth. It attaches at the rear waist, arches over the shoulders, and attaches again in the front, at the waist level, leaving an opening for the head, of course. Like the covering, it expresses modesty.

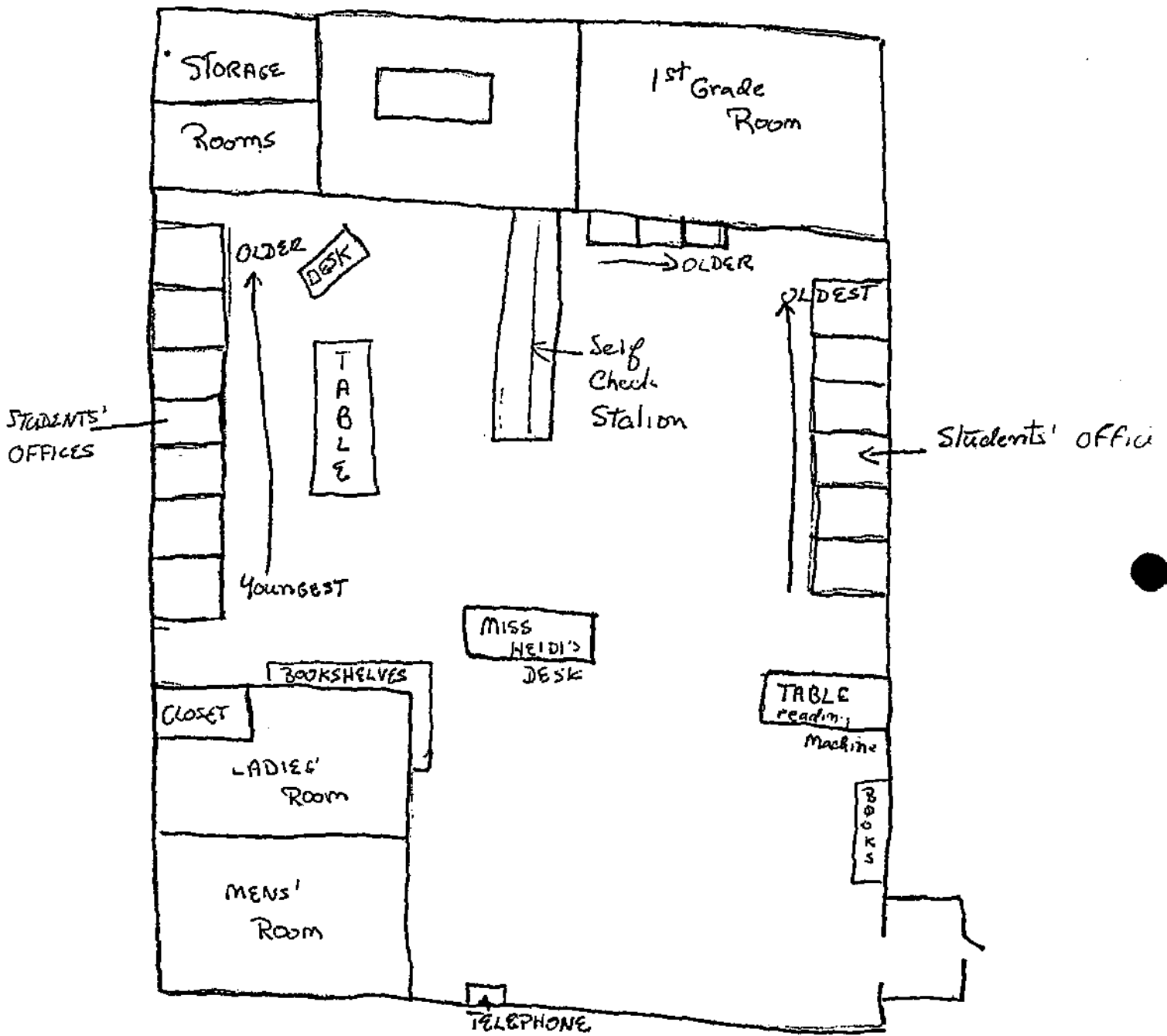
Young men do not change their dress during this period. Only after marriage--generally in the early twenties--do they change. At this point, men are required to grow a beard. Though unmarried men in their twenties may have beards, a married man must grow one. Generally, a man keeps his beard well clipped. He will have no mustache; the hair line along the cheeks and under the neck will be precise. This precision corresponds to the neatness with which males cut their hair from youth. Their hair may be three to four inches long on the top of the head, but along the sides, the back and the front, the hair line will be neat and exact. A male child may have straight bangs or have a part on one side. A child or adult male may have the rear of the hair cut in a tapered or square cut. Many of the variations stem from the fact that families of this congregation have moved here from many far-flung communities in which slightly different dress codes prevailed. Several older men, men who were once Old Order Amish, may display slightly different demeanor than others who have homogenized more to this community's standards. Yet, in spite of variations, the hair line remains precise.

B. While children proceed through these graduated steps within the church, they face similar expectations at school and at work. At six, children enter school; at sixteen they leave. The state

of Maryland requires schooling between these ages. The Beachy Amish have no problems with this system. Everyone needs skills of science, mathematics, Bible study, language arts, social studies, and scientific experimentation.

If the Beachy Amish have no problem with Maryland's requirements, Maryland has no problems with the Harmony Christian school. The community runs it effeciently and well. while in school, the children work at their own pace, in their own offices. They are physically and emotionally isolated from each other. Each office has a door to close off each student's study materials. When the doors are opened, they physically separate each child from the students on either side of him or her. Mr. Yoder explained to me that this individual study discourages competition and thus discourages depression among students. Students are not allowed to talk in class. When they do speak, to ask questions privately of the teacher, or to make a special request, they will whisper. There are eighteen children in the school this year. One teacher teaches the first graders. One teacher is responsible for the sixteen others.

The school uses a curriculum published by Christian Light Publications, Eastern Mennonite College, in Harrisonberg, Virginia. For each subject, a student has a book called a Light Unit, which is suited to his or her level. There are eight levels in each subject, and ten workbooks on each level. Mr. and Mrs. Steven and Ruth Stoltzfus agreed that the Mennonites probably developed the curriculum to satisfy state laws that the students be taught by someone who has had at least a college level education. The teacher here, Miss Heidi, has completed this curriculum through



HARMONY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

CHART II

twelve levels, in a program for teachers in schools such as these.

The children may get up from their offices to go to the self-check station to check their own answers. Each office has a small raisable flag that the student raises should he or she need help from the teacher. Otherwise, each student does much of his schoolwork on his own. At the end of the day, each student cleans his office, and each has a duty in cleaning the school room.

C. While young people spend much time at school, at home their parents also give them chores from a young age. Many of the Beachy Amish are farmers who grow grain and raise cattle. Others raise veal, or are building contractors. One recent convert works as a furnace repair man. Adults give six year old children relatively responsible jobs. Six year old Deborah Lapp informed me that she was supposed to help feed the calves (she added that she often did not do it!). Joyce Schrock says she began cooking at the age of ten.

By the age of twelve, depending on physique, boys begin taking on heavy work on their farms, or those of their neighbors. They may be expected to plow, to help repair farm equipment, and to be on hand for the planting and harvest rush. Yet at the same age boys begin a long awaited pleasure: they are allowed to begin hunting. While at first, they might be allowed to hunt with bow and arrow only, within several years they are hunting duck, goose, or deer, with shotguns.

The pleasures of life for the Beachy Amish, and for the children of the community center on family recreation. These pleasures cannot be overestimated. While no home has a television or radio--these expose too much of the wickedness of the world--

families play together, never wanting for things to do. One family with whom I visited had bought a trampoline; another used to own a pleasure boat when the children were younger. Many own stereos to listen to music of their choice while at home. At another home, I heard two sisters singing together beautifully as they worked in the kitchen (the Beachy Amish do not play musical instruments). On 'ordinary' evenings, families may sit together in the family room, and quietly chat or play.

D. After a young person finishes school, he or she begins to work full time at home. Also at sixteen, young people join the church youth group. The youth group meets on Wednesday evenings. One time, I was planning to meet with several young people only to find that they had gone to a banquet in Chestertown with the youth group. The youth frequently meet for organized play. At times, they go on camp weeks, during which they meet with youth groups from other congregations, go to one of the church's nursing homes or homes for the retarded, and spend the week cleaning the place from top to bottom. All the while, they socialize with each other. Many of the congregation's young people meet their spouses in this way, as Mrs. Liza Anne Yoder mentioned to me. In the summer, the youth go on a weekend retreat, accompanied by adult chaperones. Sometimes, the youth travel as a group to visit other congregations.

At the age of nineteen, many young people opt to go on 'service' for one, two, or occasionally more years. During this time, they may voluntarily work for a Beachy mission in Belize, El Salvadore, several other Latin American countries, France, or Canada. They also may opt to work in one of the church's nursing homes in Vir-

ginia, Arkansas, or Michigan. Service provides another opportunity for young people to meet a potential spouse.

E. Though the Beachy Amish live in widely scattered settlements, from Pennsylvania to South Carolina, from Iowa to Texas, a religious and social unity does not seem difficult to maintain. Most of the members of the church are people who have left the Old Order Amish; this common point of origin provides a cultural starting point.' ' Because of extensive traveling, as among the youth groups, members know each other from all congregations. Since many youth meet their husbands or wives while traveling, most of the congregations throughout the country intersect through kinship ties.

Aside from the traveling of the youth groups, other ties continue the social contact of the distant congregations. On "Sisters' Day," sisters will try to get together to visit with each other after marriage. Since the Beachy's young men prefer to live near their fathers, who attempt to establish them in business, sisters may find themselves living apart. While kinship ties often form the primary bond of the many Beachy congregations, the intervisiting of kin often takes ministers to the congregations of their children. Customarily, a minister visiting another church must preach at that congregation (Visiting of kin represents only one of several reasons ministers may travel to other congregations; there are many customary obligations that take a minister to another church). Kinship ties and religious custom combine to keep the Beachy churches a unified community without formal leadership.(There is a formal decision-making school

board and mission whose decisions are binding in those areas. Annually, all ministers meet in Grantsville, Maryland to discuss church issues. Though no binding decisions are made, all ministers come to know and be friends with each other. These ties further cement the many congregations into the one functioning redemptive community that it is.).

Ideally, a father will establish his young, married sons in business (as a farmer or contractor, for example) near to him. Yet, third or fourth sons often settle near their fathers-in-law if the economic opportunities are better. Though males run the Beachy communities and congregations, families do not trace their backgrounds through their fathers only. Since the major necessity in the community is to maximize the use of the land--to preserve ownership in as few hands as possible--the forming of marriage ties between specific families over many generations, is not as important as consolidating land in whatever way. Yet conservation of land seems so important that marriages of two brothers with two sisters, marriages of a brother and sister with a sister and a brother, or occasionally marriages of two brothers and a sister with two sisters and a brother are common, but never predominant. With marriages such as these, only two families become involved with a particular acreage rather than three or more. This pattern apparently held true more in the past than today, since the Old Order Amish could not travel easily in their buggies. Therefore, their marriages tended towards this pattern of multiple marriages among two families. Mrs. Ruth Stoltzfus offered this entirely logical explanation to me at dinner one Sunday. I cannot but agree.

Concluding this section of this paper, the Beachy Amish raise their children with a constant, gentle restraint. At church while in prayer, individuals turn around and face the rear of the pew so that they see no one as they address God. In school, they live with silence. The feelings of the soul become more directed toward the Holy Spirit than toward the fickle world. Furthermore, like their Old Order Amish kin, they tend to become shy, expressing their beliefs through example rather than through words. Perhaps I am making too great a generalization. Yet when the youth begin searching for marriage partners, these personality traits, these religious, social and prior kinship ties direct them towards members of the same church, but from physically distant congregations. It is with those of similar background to whom one generally marries.

IV. Children's games tend to act out many of the central ideas of a community. Small communities cannot foster too much competition amongst themselves in sports, school, games, or in adult life. Likewise, ⁱⁿ small societies children cannot play with members of their own age group only, since there are only a small number of children in total. The communities must encourage children to play games that lead to the incorporation of everyone into one group. Further, games often teach children to identify and handle factors as rumor or gossip. Among the Beachy Amish, young people--both male and female--play soccer, softball and volleyball. Yet, adults do not encourage the young to follow these games as professional sports, since they feature competition more than recreation.

Games of different age groups often reflect different attitudes of children toward authority. Children who are six to eight in

age often play games that feature a group of children counterposed to a single, central person, who is designated as "It." The central person often represents a symbolic authority. At this age, children covet the role of the central person. Yet, children who are slightly older often attempt to avoid the role of the central person; they are engaging in symbolic rebellion. Among the Beachy Amish, children from six to sixteen play the same games in recess at school. Like children of the larger society around them, they play games involving a central person. Yet the games of the children of the larger society tend to pit the central person against all other children who act as atomized individuals. In "tag," for example, the person who is It touches another player, who then becomes It. Older children tend to prefer organized team games. The games that the Beachy Amish children play at school feature central persons counterposed to all others, who form a loose team. In these games, the central person attempts to bring all children into one fold. These games cater to the younger children's needs and the older children's needs.

Among other games, the Amish children play Catch the Deer, Blackman, Bear, and Prisoners' Base while at school. In the game, Catch the Deer, the group designates someone It and decides on a base, or place of safety for everyone else to rest on, or to stop and plan. The one who is It chases the others and must hit each one in turn with a ball in order to catch them. Once a child has been caught, he or she will help It to catch the others. That child will try to catch and hold someone, but that person will not be caught until It hits him or her with the ball. The children

run around the school building (the Church building) while trying to avoid being hit. Once everyone has been captured, and all are on the same team, the game starts again, the first person caught in the first game becoming It in the next.

The children play Backman on the church parking lot. This game features two teams which face one another, and an It in the center. As the children on the two teams cross, the central person must slap one person three times on the back to catch him or her. That person then becomes It also. The two together attempt to capture the remaining group in the same manner as they cross.

When Bear is played, three children together form a group It. They form a semi-circle around one corner of the church building. The other children run around the building, while the three remain securely touching the building. As the children run by, they attempt to get as close as possible to the It-s without being caught. One of the three children who are It must touch a runner while still touching the church in order to capture the other. The captured person is held within the semi-circle. Others who are still free can try to free a prisoner by touching him without being caught. The game is completed when all are caught, yet this never happens during the period of recess (so I am told by my child informant!).

The school children commonly play Prisoners' Base. Unlike the other games, in this game there are two teams, and no central person. Yet, like the others, each team attempts to capture members of the other team by touching them. They then become prisoners of the opposite team. The older children often

use the younger as bait, sending them out into no man's land ahead of them, luring a member of the opposing team toward the young child, while the older child waits to swoop down and capture the member of the opposing team by surprise. While the youngest children play simply, the older play with strategy. If any member or members of one team circles the other team three times, they will have captured all of the opposing team, ending the game. In all of these games, the final goal is reached when all have been assimilated into one unit.

When the children play indoors, they often play *Whisper Down the Valley*, and *Four Yards of Sausage*. In the first game, the group picks one person, *It*, to leave the room; while that person is out of hearing distance, another child of the group decides to say something funny about that person. The one who thinks of the funny statement whispers it to everyone else, who all sit in a circle. When *It* returns, someone must say what he or she heard about *It*. *It* must trace who originated the statement. If *It* cannot guess who began the rumor, he or she must again leave the room while one of the others again begins a rumor about the absent person. This game seems to teach children to identify gossip and its origin. By making gossip intelligible, the game teaches the child how to control his or her response to it.

When playing *Four Yards of Sausage*, *It* leaves the room, while the other children sit in a circle and make up funny names for themselves. These names can be, for example, "Four Yards of Sausage," "In a Barrel," "A Bar of Soap," "Yes," "No," and so on. When *It* returns, he or she may ask the others any question, but the others

can answer only the name they have made up for themselves. The first child to laugh becomes the next It. A skillful central person begins by asking questions to which he or she receives only a silly response. It may ask someone, for example, "What did you do this morning?" That person will answer 'In a Barrel.' This question and response may produce no laughter. Yet, on the second round, if the questioner remembers the initial reply, she or he may ask any number of questions for which the reply 'In a Barrel' could be funny. The central person begins this game in a weak position, but always ends strongly, having elicited a desired response from the others. If one connects this game to the first one, 'Whisper Down the Valley,' one can hypothesize that successful use of wit in the community may be considered an acceptable response to gossip; it may help diffuse tendencies that otherwise could eventually tear the group apart.

The school teachers often choose who will be It in many of the games at school. In Bear, for example those who are It will be balanced by adult standards: not all ^{will} be 'big kids,' all boys, all small in size, and so on. Yet children often have their own ways of choosing It. Among the Amish children, a child may ask a seemingly innocent question, yet it may be a non-sequetor to previous conversation. A child who is not alert to that signal, and answers the question anyway will be It.

Further childlore ranges from the innocent, but somewhat sacreligious humorous grace: 'Dear Lord, Bless this bunch as we munch on our lunch,' to the sincere song, composed by John Phillip Stoltzfus:

Remember your Creator, God
 While still young
 He made your eyes, your hands and feet
 And made your little tongue

He knows the things you read and do
 And hears the things you say
 He knows when you have disobeyed
 And he knows when you obey.

V. When I first began working with the Beachy community, I asked Steven Stoltzfus whether there were any differences of opinion, or problems within the church. He replied that some people do not understand the need for modesty of dress. He also mentioned that some children leave the community for other churches, or they resist baptism. These two issues may be connected.

The Beachy Amish modesty in dress represents the main visible form of their Separation from the World. Separation itself is a Witness of each member's dedication to Christianity. Though each congregation maintains moderately different standards of dress, all styles represent a modified form of the Old Order Amish dress. This somewhat liberalized dress may be seen to correspond to a somewhat more liberalized attitude to the outside world. Yet, as a former Amish man mentioned to me, this more liberal attitude may itself represent a problem to the community, since some of the Old Order Amish may convert to the Beachy church as a stepping-stone to assimilation into the larger American society. Reverend Mullet reserved the final day of his week of revival meeting sermons for his comments on the importance of Separation.

The issue of young people leaving the Beachy church is a serious one; it seems true that many do leave. While dress style may symbolize the Beachy faith, more serious issues underlie that

symbol. First, though the Beachy Amish provide their children with an extremely rich upbringing, and though they guide them well, many of the older members of the community have themselves left the church into which they were born (The Old Order Amish); they may therefore show a negative example to their children, in spite of their guidance. Further, the Beachy church emphasizes the need not to be self-righteous as one individual to another, or as one church to another. While they are consequently warm and friendly people, they may be encouraging their children to leave for other churches. For this reason, it seems, they need the revival meetings. These issues are difficult and always present.

VI.A. While writing this paper, I have attempted to maintain an objective description of the Beachy congregation in Kennedyville. Yet, at this point I feel I need to state my opinion of the above issues to the Beachy community. As an outsider to the community, I first came to the church and was moved by the nature of the Christian Fellowship. Any child who may think of leaving the church for a 'better' situation in another church or another lifestyle will be greatly disappointed, for nowhere is there a better life. Yet I think that the Beachy church might benefit if their children could talk with a completely neutral person regarding their thoughts on the church. A young person may leave simply because she or he feels there is no one with whom to share honest doubts. In these cases, a young person's leaving may be tragic and avoidable.

B. Early one Sunday morning in October, I begged a ride from Chestertown to Kennedyville from a man in a pick-up truck. We

reached Kennedyville quickly. As I got down from the truck, I noticed four old tombstones on the side of a church in town. I walked over to look more closely. The grass of the churchyard glistened with morning dew. Beyond lay fields of sprouting winter wheat. Patches of ground fog restricted the view. Three silos of a barn rose above the fog as if towers of a heavenly city. The sun rose in the east. The fog burned away, and the dew evaporated. The distant city became once again just a barn.

That morning, the Harmony Christian Fellowship held a communion service. During communion, all those within the Beachy church (The Beachy Amish, as a redemptive community, practice closed communion. Only full members of the church take communion) join equally in the union of the spirit of man with the Holy Spirit. All individuals in the church, one by one, rise, and in a separate room wet the feet of the individual behind, as Christ did to his disciples during the Last Supper. By this action, they symbolically express the central importance of the church as a body of believers.

While communion represents the mystic union of the human spirit with the Holy Spirit, it also symbolizes community in the deepest sense. During this ceremony, individual status, age, or wealth do not matter. During everyday life, the Beachy church organizes and structures the lives of its members; yet the Beachy Amish are not sectarian. They state that their interpretation of the scriptures may not be the exclusive truth; being a Christian is more important than being of any particular denomination. Outside the Church, confusion, disorder, and chaos reign. This is the World. While the Church and the World are absolute and opposite, the

Beachy Amish consider their church and their world to be humanly structured by their choice to be baptized.

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