

THE DAVID O. BURKHOLDER MOVEMENT

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Introduction:

Every church denomination appears to have individuals who for one reason or another cannot be accommodated within the larger body of believers. Even though the Old Order Amish denomination appears to be a very homogenous group, they are no exception. While outward conformity in dress and behavior patterns is fairly uniform, inwardly some cannot conform to the majority. In fact, among the Old Order Amish, individualism, if it is practiced contrary to group practice leads to exclusion. This paper is about one such individual, David O. Burkholder, bishop in the Old Order Amish Church from 1917 to 1940, who then withdrew from the O.O. Amish and became leader of a new movement known as the "Burkholder Amish" near Nappanee, Indiana.

He found himself alienated from the larger group of Old Order Amish primarily for holding views which were considered too progressive, or too liberal, depending upon your basic assumptions of what is standard. David O. Burkholder (often referred to as D.O.) had serious concerns about what was happening to the young people, with the lack of Sunday school and the lack of wholesome activities for the young people.

How does a bishop, one who is considered the shepherd of the flock, withdraw from his flock with his integrity and respect remaining intact? This undoubtedly became the most troublesome aspect of withdrawal from the Old Order Amish, as he first sought to reform the group, then had to withdraw and shepherd a new flock of believers.

There were other similar breakaway groups in other Old Order Amish communities in Pennsylvania and Ohio. The Burkholder Amish group appears to have been the third group to break away. Later these groups affiliated loosely to become

known as the Beachy Amish Mennonite Churches, named after Moses Beachy of Pennsylvania. In the Mennonite Yearbook they are listed as non-conference Amish.

Development of the Burkholder Movement:

David O. Burkholder observed the apparent lack of concern by the Old Order Amish spiritual leaders to the behavior patterns of their young people. He expressed this concern to the other ministers in his own district, as well as to ministers of other districts.¹ Family members² reported that D.O. attempted many times to initiate regular Sunday school on the alternate Sundays when no church services were held. In these attempts, he met a solid wall of opposition, not only by the leaders but also by the membership.

The O.O. Amish have regular church services every other Sunday in each church district. The alternate Sundays when no services are held in the member's home district, there will be church services in an adjacent district. While it is not required, it is expected that Amish members either attend an adjacent district church service or visit other families in one's own district. D.O. Burkholder felt that Sunday school could usefully provide spiritual nurture for the young people even if only held every other Sunday.*

¹Peter Miller reported this as one of D.O. Burkholder's concerns. Peter was ordained in 1935 in another O.O. Amish district and is married to D.O.'s nieces.

²Family members who provided significant information were Leona (Burkholder) Kilmer, Mable (Burkholder) Mast, Levi and Paul Burkholder, and Malinda (Burkholder) Miller.

*As a youth in an O.O. Amish district southwest of Nappanee, Indiana, the writer recalls attending Sunday school on alternate Sundays during the summer months. (This would have been in the mid 40's sometime after D.O. withdrew.) In winter months, it was German spelling bees that were attended on alternate Sundays. Sunday school consisted of writing the German alphabet and reading the German Bible. There was no graded material and no effort was made to teach the biblical stories, the salvation story, or the moral teachings of the Bible. German spelling bees were attempts at being able to be the best speller of German words. It provided a challenge to be the best speller. Otherwise, it had no spiritual significance except perhaps the fellowship.

D.O.'s concern for the young people no doubt stemmed from his observation of their behavior and recognition of the effect this would have on his own family. Many Amish young people do not "join church" until their late teens or early twenties. "Joining church" is the formal expression that he/she is now ready to confess Jesus as Lord and Savior, and also accept the Amish standard of dress and conduct. With this commitment, one becomes subject to the discipline of the church body, and serious moral misbehavior without confession would bring excommunication. Many times this commitment to the Amish church was preceded by a period of "sowing wild oats". "Sowing wild oats" came to be expected by some Amish parents, but by no means by all Amish parents. It was essentially emulating "English" dress and behavior while engaging in Saturday night parties of booze and square dancing. The occasional Sunday evening "singing" was often well attended but the singing was only by the unattached girls.³ The rowdy group usually dominated the social events of the Amish young people, even when the event was to have spiritual significance. Typically, the church could not or would not exert direct control on non-members, and the rowdy ones were often not members.

Without effective control by the Amish church, the rowdies intent on evil behavior, faced no effective restraint to their behavior. Biblical moral teaching was primarily through the Sunday morning preaching service, which the rowdies were not inclined to attend. According to Harvey Graber, a former Old Order Amish member who later became involved in renewal efforts among the O.O. Amish through

³Harvey Graber, a paper written in 1956 for Mennonite History, entitled "Amish Renewal Movement". This paper is presently found at the Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

Mission Interests Committee (MIC), "sexual irregularity" among Amish young people was also a serious problem. He claimed in some larger communities, "few couples marry without first confessing to some form of sexual irregularity". The fear of loose morals came to haunt D.O. Burkholder.

Amish church leaders were paralyzed by upholding tradition and yet fearing innovation and change. D.O. felt, however, that a strong spiritual base must uphold the traditional way of life. The way to do that is by teaching the scripture to the young people. Eventually the "spiritually minded" young people would outnumber the rowdies and the Saturday night parties would disappear, while the Sunday evening sings would become a wholesome activity. When this viewpoint met stiff resistance, D.O. Burkholder was faced with the alternative of withdrawing.*

D.O.'s withdrawal was probably not entirely because of spiritual concerns. Those Amish who knew him personally and (including one of the original founding members, as well as his oldest son) who responded to the question, "Why did D.O. withdraw from the Old Order Amish?", gave as their first response that D.O. wanted more modern conveniences.

If concern for the moral behavior of the Amish young people was one major concern of D.O., one might ask if this was sufficient reason to withdraw, or were there other reasons. Another reason put forward for D.O. leaving the O.O. Amish was that a poisonous mushroom on his farm killed his horses so that a tractor became a necessity and the Amish would not permit that. While the poisonous mushroom story is true, the evidence seems to be against that being a factor in his withdrawal.

*Related to the writer by interviewed family members. Quoted in summary form.

James E. Landing⁴ writing about "The Amish and Mennonite Settlement at Nappanee, Indiana", indicates that D.O. Burkholder was silenced by the Old Order Amish for advocating mission work. This was also the view of one of the family members who indicated D.O. was more "mission minded" than other O.O. Amish. D.O. was undoubtedly sympathetic to mission work and outreach but it does not appear that this was a prime motive for withdrawing from the Old Order Amish.⁵ The actual event which forced D.O. Burkholder to withdraw from the O.O. Amish is difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint.

The actual timing of the withdrawal, however, must have been rather quickly decided. Rumors of some member dissatisfaction had been circulating among the O.O. Amish group for some time. One fellow minister recalls a conversation with D.O. approximately nine months prior to D.O.'s withdrawal announcement. In this conversation, D.O. reportedly said, "I suppose you have heard of rumors of a group pulling away (weg ziehe) from the Amish". The minister replied that he had heard those rumors and wondered if these were true. D.O.'s reply was that, "There is no truth to the rumors".⁶ This conversation took place outside the home where Noah Miller's body was being viewed. His death date was confirmed as July 11, 1939.

Henry Yoder, of Sarasota, Florida, one of the original members still living, could recall only three or four meetings among the dissatisfied Amish members prior to the actual announcement of withdrawal. There was very little planning

⁴James E. Landing, Family Life, Vol. 2, No. 6, June 1969, pp. 38-39.

⁵See my analysis and conclusion as to the reasons for my conclusions.

⁶Peter Miller interview.

or preparation as to what their new fellowship would be; that is, what pattern of worship they would follow, how they would meet their mutual aid requirements, or where they would meet to hold their worship services. Their primary concern at those meetings was when they would announce the withdrawal. It was on April 21, 1940 that D.O. Burkholder stood up before his congregation and asked who would provide the place of worship for the next service in two weeks. There was no response. D. O. then announced that next Sunday morning church services would be held at his house. (Normally it should have been in two weeks.) Everyone understood the meaning of this cue, but he further announced that he could no longer be their bishop. Feelings were running high in both groups. The Burkholder family did not remain for the dinner which followed the service. Two other families in the congregation heard the announcement and left.

Within two weeks following D.O.'s announcement to withdraw from the Old Order Amish church, the local ministers and a neighboring bishop, John L. Schwartz, took action to silence Bishop Burkholder. In order to provide unbiased judgment, they invited three Amish bishops (Nathaniel Miller, Cornelius Christner and Joe Yoder) from east of Goshen, Indiana to participate in the investigation and proceedings against Burkholder. They found that D.O. Burkholder was no longer in sympathy with the Old Order Amish faith and doctrine. The Goshen ministers were driven by car to Bishop Burkholder's residence to deliver the verdict that he was being silenced for his intention to purchase a car, (a contradiction which D.O. often noted with some irony), a tractor, and plans to install telephone and electricity which were all contrary to Old Order Amish practice. D.O. Burkholder thereafter could not preach or perform any baptisms, marriages, or serve communion in any Old Order church service. Later he was excommunicated.⁷

⁷Family interview.

We know that their first worship service as a separate group was on April 28, 1940.⁸ Two other families from D.O.'s church district and five other families from other Amish church districts met on that first Sunday in D.O.'s home. Even though there are conflicting reports as to the number of families and the names of those first families, the following eight families appear to be substantially correct.⁹

D.O. Burkholder, bishop; two daughters were also members.
Joe Swartz
Abe Stutzman; daughter Ida Stutzman also member.
Harley Miller
Henry Schmucker
Henry Yoder
Levi Glick
Roman Mullet

The original membership was 24,¹⁰ but we have no record whose families or who made up the additional five persons. (Each family husband and wife plus three young adults is 19 members.) All of the original families were members in good standing of the Old Order Amish church. Others joined the group as they worshipped in various homes until 1943 when a 400-seat meeting-house was erected on one acre of land donated by John Hochstetler which is located one mile north and $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles west of Nappanee, Indiana. The first worship service was held in the new meetinghouse on June 6, 1943, which was also the first wedding ceremony held in the new meeting house. The couple being married was Roman Yoder of the Nappanee congregation and Katie Hershberger of Kokomo, Indiana. The official dedication of the building was on Sept. 26, 1943.

⁸Mennonite Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, pg. 478.

⁹From two sources: The Burkholder Family and Steve Yoder, present bishop of Maple Lawn Amish Mennonite Church.

¹⁰Mennonite Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, pg. 478.

The first baptism within the group consisted of three young men and two young ladies. We have no exact date of the baptism, but we do know that it occurred before the new meetinghouse was built and took place at the John Hochstetler residence sometime in the Spring of 1941.¹¹ The baptismal candidates were:

Levi Burkholder
Ralph Sommers
Esther Swartz
Roman Yoder
Malinda Burkholder

The first funeral among the group was that of Eli Miller, son of John E. Miller of New Paris, Indiana. No date or other information is available.¹²

The third Sunday after the withdrawal, Bishop Mose Beachy from Meyersdale, Pennsylvania came to Nappanee and reinstated D.O. Burkholder as bishop of a new congregation of non-conference Amish Mennonites. Moses Beachy became the leading minister among the non-conference Amish congregations. These congregations became known first in Pennsylvania and Virginia, then in Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Canada and other places as the Beachy Amish Mennonites. The Burkholder group became formally affiliated with the Beachy Amish churches in 1948. In 1954 the Burkholder church formally adopted the name Maple Lawn Conservative Amish Mennonite Church.

The Burkholder group held church worship services and Sunday school in homes of members for three years. They changed the order of service by singing the "Lob Lied" (Praise Song) as the first song instead of the second as do the Old Order Amish. Also they sang songs in the "fast" tune, rather than slow

¹¹Malinda Burkholder, one of the baptismal candidates.

¹²Steve Yoder, copy of short history of Maple Lawn Mennonite Church located in Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

tunes with a "vorsinger" (leader). The church services were still every two weeks but now Sunday school was held on each alternate Sunday morning with a singing in the evening.

Sunday school at first was basically the German alphabet for the youngsters with reading and discussion in German of scripture passages for the adults. Nothing much had changed except the freedom to change.

Dress remained essentially as it was in the Old Order Amish church. Some of the beards were trimmed, the hair was parted in the middle of the head, and the men's hair was cut above the ears. Otherwise, the Burkholder group identified strongly with their Old Order Amish heritage. They now drove cars, farmed with tractors, and used electricity and telephones. Today (43 years later) their dress codes are still very similar to the Old Order Amish.

After the group began meeting in the new meeting house the membership increased steadily. In 1949 the membership was 65. All of their new membership came from Old Order Amish transfers and baptisms within the group. Transfers from the Old Order Amish were accepted if the transferee brought a letter of good standing from their Amish bishop. In some cases the Amish bishop would not provide any statement, in which case the transferee was accepted or rejected on the basis of the minister's own investigation.

Only one family returned to the Old Order Amish after fellowshipping with the Burkholder group. Ironically, that was D.O. Burkholder's oldest son, Walter, who had married in the O.O. Amish church prior to the break-away. Walter's wife wished to remain in the O.O. Amish church. He is still O.O. Amish but his son is now a minister at Fairview Amish Mennonite Church which formed out of the Burkholder group.

Some of the membership drove from east of Goshen to Nappanee each Sunday. When Ervin D. Miller was ordained by lot on April 4, 1947, some of the Goshen members expressed the hope that one of their group might be ordained so that they could have their own services locally. D.O. considered that a valid concern and on October 5, 1947 he ordained David A. Bontrager and Moses J. Bontrager to the ministry. Their new congregation became known as the Clinton Amish Mennonite Church and later the name was changed to Fairhaven Amish Mennonite Church. It is located on Indiana 4, approximately four miles east of Goshen, Indiana.¹³

On September 28, 1948, David A. Bontrager was ordained as bishop of the Clinton congregation and in 1949, because of poor health, D. O. Burkholder placed Bishop Bontrager in charge of Maple Lawn as well. On July 6, 1952, Steve Yoder was ordained as minister and as bishop on April 25, 1954. Bishop Yoder took responsibility for Maple Lawn which relieved Bishop Bontrager, and D.O. Burkholder retired from active service. Bishop Burkholder had by then helped to start numerous new congregations throughout the midwest. He had served 39 years as minister and bishop. In 1956 the membership at Maple Lawn was 76, plus 75 children.¹⁴

What efforts were made to involve the young people early in the Burkholder movement? The earliest efforts at Sunday school was a carryover from the Old Order Amish. Actually there was no German Sunday school material available. The German spelling book was used for years. Some of the children attended North Main Street Mennonite Summer Bible School. At home more Herald Press literature was read. The Gospel Herald had been in the Burkholder home for many years. The Youth's Christian Companion and Christmas Carol Kauffman's

¹³Steve Yoder, interview.

¹⁴Ibid.

writings were popular among many interested families. Eventually, in the late 1940's, English Sunday school materials were used by the children. In 1952 Maple Lawn had its own summer Bible school using Herald Press materials. One hundred students attended that first year. Even before this, the young people were organizing their own activities.

During the war, the draft age men were serving their CPS time. However, in spite of this, in early 1948, ten young people met to organize a literary society. The Clinton youth group joined the Maple Lawn youth in these fellowship meetings which were held biweekly on Wednesday evening. Much of their activities were centered around wholesome fun and games. In 1956, sixty youth were attending literary meetings regularly.¹⁵

In addition to the biweekly meetings, an annual youth meeting began when Dan Zehr of Ft. Wayne, Indiana invited the Indiana Beachy Amish youth to his farm. The first annual meeting was on Ascension Day 1950. Eventually this annual event included all Beachy Amish Mennonite youth in the United States and Canada. It came to be known as the Ascension Day Youth Fellowship Meeting.

The young people were also the first to reach out in service to people outside their group. Bishop Burkholder's two daughters, Lilly and Tilly, entered Voluntary Service in 1950 under the Elkhart Mennonite Mission Board serving in Kansas City for a period of one year. David Burkholder Jr. attended Fairview Bible School at Fairview, Michigan and in 1953 joined Irwin Shantz at Loman, Minnesota under the auspices of the Northern Light Gospel Mission. David Jr. married in 1956 and in 1957 they moved to Red Lake, Ontario area where they have served since. He was ordained to the ministry June 23, 1965 and as bishop June 27, 1973.

¹⁵Steve Yoder, interview.

The Man: David O. Burkholder

David O. Burkholder was born October 8, 1886 in Marshall County Indiana on a farm located close to the intersection of Beech Road and the Goshen-Plymouth road. This area is the Burkholder homestead so the intersection and adjacent area is known as the Burkholder "eck" (corner). He married Amanda Viola Stutzman (born January 4, 1894), daughter of Abe J. Stutzman, on January 30, 1913. David died February 8, 1959 and Amanda died April 16, 1950. Both are buried in the Burkholder cemetery on the Burkholder homestead.

David's father, Moses Burkholder, was an Old Order Amish bishop in the Northwest Amish District until his death in 1933. He lived beyond 94 years, had two wives whom he outlived by 14 years, and between the two wives, fathered 17 children--10 by the first and seven by the second. When he died in 1933, he had 574 direct descendants. In the year 1979, Moses' direct descendants were a total of 6,573!¹⁶

Moses Burkholder's ancestors have been traced to "the area around Langnau, Switzerland in the Canton of Berne".¹⁷ A Basel genealogist who was hired to research the Burkholder (Burkhalter in Switzerland) origins found records from a Langnau church dating back to 1555. The genealogy begins with:

Casper Burkhalter and Barbara Schoenberger had Hans in 1577
Hans Burkhalter and Christine Wisler had Jakob in 1619
Jakob Burkhalter and Elizabeth Roethhisberger had Michael in 1649
Michael Burkhalter and Barbara Schupfur had Heinrich in 1671
Heinrich Burkhalter (Bishop Hans) and Christen Verena had Christian in 1708
Christian Burkhalter and Christine Elizabeth had three sons and three daughters:
Christian 1764, Peter 1747, and Ulrich 1750 (This family came to USA.)
Daughters' names unknown.
Ulrich Burkhalter and (wife's name unknown) had John I (birth date unknown)
John Burkholder I and (wife's name unknown) had John II in 1815
John Burkholder II and Rachel Hochstetler had Moses in 1838
Moses Burkholder and Sarah Miller (2nd wife) had David O. in 1886¹⁸

¹⁶Moses Burkholder Family Record compiled by Owen E. Burkholder, 1980 copy, Evangel Press, Nappanee, Indiana.

¹⁷Nancy B. Hess, By the Grace of God, Hess Book Company, 1980, Harrisonburg, Va.

¹⁸Hess, pp. 22-23 and Burkholder Family Record, 1980.

We do not know of any ministers earlier than Bishop Hans Heinrick born in 1671. The Langnau Taufer records state that in 1708 fifty Taufer Mennonites fled to the Jura Mountains of Switzerland. In 1710 another 18 fled, some on to North America. Bishop Hans and his family are thought to have been among the first group who fled to the Jura Mountains and later in 1732 migrated to the Gerolsheim, Germany area.¹⁹

The Swiss Burkholders apparently did not side with Jacob Amman in the split of 1693 which saw the Amish and Mennonites form separate congregation. However, the D.O. Burkholder ancestors came into the Amish faith when either John I or his wife passed away (tradition says the wife died) and two of their eight children, John II and Jacob, were placed into Amish homes. Both John and Jacob accepted the Amish beliefs and married Amish girls.²⁰

We have records of Christian, Peter, and Ulrich, the three brothers who came to North America with their mother in 1754 and settled in Pennsylvania. Ulrich Burkholder was a farmer and a Mennonite minister in the Bowmansville district.²¹ We also know that Christian was a minister, and Peter's son Peter also became a minister. David Burkholder (1825-1923) of Nappanee, Indiana was a descendant of this Peter Burkholder.²² Moses Burkholder was the first Burkholder to be ordained to the Amish ministry in 1862. His son, David, was the third Burkholder to be ordained in the Amish church.²³

¹⁹Hess, pg. 23.

²⁰Esra Burkholder, Family Life, "The Burkholder Ancestry", January 1970, pp. 38-39.

²¹Ibid. pg. 38.

²²Mennonite Encyclopedia, Vol. I, pg. 476.

²³Family Life, "New Names Among the Amish", Part 4., Feb. 1973, pp. 13-14.

David O. Burkholder was first ordained an Amish minister in 1915 and bishop in 1917. (The initial "O" in David's name was taken from the "O" in Borkholder and replaced with a "U". Burkholder-Borkholder is from the same family roots. The choice of using "U" or "O" is strictly an individual choice.) For many years (1878-1920), Moses Burkholder was very active in performing baptisms and marriages. Later (1917-1940) David O., Moses' son, became the most active Amish bishop in the Nappanee area.

The family remembers him as being gone many evenings of the week on church matters. Often members would visit their home to seek David's counsel. This was one of David's strengths. He was also very sociable, talkative and never met a stranger. His voice was gentle and soft-spoken. No one seemed to question his sincerity or faith in Jesus Christ.

No one knows exactly at what age David was baptized or joined the Amish church. It may have been in his later teen years. His family shared a story of David's vision as a young man. In this vision it was revealed who his wife would be and that he would be ordained to the ministry. Also revealed was that he would travel widely in church matters. However, several perplexing problems became evident. The girl he was to marry was only 14 and he was 22. He decided to travel out west and work the harvest in the Dakotas. The other problem emerged much later after his ordination. If he was to travel widely as suggested by his vision, it would not happen with a horse and buggy. In the 1940's, David did have bishop oversight in Ohio, Michigan and Iowa.

When Amanda was 19, they were married. During courtship one evening as they drove past a particular farm north of David's parents' farm, both David and Amanda experienced a vision that the farm they were passing would be their first home. This was something they shared with each other after

marriage when they lived on this farm. Later they moved to another farm one mile south and two miles east of Nappanee and there lived out the remainder of their life.²⁴

In 1915 when D. O. was ordained as minister, there were only two church districts.²⁵ In 1916 a third district was created. The northwest district was under Bishop Mose Burkholder; the west district came under Mose Burkholder until D. O. was ordained bishop. The east district was under William Yoder. By the end of the 1920's there were five districts and by the end of the 1930's there were seven districts in addition to the Christner splinter. (The Mennonite Yearbook reports only six districts by 1940.) Peter Miller reports that William Yoder's health was not good during the 1920's and as a result, more of the bishop oversight became the responsibility of David O. Burkholder. In 1933, John L. Schwartz was ordained bishop which relieved D. O. of some bishop responsibilities. In 1940, John L. Schwartz and three Goshen bishops were to silence D. O. Burkholder.

David preached the necessity of being "born again" and living Godly lives. His dress conformed strictly to the O. O. Amish code and his beard reached to the fourth shirt button. He would use the ban or shunning in the case of unrepentant immoral behavior. But in matters of Ordnung (church rules) deviation, he was more tolerant. His compassion for people was well known. He loved the ministry because he felt called by God early in his adult life, and so did his wife. She always supported her husband and during those many evenings away from home, the family can never remember their mother complaining about it.

²⁴Burkholder family members.

²⁵See chart in appendix on formation of Amish church districts (1853-1966) by James E. Landing.

Maple Lawn Amish Mennonite Church 1948-1982

I have already described the initial worship practices, dress codes, and various changes which the Burkholder group initiated soon after meeting separately. The Burkholder group had not formulated clear and concise outlines of what they wished to do and how they wished to worship. Partly that may have resulted from the sudden decision to withdraw. In any case worship services initially were very much like the Old Order Amish services. One may not have recognized these services as not being Old Order Amish except for the cars and the meetinghouse.

After 1948 when the Burkholder group affiliated with other Beachy Amish congregations, and in 1954 when the name became officially Maple Lawn Conservative Amish Mennonite Church, the group had a greater self-identity and also identified more with other Beachy Amish congregations. More members became involved in summer Bible school programs; the Sunday school, now in English, had more graded materials available in English and this required more organization with a Sunday school superintendent, assistant superintendent, teachers, and secretaries. However, Sunday school was still only every other Sunday until approximately 1973 when the change to Sunday school and worship services every Sunday was made. The Sunday evening services are still every other Sunday but have become more topical and preaching rather than only singing.

Revival meetings were held in the early 1960's. These revival meetings placed more emphasis on holiness in living. Ministers began to speak out against the use of tobacco and alcohol. About half of these revival meetings were conducted in English and half in German. Some reacted against the use of English, as well as the teaching against tobacco and alcohol. In 1962, one group withdrew to form another fellowship which today is known as Fairview Beachy Amish Mennonite Church. It is located six miles south and

one mile east of Nappanee. Another group who felt holiness in daily living had not been taught adequately withdrew in 1963 to form the Berea Christian Fellowship. They located on the Kosciusko-Marshall County line road approximately one and one-half^{miles}/south of the Elkhart County line. All three groups observe the Beachy Amish dress code, with the Berea group expressing more variation than the other two.

Each Beachy affiliated congregation is highly independent. There is no conference which forms a consensus for congregational action. Each congregation forms its own consensus about worship practices or mission emphases. Aside from the few individuals who served in Voluntary Service, there was no consensus to reach out in mission service. Steve Yoder reports that, "Voluntary Service within the U.S. and mission service abroad were not accepted or encouraged and backed, nor personnel sent out until 1959 when one sister (Iva Burkholder, D.O.'s daughter) was sent to our first denominational project in Germany".²⁶

It was November 9, 1955 when 31 Beachy Amish ministers gathered at Weavertown Amish Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania to form Amish Mennonite Aid (AMA), an "agency of the Beachy Mennonite churches". Its explicit purpose was "dedicated to rendering of material, moral, and spiritual aid in the Name of Christ, to destitute and needy people".²⁷

In 1950 a renewal movement surfaced among the Old Order Amish. An outsider, named Russel Maniaci, organized a mission conference in August 1950. Two years later a permanent organization emerged called the "Mission Interests Committee" (MIC).²⁸ This organization also provided Irwin Shantz with workers and financial support in the mid 1950's. However, at its inception the Burkholder congregation did not cooperate in any mission endeavor. Today the AMA and MIC share many of the same projects overseas and in the United States.

²⁶ Steve Yoder, Questionnaire reply to writer.

²⁷ Ervin Hershberger, editor, Into the Highways and Hedges, "Amish Mennonite Aid Report", 25th anniversary edition, 1980, pg. 2.

²⁸ Harvey Graber, term paper.

Many members from Maple Lawn have served in home and overseas mission work since the formal organization of AMA in 1955. Many more became involved in sending clothing, quilts, and Christmas bundles as well as giving money to support missionaries in Germany, El Salvador, Belize, and Paraguay.²⁹ The AMA 25th anniversary report does not list workers by congregation, but Steve Yoder reports that since the late 1960's some one from Maple Lawn has been serving continuously either in stateside voluntary service or as foreign missionaries. Out of the present membership at Maple Lawn, over 20% have given from one to five years of service, half of which service was outside the United States.³⁰

Not only does the Maple Lawn group help those less fortunate in other countries, but they also have a mutual aid plan among themselves. An in-group medical and hospital assistance is available to any member or his/her family above the first five hundred dollars of expenses. All assistance is by free-will offering. Members report that this has been satisfactory to date. Fire, storm, and theft losses are covered by the broader based Conservative/Amish Mennonite Mutual Aid Association (CAM). CAM reinsures under the larger umbrella of Mennonite Indemnity to cover major losses within the group.³¹

Conclusion and Analysis:

What kind of perspective does the elapsed time (since withdrawal to the present) provide us now as we attempt to discern the issues which caused a group of believers to withdraw from the Old Order Amish? There seem to have been three issues which contributed to the eventual withdrawal. The three issues were modern conveniences, a desire to do mission work (even though no plan

²⁹Ervin Hershberger, pp. 180-181.

³⁰Steve Yoder, Questionnaire reply.

³¹Levi Burkholder, Interview.

seems to have been formulated as to what type of mission work) and the desire to see young people receive teaching of the scriptures. The "poisonous mushroom" story certainly didn't ring true with anyone other than the one who related the story.

Wanting modern conveniences may certainly have been a factor in David's decision. How large a factor, we can't be sure. When D. O. worked among the Dakota Amish, they all used tractors, and apparently other Amish groups in Kansas and Oklahoma did also. How much this influenced D. O.'s thinking isn't known. We do know that some of his early supporters were families who moved to Indiana in the late 1920's from the Dakotas and other western states. The western families were more progressive in the use of English and modern technology such as motorized equipment. It was against these progressive practices that Samuel Christner in 1930 led 16 families to form a separate church district in the South (Nappanee) Amish district. This group dissolved when no bishop would assist Christner in ordinations.³² This means D. O. Burkholder refused to assist the more conservative Christner and lent support to the more progressive views within the Old Order Amish Church.

Those who responded by saying D. O. Burkholder left the Amish church for modern conveniences may have been interpreting their own motivation for leaving the Amish. Or in the case of the Old Order Amish response, it may have been their perception as the most obvious reason for leaving the O.O. Amish. Certainly the very minimal change in dress and worship practices lends strength to the argument that modern conveniences such as the car, tractor, telephone and electricity were a strong attraction. Usually, however, upon reflection those interviewed conceded that D. O. had a deep concern for young people and believed strongly in Sunday school.

³²James E. Landing, June 1969, pg. 39.

The lack of support for the Amish renewal movement in 1950 would indicate that the Burkholder group as a group was not "mission minded". On the other hand, it was D. O. Burkholder's children who first ventured into voluntary service and mission work with Irwin Shantz in Minnesota, and Red Lake, Ontario. We know David encouraged his children in the direction of mission outreach, even though his congregation was not supportive. Lillie and Tillie Burkholder went into VS in 1950; David Jr. went to Minnesota in 1953 followed by both Lillie and Tillie; in 1959 Iva Burkholder went to Germany; in 1974-79, John and Mabel (Burkholder) Mast served in El Salvador. After 1955 there appears to have been more support for missionary activity until today Maple Lawn has an astonishingly high percentage of its people who left home to serve others for a period of time.

David Burkholder's concern for the young people was widely recognized by both his followers and those in the O.O. Amish church. How to implement changes which would effect the young people was his greatest conflict within the O.O. Amish church. Some O.O. Amish remember David as not being open about his intentions to implement change. One can see that any change is viewed suspiciously by Old Order Amish. One would not dare openly advocate change. Nevertheless, in order to bring about change one must know who will agree with you. So one must chance to express his views to others. This was the source of rumor which when denied by D. O. Burkholder led to accusations of lying and deception. A closed system like the Old Order Amish does not provide for expression of ideas which are out of line with accepted practice. Bad feelings began to pervade the entire atmosphere, where rumor and fact become intermingled and soon become inseparable. This was no doubt the situation on that Sunday morning April 21, 1940 when David O. Burkholder stood before the people he had served for 23 years as bishop. I'm sure he felt deep regret but events had reached a point where he could no longer serve as their bishop effectively. He decided to withdraw and start again.

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Peter Miller, Charlotte, Michigan

Steve Yoder, Nappanee, Indiana

