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Meeting in Holmes County

by Joe Keim

When you look at this empty room, it looks like any other room. A few minutes earlier, every chair was filled with ministry leaders from the Holmes County, Ohio, area.

There were local pastors from Amish, Mennonite, and English backgrounds gathered together for one purpose: to discuss what has to happen for us to tear down the walls of division and for the gospel of grace to move forward. I was blessed to have been invited and to have been part of it all.



As each man shared scripture and what the Lord had placed on his heart, one truth kept coming back to us.

"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it..." Psalm 127:1

Far too often, ministry leaders can become focused on what is in it for them, their ministry, or their own camp. That was not what any of us were after. We want this move of God to be His move, not ours.

We talked about the great spiritual need in the second-largest Amish community in America. One Amish preacher shared that during any given week, the different groups work together and help each other. But on

Sunday, those same groups separate, attend their own churches, and hold tightly to their own traditions and preferences.

Many have become so attached to their religious system that they are unwilling to open the Bible with anyone who might challenge what they have always been taught. Again and again, it was said that pride, control, and fear are three of the main reasons the Amish church system remains intact.

Security is often deeper than the religious system itself. In many Amish and Mennonite communities, security is also tied to hard work, business success, land, money, and what they have built with their own hands.

Many are known for being very hard workers, and in some cases, that work ethic has produced great wealth. But when money, property, and success become a person's security, these things can become just as strong of a wall as tradition or religion.

But we also believe God is working.

For years, we have sensed that revival is coming. The cracks are showing. Eyes are being opened. Bible studies and gospel-preaching churches are spreading, not only in larger Amish communities, but also in smaller communities across America. This is happening among the younger generation as well as among some leaders.

Forty years ago, we saw very little movement. Even twenty years ago, we wondered if we would ever live to see the day when revival would come among the Amish. In the last five years, God has been doing a

work that is far bigger than men could put together on their own.

Not only do we believe that unless the Lord builds the house, men labor in vain, but it was also brought up again and again that if we want to see true revival, we must get on our knees and cry out to God. Like the children of Israel in Egypt, we must cry out and trust that God will hear.

This meeting reminded me of the upper room. We need to come together, let go of pride, lay aside control, and stop building our own little kingdoms. The saints do not belong to ministry leaders. They belong to Jesus.

Yes, unity can feel scary. Letting go of control can be hard. But while we hold tightly to our own preferences and traditions, people are dying every minute of every day and going to hell right under our noses, including many of our own people.

One of the greatest encouragements of the day was hearing Amish bishops and deacons speak with passion and zeal about getting the truth to their own people. They know the fear, control, and condemnation are real. They know the battle is hard. But they also know God is able.

We prayed over one Amish preacher I had spoken with by phone about three years ago when the Lord first began opening his eyes. Today, I met him in person for the first time. Hearing him speak of the fear he has faced, and then watching men gather around him and pray for God's power and anointing on his life was so powerful and moving.

Joe & Esther Keim
Greenwich, OH
(419) 651-6813
jkeim@mapministry.org

Samuel & Polly Girod
Bennington, IN
(419) 631-5162
samuel@mapministry.org

New Beginnings
Greenwich, OH
(419) 962-1515
map@mapministry.org



575 US Highway 250
Greenwich, Ohio 44837

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We left the meeting encouraged, but also careful. We did not want to plan another meeting just for the sake of meeting again. We all agreed that if God is in this, He will lead, and it will come to pass.

Everyone agreed that we do not need more meetings filled with talk. We need prayer. Real prayer.

Too often, we say we are having a prayer meeting, but we spend most of the time talking about everything except prayer. A true prayer meeting is when God's people gather with purpose, humble themselves, and cry out to Him.

Jesus said, "...My house shall be called the house of prayer."
.. "Matthew 21:13

Gospel preaching churches in America have accomplished many great things in the world, but we must get back to prayer. We must cry out to God. We must let go of pride. We must lay down control. We must seek unity around the gospel of Jesus Christ. If for no other reason, remember this: people are dying and going to hell. We must rise up, make ourselves available, and let God use us in this generation.

Join us on Wednesday Mornings

If you would like to join a group of believers who gather on Zoom each Wednesday morning to pray, I would love to invite you. We meet from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. Eastern to pray for Mission to Amish People, for one another, and for the many people the ministry is in direct contact with.

Each week, we pray through a list of specific needs and ask God to intervene in people's lives. Far too many have lived and died without ever knowing Jesus Christ. God has entrusted us with the truth of the gospel, and we have the privilege and responsibility to share that message with our Amish friends, neighbors, and family members.

If you would like to pray with us, simply let me know, and I will be happy to send you the link. (419) 651-6813

A Huband and Wife Team up for MAP

by Joe Keim

We have an update on the bookkeeper position and also for the position of someone to help us update supporting churches. After searching and praying for six months, it felt like we were not getting anywhere. Today, I am very thankful that God has brought Ed and Gail from one of our supporting churches in Northfield, Ohio, to come alongside MAP to fill both of these positions.

Ed and Gail recently retired and are looking to become more involved in ministry. As a husband-and-wife team, they will be helping with incoming donations. Gail has worked in accounting most of her adult life, and we are so grateful they are willing to drive an hour and a half each week to help us with this much-needed part of the ministry.

Ed and Gail will also be helping Samuel and me update supporting churches and visit new churches. They love to travel and are looking forward to traveling with Esther and me for a season, until they are ready to go on their own. This will take place after we spend a day training together on August 9.

We are also thankful to Pastor Mark Ashley for supporting their decision to serve with MAP.

I often think about how God works. Here are two people who had good people around them for many years. Others invested much time, love, and training into their lives. Now MAP gets to reap the valuable benefits of someone else's work. That is an overwhelming thought.

Ed and Gail have hearts of gold. Ed has taught Bible Studies, served as missions committee chairman, been part of the church deacon board, and has always had a heart for missions. Ed and Gail have loved and supported MAP from the time their church first took us on for support.

We could not have asked for better servants to fill these much-needed roles. All glory to God. The wait was well worth it. Thank you, Ed and Gail.

