

STUDY OF AMISH CULTURE AND PRACTICES

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Ministry of Agriculture
Submitted By

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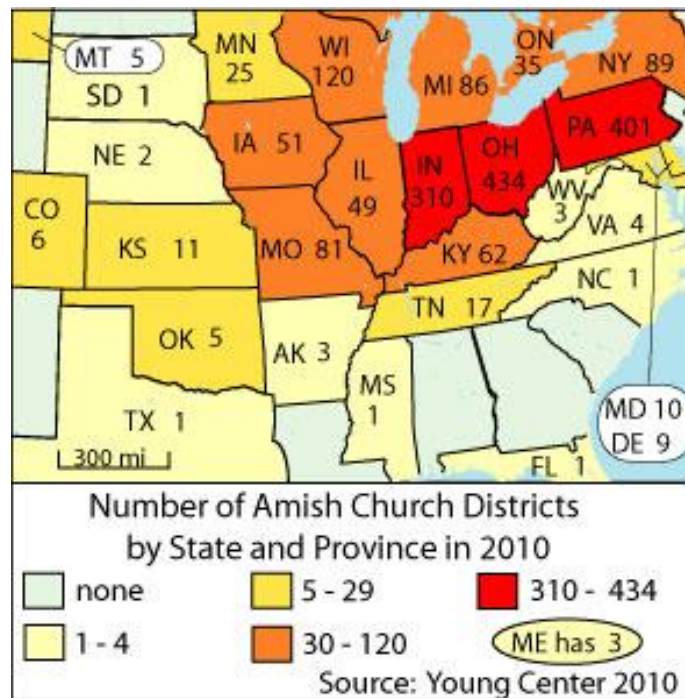
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INTRODUCTION

The first sizeable group of Amish arrived in America around 1730 and settled near Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, as a result of William Penn's 'holy experiment' in religious tolerance. Since then the Amish have settled in Canada, Central America and as many as 28 states in the U.S. with about 80% located in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. The Amish population in the U.S. 2010 census, numbers more than 251,000 and growing, due to large family size (seven children on average) and a church-member retention rate of approximately 80%. There is a new settlement forming on average about every 3 ½ weeks.

There are about 2,007 congregations which are called church districts. Each district typically includes between 20 and 40 families. A settlement is a geographical area that contains one or more districts. Large settlements have more than 100 districts. There are 463 different Amish settlements, but many of them have only one or a few districts. See map below



By some estimates, there are as many as eight different orders within the Amish population, with the majority affiliated with one of five religious orders - Old Order Amish, New Order Amish, Andy Weaver Amish, Beachy Amish, and Swartzentruber Amish. These churches operate independently from each other with differences in how they practice their

religion and conduct their daily lives. The Old Order Amish are the largest group and the most conservative.

All aspects of Amish life are dictated by a list of written or oral rules, known as Ordnung, which outlines the basics of the Amish faith and helps to define what it means to be Amish. For an Amish person, the Ordnung may dictate almost every aspect of one's lifestyle, from dress and hair length to buggy style and farming techniques. The Ordnung varies from community to community and order to order.

MIGRATION

There are many different reasons for a new settlement or migration to start. Amish migration is influenced by either leaving a settlement (push) or by enticing families to a new settlement (pull). Some factors are listed below:

Push Factors for Migration.

- (1) Suburban congestion and sprawl,
- (2) High land prices,
- (3) Tourism and other intrusive outside influences,
- (4) Disputes with municipal authorities over issues such as zoning,
- (5) Weak regional economies,
- (6) Occupational changes (closing of markets, jobs, factories), and
- (7) Church-related troubles or disputes.

Pull Factors in Migration.

- (1) Fertile farmland at reasonable prices,
- (2) Non-farm work in specialized occupations,
- (3) Rural isolation that supports a traditional, family-based lifestyle,
- (4) Hospitable social and physical environments (climate, governments, services, economy) conducive to the Amish way of life, and
- (5) Proximity to family or other similar Amish church groups.

GOVERNING AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Amish life pivots on what is called Gelassenheit, the cornerstone of Amish values. Roughly translated, this German word means submission and yielding to a higher authority. In practice

it entails self-surrender, resignation to God's will, yielding to others, self-denial, contentment and a quiet spirit. The religious meaning of Gelassenheit expresses itself in a quiet and reserved personality and places the needs of others above self. It nurtures a subdued self, gentle handshakes, lower voices, slower strides, a life etched with modesty and reserve. Children learn the essence of Gelassenheit in a favorite verse: "I must be a Christian child, / Gentle, patient, meek, and mild, / Must be honest, simple, true, / I must cheerfully obey, / Giving up my will and way."

Submission to authority at all levels creates an orderly community. Children learn to obey at an early age. Disobedience is nipped in the bud. Students obey teachers without question. Adults yield to the regulations of the church. Among elders, ministers concede to bishops, who are said to obey the Lord.

Since local leadership dictates the rules and regulations of the community, decisions about modern developments and technology differ from area to area as well as district to district.

A church district comprises 20 to 40 families and is the basic social and religious unit beyond the family. Roads and streams mark the boundaries of districts. Members are required to participate in the geographic district in which they live. A district's geographic size varies with the density of the Amish population. As districts expand, they divide. The church district consist of church, club, family, and precinct all wrapped up in a neighborhood parish. Periodic meetings of ordained leaders link the districts of a settlement into a loose federation.

Leadership responsibilities are shared by a bishop, two preachers, and a deacon in each district without formal pay or education. The bishop, as spiritual elder, officiates at baptisms, weddings, communions, funerals, ordinations, and membership meetings. Deacons coordinate mutual aid to assist members with financial needs. Both ministers and bishops preach in the Sunday services. The Amish gather every other Sunday for religious services in members' homes, rotating from home to home around the district. The close physical proximity encourages face-to-face interaction in daily life.

No central organization or national church authority holds the subgroups together. Most districts in an affiliation have similar practices, but even so the ultimate authority for Amish life and practice lies in the local district.

Although the Amish Lifestyle revolves around the geographic district in which they live, they still have additional social controls for any member who does not adhere to the Gelassenheit or Ordnung on which their Society is built.

When informal social control techniques such as gossip are not effective in keeping individuals in line, more formal control measures are used. The deacon and a minister will visit the individual, and if the offense is minor and he or she is properly penitent, the matter will be dropped. If the offense was more serious and more public, the deviant may be asked to confess in front of the congregation. The most severe level of punishment involves a six-week ban, where everyone shuns the individual. If the ostracism does not prompt the individual into correct behavior, then full excommunication will follow. The process of subordination to the group, confession, and catharsis of guilt feelings helps hold the community together.

The Amish have learned to live with limits, and would argue that setting and respecting limits on almost everything is one of the foundations of wisdom. Limits, for the Amish, are a requirement for happiness. Without limits, they believe, individuals become arrogant, conceited, and self-destructive.

To the Amish way of thinking, a respect for limits builds community, brings a sense of belonging, and shapes identity—three important keys to human satisfaction and happiness.

The Amish have been able to maintain a distinctive ethnic subculture by successfully resisting acculturation and assimilation. The Amish try to maintain cultural customs that preserve their identity. They have resisted assimilation into American culture by emphasizing **separation from the world**, rejecting higher education, selectively using technology, and restricting interaction with outsiders.

THE COMMUNITY

The community layout is dictated by the “church”. It consists of family farm homes, barns and silos, schoolhouses, and businesses and services in which the community would need and use. This also includes any social interactions.

The Amish’s leisure time is all about family and community. These activities may include weddings, household auctions and public auctions of farm equipment, horse sells, reading or writing for Amish newspapers or publications, quilting or corresponding with family or friends outside of visiting reach by a mail system they create. They also participate in other collective social activities such as: Young people gather in homes for Sunday evening singing, Married couples gathering with old friends to sing for shut-ins and the elderly in their homes. Work frolics blend work and play together in Amish life. Parents gather for preschool frolics to ready schools for September classes and end-of-school picnics bring parents and students together for an afternoon of food and games.

Other moments of collective work (cleaning up after a fire, plowing for an ill neighbor, canning for a sick mother, threshing wheat, and filling a silo) involve neighbors and extended families in episodes of charity, sweat, and fun. Adult sisters, sometimes numbering as many as five or six, often gather for a sister's day, which blends laughter with cleaning, quilting, canning, or gardening. Games of corner ball in a nearby field or barnyard often compete with the drama of the auction. Family gatherings at religious holidays and summer family reunions link members into familial networks. Single women sometimes gather at a cabin or a home for a weekend of fun. There are also special meetings of persons with unique interests, often called reunions that are on the rise, and attract Amish from many states: harness makers, cabinetmakers, woodworkers, blacksmiths, businesswomen, teachers, the disabled, and the like all while keeping the Amish immersed in their religion and culture.

Among youth, seasonal athletics are common: softball, sledding, skating, hockey, and swimming. Volleyball is a widespread favorite. Fishing and hunting for small game are preferred sports on farms and woodlands. In recent years some Amish men have purchased hunting cabins in the mountains where they hunt white-tailed deer. Deep-sea fishing trips are common summertime jaunts for men in Pennsylvania. Others prefer camping and canoeing and pitching quoits (a flattened ring of iron or circle of rope used in a throwing game)is common at family reunions and picnics.

JOBS AND INCOME

Amish life is rooted in the soil. However, all Amish are not farmers. In the past most families farmed, but now many Amish earn their living from various types of Amish-owned establishments—small shops, businesses, carpentry, construction, retail stores, roadside stands—as well as employment in “English-owned” factories, restaurants, and shops.

There are four types of Amish industries that consume much of work that is done away from the farm:

1. Cottage industries located on farm or beside home: crafts, repair work, light manufacturing
2. Large shops: farm machinery, lawn furniture, storage sheds, etc.
3. Mobile carpentry and construction crews: construct homes, install kitchens, build silos
4. Retail stores: sell hardware, appliances, clothing, furniture, quilts and crafts for the Amish community, non-Amish neighbors and tourists

The Amish sell many different products. Some Amish may specialize in organic produce. Amish sell their produce at produce auctions, through co-ops and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, and at roadside stands.

They have a variety of home-based businesses which includes such products as bulk foods and dry goods stores, buggy and harness shops, furniture, engine repair shops, and manufacturing operations. There are also bakeshops, craft shops, hardware stores, health food stores, quilt shops, flower shops that are included in the home-based businesses just to name a few. Some Amish businesses cater to the tourist industry. Larger shops and manufacturing concerns (called formal shops) are housed in newly constructed buildings on the edge of farms or on commercial plots.

These formal shops with five to ten employees manufacture farm machinery, hydraulic equipment, storage barns, furniture, and cabinetry. Some metal fabrication shops arrange subcontracts with other manufacturers. The larger shops are efficient and profitable. Low overhead, minimal advertising, austere management, modest wages, quality workmanship, and sheer hard work grant many shops a competitive edge in the marketplace. Amish are quite entrepreneurial, and farmers themselves often have sideline businesses. A part-time business may grow until it becomes an Amish person's main occupation.

There is presently a wave of new era businesses for the Amish which are mobile and remote business. These cover such businesses as general contracting work, or subcontracting. Some Amish specialize in masonry or roofing work, or may do landscaping or build decks. They do both commercial and residential building, and do remodeling work as well. Traditional Amish values of simplicity and frugality are now challenged with the wave of these new industries. With increased contact with the outside world, these businesses will surely prompt even more changes in Amish life. Despite the occupational changes, **virtually no Amish are unemployed** or receive government unemployment benefits.

PRODUCT DISTRIBUTION AND ADVERTISING

For the Amish, they produce a quality product for a good price. Things are very simple. Once the product is produced it is distributed through their local stores which are located mostly in the tourist parts of the cities closes to them, local flea markets, food stands, and large scale retail outlets. They also use the expertise of wholesale food brokers to distribute their products beyond their local communities.

Another resource that is used is the "Buy Fresh Buy Local" organizations that are located in most cities in the United States. These organizations help to "brand" products and help to

create relationships with the community, businesses, organizations, institutions, and potential partners.

The Amish do not advertise their individual products. They have an Amish Bureau. All products go through this agency for any kind of advertising, although they sometimes advertise in Amish newspapers.

Even though many may think of the Amish as strange, rustic and traditional, consumers buy these products because they take pride in the products they make and sell them for a good price. When consumers come in contact with them, they are honest and respectful. They have integrity and have a strong work ethic. These are qualities we are taught to have as Believers.

Here are 10 social marketing best practices that cause their businesses to thrive.

- 1. FORM YOUR BUSINESS AND NETWORK AROUND SHARED VALUES:** Amish home builders, for example, don't begin business thinking about the financial pay-off. It's more around values like being able to mentor employees or form lasting relationships with customers. They place values before rewards.
- 2. REPLACE FEAR WITH FAITH:** If fear is a driver, you're out for yourself and what you can grab today. If faith is the driver, you're part of a larger belief system where there is a source of strength and security and hope appears when hard times occur.
- 3. PRE-INSTALL THE FAMILIAL ASPECT:** When a family is in need, an Amish community gets together and raises a barn in a day; something that would take that family months to do on their own. Everyone in the community is automatically treated as if they were an immediate member of the family.
- 4. HELP PEOPLE AND PROFITS HAPPEN:** The need to make a profit never is expressed. When you help people, profits come.
- 5. COMMIT TO CRAFTSMANSHIP:** To show high quality craftsmanship in what you produce is proof of your principles. It also establishes a reputation that commands a premium price.

6. **PITCH IN ON THE UNPLEASANT TASKS:** The Amish are masters of leadership by example. When you pitch in on unpleasant tasks, it reinforces how important the goals are and helps others in the community learn faster.
7. **FOCUS ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:** There is no substitute for excellent customer service and showing appreciation to your best customers. That's because the Amish know there is no better way to build business than word-of-mouth.
8. **REPLICATE SUCCESS THROUGH STORYTELLING:** The practice of storytelling is a bedtime ritual. But it's also a way to use a compelling narrative to reinforce principles that work and have success repeat itself.
9. Getting your hands dirty earns employee's respect. Humility opens ears and minds. Fear and intimidation may motivate employees for a while but respect gets longer term results.
10. Organization and systematic analysis can yield efficiencies and savings. Make sure that all tasks performed contribute to the effectiveness of the business.

WORLD INTERACTION AND FINANCIAL STABILITY

Despite their separation from modern culture, the Amish are entangled with the larger economic system. They lean heavily on the broader world for raw materials and supplies, and they use banks. Just like other citizens, they pay all taxes state and federal income taxes, sales and real estate taxes, public and private school taxes, with the exception of Social Security, which they consider to be a form of insurance and refuse its benefits. Similarly, the Amish pride themselves on being self-sufficient and do not collect unemployment or welfare checks. They believe that the Bible instructs them to care for church members who have special needs, including the elderly. To rely on commercial or government insurance would contradict their belief that God will care for them through the church.

Financial security and protection come from the community itself, most outwardly visible in the Amish barn-raising. However the Lancaster County Amish have also created other ways to help church members in time of need. An Amish Aid Society was formed, by which members are assessed and money collected to help rebuild after a disaster.

This is a modest system of fire and storm insurance. Those with medical bills to pay are helped by church alms. Again, in Lancaster, an Amish Church Aid was developed for serious problems as an informal version of hospitalization insurance.

The Amish are not a wealthy people. Most of a family's **net worth is in real estate**, and a lot of that wealth has been created by rising real estate values. If you also consider that an Amish family does not spend as much on food, clothing, entertainment, transportation and gadgets, a small income goes a long way. The Amish do not borrow, and therefore pay no interest. They also farm with less equipment. Cash and barter are used as much as possible.

So, how does an Amish family buy a farm, handle loss or cover unexpected expenses? Again, family and community are the bank and the insurance company. All community members are expected to contribute a share of their income to the "community pot", (i.e., a young couple is not expected to be able to buy a farm. It will be purchased for them with assistance from family and community).

The Amish emphasize the separation of church and state. They prefer not to receive subsidies from government programs. They will typically not serve in government committees or commissions, but will often consult and cooperate with local officials. The Amish generally avoid holding public office and engaging in political activism. They are, however, permitted to vote. The rate of voting is typically low unless a local issue is on the ballot.

The Amish are not afraid to take a stand and are taught to respect and pray for governing authorities according to biblical admonitions. However, when caught in a conflict between their conscience and civic law, they cite the scripture verse "Obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), even if it brings imprisonment. From their reading of the New Testament, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, they believe that Jesus' followers are to be nonviolent, and they forbid self-defense as well as entering the armed forces. However, as conscientious objectors many have received farm deferments or served in alternative service programs particularly during times of military draft.

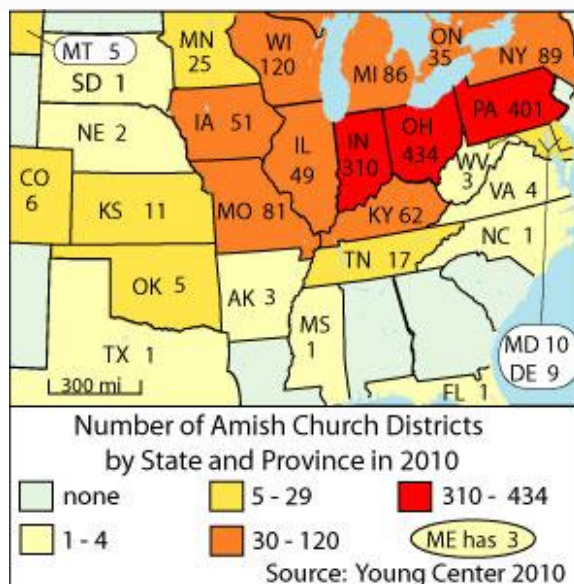
In recent years, numerous conflicts have pitted the Amish against the growing regulatory power of the state. The points of friction have included military service, education, Social Security, health care, property zoning, child labor, photo identification, and the use of slow-moving-vehicle signs. To cope with these various conflicts, in 1967, the Amish formed a National Steering Committee with representatives in various states to work with public legislators when issues arise.

In general, however, the Amish have fared rather well in a political system that respects and protects their freedom of religious expression.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN AMISH AND NATION OF ISLAM

| AMISH | NATION OF ISLAM |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Believe in one God and the Bible | Believe in one God, whose proper name is Allah, his messenger and all the prophets |
| Believe in their religion and conduct their lives accordingly | Believe in their religion and conduct their lives accordingly |
| Have a governing council and live by a written or oral set of rules that dictate every aspect of their lives | The teaching of the H.E.M. as taught by his servant H.M.L.F. Have an Executive Council and live by the "Restrictive Laws". 9 Ministries |
| Located throughout the United States(see maps below) | Migration through the United States and the World(see maps below) |
| Believe in obedience, humility, and simplicity | Believe in obedience, humility, and simplicity |
| Means of discipline | Means of discipline |
| Members are required to participate in the geographic district in which they live | Members are required to participate in the geographic district in which they live(Mosque) |
| Live with limits and except it gladly | Live with limits and except it (gladly) |
| Emphasize separation from the world | Emphasize separation from the world (the best and only solution) |
| Community layout is dictated by the" church" | Community layout is dictated by Allah and the messiah. |
| Leisure time is all about family and community- Brothers with brothers, sisters with sisters, and special interest groups | Leisure time is all about family and community- FOI, MGT righteous activity |
| All individuals work for the good of the whole | All individuals work for unity and the good of the whole |
| Amish life is rooted in the soil | Muslim life is rooted in the soil(HEM go to the farm) |
| Have business and work outside | Have business and work outside(HEM do for self) |
| In business they are taught to be honest, respectful, have integrity and have a strong work ethic | In business they are taught to be honest, respectful, have integrity and have a strong work ethic (HEM be fair in all our dealings and give an honest day's work) |

| AMISH | NATION OF ISLAM |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Conscientious objectors | Conscientious objectors |
| Community should take care of own | Community should take care of own (HEM rule ourselves) |
| Believe in acquiring real estate | Believe in acquiring real estate (HEM we must have land we can call our own) |
| Bedtime stories to children | Bedtime stories to children |
| | |
| | |



CONCLUSION

Although, this report is an overview and not meant to be all conclusive, it gives an introduction and a look into the overall structure and practices of the Amish. Their history and existence shows that when a group of like-minded individuals make up their minds, live by a set of principles and unite they can accomplish the goals and bring their vision into reality. They have been able to peacefully coexist within the borders of the U.S. with minimal contact and without control from the outside world. If the people who historically have been the mischief makers and bloodsheders of the people, can unite and separate from overall wicked practices and establish their own, WHAT ABOUT US!

The violence, riotous and unrighteous living, depression, mis-education, poverty and want can be eliminated, once a group of righteous people decide to unite, pool their resources and separate themselves from unrighteous practice and unrighteous people, then a territory can be established and controlled with the foundation of FREEDOM, JUSTICE and EQUALITY under the law of Allah (God). Under such a territory guided by almighty god Allah and his Christ, the righteous would have control of their own destiny. Then with hard work and obedience the kingdom of heaven on earth will be established. All that needs to be done is what was uttered by Master Fard Muhammad, "Except Your Own and be Yourself".

RESOURCES

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