



Chronicling the Anabaptist Rediscovery of their Special Spiritual Heritage

Unser Leit!

By David Kirkwood

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

This issue of *The Awakening!* is like none before and like none that will follow. I will shortly explain why.

But first, why do we publish *The Awakening!* magazine? We've stated the reason at the top of every issue. We are "Chronicling the Anabaptist Rediscovery of Their Special Spiritual Heritage." Your Swiss Anabaptist ancestors were certainly special, as they were devoted, born-again followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I recently started reading the two-volume book set titled, *Unser Leit: The Story of the Amish*. I would highly recommend it to you if you've never read it. It is well-researched, well-written, and every page includes beautiful illustrations. It would help you appreciate your heritage even more. My favorite

quotation in *Unser Leit* (so far) is from Jacob Amman himself:

We will not heed any counsel of men, long-established customs, or current practices if they are not founded on the Word of God, for our faith shall be pure, undimmed, and established solely on the Word of God.

The early Anabaptists spread the gospel everywhere they went, as well as everywhere they were forced to go when they had to leave their homelands because of persecution. That is why it is referred to as the "Anabaptist movement." It was always growing. Many of the early Anabaptist gospel preachers gave their lives for the sake of Jesus' kingdom. Their example has inspired innumerable Christians of all creeds over the centuries since, which has no doubt resulted in immeasurable fruit.

Jacob Amman understood that the centerpiece of Anabaptist faith was the new birth that was experienced by everyone who repented and genuinely believed

in the Lord Jesus Christ. He wrote, "Without a truly regenerative faith it is impossible to please God." He and all of his Anabaptist contemporaries experienced the spiritual regeneration that transforms people who believe into "new creations in Christ" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Now, here is why this issue of *The Awakening!* is like none before and like none that will follow: We begin with the story of Marie (not her actual name, but a pseudonym). Marie was terribly abused as a child and teenager, and the result was traumatizing spiritual and emotional confusion and depression. She was, however, born again a few months ago, and she has been amazingly delivered from what plagued her all her life. You will be blessed as you read her story in her own words.

Incidentally, speaking of pseudonyms, you may be interested to know that I have used the pseudonym "David Servant" for about 20 years. The reason is because, 20 years ago, the ministry of *Heaven's Family* began to expand into

what are known as “restricted nations,” that is, countries where Christianity is forbidden or severely restricted. In order to gain entrance into those kinds of countries, you must first submit a request for a visa, and your request must accompany a lot of information about you. Visa-granters also search for information about you on the internet to see if there is any reason to deny you a visa. I realized that they would discover that I was involved in Christian ministry and deny me a visa, so on our ministry websites, we changed my name from “David Kirkwood” to “David Servant.” And that made it possible for me to get inside Islamic nations like Pakistan, Afghanistan and Oman, and communist nations like Cuba, China and Vietnam.

In any case, if your ordnung allows internet access, you can visit both of our ministry websites. One is Heavens-Family.org, that has lots of information about the relief and development projects that *Heaven’s Family* has been doing around the world for 22 years. At DavidServant.org, you can find decades of compiled biblical teaching to help you in your spiritual growth. We also have a Bible-teaching YouTube.com channel called “Little Lessons,” where we have posted over 1,500 videos on many biblical topics.

After Marie’s story, I share the alarming results of our recent CSA survey of almost 500 current and former Amish people. I include the testimonies of a number of survivors, and then discuss redemptive solutions that can bring spiritual and emotional healing for victims, as well as justice to their perpetrators. Again, this issue of *The Awakening!* is like no previous one.

Finally, if you are not yet born again, you can be today. The key to that is believing in the Lord Jesus Christ who

said, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

The new birth is not the result of believing in certain doctrines about Jesus. It is not the result of trying, in your own power, to be worthy of heaven. It is the result of *believing in a Person*, the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, anyone can *say* that they believe in Jesus, but those who truly do believe in Him *follow* Him. True faith begins with an initial repentance, and it continues every day by a determination to learn from Him and obey Him.

Jesus, by His Holy Spirit, indwells all who genuinely believe in Him, and He not only “leads us in the paths of righteousness” (Psalm 23:3), but He also empowers us to that end. We no longer need to strive to establish our own righteousness, because we enjoy “the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (Phil. 3:9). Paul referred to it as the “gift of righteousness” (Rom. 5:17). It is the best thing that can happen to anyone, and our heart’s desire is that it will happen to you. It can today; you only need to believe!

Marie’s Amazing Story

By Marie -----

“He’s going to kill me!” I inwardly screamed, as he pushed my head underwater in a horse trough. I struggled and kicked to be released, but he was too strong for me. I held my breath for as long as I could but eventually, I instinctively inhaled. Water shot into my lungs. Just as I was about to lose consciousness, he pulled my head back up, and I gasped for breath. My heart was

racing wildly and my mind was in panic mode. “If you ever tell anyone what you witnessed, this is what’s going to happen. But next time, I won’t let you up!” Those words, spoken by my own dad, kept me quiet for a long time.

Some of my earliest memories as an Amish child are of my dad pulling my bed blankets off me and feeling his hands touch me in odd places. I didn’t know, of course, what he was actually doing, but it hurt, and it felt wrong. In later years I learned from others that dad’s abuse began when I was around six months old.

Early during my childhood, I wondered if I was the only child dad molested. Did he especially hate me? Had I done something wrong that my siblings had not done to deserve his abuse? I was soon to learn that was not the case.

One day, dad was working in the fields on the “back forty” of our farm. A few of us children decided to go play in the woods nearby. I don’t remember exactly what we were doing, but I vividly remember running as fast as I could down a path. I came out of the woods into a small clearing and stopped dead in my tracks. There in the clearing was dad, raping my older sister. I spun around and ran away as fast as I could.

Dad didn’t know I had witnessed him raping my sister, but not long after that, I caught him doing it again. That time he saw me, and I didn’t escape. I will never forget how he almost drowned me to ensure my silence.

His sexual, physical and emotional abuse became a regular part of my life as I grew up in an Amish household that appeared normal from the outside. Few in our community would have suspected that, multiple times every week, dad would come into my bedroom late

at night, or catch me alone outside. I often wondered if all dads did to their children what dad was doing to me. I was also sexually abused by two other men in my childhood. Others made unsuccessful attempts in my early teens. As I approached my teenage years, I became physically stronger, and if I fought hard enough, I was able to make things difficult for dad. That infuriated him. One day he was trying to rape me in his shop. As I resisted, he grabbed a rope and hung it over the rafters. Looping it around my neck he pulled me up until my feet were just off the ground. "If you don't quit fighting me, I'm going to leave you right there!" he shouted. He did that at least four more times over the years. I eventually stopped resisting for fear of him killing me.

When I turned 15 years old, I became pregnant with his child. I didn't know what was happening to me at first. I thought I had cancer. Eventually I realized I had a growing baby inside me. I told a cousin of mine who was a year younger than me. A few months later I miscarried.

Years later, when I spoke with that same cousin, she asked me, "What ever happened to the baby?" I had forgotten I had told her about it. "I miscarried" I told her. "So did I," she replied. "What do you mean?" I asked. She said, "During the same time you were pregnant at fifteen I was pregnant at fourteen—either by dad or brothers—I don't know who."

From then on, until I was married at twenty years old, I began to stay awake at night for as long as I could. If dad knew I was awake he would not bother me. I would hear him walk upstairs and visit one or two of my sisters' rooms. Then, I would hear him standing outside by bedroom door. I would lay in the dark, terrified, for what seemed like

an eternity. If he didn't hear me making sleeping sounds, he would move on to another one of my sisters' rooms. He abused us all.

Dad would go to bed as late as 2:00 AM, so I would stay awake until I heard him snoring downstairs. But while he would often sleep until 6:30 or 7:00 AM (and sleep throughout the day), I had to get up at 4:00 or 4:30 to do my chores. For that reason, I got very little sleep from age 15 to 20, when I got married. That had a very negative impact on my health.

I was one of twelve children, six boys and six girls. I know now that all of us girls were molested by our dad. All of my brothers were molested by my mother. I have also come to know that both my mother and dad were sexually abused as children. That, of course doesn't justify what they did to us, but it does help us realize that abused people often become abusers.

I eventually began dating a young man in my late teens who is now my husband. Due to all my trauma from years of abuse, I was initially afraid of him but that young man proved himself to be a total gentleman who treated me with respect. He never made any improper advances towards me, and we had a hands-off relationship until we were married.

Not surprisingly, I carried into my marriage all the guilt, anger, depression, and self-hatred that I harbored from my years of abuse. As my husband and I began to have children, all of my emotion began to spill out onto them. In 2012, my husband and I sought help from a mental health counselor.

That counselor began to peel back the shell I had built around myself. When dad discovered what we were doing, he

told our counselor that I was a problem child all my life. He claimed that I often lied about what others did. My counselor initially believed him, until dad lied to him repeatedly. Once my counselor realized I was telling the truth he realized he could not help me, so he referred me to a new counselor.

In mid-2014, our oldest daughter was 16 months old. Mom and dad were at our house and we were sitting in the living room. Dad was holding our youngest daughter on his lap. I was very suspicious of him because I suspected he would fondle her if he got a chance. I kept a sharp eye on him. Then someone called me from another room and I was distracted. I left the room to see what they needed.

I was only out of the living room for a minute. As I reentered the living room I heard our young daughter cry out. I glared at dad as he let my daughter slide off his lap. "I don't know what her problem is!" he said sheepishly. He knew that I knew exactly what had happened.

When I told our counselor all that had been happening, he said that we needed to talk to the authorities. So we did. An investigation ensued, and dad denied just about everything. The only thing he admitted was inappropriately touching one of my sisters when she was younger.

Needless to say, he was soon arrested, but our local Amish church posted a \$50,000 bail for him. So, he was released. Eventually he was sentenced to probation with no jail time. He violated his probation repeatedly and was sent back to jail. Again, the local Amish church posted bail for him and he was released. They always believed and supported him, rather than me.

Several years later, he violated his

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probation again. He visited a public park where there were minors, and he purchased a weapon, two things that were prohibited by his probation. So, in 2023, he was sentenced to four years in prison.

I still found myself on an emotional rollercoaster, succumbing to anger and depression. My frequent outbursts of anger made me fearful that I might hurt my children. In fact, I had hurt them already to some degree. So I asked a caring local family if they would take care of our children. They did for about a year. I was able to visit our children every day.

We eventually moved to another Amish community in another state. Although everyone was friendly, I was initially very leery of them, having been a victim of gossip in other places.

We soon became friends with a local couple, the Yoders, and they began to try to help me. They talked to me about Jesus and about being born again, but I resisted. Because of all I had suffered, I viewed God as a terrible Being who didn't care for me one little bit. In my mind, He only wanted to discipline and hurt me. In fact, I even wrote poems and songs to express those very feelings as a coping mechanism. Here is an excerpt from the lyrics of one of them:

*Does Jesus care, when the road gets rough
And my feet, to shreds, does tear
When the load bears down, till it's unbearable
Does He care enough to be there?*

*Oh no He doesn't, I know He doesn't
His heart isn't touched with my grief
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary
I know He doesn't care....*

*Would Jesus care if I kill myself
And in hell fire always burn
Where I never learn what comfort means
And my trials always will churn*

*Oh no He doesn't, I know He doesn't
His heart isn't touched with my grief
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary
I know He doesn't care....*

In contrast, the bishop and members of the new Amish church we began attending talked about God in a completely different way. They talked of a loving God who cared about me. Our special new friends talked about how they had been born again and how Jesus lived in them by the Holy Spirit. They told me that He cared for me and died for me, but I still didn't get it. I always especially dreaded communion church, because I always thought I was to blame for all that happened to me. I would try to repent of sins that I never committed.

Then, on September 1, 2024, we visited our new friends at their home. As we talked about the Bible once again, I came across Mathew 12:20 which, speaking of Jesus, says, "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench." I asked them what that meant, and they explained it in such a way that a lightbulb was switched on inside me.

Over the next few weeks, however, Satan went right to work to once again fill me with doubts and depression. There were some misunderstandings with our church that compounded it. But one day, our new friends drove an hour-and-a-half in their buggy to see me, saying they had felt led of God to come and pray for me, which they did with all their hearts. As they prayed, I felt love like I had never felt before. Faith arose on the inside. I finally believed that

Jesus loved me, died for me, and cared for me. And I completely surrendered my life to Him. On that day, my life began to change dramatically.

Looking back now, I believe that before my conversion I was oppressed by evil spirits. After my conversion, I have had to learn how to resist wrong thoughts that enter my mind. Although I still had much to learn about staying focused on Jesus and His Word, I have a reason to hope and a reason to live.

Before my conversion, I had struggled a lot with the temptation to end my life. A few times I tied a headscarf around my neck as tightly as I could to kill myself, but my husband intervened. There were days that he stayed home from work to be with me so I wouldn't commit suicide.

After that day in September, however, that cloud lifted. I was finally able to care for my children as they deserved. I began to realize that I did have worth, and that I was not just someone's worthless toy. When you know that you are a child of God, life takes on a new meaning!

My Amish church family, who have also all been born again, have been so supportive as I have taken small steps to live my new life of following Jesus. They don't gossip about me. They don't laugh behind my back. They don't make fun of me because my house is maybe not as spick and span as theirs. They don't ridicule our children at school and tell them how dumb their parents are. For the first time in my life, I belong to a group of people who truly care for me and my family. Once, when I was facing some struggles and doubting, they all fasted on a Saturday and came to our house to pray. They gathered in a circle around my husband and I, and they took turns praying for us.

When they prayed, I received a vision. I saw angels with swords surrounding our house and who formed a tunnel all the way to the door of heaven. Many of them around that door were playing instruments and singing praise to God. I saw a building that had a glow coming from it. I intuitively knew that the presence of God was there. As the people around my husband and I were praying, each prayer was picked up by an angel and delivered to the presence of God! That vision showed me that God not only listens to our prayers, but He cares about them. He cares about us!

I am sure that God cares about you just as much as He cares for me! If you are in an abusive situation, or if you have ever been abused, read the next article in *The Awakening!* and see the resources on page 15. It includes some resources where you can find help. Most importantly, if you want to experience the peace and joy that I have recently begun enjoying, the first step is to be born again. Find someone, as I did, who has truly been born again who will pray with and for you. Pour out your heart to Jesus, and surrender your life to Him. Soak yourself in the four Gospels to get to know Jesus like you have not known Him before. Jesus will heal you and restore your soul. He will give you peace and joy. He is the source of everything that is good! May His name be glorified forever! Amen!

Shocking C.S.A. Survey Results

By David Kirkwood

Because of too many reports we've heard like that of Marie's, we decided to conduct an 11-question survey of Amish and former Amish people about their experience with Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). I announced that survey on my Facebook page, and because I

have many Amish and former-Amish Facebook friends, we received a total of 483 responses as of this writing.

About 90% of those who participated in our survey were former Amish/Old Order/Plain, and about 10% were current Amish/Old Order/Plain. 64% were female and 36% were male. 38% were age 41 and older, 58% were age 21 to 40, and 4% were 20 or younger.

Here are three of the primary questions that we asked, and the results:

1.) "Were you a victim of sexual abuse as an Amish/Old Order/Plain child or teen?"

49% said "Yes." 51% said "No."

2.) "Do you personally know someone, besides yourself, who was such a victim?"

86% said "Yes." 14% said "No."

3.) "Have you ever heard someone confess, to any degree, in a church gathering, to victimizing a child or teen?"

21% said "Yes." 79% said "No."

Our survey, of course, was not a scientific survey, as we could not obtain a random sampling of Amish and former-Amish responses. We did, however, encourage both men and women, as well as victims and non-victims to respond, and clearly, they did. Victims, perhaps, were more likely to participate in our survey than non-victims, as victims often find some healing in "gaining a voice." Yet half of those who participated indicated that they had *not* been victims of CSA. That says something. Similar past surveys, I've learned, have revealed similar results.

In any case, although it certainly cannot be concluded from our survey that 49% of all Amish/Old Order/Plain people are victims of CSA, it would be foolish to

conclude that the people who indicated in our survey that they *had* suffered CSA make up *all* of the victims within Amish/Old Order/Plain circles across North America. That being so, it is clear that CSA is a significant problem that has been hiding for a long time within some Amish communities.

Some of my dear Amish friends have claimed that CSA is far worse in the world than it is in the Amish/Old Order/Plain world. *I certainly hope so*, but that is not what our survey indicates. If proving that the Amish world is doing better than the English world is important to you for some reason, I suggest that you ask your ministry leaders to conduct an anonymous survey of all the adults in your own community. You will need to do a significantly-sized random sampling with 100% anonymous participation for accurate results. And those results will only be relevant for your community, not the entire Amish world. For reference, in the world, one in every four girls (25%) is a victim of CSA, as is one in every thirteen boys (8%).

But my question is, *Why is there any CSA in the Amish world?* I can assure you that among truly born-again Christians, there is no CSA. No perpetrator is a believer in, or a follower of, the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, the purpose of our survey and this article is not to prove that there is more or less CSA in Plain circles, but to *end all CSA*. One victim is too many!

At the end of our survey we asked, "Please tell us anything else you feel would be important for us to know." 171 people shared information they felt was important. I will shortly share a sampling of their responses.

Allow me to pause for a moment and remind us all of Jesus' solemn words:

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“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea” (Mark 9:42) That statement reveals what Jesus thinks of anyone who causes a child to stumble for *any* reason. Certainly, the horrific act of CSA would be at the top of the list of evils that might cause a child to stumble—and scar them for life. In the world, those who are found guilty of CSA are sentenced to years, and often decades, of prison time, because even the world understands how wicked, vile and perverse such a crime is.

Below is a sampling of 40 of the 171 comments that were made by survey respondents. After that sampling, I will add some closing words for both victims, perpetrators, Amish leaders, and all readers.

If you have always lived in an Amish community where CSA is not an issue, then thank God. You should not be offended by this article. Rather, have compassion for victims like those below who share their stories in their own words.

Let me begin with the testimony of one person from our survey that hopefully represents the testimony of the majority of Amish people:

I had an amazing childhood with a godly father and grandfather whom I will be eternally grateful for.

There were three comments among the 171 that were similar. The large majority, however, were more like those that follow. The first three are from currently-Amish women:

1.) *A very good friend of mine was sexually abused, and she said something*

to the ministry. They asked her abuser about it. He admitted to it, and he had to make a confession in church. But then his abuse continued, and she reported it again. The ministry told her to leave it, saying that he had confessed and is free now. She was put under the bann for a year for bringing it up again. She is no longer Amish.

It needs to be drilled into the Amish culture that sexual abuse needs to stop.... It just gets swept under the carpets. We need to educate the Amish women and children how important it is to report any form of sexual abuse.

2.) *I have ___ siblings. At least 7 of us were either victims or perpetrators. My mom found out about it by questioning me, but there was no action taken to end the abuse.*

Through the mercy of God, I have found healing on a scale that only a loving and powerful God can accomplish. I truly am blessed because my husband is kind and very compassionate. We are still Amish, however the church we attend is different than many other Amish churches, and we have the freedom to follow the Word and the Spirit. Many of my friends have been abused. It's a plague everywhere and the Plain people have no immunity against it, rather, they seem more vulnerable than most. So sad.

3.) *I have a very traumatic past. I've suffered every kind of abuse that there is, and to this day I am really struggling with PTSD, different anxiety disorders, and depression. And YES I need help to this day!! But what I'd like to say is PLEASE!! in some way give the victims help and let them know they have a voice and to use it!!!! 🙏 Currently, for myself, I'm still trying to find it and not feel guilty!! I am ___ years old and only getting into seeking help for*

about 2 1/2 years... I feel stuck in many ways!! May God bless you as you continue to reach out to those hurting and abused souls!!

All the testimonies that follow are from former-Amish people. They are, however, not angry “ex-Amish-bashers.” They are precious people who either suffered CSA themselves, or who care about CSA victims whom they know. Many left the Amish, not because they “succumbed to the lure of the world,” but because they had to escape to a safer place.

If you are not born again, these testimonies may make you angry at me, because you will judge me, saying that I am only publishing them to make all Amish people look bad. If you are born again, however, these testimonies will break your heart and motivate you to pray. You will be asking God to comfort victims, protect innocent children and teens, bring perpetrators to justice, and bring an end to all CSA.

4.) *We were excommunicated from our Amish community because we sided with victims. A 15-year-old girl who was abused by her grandfather was also excommunicated at the same time as us. She has since spoken of how many of her cousins were involved.... I believe this is a shocking issue that the Amish shrug at!*

5.) *Whether I was sexually abused is a complicated question for me as it was inappropriate play from my friends that they initiated, but I was a fairly willing participant, as I had no sexual education at all. That sexualized playing-around resulted in a very enlarged imagination and misery for me from the time I was 8 years old. Unknown to me at the time, being the youngest in my large family, there was a horrible level of ongoing abuse amongst most of the*

male family members against their siblings and animals.

At 16, I myself personally intended to rape my sister four years older than me; I had convinced myself that she would want it. Thankfully, she was older and more mature than me and her response shattered any delusions that she would want it. Her reaction revealed to me my utter sinfulness and utter wickedness of my heart, and it never went farther than me grabbing her dress. I contemplated suicide to exterminate the wickedness that was clearly overtaking me and destroying me; I was a horrible slave to sin. But God, through His Spirit, led me to Romans 7 and 8 over the course of the next several days, and I felt a faint glimmer of hope. I cried out to God (if He was real) to teach me what the Apostle Paul experienced in his transition from being a slave to sin, to being set free from slavery, to living a life of victory. If God wasn't real or able to get through to me, then suicide was my plan as a fitting check against the evil forces.

As we know, God is faithful. I was born again and set free!

Most of my siblings are still some form of Amish, and they will not be able to complete this survey. I am of the understanding that all of them suffered sexual abuse at some point in their lives before unfortunately—for my three brothers—becoming perpetrators themselves. This started in an Amish settlement in _____ where the abuse and sexual violence percolated through the family. The community of _____ and its daughter settlement in _____ has to my knowledge an extremely disturbing pattern of sexual violence even from the fathers of the families.

6. I think it's very important to realize that sexual abuse goes on everywhere

in the world and not just among the Amish...I also think it's important that people understand that not every Amish community banns people if they go to the church leaders to report predators. And many Amish people are incarcerated for their perversion. Many go through the court and the legal system. It is important to me to get the word out that that it is indeed a lie that all Amish communities and churches are being silent about this particular thing. I was abused as a teenager. And I got help I needed and all of my attackers got brought to justice.

My thought on that testimony is that I'm glad that her abusers were brought to justice. But would it not have been better if the church she was a part of had no perpetrators, thus ensuring the safety of innocent women and children? My other thought is that her abusers were all Amish men, but none were born-again followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Does that teach us anything?

7.) In our culture it is always the woman's or girl's fault if sexual abuse happens. The women are not giving their husbands enough sex which causes them to lust elsewhere. And the girls were too pretty dressed or did something that aroused them. So the men were never to blame. It was the woman who sinned. Eve ate of the apple.

8.) I was a young girl, around the age of 7 (my memory is a bit blurry yet of around that age), while playing a game of hide and seek. I told my mom what happened and she said I can never again go hide with that person who abused me. But I ended up being forced once more. And I let my abuser know I told my mom. It never happened from him again.

After I was a teenager and realized just what happened, I asked my mother

if she or my father ever talked to the abuser's parents. The answer was, "No, your dad was too afraid of causing an uproar in the family." I have since forgiven him and have healed from it. Now, instead of hurting from the pain of what happened to me, my heart hurts for him and his family. Hoping and praying that he has repented and given his life to Christ.

9.) So far since leaving the Amish almost 95% of all women and children whom I have met who have also left have suffered from of sexual abuse. And we have been out for almost 9 years.

10.) I was sexually abused by an older cousin at age 4. My brother walked in on him and reported it to my parents, hoping for their intervention and help. (I learned in adulthood that he was being abused himself, and he also was hoping for help.) Instead, I was blamed for what had happened, and I was beaten with a leather part of a horse harnesses (called a tug). This was to keep the peace with my mom's extended family since the cousin pled innocence, and then my grandmother and aunt got involved and my parents didn't want to fall out of favor.

My entire life I was treated as a dirty sexual pervert. At age 24 [age slightly altered to protect the author], I learned my son was being molested by his cousins and I confronted my mother and sister to try and stop this cycle. Then my parents admitted knowing I was innocent as a child, but they told me to keep the peace. I should do the same to my child as they had done with me. But I could never treat my children that way. We are now safely living hundreds of miles away, but few people in the community would believe what goes on with my family if I were to confront them, as my father has been a minister and successful businessman his entire

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life. They look shiny and happy outside, but certainly are rotten on the inside.

11.) A counselor in _____ told me that CSA among the Amish is the same as the general population, every one out of three children is a victim. She said there's only one thing different with the Amish and that is that they have more sex with animals. In my lifetime as an Amish person, I have personally heard confessions made before the church of having sex with animals. In 2 different cases, in the church district I lived in, we were ready to have communion before we had ordination service. In both cases the men confessed to having sex with animals and were put in the bann for 2 weeks. Both of those men ended up being ordained to the ministry. In my case, both myself and my firstborn daughter were molested, and from what I gathered from my mother, she was too. In one year's time, one of my nieces, a cousin, and a sister-in-law confided in me that they were molested. I've had friends tell me the same thing.

12.) I was from a family of ____, and I know that every one of our family—__ boys and __ girls—were all sexually abused. I left the community at age ____ and wasn't a member there until I went back for about __ months when I was ____ years old. During those months, I heard one married man confess to bestiality numerous times and eventually he was ordained deacon, and the hope and sentiment was that his selection was from God because maybe his ordination would give him the strength to overcome. I know of several other abusers in the community. One of them is finally going to trial with the church leaders defending him till their last breath saying nothing happened. Though it was always common knowledge his father even paid hush money in one case.

13.) First of all...**THANK YOU** for caring enough about this dark evil to expose it. It was rampant in the old order Amish where I came from. The one that abused me also abused over 25, yes, 25 other little girls. All because it was not taken seriously enough to **STOP IT**. And I know of many, many other little girls who were abused in this same church, many of them multiple times. Some by the ministers themselves. It is utterly heartbreaking. Most of them don't have a voice, and I must say my voice is shaking in exposing this.

14.) I was sexually assaulted/abused daily by two older brothers and my grandpa as a young Amish child from 4 yrs old until 20 yrs old.

15.) My sister was sexually abused and became pregnant and had a daughter. She was kept longer in the bann than her abuser. They said she was more to blame than he was, because she allowed her abuser to do it.

16.) An Amish Bishop had as high as 9 victims in my community over the course of 15 years and was not reported to the law.

17.) My wife was raped by an Amish neighbor when she was 8 or 9. As you can imagine, this has caused a lot of emotional damage and trauma in our marriage. This was never reported to anyone, and she never told anyone until several years into our marriage. Thank God for His healing power. It has been a long journey, but God has been very faithful to us.

18.) The stigma that follows victims who go public is far worse than the fate of the perpetrators. The victims get blamed, they get ostracized, they are asked what they did to entice men to behave like that. As if a child has any understanding of sex! Beyond that, they

don't educate or talk about sex at all.

19.) I currently know of two communities not far from us with a major pedophile problem. In one the pedophile has been arrested a little over a year ago, in the other the pedophile still roams free, although people have tried to have him arrested. The one who has been arrested has the support of the ministry, and the church members are forbidden to talk about it unless they talk to the bishop. The pedophile who still roams free has sprayed gas into windows to drug the children before going in and raping them, during the night.

When the person who molested me and some other girls was exposed, it was suggested by his mom (a minister's wife) that we probably didn't behave ourselves like we should have, and caused him to act like that. I know that's not true! This problem is way more prevalent than people know or want to know. Thank you for doing this!

20.) The only time the cops got notified about it was when the predator turned himself in with the ministry covering him, telling the cops they have everything under control. So he was let off the hook. But he is still living on the same property as young girls are, and he is still grooming them.

21.) I personally know of two bishops, both related to me, who raped their sons and daughters. A third bishop had 32 counts of raping his four daughters. All three bishops were defended by the church members, all three were convicted in court and put in prison. When I saw how corrupt the Amish leadership was, I began to realize they might not be the exclusive Bride of Christ according to their narrative.

22.) My older brother has always been the favorite child because he is a boy.

From the time I was 7 or 8 until I was 10 years old, he sexually abused me. I didn't personally report it to anyone until several years later, but my parents knew about it. My older sister caught him several times and had to pull him off me. She told my parents, but they did nothing. When I was 10, my dad saw it happening multiple times. He only scolded him a little and did nothing to stop it from happening again. The sexual abuse stopped happening when I was 10, and my dad says he stopped it, but that's not true. The only reason it ever stopped is because I learned how to fight.

23.) *I grew up in the _____ Amish community in _____ before moving to _____. Sexual abuse and physical abuse were rampant. From brothers and sisters having babies together, to fathers and daughters having kids...it is just sickening. The victimized children were silenced and led to believe they were to blame, so they should forgive and never say another word. The weddings and playroom situation in which the children of opposite genders are forced to kiss in front of the parents is another oddity. [Note: This seems to primarily be something done in certain sect of Amish.] The abuse to animals and sexual abuse is just disgusting. So many men confessed in church to having sex with dogs to other poor animals. I am ashamed to say I grew up in such a cult that participated in such horror. The abuse that is given to the mentally disabled and Down syndrome kids will just break your heart! I have listened time and time again to the English go on and on about the Amish being such good people and how they envy their Christian ways that I only wished they knew the truth and there was a way to stop all of the abuse!*

24.) *When I spoke of my personal abuse*

to an adult I was not believed.... The adult interrogated my abuser who denied it, and the abuser started the work of preserving his image and I was accused of lying.... My abuser turned to the Amish community and led people to believe I was a difficult, troubled, and crazy individual and was making terrible accusations that were not true, so he looked like the victim and I looked like the offender and the one lying. This is why those who are abused struggle to come forward because those in positions of power doing the abusing overpower and undermine those coming forward with the truth.

Later, I was told by a deacon in the same church as the abuser that he confessed to being mean to me but never fully owned or took responsibility for the sexual abuse. The confession thing they have in the Amish churches is useless. It is very similar to the Catholic Sacrament where they believe that God abolishes their sin through confession to the priest giving the priest the power to forgive and abolish their sins. Instead of directly being accountable to God, others, and law enforcement if they commit a crime, they look to the bishop giving him the power to deal with and handle their sin.

We all know how it's handled—the bishop tells the whole congregation what the sin is and whether it merits the shunning process. After that everyone is told to practice shunning if warranted and then to forgive that person of their sin and to never speak of it again. That systemic process only perpetuates and allows abuse to continue. Do you think an abuser is automatically going to stop abusing when he has received absolution from the bishop for his sins?! Is it true repentance, penance, or a way to try and appease their own conscience, when they confess their sin to the bishop?! In my humble opinion this

confession system is only one aspect of a very complex problem, but a big part of the problem, none the less.

Without directly addressing the sin issue within oneself, the damage and harm it brought to themselves and others, and processing the deeper underlying issues that allowed the sin to grow in the first place, there is no room being made for the work of true repentance and a change of heart. Changed behavior is the result of a changed heart. To sweep things under the rug and not be allowed to speak of what occurred is not going to make the problems miraculously disappear; just because the bishop has given his absolution. Why the bishop is being given that kind of power in the first place is a big problem too!

25.) *When I reported my abuse, I was whipped because I was bad. I was 8 years old.*

26.) *Reporting abuse to the authorities is considered worse than the abuse itself.*

27.) *There was a neighboring old order church where I grew up that the one preacher sexually abused his daughters and the bishop actually reported him to the authorities and the abuser has been in prison ever since. So I thought I'd let you know that thankfully some bishops/churches don't accept this in any way!*

28.) *I was sexually abused by a friend's brother when I was 13. My sister, when she was 12, was raped by an older brother. She told me, but we never told my parents, which I regret to this day. I had many friends who were sexually violated by male family members. A grandfather who molested his granddaughters, who were my friends and cousins. He was also a bishop. It was all hush-hush. This was in _____, _____. I heard that the grandfather repented*

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before he passed away, at a very old age. I'm so grateful these atrocities are being exposed and dealt with.

29.) I myself wasn't molested but it was almost unreal, as over time again and again, I found out of yet another of my friends who was molested/raped. This was in a New Order Amish church.

30.) So many of my female cousins and aunts are victims... my aunt had my grandpa's baby. I had my dad's baby.

31.) It was always blamed on the girl. Even if she was only small. My abuse started at age 8 until I told my mom at 14.

32.) I was part of the _____ Amish in _____. These communities are a large part of the problem today! Between the mental, physical and sexual abuse, I still struggle today with knowing my self-worth. So many kids are abused and these crimes are hidden or the abuser is never punished due to the cultish religion or ordnung that they hide behind for protection. So many times, the abuser never once gets any punishment as the Amish deal with it according to the ordnung, and these children suffer for the rest of their lives. They provoke the kids by using sick rules for dating [bed courtship] and if you don't follow them you are put in the bann.... We were all taught as little kids that the cops are of the devil and part of a cult, that is why we can never involve them as they will do bad things. I believed that for so long and even long after I left. That is sad and now I finally understand the reasoning why they would do that—to keep everything hush and continue to control our minds! I appreciate all that you are doing and happy to help in any way!

33.) In Amish culture the girls are always to blame, it was a girl's fault if

she got sexually abused. And the men go free. Or it is the wife's fault, as she probably isn't giving her husband enough sex. On another note, fathers have no idea how to father their sons and daughters and be spiritual leaders in the homes. They have no idea how to love in a clean fatherly way, they have no idea how to connect on a heart level.

34.) I was sexually abused from the age of 5 to teenage years by 6 different offenders. I know of many, many others that were. Far more of my ex-Amish friends were abused than not. Very sad and upsetting.

35.) In the community where I grew up, if there was anything like that happening it would have been confessed in such a way that you hardly knew what they were confessing to. But it did happen, and as a result, my young cousin became pregnant from a family member and they tried to cover up and say it was the parents' child (the baby). Bestiality was something that was confessed to many times by numerous different men and boys.... Another thing that happened many times was sexual impurity among the dating couples. I did not know of very many couples where this didn't happen, sometimes resulting in them getting pregnant and having to quickly get married.

36.) While still Amish I personally knew two cases of the father having molested his own daughters. The one ongoing case was reported and three of the five ministers defended the molester. Two defended the girls.

Later, after we left, it was revealed that the three had molested their own daughters. The bishop served his time in prison as a "martyr." Those (the molested) that reported it to the authorities were put in the bann and shunned for reporting it and were considered the

bad guys. Later I found out of several more old cases in that community that were never reported.

37.) I have a distant relative who is serving a decades-long prison sentence for molesting his nieces. The father of the little girls that were molested (by their uncle) reported it to the authorities, which caused a big uproar among the Amish. The father was basically reprimanded for going to the authorities, he was told that the Amish preachers should have been the ones to deal with it, where it would have been swept under the rug, with nothing really done about it.

38.) My abuser, who was also my sister's abuser, later was an Amish school teacher, and he is now an Amish bishop, and a counselor. Also in our community, there are multiple other known cases of abuse in the last 15 years. Two brothers, one also a bishop, are in prison for molesting their own daughters. Another bishop has been dealt with by the church [not reported to authorities] for molesting his children. Another bishop was dealt with [not reported to authorities] for molesting a young girl in his church. A minister was dealt with by the church [not reported to authorities] for molesting his granddaughter. And the list goes on. Certainly not all of them are in the ministry.

39.) As an Amish teen in my rumspringa time, I was saddened that 75% of my friends endured sexual abuse, and they often spoke on it while intoxicated. I'd say over half of those reported to a parent or someone close and they were told they were lying or that they need to keep silent about it. Their voices need to be heard!

40.) Please, something must be done, there are many more children who need help among the Amish 😞😞 I know, I

was there, and I saw my sister and relatives and friends, who were sexually abused and suppressed.

There were 131 other heart-breaking testimonies that I wish I could include, as those precious victims deserve a voice, but we just don't have enough room in this issue of *The Awakening!* to publish them all. But I hope that all readers who are victims took note of the testimonies of victims who have found healing through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is your hope as well! He can "restore your soul" (Psalm 23:3). The restoration begins with the new birth. On the last page of this issue of *The Awakening!*, there are multiple free resources we are offering that we would be happy to mail to you. One is an article titled, "What Does it Really Mean to be Born Again?" (which we can also email to you in ten seconds at no cost to us). The second is a biblically-based, Christ-centered book to help victims of CSA titled, *On the Threshold of Hope: Opening the Door to Healing for Survivors of Sexual Abuse*. Just write, email, or call us to make your request for either resource or both.

If you are *currently* a victim of abuse, as soon as you can, call Amish Restoration at 1-888-621-1985, and tell the person who answers what is happening to you. The person who answers your phone call will be able to help you take steps to protect yourself and stop the perpetrator. They will be able to speak in Pennsylvania Dutch. (Please understand, they are not a resource to help non-abuse victims relocate. They only serve abuse victims within Plain communities, and relocation is often not necessary for abuse victims to find safety within their communities.) If your church ministry leaders tell you that you have done wrong in seeking help by telling someone on the outside what has happened to you, don't listen

to them for a second. They are protecting themselves, not you.

If you are a perpetrator of CSA, your only hope is the Lord Jesus Christ and the forgiveness and deliverance from slavery to sin that He offers through His death and resurrection. We would also be happy to send you a copy of "What Does it Really Mean to be Born Again?" But I must tell you that if you *are* truly born again, you will seek out any and all whom you have abused and, in the presence of witnesses, tearfully beg for their forgiveness. If you committed your crimes as an adult who was legally accountable to the law, you will also turn yourself in to the civil authorities and confess, just as you would do if you were born again and had gotten away with murdering someone in the past. *Born-again people obey God*. By turning yourself in to the authorities, you are more likely to receive leniency, but you must prepare to suffer the justice you deserve.

To all readers: If you are truly born again, you will not remain silent about CSA perpetrators, regardless of pressure from any ministry leader to keep quiet. Apart from physical restraint, CSA perpetrators generally continue their pattern of abuse. By remaining silent, you are assisting them in their abuse of innocent children and teenagers—as you surely know in your God-given conscience. And you are violating the second greatest commandment, because you are not loving your neighbor by allowing predators to continue to prey on their victims. To only require CSA perpetrators to make a confession in church followed by a few weeks in the bann, and to require church members to forever remain silent about perpetrators' crimes, is a gross perversion of Jesus' teaching about church discipline and forgiveness.

To Amish leaders: We all have an obligation to report CSA perpetrators to civil authorities. This is even more true for ministry leaders, which is exactly why some Amish ministry leaders are in prison today for not reporting CSA perpetrators. Amish ministry leaders often emphasize the Bible's instructions to submit to church leadership while ignoring the same Bible's instructions to submit to civil authorities. If you are an Amish ministry leader, don't be a hypocrite who expects submission to yourself from church members while you fail to submit to civil authorities. Are you protecting predators, or children and teenagers?

If you are a reader who claims to be born again, and you are angry that we've published all of these testimonies "because we are trying to make all Amish people look bad" (a false judgment), then why don't you instead weep for what has been happening for decades in some Plain circles and send evangelists to preach the gospel, as did your ancestors, to those Plain communities that are, unlike you, unregenerate and in complete spiritual darkness regarding the power of the gospel?

If you are genuinely born again, on the final page of this issue of *The Awakening!* is a poster that you can cut out and post in your local schoolhouse that can help prevent CSA. Take advantage of that.

Finally, join me in praying for an end to the plague of CSA in Plain churches and EVERYWHERE ELSE that it terrorizes innocent children, often emotionally scarring them for life, which then has a cascading effect upon many others who suffer as well. "MAY YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN! IN JESUS' NAME!"

Letters from our Beloved Readers

By Jonas Kurtz

We receive hundreds of letters in response to each issue of *The Awakening!* They come in every variety imaginable—short and long, positive and negative, agreeable and disagreeable, angry and grateful.

We've also received scores of books from our readers, also on a variety of topics. Among those books we received six copies of a book titled, *Why Be Plain?*—to which David has recently written a biblical response (see the resources page for that book). We've been subscribed to numerous Anabaptist devotionals, and the list goes on. Thanks to everyone who has taken the time to connect with us!

We do read every letter, and we respect every author. We know they are not only sincere, but are people whom God loves and for whom Jesus died. We may not agree with everyone who writes to us, but one thing we all agree on is that the most important thing is to one day gain entrance into the eternal kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

The letters that we enjoy the most are from born-again Amish people. They always realize, as we have repeatedly stated, that we are not encouraging anyone to leave the Amish. So they don't perceive us as a threat. Rather, they rejoice that we are joining them to bring the good news to the lost people around them.

Below is a recent letter from one such reader who has realized the futility of attempting to gain eternal life through his own righteousness. Note that he has not left the Amish, nor did we advise him to. He and his wife consider them-

selves "Ahamish," a word David invented to describe Amish people who are saying "Aha!" as they are awakening to their spiritual heritage.

Jonas, I would be pleased to receive a digital copy of the "What is the World and it's Lure?" pamphlet. My wife and I sincerely appreciate your efforts in this ministry, especially since we are travelling on our own spiritual journey towards finding TRUTH.

We are ever so thankful the Holy Spirit has revealed to us the great emptiness of merely conforming to certain "codes and statutes" and hoping against hope that we can be good enough to get to heaven "sometime." We are still Amish (or Ahamish) and we continue to learn more as we go. God the Father created each one with a separate identity and he desires for us to walk in that identity WITH HIM.

We so wish we could share our views with our many friends and family members but unfortunately most do not seem to be interested, and become very concerned that we are accepting a strange doctrine. Our ministry specifically mentioned The Awakening letters to the congregation, and warned us all to just throw them in the trash and not read them at all! Is not that the devil at work? (Father forgive them for they know not what they do.)

Once again we greatly appreciate your magazine. It is like a drink of fresh water in a dry desert. The Father God will surely bless you for it.

P.S. I strongly recommend THE LIVING BIBLE paraphrased English Bible from Tyndale House Publishers, to anyone who would begin the journey from Amish to Ahamish.

Here is a short letter from a reader who doesn't think it is possible to know if

you are born again. He is apparently not aware of biblical passages like 1 John 5:13 or 2 Timothy 4:6-8. He also evidently believes that anyone who does not dress like Amish people is "worldly." If you read the CSA testimonies in this issue of *The Awakening!*, I'm sure you are aware that "the world" (by biblical definition) is just as evident among the Plain churches as anywhere.

Hello, just a few lines to let you know that I want to be off of your Awakening papers list as it doesn't fit in with the holy Bible. And you think you are fit to let people know how to live a holy life and you don't abide by the Bible to start with. You left the Amish so to have your lust. If I would meet you, I probably wouldn't know that it wouldn't be just an English guy. You are of the world if you look like the world. We got the papers today and I was disgusted by it.

PS: You claim you are Born Again. Where does your hope come in? Nobody knows if he is born again but we hope we are! And your idea doesn't come in with the Bible.

We have, of course, removed him from our mailing list as he requested. But we feel sorry that he follows tradition above the Bible. Neither Jesus, the apostles, the early Christians, or the early Anabaptists dressed any differently than the cultures in which they lived. And all of them knew that they were born again (besides Jesus, who didn't need to be born again). And I didn't leave the Amish. I was born again and became a follower of Jesus, and my Amish church excommunicated me because of it.

Next is a letter from an Amish woman who has been born again. Again, she is not leaving the Amish, nor are we encouraging her to leave. Note also that she realizes her children who have left the Amish are Christians, and her church realizes it now as well. Hence the church has repented of their wrong

against them and lifted the bann. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all Amish churches would do that?

Hi, we would be interested in a copy of "What is the World and it's Lure?" and we are also interested in a copy of The Amish Papers: Encouragement on the Journey from Amish to Ahamish! We find this very interesting,

We believe in God's word that you must be born again! We are still in the old order Amish church but most of our children left, they were excommunicated but are no longer because our church don't believe it's right if they are Christians and believers in Christ, and we have a good relationship with them.

We agree with what you are saying about so many of the Amish churches and it's sad, we do see more of them opening up to the truth. Praise God!

Next is another short encouraging letter from a reader in Lancaster County, PA.

Thank you for your papers and encouragement sent with The Awakening! Knocks over all doubt and fear!

We would like to ask if you could send us the booklet "What is the World and its Lure?" and also The Amish Papers book. With us being from Lancaster, yes it's a mess just like you mentioned. God bless you!

You probably know that the Amish churches in Lancaster are in the middle of splitting in multiple directions.

Below is a letter from a staunch Amish man who lives in New York. I have not quoted his entire letter (as it was quite long), but only from the first and last page, as they stood out to me. I've added my response to his comments, within the text of his letter.

Friendly greetings sent in our dear savior Jesus Christ's name! We have been receiving your letters and you have a lot of good points but you need to stop tearing Amish families apart!!! I would say our order number is based 100% on biblical values. Before I get into that too much....

We never intend to tear any families apart and, in fact, we never do. We're not excommunicating or shunning anyone, or encouraging anyone to do so. In fact, we're telling everyone that it is wrong to shun family members who are following Jesus!

If you've read the earlier letters in this issue, there is one from an Amish mother who has several children who are no longer Amish. She and her husband recognize that their children are following Jesus, and so they are not shunning them, and neither is their Amish church. They all realize that living an Amish lifestyle is not what makes someone a Christian. Believing in and following Jesus is what makes one a Christian.

Any family that is torn apart because of the excommunication of born-again children is being torn apart by parents who are elevating tradition over the New Testament. The overriding characteristic of born-again people is their love for one another (see John 13:35; 1 John 3:14).

You make it sound like if you are born again you are now saved and can no longer be tempted to do evil? For instance you have people out there that had a pornography addiction they no longer have to worry about getting back into it even though they have access to it 24 hours today? How do you explain away Romans 8:? So if you say you are saved before you are in heaven, then you are saying we see it and making hope to nothing right?

I don't think that you have been reading *The Awakening!* very closely, or the Bible! Obviously, born-again people are still tempted to sin, but they have been set from slavery to sin, and they have the Holy Spirit living in them to give them power to obey Jesus, which makes His yoke easy and His burden light (Matt. 11:30). Beyond that, because they love Jesus, they have a strong desire to obey His commandments, just as He taught (see John 14:15, 21).

Sadly, many Amish people, just like people of the world, are addicted to various sins from which they can't escape. The new birth is the solution, which comes by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. And because of the wonderful work God does in those who believe, they know they are children of God and are "new creations in Christ" (1 Cor. 5:17). Still, they must cooperate with the indwelling Holy Spirit and "work out their salvation with fear and trembling; knowing that God is at work in them, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

And, as I mentioned in a comment to an earlier letter, there is plenty of scripture that indicates that we can know we are born again. If you are interested, I would be happy to send you a biblical article titled, "What does it Really Mean to be Born Again?" It explains in detail the scriptural basis for assurance of salvation and victory over sin.

In the English version Bible some verses are translated so different from German that you can't get the same meaning out of it. For instance James 3:16. In English it says, for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. The way I would translate it from German to English is, where there is jealousy and strife there is no ordinance an idle bad thing. So where there is no ordinance there is confusion.

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As an Amish minister, I too came across that exact same verse. If you will go back and read the German version again you will find that it says: “vo neid un zank isch, is unordnung, ein eitel beises ding.” Translated into English it says: “Where there is envy and strife, there is confusion, and every evil work.”

Your comment does not reveal an error in the English translation. Rather, it reveals that you, like so many Amish folks, do not possess a good understanding of the German language.

This is a major issue in so many Amish churches. I think God is grieved every time an Amish minister reads the Bible to his congregation in German when he knows that most of the people do not understand what he is reading. In many Amish churches, the Scripture reading is viewed as a good time to go to the barn and stretch your legs! What’s the point of standing inside listening to the minister struggle to pronounce a language he hardly knows? Especially when you can’t understand it yourself?

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled for before God the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. Not only are we to strive to be different from the world we ought not even to have the spot of the world on us! That is pure undefiled religion in the sight of God.

How can we have a lifestyle similar to the world without being spotted by them? How can we partake in their entertainment, in their technology which is saturated with the world’s corrupted thoughts and lusts yet remain unspotted of them? We cannot! We are called to be different from them, because God knows that once we conform to the world externally we will also conform internally.

We see over and over and over when

people leave the Amish for a more liberal church the children and grandchildren eventually lose all forms of religion? Please take some serious thought that you will have to answer to God for what you are doing! Through your newsletter you have caused heartache after heartache after heartache disrupting families ECT.

Father and mother I honor and love you so I’m gonna cause you a heartache and get a car and phone and wear worldly clothes just what my flesh and blood desires because this way I can serve Jesus better what!

Please answer me on how you can serve Jesus and do the things I described in the last lines of my letter. Also I quoted a bit from the book “Why Be Plain.” Yes our forefathers left family and got re-baptized but they were leaving the world church to become what we are now! Separated from the world not the way you are doing!!! May the peace and grace of Jesus Christ our Lord and savior be with you!

These final comments simply reveal a basic misunderstanding of what “the world” is as defined in the New Testament. (On the resources page of this issue, we are offering a biblical teaching titled, “What is the World and its Lure?”) The 40 testimonies in the CSA article in this issue reveal that the world is right among many Amish communities.

It’s time for all Amish churches (and I know that some already do) to recognize that “the world” is not defined by straw hats versus baseball caps or buggies versus cars. It is defined by biblical sins. Think about it: all of the CSA perpetrators mentioned in those 40 testimonies weren’t “worldly” by Amish standards! They were keeping the ordnung. They were living “separated from the world.” But they were secretly committing

incredibly-vile sins. And when their churches discovered what they’d been doing and didn’t report them to the authorities, many of those churches became complicit in the sins of the perpetrators, yet they would claim they were not “worldly”! And when the victims left those churches to escape the predators, they weren’t going to the world, they were escaping it.

And lastly here is one of the more discouraging letters we’ve received lately.

Oh! What a wonderful savior.

I have no idea why I am on your mailing list. Maybe it is because you want and/or need a big mailing list or maybe more followers.

I do know that deceivers need to deceive.

Take me off the list. I do not read the material I only burn it. That is not being a good steward for your money which is God’s.

I close praying that God will destroy The Awakening! and it’s deceivers. I know God will judge deceivers justly.

Contact Us

We appreciate everyone who communicates with us. Your letters of encouragement are what keep us encouraged, and your donations make it possible for us to continue publishing *The Awakening!* four times a year. You can write to us at The Awakening!, P.O. Box 611, Punxsutawney, PA 15767. Call or text us at 814-952-7758. Email us at Jonas@HeavensFamily.org. If *The Awakening!* is of no interest to you, we would appreciate your letting us know so that we can remove your name from our mailing list.

Helpful Resources

We've focused the majority of this issue on CSA, and so we want to offer some good resources to help victims find safety and healing, and to protect vulnerable children from harm. All of the resources below are offered free of charge, but they do cost us money to purchase and mail, so we appreciate your consideration in helping us when you place your order. You can request any of these resources by calling me (Jonas) at 1-814-952-7758, by emailing me at Jonas@heavensfamily.org, or by writing us at The Awakening!, P.O. Box 611, Punxsutawney, PA 15767.

On the Threshold of Hope: Opening the Door to Healing for Survivors of Sexual Abuse. This is a highly-recommended, biblically-grounded book by Diane Langsburg that has helped many survivors of CSA regain their lives.

Yell and Tell. This is an illustrated booklet for parents to read to their young children to help protect them from predators. It is written by Michael and Debbi Pearl of "No Greater Joy Ministries." My wife and I read this to our children when they were very young, and it was instrumental in our son coming to us when an incident happened to him.

Trauma Healing Group. We are offering an 8-week trauma healing course, via a weekly conference call, for any women who want to join. You will be a part of a small group of no more than 12 women. To learn more, and to register, call Elizabeth at 1-719-458-8239.

Currently Experiencing Abuse? Call 1-888-621-1985.

What is the World and it's Lure? and What Does it Really Mean to be Born Again? are two biblically-based articles by David Kirkwood.

The Amish Papers: Encouragement on the Journey from Amish to Ahamish. If you desire a joyous relationship with God, coupled with Spirit-empowered victory over sin, doubt, fear, depression and addictions—blessings that were enjoyed by your Anabaptist ancestors centuries ago, this a book for you. You can request a hard copy or electronic copy via email.

Why be Plain, A Biblical Response. In reply to the recently-published book, ***Why Be Plain?*** by authors Weaver and Zimmerman, David Kirkwood has written a chapter-by-chapter biblical analysis. David's book is best read with a copy of *Why Be Plain?* close by for reference, but it is not essential, as he has quoted the authors over 130 times in his book. You may want to order more than one copy to share with others. Available on Amazon.com or by contacting us. If you have an email address, we can send you a free electronic copy.

What is Safe Touch~Not Safe Touch?

X Spots are Private!

"Boss"

You are the boss of your body!
If you say NO ~ that means NO!
If someone touches you in a "Not Safe" way...
you NEED to TELL someone right away!

"Rules"

No one can touch you on your X spots!
No one can ask you to touch their X spots!
You cannot touch anyone's X spots!
If any of these things happen...
you NEED to TELL someone RIGHT away!



Anyone touching you there

Is Not

"Safe Touch"

If you TELL and
no one can help you...
text "help" or call

1-888-621-1985

Amish Restoration



Ephesians 5:11

Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

Heaven's Family
P.O. Box 611
Punxsutawney, PA 15767

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The Awakening!



Inside:

- **Marie's Amazing Story**
- **The Shocking Results of the CSA Survey**
- **Letters From our Beloved Readers**
- **Why Be Plain?**