



Chronicling the Anabaptist Rediscovery of their Special Spiritual Heritage

Introduction

By David Kirkwood

Greetings in Jesus' holy and wonderful name! And welcome to the second issue of 2024 of *The Awakening!*

Before anything else, I want to first thank everyone among our Amish friends who have written to us in response to the March issue. I wish we had the capacity to respond to every letter, but there are too many. Some letters are short and some are quite long. Some are encouraging and some are discouraging. Many—even some of the discouraging ones—include helpful words of wisdom. Many also include financial gifts to help us continue to publish every quarter (for which we are very thankful).

Jonas Kurtz and I do read every letter, and we respect all the authors,

as we know they are not only sincere, but they are also created in God's image and are people whom God loves and for whom Jesus died. One thing all of us agree upon is that the most important thing is to one day gain entrance into the eternal kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The most encouraging letters, of course, are those from born-again Amish folks, and from Amish folks who have recently been born again with help from reading *The Awakening!* In this issue, I think you are going to be very blessed to read about the recent new birth of scores of Swiss Amish folks in Michigan.

Second, may I again affirm my appreciation and respect for Amish culture. There are so many good aspects of Amish life that I could list, and although I have never been Amish, I enjoy many of those same good aspects of Amish life. The reason is because I am a follower

of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Amish culture has its roots in the teachings of Jesus. In fact, I have said in the past to some of my non-born-again Amish friends that I am actually more Amish than they are because I believe all of the 1632 Dordrecht Confession, and particularly what it teaches about the new birth (being "born again") and the assurance of salvation, whereas they don't.

And although I said those words to my non-born-again Amish friends in a light-hearted way, I am actually deeply saddened by it, because I know that the new birth is required for entering heaven (John 3:5), and it is the foundational spiritual experience of the original Anabaptists. The original Anabaptists are your ancestors, and if they could speak to you now, they would be strongly encouraging you to investigate what the Bible teaches about the new birth, because it is the

bedrock of your spiritual heritage.

Our primary goal in publishing *The Awakening!* is to help Amish people who are not yet born again to truly experience it with all of its many blessings, such as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And we always encourage born-again Amish folks to remain Amish, to follow Jesus, and to allow the indwelling Holy Spirit to teach them (see John 14:26), although we know that in some Amish communities, those who are born-again will be excommunicated and shunned. That is a tragedy. When a community excommunicates a born-again believer in Jesus, they are excommunicating someone in whom Christ lives, and thus they are unwittingly excommunicating Jesus.

And third, may I affirm my love for all Amish people, a love that stems from the love that God Himself has for them. We are publishing *The Awakening!* from hearts of love, hearts that have been transformed by God's grace through the new birth. I cannot imagine that God doesn't appreciate the sincerity and desire of Amish people to resist all that is evil and contrary to His will. But I also cannot imagine that He doesn't have great sorrow regarding the fact that so many of them are trying to please Him without the empowering of His indwelling Spirit, and thus they are failing. And that is why God wants everyone to be truly born again. The new birth makes God-pleasing holiness possible. And so in this issue, I have included an article about the new birth and how you can experience it (if you have not already).

I've learned over the past three years

of publishing that Amish people are no different than all other non-Amish professing Christians. That is, some are born again, some are not born again, and some think they are born again but actually are not. Some in the latter category are Amish bishops and ministers whom Scripture plainly identify as not being born again—as indicated by their behavior. For example, some have knowingly and publicly published slanderous lies about *The Awakening!* Yet they preach from Bibles that promise them that all liars—along with murderers, immoral people, and idolaters—will one day find themselves “in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone” (Rev. 21:8). We pray that they will come to repentance and a genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ before it is too late.

Finally, don't forget that there is a very broad spectrum of belief and practice within the Amish world. Your experience may be considerably different from other Amish folks. If something that you read in this issue of *The Awakening!* doesn't fit your experience, understand that other Amish folks have had different experiences.

Again, we so appreciate all of your feedback. We wish we could share it all, but we are thankful that we can share some of it on the final pages of this issue of *The Awakening!*

Please do address any feedback to *The Awakening!*, P.O. Box 611, Punxsutawney, PA 15767. That is also the address to send your much-needed financial support to help us continue publishing. May God bless you as you read the pages that follow.
— David

An Awakening in Burlington MI

The story of my 32 years as an Amish man is probably similar to the experience of many other Amish folks (but certainly not all). It is a story of ups and downs, joy and pain, twists and turns. I am now, however, a different person from the one I used to be, because I've been born again about a year ago. Let me tell you my story.

I grew up in a very conservative Amish church with practically no contact with other Amish churches, even those in our area. I was ingrained at a very young age to believe that all other churches were “off track” and to be avoided.

I also remember the time, 17 years ago, when my parents and my siblings relocated for the first time. My father and mother wanted to escape the community in which we lived due to disagreements with the ministers. My father believed church doctrine should be based on Scripture rather than tradition, and because of that, he was soon to be put under the bann. So, on a preplanned day, our family fit everything that we could into a van and a horse trailer at midnight, so that no one would know we were leaving. My father escaped the bann!

Fast forward three years to 2010, when I was 18. Our family, along with four other Amish families, started a new community. Within five years, however, there were again disagreements regarding the elevation of tradition above the Bible's teaching. So, the bishop of

that community brought in “Fremde Manner” (other ministers from outside the community). This is quite common in Amish circles when there is a dispute, as it is believed that “Fremde Manner” will give an unbiased judgment on the situation.

The result, however, was that our family was silenced, although we did have one minister in our church who agreed with us. I could go into more detail, but the disagreement was over church doctrine that contradicted Scripture. The Fremde Manner told us that our bishop was something like a “god,” and we should let him do as he pleases. The Fremde Manner also silenced the one minister who agreed with us.

So, in 2015, our family relocated again, and we started another community with a few other families. By now, at age 23, I was having some serious questions about the entire Amish system. Not only was I disturbed over the elevation of tradition over Scripture, I was also bothered by the lifestyles of my peers. Most of the young people of my age would drink and party practically every weekend, and it was generally accepted by our communities. Some would get drunk on the very night that they were baptized and became church members! Fornication was also rampant among them. My siblings and I never partook of that kind of behavior, so they branded us as “goody goodies.”

At that point I really started questioning a lot of our practices. For example, we were taught that certain sins had to be punished by a six-week bann, even if the offender

had repented. In fact, our bishop at the time said those very words. But I read that our Anabaptist forefather, Menno Simms, said he would have no part of banning a repentant sinner, no matter what sin he had committed.

My question about that was, “When the woman who was caught in the act of adultery was brought before Jesus, did He say to her: ‘You can be forgiven, but you need to first carry the bann for six weeks’?”

The Bible teaches that Jesus paid the punishment for all our sins on the cross. Some of our Anabaptist forefathers gave their lives for being opposed to the Roman Catholic doctrine of doing “penance,” that is, doing some deeds to “pay” for sins committed.

Another question I started asking was, “What Ordnung did the early church of the original apostles follow?” Of course, the answer is that they had no other Ordnung than the commandments of Jesus. Paul called those commandments the “law of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2).

I realize now that no amount of church discipline can change anyone who does not have a regenerated heart. That is why Jesus said we must be born again (John 3:1-7). Without the new birth, the Amish system often results in a lot of hypocrisy. Everyone makes sure that they look good on Sundays or when the bishop or ministers are around, but they are different people at other times.

One thing the young people in our communities would say as they indulged in their sin was, “I’ll just carry the bann before I get married. Right now, I’m just having a little fun.” I remember one conversation

I overheard in which some young people were discussing what would happen if they died while they were drinking, fornicating, indulging in pornography, and so on. I heard one of them say, “It’s just a chance you gotta take!”

Worse, I spoke with several older Amish adults about all of this and their reply was, “Oh, it is OK as long as they settle down and don’t become “English.” Today I realize that none of those young people, or the older adults, had any relationship with God. They were all Amish who kept the Amish traditions, but none were born-again followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Confirming those observations was the general lack of spirituality in the Amish communities in which we lived. (I realize of course that this is not true of all Amish communities.) If you wanted to disperse a group of people fast, all you had to do was start talking about Scripture! And if you asked any questions about Amish practices, you were told to be “content.” We were warned not to read the Bible too much, as that could be dangerous. It might lead you astray, away from Amish traditions!

Beyond those things was the lack of understanding of basic gospel truth. We were taught that the grace of God was something you earned by following the Ordnung. But how can grace ever be earned?

One minister even told me that the Ordnung is to test our obedience, because if we can’t follow it then we could never please God. I wondered, Shouldn’t we be putting every ounce of our energy into obeying Jesus’ commandments in order to please

Chronicling the Anabaptist Rediscovery of their Special Spiritual Heritage

God? If we keep the Ordnung, but disobey Jesus' commandments, does that please God?

I went through some dark days as I attempted to establish my own righteousness, just like the apostle Paul did before he was born again (Phil. 3:7-11; Rom. 10:3). I did not know that God wanted to give me the gift of His righteousness through His forgiveness and the indwelling Holy Spirit—if I would truly, from my heart, believe in the Lord Jesus. And the harder I tried to do what was right, the more I failed.

I was told that it was especially praiseworthy to deprive myself. So I did certain labor by hand, without the tools that would have made it easier, even if those tools were not against the Ordnung, thinking it would earn me points with God. Again, the more I tried to please God by keeping the Ordnung, the emptier and more lost I felt.

Then there was always a terrible dread of death, of judgement day, and hell. I knew something was missing because I did not have peace. It was generally taught that God was just waiting for us to slip, so we better abide by the "rules." I didn't know that salvation was a gift from God's grace, that is, His undeserved favor, that is received through faith and not through my works (Eph. 2:8-10).

In the communities in which I was a member, it was forbidden to read the Bible in any language except German. Our church services were strictly in German. Sadly, German was a secondary language that was taught at school (if taught at all). So how were we supposed to understand the most important instructions in the

whole world—found in the Bible? If someone who only spoke English was going on a road trip across the state, what would happen if the only directions they had were written in German? Chances are slim they would reach their destination! How much more important it is that we clearly understand the directions to eternal life on this great spiritual journey of our souls?

I thank God that He saw my confusion and despair, and He cared. God is love! (1 John 4:7-8). About a year ago we received the first issue of *The Awakening!* newsletter. I remember getting goose bumps as I read many different testimonies about Amish people like myself—who felt exactly the way I did. It gave me courage. I told my wife, "We are not alone!"

Shortly thereafter, I put my faith in Jesus, making him the Lord of my life, and I was born again. I have not been the same since. So many things changed in my life. For example, I found that I was truly able to forgive those who were persecuting us. It was like the floodgates of my heart were opened for the first time, and all the bitterness flowed out. I turned to the hope of the world, and Jesus Christ gave me peace, true peace! When that happens to you, you will know the difference, trust me. The lifelong void in me was filled with a new hope!

Not long after that, my wife was born again. How wonderful to both be children of God, indwelled by His Spirit! We had been taught all our lives that we could not know if we were right with God and on the path to eternal life. But how could

our dear Anabaptist forefathers go to their executions with joyful hearts? Some would even sing praise to God as they were led to their deaths. They had that "blessed assurance" that can only be obtained through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Apart from Him, it is impossible to have peace while facing death.

Naturally, after we were born again, we sought to find other born-again Amish people. We did so secretly, as the ministry leaders in our Amish community had made it clear that we were not to affiliate in any way with other Amish groups outside of our own. We visited several churches to find true Amish believers whom we could join, knowing it was inevitable that we would be excommunicated from our community because of our stand for God's Word over Amish tradition.

We were, as we expected, eventually discovered, and we found ourselves under the bann from trigger-happy leaders.

The good news in all of this is that, during the months that followed, my entire family has been born again. That includes my parents, my eleven siblings, and the spouses of the nine of us who are married! All but three of us have been excommunicated. But, praise God, we have each other. And all of us are still living an Amish lifestyle, although we all know now that doing so is not a requirement for eternal life.

My intention in telling my story is not to belittle anyone or any group. All of us have been born into a religious system that is broken to some degree because tradition has been elevated above the Word of

God. So, I don't blame those who have wronged my family, as they may have been actually trying to help us in their own understanding. But many Amish communities (not all) are in desperate need to rediscover the biblical Christianity that our Anabaptist ancestors enjoyed and for which many gave their lives.

In an ironic way, I now better understand our forefathers' sufferings for the sake of Christ. Like them, my family now finds ourselves being persecuted by those who claim to be Christians, but who are actually just religious traditionalists. But we are all rejoicing, as we know, as Jesus promised, that our "reward is great in heaven" (Matt. 5:12).

And we pray for those who persecute us (Matt. 5:44), asking that they, too, would turn to the light of God's Word, escape spiritual darkness, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and experience the new birth that He so graciously offers—and without which no one will see or enter the kingdom of heaven (John 3:1-7). We deeply desire that all of our extended Amish family and friends will be with us in heaven forever to together worship our Lord and Savior, the Lamb of God slain for our sins, Jesus Christ the Righteous One, who sits at the right hand of God the Father! May the awakening we have experienced spread to thousands!

May we meet on that celestial shore!
Feel free to reach out if you are in a similar situation. You are not alone...
My number is: 269 239 2888

What Does it Really Mean to be Born Again?

by David Kirkwood

One of the most tragic statements I've ever heard was spoken from the mouth of a woman who had encountered some people whom she considered odd, folks who had identified themselves as "born-again Christians." She rolled her eyeballs as she mocked them, saying to some family members, "Watch out for those 'born-again' Christians! They're out to convert you!"

What made her warning so tragic is that she attended a Methodist church every Sunday. Not only was the founder of her denomination—John Wesley—fully persuaded almost 300 years ago of the necessity of being born again, but even more persuaded was the founder of all of Christianity—Jesus Christ—about 2,000 years ago. Jesus once said to a very religious man, a highly-respected teacher and Pharisee named Nicodemus:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

Take note that that solemn declaration, spoken by the King of God's kingdom, begins with the words, "Truly, truly." Jesus didn't want Nicodemus—or anyone else—to take His words lightly. It was a declaration of unassailable truth uttered by the very Son of God: Unless one is born again, he absolutely cannot see the kingdom of God. There are no exceptions. For

that reason, everyone, and especially those who profess to be Christians, should ask themselves this very important question: Have I been born again? (And if you answered "yes," a second important question is: "Have I REALLY been born again?")

One who has not been born again is comparable to a baby who has not yet been born. She is blind to the world outside her mother's womb. She may hear muffled sounds and perhaps even perceive a dim light that penetrates the darkness of the womb, but she is completely shut off to that world and cannot see it. Similarly, those who are not born again may sense some hints of the kingdom of God "out there." They may, like Nicodemus or the mocking woman I first mentioned, be steeped in religion and therefore think they already have some connection to God. But still, until they are born again, they cannot see His kingdom. They live in isolation, blind to a wonderful realm that potentially awaits them.

Conversely, one who has been born again is comparable to a baby who has escaped the womb and now entered into a brand-new world he previously could not see. The born-again believer has his eyes opened to see God's kingdom. He realizes there is (of course) a great king—Jesus Himself—who rules over that kingdom. He understands that Jesus' kingdom includes not only himself, but everyone who has submitted to His loving rule. For his "fellow kingdom citizens," he feels a special affinity, a supernatural love. He soon realizes that Jesus' kingdom extends all over the world, and that it will one day be the only kingdom on earth—when Jesus finally banishes all those

Chronicling the Anabaptist Rediscovery of their Special Spiritual Heritage

who did not heed His solemn words: “Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

The Conversation Begins

Not understanding Jesus’ declaration regarding the necessity of a second birth, Nicodemus replied, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” (John 3:4).

Nicodemus apparently thought Jesus was referring to a physical rebirth. So Jesus repeated what He had already said, but altered it slightly to help Nicodemus realize He was referring to a spiritual rebirth: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

First, notice Jesus again began His second declaration with the words, “Truly, truly.” Of course, Jesus never lied. So we should believe everything He said. How much more when He prefaces His words with “Truly, truly”!

Second, it is from this elaboration we realize that, not only can one not *see* God’s kingdom unless he is born again, neither can one *enter* God’s kingdom. Jesus’ solemn declaration has become even more solemn. No one can *enter* God’s kingdom unless they are born again. There are no exceptions. This teaches us that all true Christians are born again. If you are not born again, you are not a true Christian.

If you think you are a Christian, but you have not been born again, you put your own opinion above the solemn words of Jesus. You

exalt yourself above God. (Which probably isn’t a good strategy for getting into heaven...)

Third, it is from this declaration by Jesus we realize that, to be born again, one does not need to re-enter his mother’s womb. Rather, he needs to be born “of water and the Spirit.” What does that mean?

Some think the phrase being “born of water” refers to a physical birth, which is often preceded by a rush of water-like fluid from the breaking of a mother’s amniotic sac. If that is the correct interpretation, Jesus was simply telling Nicodemus that one must experience both a physical and a spiritual birth in order to see and enter God’s kingdom. Jesus seems to also draw this contrast in His very next sentence: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).

Other interpreters, however, wonder why Jesus would affirm to Nicodemus something that is so obvious, namely, that one must be physically born to ultimately enter God’s kingdom. For that reason, some think Jesus was referring to water baptism, or to something else that the word *water* might symbolically represent, such as the word of God, spiritual purification, or the Holy Spirit (see Ezek. 36:25; John 7:38-39; Titus 3:5; Eph. 5:26; 1 Cor. 6:11). I don’t see a great need to be dogmatic about any single interpretation, as all of them contain some biblical truth. Every new believer should be baptized in water. And one must respond in faith to God’s Word as revealed in the gospel, be spiritually cleansed, and be indwelt and transformed by the

Holy Spirit to enter God’s kingdom. According to the New Testament, all those things occur when one is born again. So let us focus on what it means to be “born of the Spirit.”

Being Born of the Spirit

Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). So it is the spirit of a person that needs to be reborn if that person is to enter God’s kingdom.

Scripture teaches that all of us are tripartite in nature—spirit, soul and body:

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thes. 5:23, emphasis added).

My body, of course, is my physical, material self—my flesh, bones, blood and so on.

My soul is my mind, emotions and intellect.

My spirit is revealed in the Bible as being the “true person,” who lives on even after my body dies:

For just as the body without the spirit is dead, *so also faith without works is dead (Jas. 2:26, emphasis added).*

The human spirit is referred to in the Bible as the “hidden person of the heart” (see I Pet. 3:4). The human spirit is a *person*. People who have temporarily died during hospital surgery sometimes say, “I came out of my body and ascended to the ceiling, and I was looking down at the doctors who were trying to revive

me.” They refer to their spirit as “I” and “me.” Your spirit is the “real you.” And your spirit must be born again by the direct action of God’s Holy Spirit if you are to see or enter God’s kingdom.

Why is being born again essential? Because the Bible teaches that prior to being born again, our spirits possess a sinful nature, and we are “spiritually dead.” Consider Paul’s words in his Ephesian letter:

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) (Eph. 2:1-6).

Paul told the Ephesian Christians they were formerly dead in their “trespasses and sins.” Obviously, they were not formerly physically dead, so he must have been saying they were spiritually dead. Their sins made them dead to God. They lived like everyone else, indulging in sin every day, not even realizing that the spirit of the devil, whom Paul called “the prince of the power of the air,” was “working in” them. They were “by nature children of wrath.” That is, they sinned because they were sinners by nature.

This state of spiritual death is the

same state in which Adam and Eve found themselves after they sinned. God had told them they would die on the day they ate the forbidden fruit, but Scripture tells us that Adam lived hundreds of years after he sinned. So, he must have died spiritually that day. He found himself cast out of Eden, alienated from God. That is the state of every spiritually dead person. It is not only their sin that separates them from God, but their sinful nature.

And all of this explains why no one can enter God’s kingdom unless they are born again. People who are spiritually dead, whose very nature is sinful, who have Satan’s spirit working in them, cannot enter God’s kingdom unless they are somehow transformed. They must be born again!

Thankfully, the Christians in Ephesus had all experienced that wonderful spiritual regeneration. As we just read in Paul’s letter to them, God, in His great mercy and love, changed them from being dead to being alive, spiritually. That is just another way to describe being born again. Both Jesus and the apostle John referred to the spiritual rebirth as “passing from death to life”:

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life (John 5:24; emphasis added; see also 1 John 3:14).

Obviously, in light of Scripture’s very descriptive words related to this subject, one who has been truly born again has experienced a profound spiritual change. To be born again is

not a human effort of reformation; it is a divine work of resurrection! It is not “turning over a new leaf,” but “receiving a new life”!

This is not to say that true Christians have no struggle with sin. Although they possess spirits that have been transformed, they possess souls/minds that are being transformed, and bodies that are awaiting future transformation. Their transformed spirits find themselves at war with their non-transformed “flesh” (see Gal. 5:19-23), but they are no longer slaves to sin as they were prior to their rebirth.

Religious Blindness

Tragically, those who are often the most blind to their dead spiritual state are those who are the most religious. As they keep their traditions, manmade rules, and even some of God’s commandments, they wrongly assume that they have no need to be spiritually reborn.

Such folks are somewhat comparable to pigs that have been bathed and sprinkled with perfume. They may look clean and smell nice, but they are still pigs. And if you put them close to mud, they will gravitate towards it. That is their nature.

The only way to keep pigs from returning to the mud is to build a fence that prevents them from doing what they want to do. And it is the same way for religious people who have not been born again. Their leaders, ancient or modern, build fences to keep them away from sin. In Jesus’ day, this is exactly what religious leaders like Nicodemus did. They built fences around God’s laws, hoping to keep people from even

Chronicling the Anabaptist Rediscovery of their Special Spiritual Heritage

getting close to sinning. But those “pigs” always found some way to slip under or around the fence, because pigs love to wallow in the mud! And when they found their way under and around those fences and into the mud, they often discovered that their fence-building leaders were already wallowing in the mud themselves!

God, however, takes pigs and transforms them into sheep, the “sheep of His pasture”! (Ps. 79:13). That is why Paul wrote, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17).

The Difference

People who are born again are radically different than they were before they were born again. From the moment of their spiritual rebirth, they immediately see themselves and others differently. They know that every person is either born again or not born again, a new creation or not a new creation. And the first thing that enters their minds when they see or meet a new person is, “Are they born again or not?” They want everyone to experience the same rebirth they’ve experienced.

When religious people experience a spiritual rebirth, they no longer look at the world as consisting of everyone who is in their religious group and everyone who is not. Again, they realize that there are only two categories of people in God’s eyes—those who have been born again and those who have not been born again. When religious people are born again, they are immediately concerned about everyone who is not born again, especially those within their religious group. And

they can’t keep quiet about it, any more than they could keep quiet if they saw their neighbor’s house on fire. Because people who are not born again are on the road to hell—unless Jesus was lying when He said, “Unless you are born again, you cannot enter God’s kingdom.” Spiritual rebirth is just one of numerous immediate blessings God pours out upon those who believe in His Son. God forgives their sins, makes them His children, gives them the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and promises them eternal life. These blessings are like birthday gifts, but gifts that are given at birth!

How Can I Be Born Again?

Babies in the womb can’t birth themselves. They are birthed by the action of their mothers. Similarly, no person can cause himself to be born again. Spiritual rebirth is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. This is why the New Testament refers to those who have been born again as people who are “born of the Spirit” (John 3:6, 8) and “born of God” (1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1). Being born again is a divine miracle that no one can fully understand or explain.

The Holy Spirit, however, doesn’t regenerate people’s spirits arbitrarily. He regenerates the spirits of those who believe in Jesus. John wrote, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah] is born of God” (1 John 5:1, emphasis added).

John also wrote, “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith (1 John 5:4). Faith is the key that opens the door to being “born of God” and “overcoming the world” (that is, not

living like the people of the world who are not born again). Similarly, and just a few seconds after telling Nicodemus that he must be born again, Jesus told him: *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; emphasis added).*

It is simply by believing in Jesus that eternal life, and spiritual rebirth, is gained. If we had lived sinless lives of perfection, we would not need to be born again, and we would have earned eternal life. But sinners (like all of us) need forgiveness and transformation. The New Testament repeatedly reveals that these things are graciously granted to those who believe in Jesus.

How Can I Be Sure I’ve Been Born Again?

Of course, claiming to believe that Jesus is the Christ is not proof that one actually does believe. I know that, because I publicly claimed I believed in Jesus when I was confirmed as a church member at age 12. Looking back, I realize that I really didn’t believe what I claimed to believe. If I would have truly believed in Jesus, I would have been spiritually reborn and become a new creature—just as Jesus promised—and I would have started acting like it. The New Testament teaches that there are two primary marks that identify those who are genuinely born again:

(1) If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.... No one who is born of God

practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God (1 John 2:29; 3:9, emphasis added).

(2) Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God (1 John 4:7, emphasis added).

The first identifying mark of those who are born of God is that they practice righteousness and do not practice sin (1 John 2:29; 3:9). That is, they consistently do what is right. They are not perfect, and they may sometimes stumble (see James 3:2), but their lives are characterized by righteousness and holiness. Those whose lives are characterized by sin and unrighteousness are not born again. As Paul warned in his letter to the Corinthians:

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Take note that Paul credited the transformed lives of the Corinthian Christians, not to human efforts to reform, not to fence laws, nor to church membership. Rather, he credited God's Spirit. The Corinthian believers had been "washed," "sanctified" (set apart for holy use) and "justified" (made righteous) by

the work of God, not by the work of man. They had been born again! The second identifying mark of those who are born of God is that they love others who are born again (1 John 4:7)—those who are fellow members of their spiritual family and who have the same Heavenly Father. If they mock, resist or don't want to associate with those who are born again, it proves they are not born again. As John also wrote:

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death.... If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen (1 John 3:14; 4:20, emphasis added).

How tragic it is when people who profess to be Christians shun or disassociate themselves from family members who are born again. By their actions, they demonstrate that they are not Christians, but just religious.

The love that born-again people have for their spiritual family also motivates them to make sacrifices for members facing hardships. Jesus' foretelling of the future judgment of the sheep and goats makes that ever so clear (see Matt. 25:31-46). To not care for the "least of these" among Christ's brethren is to not care for Jesus. As John echoed:

We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and

closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? (1 John 3:16-17).

The Assurance of Salvation

Notice that so many of the passages I've quoted from the Bible are from the apostle John's first letter. John wrote that letter to help his readers ascertain, by self-examination, if they were truly born again and genuinely possessed eternal life. Near the end of that letter he wrote:

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life (1 John 5:13).

It is not only possible to know that you have eternal life and are born again, it is the normal experience of every true Christian. To say that we can't know if we have eternal life or if we are born again is to take sides against the Bible.

Moreover, to claim that people are born again simply because they are water baptized, even though they continue to live sinful lives or don't love born-again people, is also to contradict the Bible. Baptism is a symbolic picture of being born again, not a means to be born again. New believers should be baptized, yes, and they should be told that their baptism represents their death, burial and cleansing resurrection to a new life—as spiritually reborn children of God. But those who are baptized without genuine faith in Jesus are like dry pigs who temporarily become wet pigs! They are still pigs!

A Gradual Rebirth?

Occasionally, I've encountered

Chronicling the Anabaptist Rediscovery of their Special Spiritual Heritage

religious people who tell me their church teaches that Christians are gradually born again over their lifetimes. This, too, is an idea that you will never find in the Bible. Consider the many Scripture passages I've already cited that make some reference to being "born again," "born of God," "born of the Spirit," "passing from death to life," and so on. Most of them make it abundantly clear that the new birth, like the physical birth of a child, is an event that takes place in a relatively short amount of time. The apostles wrote to the early Christians as if they had already been born again at some point in the past, not as if they were gradually being born again throughout their span of their lives.

For example, Peter wrote:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again [past tense] to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pet. 1:3, emphasis added).

For you have been born again [past tense] not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God (1 Pet. 1:23, emphasis added).

If you encountered an adult who said, "I can't say that I've been born yet, but I believe I'm gradually being born over the course of my life," you'd have to conclude that person doesn't understand the plain meaning of the word "born." Similarly, the person who claims he is gradually being born again over the course of his life does violence to the simple word "born." Moreover, he clearly has not investigated what the Bible

says on the topic of the new birth and has no idea what it actually means to be born again.

What About You?

Have you experienced a life-changing spiritual rebirth so significant that you view the span of your life so far as "pre-born-again" and "post-born-again"? Has your inward nature changed so that, more than anything else, you want to please God? Do you look at God as your Heavenly Father rather than as "the Man Upstairs" or the distant God whom you sing about on Sunday mornings? Have your eyes been opened to see God's kingdom, and do you consider all of those who have been born again to be your spiritual brothers and sisters? Are you sure that if you were to die today, you would enter God's kingdom?

If you cannot answer "yes" to all of those questions, then there is one thing you must do: You must believe in the Lord Jesus:

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).

If you believe in Him as He has revealed Himself in the Bible—as the Son of God, the Creator of the Universe, the Future Judge before whom everyone will stand and give an account—He will become your Lord. Your life, and your eternity, will dramatically change.

Don't wait until you are in hell to finally take Jesus' solemn words—"You must be born again"—as serious as He intended for you to take

them. Don't wait another second! Fall on your knees and pray to the God who created you, loves you, and who will re-create you!

Letters From Our Readers

We receive so many letters that it is difficult to decide which ones to publish in *The Awakening!* Again, thanks to all who take the time to write to us. Below is a small sample of recent letters. To one, I have written a reply that is also included.

Here's a short letter from some kind Amish folks in Pennsylvania who know the Lord:

Hello, we have received several issues of The Awakening and I want to say I appreciate the way you present the truth in a loving way, not with hateful condemnation as some do. It's sad that some say The Awakening is the work of the devil. The only say that because they do not know the Lord Jesus!

Please add the enclosed addresses to your mailing list for the future, as well as the latest issue if that is possible. Thank you, and God bless your ministry!

Here's a nice letter from a very spunky born-again Amish widow who also lives in Paradise, Pennsylvania, and who is enjoying her walk with the Lord. I love how she is not afraid to let us publish her name. And she is writing a book!

Dear Friends,

Greetings of love from my heart to yours....

Thank you! for another well written

copy of "The Awakening." The only drawback I had with it was the fact that I got to bed late because I failed to use self-discipline in the reading of it! And that wasn't your fault!

I very much appreciate seeing my personal feelings and convictions expressed so well in a published newsletter!

My own journey has been (and is) unique. We all have a journey and I have long felt a call to share mine (my failures and my victories) in hopes that it would be helpful to others on their own journey. As I share God's love with those around me I consistently see that as I dare to be real it gives others permission to be real as well.

My journey was rough, but God's grace was always sufficient, and today I can confidently say I am who I am not in spite of my journey but because of it. It has been the avenue to my flourishing and I am uniquely blessed! My cup runneth over.... We serve an awesome God and He is good!

I find it so encouraging to find my feelings and convictions in print for more reasons than one. It lessens my writing load. I may in time ask permission to reprint some of your articles in my book. I often get asked "Is your book about finished?" And increasingly I feel convicted to make that more of a priority. There are so many emotionally hurting all around me.

But at the same time I am the mother of 7 boys (living) (5 are still at home). I am a widow. My husband and 2 more boys have been gone awhile. I am a caregiver for the elderly. I write in my spare time at my job which is wonderful therapy for me. And I

find great joy in reaching out to the youth. I see a generation rising up who is passionate about serving in the Kingdom of God.

Because of my own unique journey it is so interesting the variety of people who show up at my door. And because I have gone through much pain I have compassion.

My boys are such fine young men and were it not for the fact that I am (I think) the most pampered widow in Lancaster county I would never be able to reach out in so many ways. They have been and continue to be such a blessing in my life.

My life is rewarding and fulfilling. Like so many others, an ordinary person serving an extraordinary God.... And He is good!

If perchance my letter got printed you may publish my name but please not the amount of my contribution – thanks!

I am Amish and am committed to staying unless they put me out. I feel like God has a ministry for me here. (My boys are not Amish except for my 14 year old). At the same time, by the grace of God I stand for my convictions. The threat of being put out does not intimidate me, and strangely that seems to generate respect.

In the past 1 ½ to 2 years (especially in the last 6 months) God has really been stretching me outside of my comfort zone. Teaching me more about waiting and trust...

I find the more I let myself stretch and go outside of my comfort zone (I am by nature a very routine person) the more I grow. The more I am amazed at God's work in my life and those I

love, the more he seems to delight in amazing me! As I allow Him to expand my world the more he can use my full potential.

The surrendered Christian life is a thrill ride if we just let go and trust that he does know best. He always does! In hindsight it is always so clear....

Blessings wished!
Barbie Smucker, Paradise PA

Here is a good report from an Amish woman in Michigan whose husband was born again from reading *The Awakening!* He is now a changed man...for the better!

I talked with you a year ago, after receiving the spring issue of "The Awakening"I have been praying for my husband to see truth and be born again for 6 years. Last spring I was talking to him about how spot on "The Awakening" publication is, and he read it... His eyes were opened, he has been born again, and is doing Bible study with a weekly group of men. He will be going to "Marked Men for Christ" conference this weekend.

We're currently being shunned, but we don't care. It's been worth it. Seeing my hubby praying out loud and leading the family in prayer, coming home from work, and reading the Bible instead of sleeping..... Thank you for all your hard work!!.

Here's a good testimony from a 28-year-old Amish man in Ohio who was born again about three years ago. He is still Amish:

Shalom David,

May gracious love and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
Thank you for all your time and

Chronicling the Anabaptist Rediscovery of their Special Spiritual Heritage

effort that you have put into The Awakening, all for the benefit of others. God bless you for your evangelistic zeal. How true are Jesus' own words, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37).

I was born again in March of 2021 which is a miracle and always is when someone goes from a child of the devil to a child of God. I truly was a child of the devil and the sad part about it was, I didn't even know it! I was lost in darkness doing the will of Satan. But just like when Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" (John 11:43), He cried out, "Michael, come forth!" I was resurrected to new life in Jesus Christ! I was saved from the wrath of a holy God. Now having been justified by faith, I now have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).

But how did all of that come about? Well, I know my loving parents prayed continuously for me, and in God's time He opened my eyes. He opened my eyes by confronting me with a Holy Law, God's standard, the Ten Commandments. God says, "Thou shalt not lie." Well, I had lied thousands of times up until then, and I was found to be a liar and "all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone" (Revelation 21:8).

God says, "Thou shalt not steal," and I had stolen, so not only was I a thief but a lying thief! God also says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord your God in vain." I had done that countless times! Now on top of being a lying thief, I was a blasphemer. God says, "You shall not commit

adultery." I thought I was OK there, until I read that Jesus said, "Whosoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). I committed that sin more than any other!

Now by looking at just four of the Ten Commandments, I was a self-admitted lying, thieving, blasphemous, adulterer at heart. And I were to die (10 out of 10 die) and stand before God on judgment day (as sure as death) and He were to judge me by the Ten Commandments, I would be guilty, and hell would be my eternal home. "The blackness of darkness forever," "Wailing and gnashing of teeth," "Shame and everlasting contempt," "unquenchable fire" was not where I wanted to go!

I was confronted by a Holy law, so I had the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20) with my conscience bearing witness that it was true (Romans 2:15) so now where to I go? What can I do? Then, and only then, did John 3:16 finally make sense! "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." I broke God's moral Law the Ten Commandments, but Jesus paid the penalty! That's what happened on that cross! When Jesus said, "It is finished!" (John 19:30), the debt had been paid! He took my death sentence upon Himself. What gracious love!

God granted me repentance, gave me a new heart with new desires to where I now hate the sins I used to love. That's a miracle! And most importantly, His Spirit now

dwells with me and He grants me everlasting life as a free gift! I will praise you, O Lord, with my whole heart, I will tell of all Your marvelous works (Psalm 9:1)

Below is my reply to a negative letter sent to us from an Amish couple in Ohio. In my reply I quote every word of their letter, so you will be able to read both at the same time.

Dear _____ and _____, I just read your letter of March 15 to Jonas Kurtz who, along with me, is the co-publisher of The Awakening! Magazine. Jonas has been very busy helping Amish people, and so I am taking the time to reply to you.

You wrote: "Why do you always drive on the right side of the road, stop at stop signs & lights? What does it matter which way you go? As these are all Man Made Rules. It is to try & keep you from having an accident. That is how our Ordnung is. To try & keep the world out. Even God has an Ordnung. And if you read in Moses they even had an ordnung."

My Reply: Yes, we all follow plenty of manmade rules, such as the rule to drive on the right side of the road, in order to help everyone avoid collisions. And God has also given rules to us to help us get along with each other; rules that He has not only written in every conscience of every person who has ever lived, but rules that He also included in the Law of Moses (which are all the rules that God gave through Moses to the people of Israel) and rules that He also included in the Law of Christ (which are all the rules that Jesus gave His apostles to teach to His followers; see 1 Cor. 9:19-21).

The early Christians followed the Law of Christ. That is, they followed Jesus' commandments, as that is what Jesus said they should do (see Matt. 28:19-20). The apostles did not add hundreds, or thousands, of additional rules to regulate the behavior of the early Christians or to help them follow Jesus' commandments.

One reason they did not add hundreds or thousands of additional rules to regulate the behavior of the early Christians is because they highly respected Jesus as the Son of Almighty God. God's commandments are sufficient, and they need no human additions. To add hundreds of additional rules would be an expression of pride, to elevate oneself to God's position. What would you think if someone from outside your family added hundreds of rules for your children to obey, rules that you never gave your children?

Another reason the apostles did not add hundreds or thousands of additional rules to Jesus' commandments is because Jesus' commandments obviously covered everything that was important to God. If Jesus believed that additional commandments were necessary, He would have given them. In fact, Jesus summarized all of God's commandments into just two: Loving God and loving one's neighbor as oneself. He declared: "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 22:40). Why would there be a need to add hundreds or thousands of additional regulations when the Son of God declared that just two commandments can summarize God's entire law? Paul similarly wrote, "He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled

the law" (Rom. 13:8). That is easy to understand.

Another reason the apostles did not add hundreds or thousands of additional rules to Jesus' commandments is because of the danger that those additional rules could potentially be elevated above God's rules, and God's rules would then be neglected or ignored. For example, Christians who are striving to keep hundreds or thousands of additional rules might completely ignore Jesus' commandment to take the gospel to the entire world. Worse, they might entirely forget what the gospel is.

And even worse was the possibility that those additional rules would be so elevated that people would start believing that if they didn't keep them, they would go to hell. Church leaders then might start requiring baptismal candidates to first make a public vow that they will keep all of the additional rules before they can be baptized.

Another reason the apostles did not add hundreds or thousands of rules to Jesus' commandments is because they knew that creating more rules to help people keep the basic rules only creates more rules that rule-breakers will break. For example, to keep decent people from driving on the wrong side of the road, you only need to create one rule. Decent people will follow that rule. Foolish and uncaring drivers are the only ones who will not. And no amount of additional rules will stop them. If you create an additional rule that everyone must partially drive on the road berm of the right side of the road, that will not keep foolish and

uncaring drivers from crossing the middle line into the left lane. You can create an additional rule that everyone must always have another person in the front seat of their car who will remind them every ten minutes to always drive on the right side of the road, but that will not keep foolish and uncaring drivers from crossing into the left lane.

God's way of regulating people's behavior is to change their hearts, to change "foolish and uncaring drivers into decent drivers," to use the same analogy. He does that by calling everyone to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If they respond to His call, He forgives them of all their former sins and transforms them inwardly through the new birth, and He puts His Holy Spirit in them to empower them to live holy lives and obey Jesus' commandments. Those kinds of people don't need hundreds or thousands of additional rules to regulate their behavior.

To your point that the ordnung attempts to "keep the world out," again, the apostles and first Christians didn't feel that they needed anything more than the gospel, the new birth, the indwelling Holy Spirit, Jesus' commandments, and hearts that were submitted to Christ to "keep the world out." To have to regulate people's lives by hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of additional non-biblical rules is an admission that the people whom you are trying to regulate are not born again, do not have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, and do not possess hearts that are submitted to Christ.

You wrote: "So tell me why it is that everyone who is born again has to

Chronicling the Anabaptist Rediscovery of their Special Spiritual Heritage

leave the Amish?”

My Reply: We have repeatedly stated in *The Awakening! Magazine* that there are plenty of born-again Amish people. So everyone who is born again does not have to leave the Amish. We have also repeatedly stated that we always encourage Amish people who are born again to remain Amish for as long as they can so that they can help their fellow Amish who are not born again to repent of their sins, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and be truly born again. But the reason we say they should remain Amish for “as long as they can” is because many Amish groups excommunicate and shun Amish people who are born again. So they are forced out.

There are, of course, those Amish people who are born again and who realize that they can better obey Jesus’ commandments (like His commandment to tell everyone the gospel) outside of the Amish community. And so they depart voluntarily in obedience to their conscience.

And then there are former Amish people who think they are born again because they prayed a prayer to “accept Jesus,” and someone told them that they are now born again. But they are not actually born again, and it is evident by their disobedience to Jesus’ commandments.

You wrote: “That is just a crutch [excuse] for you to do & have anything you want & say I’m born again.”

My Reply: That is only true for those who are not truly born again. Those kinds of Amish people may

indeed leave their Amish lifestyle in order to pursue sinful behaviors. The primary characteristic of someone who is truly born again, however, is their desire to obey all of Jesus’ commandments. John wrote, “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3).

When you use the word “you,” in your sentence that I quoted above, I don’t know if you are specifically accusing Jonas of wanting to do and having anything he wants, but if you are, you are passing judgment upon Him (something that Jesus forbade), and I can assure you that your judgment is not true of Jonas at all. Everyone who has seen the transformation of Jonas since he has been born again will tell you that he is much more obedient to the commands of Jesus than before he was born again.

You wrote: “Also I have never heard any Amish on their deathbed wish they had left. But I have heard people who have left the Faith & who were on their deathbed wish they hadn’t.”

My Reply: Those subjective observations have nothing to do with what the Bible teaches. Plus, you have no idea what actually happened to any of those people after they died.

In contrast to your experience, I have heard hundreds of Amish people say how glad they are that they believed the gospel and were born again, including even Amish people who were excommunicated for their faith and are being shunned by their families. The price they have paid to

follow Christ does not compare to the reward that awaits them in heaven. And I must add that people who leave the Amish to serve God and obey Jesus have not “left the faith.” Rather, they have gained the faith of the original Anabaptists, as well as the faith of the apostles and all the early Christians.

You wrote: “Be pure & read all of the Bible do not pick read.”

My Reply: That is good advice that I hope you are following yourself. I can assure you that Jonas is.

You wrote: “And Remember Let God be the Judge. Just wondering why you don’t go to the cities & preach to the poor & people that haven’t heard of Jesus. Or are you, as we read, a wolf in sheep’s clothing?”

My Reply: Did you notice that directly after you advise Jonas to let God be the judge, you pass judgment on Jonas? You state that he doesn’t go to the cities and preach to the poor and people who haven’t heard of Jesus. But Jonas has done all those things and he continues to do all those things. He has gone to several American cities to preach to people who haven’t heard of Jesus. And, although he has only been born again a little over two years, he has already taken mission trips to Central America, Africa and Asia to share the gospel and serve the poor, particularly those whom Jesus referred to as the “least of these” (see Matt. 25:33-46). Are you obeying those commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ as Jonas is? Or do you only keep the ordnung? Not only is Jonas obeying Jesus in sharing the gospel far and wide, but he is leading many Amish people

to genuine faith in Christ so that Jesus becomes their Lord whom they follow and obey. A number of those Amish people were formerly liars, alcoholics and porn-users, but they have repented and have been born again and were delivered from their sinful lifestyles, in part, because Jonas loved them and obeyed Jesus.

Jonas has also traveled to many Amish communities in other states to help Amish groups that are being born again after reading *The Awakening! Magazine*. Plus, Jonas is leading a growing church of Amish-background believers in his hometown of Johnsonburg. Plus, Jonas and his wife have taken in two foster children—whose parents are drug addicts—into their home with the hopes of adopting them. One of those small children is autistic. Yet you are suggesting that Jonas is a wolf in sheep's clothing?

Finally, you wrote of yourself in the close of your letter: "One who is always striving to follow Jesus. The Bylers. P.S. After you have answered this reply in your newsletter please take our name off your list. Thank you. As I would like to read your answer."

My Reply: As you wish, we are publishing your letter, and my reply, in this issue of *The Awakening! Magazine*. We are not revealing your full names or address to protect your privacy. And we will now remove you from our mailing list.

Here is a great letter from a young, married Amish man in Pennsylvania:

Dear Friends,
Greetings in that precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Thank you so much for another *Awakening Letter*. We were so blessed with each letter and we are so excited to hear that there will be more coming.

A little about myself. My name is _____ and I am married to an amazing God fearing woman _____.... We are Old Order Amish and we love the Amish lifestyle but we would love to have more truth taught over tradition. So I can say these letters have been such a blessing to know that maybe some of our leaders are reading these and I like to think that maybe there can be a big revival among the Amish people.

Also I am praying for these dear lost souls that respond to these letters in such a wicked way, that their blinded eyes could be opened and that they could learn to try these things with God's Word to define truth and untruth.

So I just felt led to reach out to encourage you to continue to let the Holy Spirit have his way in boldly teaching and writing His Word.

We would love if you would kindly send us the articles, "A Tale of Two Ordnungs" and "Amish or Ahamish?", and "Born Again and Amish" and "An Honest Look at the 1632 Dordrecht Confession." And also if you don't mind could you please send me the book "Forgive Me for Waiting so Long to Tell You This." Thank you so much.
God bless, _____.

Here is the text of an email we received from an Amish man in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in whose life God is working as he opens his heart:

Hi David, I just thought I need to comment on "The Awakening" issues that you're sending out.

We're also from the Old Order Amish and we've also questioned some of our culture's long standing traditions that might not necessarily be in line with what the Bible teaches us. We learned to appreciate these letters and to be open to the Truth and what God is trying to teach us. (I will admit in the past these letters might've went straight to the trash without even reading them.) It seemed like our feelings were just printed out on paper as I don't think I could have written it better. So thank you for your dedication and efforts in helping spread the Truth, in spite of all the "persecution." We look forward to the next letters.

Thank you for helping us continue to publish *The Awakening!* magazine and serve our beloved readers! Your donations make it happen! Please mail them to: P.O. Box 611, Punxsutawney, PA 15767.

Also, write to us at that same address, or send an email to Jonas@heavensfamily.org, to receive any of the following free articles: (1) A Tale of Two Ordnungs, (2) Amish or Ahamish?, (3) Born Again and Amish, and (4) An Honest Look at the 1632 Dordrecht Confession of Faith. You can also request that future issues of *The Awakening!* be sent to you by email.

Jonas Kurtz welcomes your sincere and kind phone calls at (814) 952-7758.

Chronicling the Anabaptist Rediscovery of their Special Spiritual Heritage

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

Nonprofit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 825
Pittsburgh, PA

Inside This Issue of *The Awakening!*

- (1) An Awakening in Burlington, MI!**
- (2) What Does it Really Mean to be Born Again?**
- (3) Letters from our Beloved Readers!**