

Spring 2020

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SHORT-TERM MISSIONARY TO THE AMISH

HOPE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS | U.S. MINISTRIES



Dear Friends and Family,

Wow! Where has the time gone? It is hard to believe it has been over eight months since I moved to Pennsylvania. At the beginning of 2019 I did not know where God was leading. I read some books on the Amish and tried to learn more about them. I also did some deputation services in the early part of May.

During those months of waiting I began to find a deeper vision for my ministry. I took a prayer retreat in June and God gave me an idea of what He wants. My vision for Amish ministry is to see Amish get saved, discipled, and become witnesses of the gospel themselves. I desire to see them change from being legalistic to basing their lives on Biblical principles and understanding the reasons for a careful lifestyle. I am excited to see where the Lord will lead and what doors He will open.

A relative of mine mentioned the possibility of moving to Central Pennsylvania to work with the Amish. I really liked the idea, especially because it would mean moving back to where I grew up. I attended a camp meeting in the area and made a couple of prayer drives. By the end of camp, I felt this was where God wanted me. Upon returning home I took more time for prayer to make sure I was not just feeling homesick. After about a week, I clearly felt this was the right direction.

For weeks I looked for an available and reasonable place to live. In August I attended Penns Creek Camp in Pennsylvania. Andy Cooley pastors in nearby Spring Mills. He found several apartments for me to look at. After some prayer, I picked one and am very happy with my choice! Before even moving and placing an application, the owner of Burkholder's Country Market contacted me about a job. I interviewed a couple days after I moved, and they hired me on the spot. Less than a week after moving, I was beginning my new job.

Many Amish ladies work at Burkholder's, and it has allowed me to begin building relationships with them. One young lady is named Esther. I started working with her in the deli, and we hit it off nicely. I found out she has family who live about thirty minutes from some relatives of mine in western Pennsylvania. Sometime soon I want to take her to see her family. This will be an opportunity to get to know her better and maybe get a chance to talk to her about the Lord. Please pray the Lord will open the right doors to cultivate this friendship.

Thank you to those who have been supporting my ministry both through prayer and finances. I would not be where I am today without you.

Prayer Requests:

- 1) Esther—that I will be able to cultivate that friendship and can share Jesus with her.
- 2) That the Lord will open the doors to make more friendships that go deeper than just work friendships.
- 3) That I will have the wisdom to know how to further my ministry and make it fruitful.
- 4) That I will be able to learn German quickly.

Financial Need:

Monthly Expenses: \$2,300

This is currently being paid through my job and a few donations. However, I am struggling to meet the goal every month. Would you pray about what God may want you to give to make this work go forward?

Since I grew up in this area, I have some close Amish friends here. One young lady got married in October, and I had the wonderful privilege of attending the wedding. I was a bit nervous because their weddings are very different from ours, and I did not know what to expect.

Amish weddings are all-day events with the service lasting from 9:00 a.m. to at least noon. The men and women sit on opposite sides of the room facing each other. For the first hour the congregation sings songs from their hymnal, the *Ausbund*, while the church leaders and the bride and groom meet in a designated room. After the wedding party takes their places between the men and women, the first sermon is preached by a minister—this sermon was about 30-45 minutes long at the wedding I attended. A time of prayer follows. The bishop then gets up and give his sermon for about an hour. After that the couple rises and says their vows. Shortly afterwards the crowd is dismissed. The benches are taken down and arranged into tables for the feast to follow. The rest of the day is filled with eating, visiting, and the young people singing and playing volleyball.



A new aspect for my ministry as well as for Hope International Missions is a formal partnership with Penns Valley God's Missionary Church. This will be a great asset to the work as it creates a greater level of accountability. Pastor Andy Cooley is willing to help me learn and create this new ministry. He has some insight into the Amish culture that will help tremendously from working with them on a secular level. The people of the church have been so welcoming and supportive. They gave me a surprise housewarming and have provided many things still needed for my apartment. God gave me a wonderful church family!

Ministry to these dear people is a wide-open harvest field. Many of them do not know about the salvation Jesus offers, and it is our job to see that they are told about the Truth. On April 17 a 23-year-old young man was struck and killed by a hit and run driver while he was riding his scooter along the road nearby. I have no idea where he stood spiritually, and I was struck with an urgency to get the gospel to these people. We need more individuals who will step up and take the gospel to the Amish!

Despite the coronavirus pandemic I can gratefully say I am doing well and still have a job. Right now, Centre County where I live is on a shelter-in-place order. So other than going to work, drive-in church on Sunday at Beavertown God's Missionary Church, and to the store for necessities, I am staying at home. This has given me time to continue preparing for Amish ministry. One goal I have over the next year or two is to study German which will then help me as I learn to speak Pennsylvania Dutch.

I believe God is working in amazing ways in this ministry and am excited to see where it will go. Will you become part of the team to win these dear people to the Lord?

Sincerely,

Stephanie Walter

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