

Kingdom Report

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The Amish and Covid: Lifestyle and Health

There are some interesting statistics coming out of the Amish community in America that needs comment. And no this is not a Covid rant...but it is about living a Kingdom lifestyle that makes the world sit up and take notice.

I want to write something this weekend on the challenge of living a different kind of lifestyle as a Christian community that not only makes a huge difference to our health and prosperity but also fulfills that great challenge that Jesus makes to His disciples...

Mat 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Mat 5:15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Mat 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The Amish community concentrated in Lancaster Pennsylvania in America has a light shining to the world in such a way that 20 million visitors come to that area yearly to see how they live. Not only curious visitors but academics doing studies in sociology and medicine to see the effects of a religious belief lifestyle on health and prosperity.

I have seen various medical studies done on the incidence of various diseases which show dramatic differences to the general population in occurrences of things like diabetes, cancer, autism in children etc. Typically something like...

The Science behind the Absence of Autism in the Amish Community: EnergeticImmunity

Rajalakshmi Kandaswamy*

Autism Expert, Authentic Autism & ADHD Solutions, Energy Medicine Consultant, Pioneer-Intent Healing Featured On CNN-IBN, Chennai, India

And so forth....

Now 18 months into the Covid crisis there are once again analyses of the Amish community and the impact of Covid on that community. From reports I read, there seemed to be either none or very few actual deaths reported in hospitals in the Lancaster region of Amish people.

Other reports that I have read says that not only did the Amish survive through the Covid lockdowns but they also thrived financially as they just kept on working normally in their communities.

I want to give you my personal analysis of what we can learn from this as a Christian community on how we can better let our light shine as the world around us is getting

darker economically, culturally, politically. But first have a read of an interview transcript of a famous investigative reporter questioning some leaders of the Amish community to get their perspective.

Sharyl Attkisson, is a Pulitzer prize winning investigative reporter from the NY Times and host of "Full Measure". She interviewed members of the Amish community in Lancaster, Pennsylvania to find out how any of them managed to survive without following the Covid response mandates and recommendations of the U.S. government and medical establishment.

Contrary to assurances that hospitals would be overwhelmed and bodies would be piled up in the street unless everyone locked down, masked up, and got a Covid vaccination, the Amish community actually managed through the pandemic just fine after a brief shutdown in early 2020.

Attkisson interviews Amish Mennonite Calvin Lapp and Steve Nolt, a scholar on Mennonite and Amish culture who is also a Mennonite himself.

Lapp: There's three things the Amish don't like. And that's government— they won't get involved in the government, they don't like the public education system— they won't send their children to education, and they also don't like the health system. They rip us off. Those are three things that we feel like we're fighting against all the time. Well, those three things are all part of what Covid is.

After a short shutdown last year, the Amish chose a unique path that led to Covid-19 tearing through at warp speed. It began with an important religious holiday in May.

Lapp: When they take communion, they dump their wine into a cup and they take turns to drink out of that cup. So, you go the whole way down the line, and everybody drinks out of that cup, if one person has coronavirus, the rest of church is going to get coronavirus. The first time they went back to church, everybody got coronavirus

Lapp says they weren't denying coronavirus, they were facing it head on.

Lapp: It's a worse thing to quit working than dying. Working is more important than dying. But to shut down and say that we can't go to church, we can't get together with family, we can't see our old people in the hospital, we got to quit working? It's going completely against everything that we believe. You're changing our culture completely to try to act like they wanted us to act the last year, and we're not going to do it.

Sharyl: So, are you saying, as of about May of 2020, things kind of went back to normal in the Amish community?

Steve Nolt: For the most part, yeah, by the middle of May, it's sort of like back to a typical behavior again.

That also meant avoiding hospitals.

Nolt: I know of some cases in which Amish people refused to go to the hospital, even when they were very sick because if they went there, they wouldn't be able to have visitors. And it was more important to be sick, even very sick at home and have the ability to have some people around you than to go to the hospital and be isolated.

Then, last March, remarkable news. The Lancaster County Amish were reported to be the first community to achieve “herd immunity,” meaning a large part of a population had been infected with Covid-19 and became immune.

Some outsiders are skeptical, and solid proof is hard to come by.

Nolt: Even those who believed that they had Covid tended not to get tested. Their approach tended to be, “I'm sick. I know I'm sick. I don't have to have someone else telling me I'm sick.” Or a concern that if they got a positive test, they would then be asked to really dramatically limit what they were doing in a way that might be uncomfortable for them. So, we don't have that testing number.

Lapp: We didn't want the numbers to go up, because then they would shut things more. What's the advantage of getting a test?

One thing's clear: there's no evidence of any more deaths among the Amish than in places that shut down tight— some claim there were fewer here. That's without masking, staying at home, or another important measure.

Sharyl: Did most of the community, at least the adults, get the Covid-19 vaccine?

Nolt: Again, we don't have data on that, but I think it's pretty clear that in percentage terms, relatively few did.

Lapp: Oh, we're glad all the English people (what Amish call Americans) got their Covid vaccines. That's great. Because now we don't have to wear a mask, we can do what we want. So good for you. Thank you. We appreciate it. Us? No, we're not getting vaccines. Of course not. We all got the Covid, so why would you get a vaccine?

By staying open, the Amish here have one tangible 2020 accomplishment few others can claim.

Lapp: We have this joke: when everybody else started walking, we started running. We made more money in the last year than we ever did. It was our best year ever.

Did the Amish really find a magic formula? They say yes. And they don't care who doubts it.

Lapp: Yeah, all the Amish know we got herd immunity. Of course we got herd immunity! The whole church gets coronavirus. We know we got coronavirus. We think we're smarter than everybody. We shouldn't be bragging, but we think we did the right thing.

"Herd immunity." The medical establishment will tell you there's no such thing, yet somehow it's working for the Amish, who are now thriving while much of the rest of the world still languishes under Covid tyranny.

My analysis is this.....

I doubt any other group of people can come up with the same medical results as the Amish with respect to Covid herd immunity, autism in children, heart disease, diabetes, cancer etc.

The reason? Lifestyle. These people grow their own food which is organically grown, meaning no pesticides, very little highly processed foods with chemicals and preservatives. Add to that a healthy outdoor lifestyle with lots of energetic work. Add to that a lot less stress from financial issues as they live a debt free lifestyle and lots of community support with any other issues and problems that arise.

The defining issue that determines the Amish lifestyle is no or very little reliance on outsiders for the needs of the community. That is why they don't use public electricity but they will use PV roof panels. Contact with others is determined by "does this help community or does this detract from community"?

When you analyze this attitude in the business world you will see that highly successful companies like the ones that Elon Musk has built, Tesla and SpaceX operate on the same principle. They call it vertical integration. That means build every thing we can that we need ourselves so that we can control our costs and our supply lines and we develop our own technology. That is why SpaceX designed their own rocket motors from scratch instead of buying them from the Russians, or why they make their own batteries for their cars instead of buying them from the Chinese.

Vertical integration and own manufacturing and developing your own technology means in essence you control how you do things. It is your company culture. In this company we do things differently because we do it better. That is why SpaceX can get rockets into space and NASA cannot and needed Russians to get their astronauts into space and why Tesla is going to destroy debt ridden legacy auto makers like Ford and GM by 2030.

Nations are waking up to economic disaster realizing that you cannot just print money you need to actually make things yourself, you cannot rely on others.

The great danger that the Church is facing is that we are no longer the "counter-culture" movement of the earth. We have been absorbed by our national cultures. We are incredibly dependent on the world system for our success and prosperity. We are divided and scattered and we no longer analyze on basis will this bring us together as a community or will this separate us as a community.

I don't agree with the Amish on technology and its uses. But I wholeheartedly agree with them on their value system. A value system that asks is this good for families is this good for our church community?

The great mistake that the opponents to my "Dominionist" theology make is to totally misunderstand what we are saying. We get accused "so you want to rule countries"! No we don't.

But what we do want to do is "vertical integration" of the church and control of our own way of life. To create a unique Christian culture in the midst of a secular world. That means the direction of the church going forward is to start identifying what is it that we can do better than the world system and then let's do it and then ask ourselves what can we do to make us less dependent on the world system and what can make us more dependent on each other.

That is the basic living philosophy of the Amish community. They don't need to go into the world to evangelize. The world comes to them to see how they live. And they get more people wanting to join their communities each year than what they can handle.

But as I look at the incredible technology breakthroughs of the last 20 years I firmly believe in the future of a technologically advanced "Amish" offshoot that has the cheapest electricity in the nation because we don't need Eskom power, we make our own; we don't need government education because we educate our own; we don't need big corporate food because we grow our own, we don't need internationally made cars, because with new battery technology we can make our own.....and we can go and on.

The Amish came through this pandemic healthy without masks, vaccines or lockdowns because they have a healthy lifestyle....we don't. They came through the Covid crises wealthier than before, because they had their economic lifestyle in their communities not dependent on a crumbling world system.

Some thoughts here for us to pray about in the months ahead.....

Is it not time for the church here in South Africa to come together and build a common community that so lets its light shine that the world will see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven?