

Appendix D Amish Groups

[Editor's note: Two sets of Amish data were collected in separate studies. Each of the methodologies is described below.]

Amish Religious Membership Count

The purpose of this project is to obtain a county based count of membership in the religious sect known as the Amish. This group consists of a number of different affiliations or fellowships, ranging from groups who resist almost all forms of modern technology to more progressive groups who increasingly embrace contemporary forms of technology. However, what all the variations on the Amish have in common are historical roots which go back to a specific offshoot of the Protestant Reformation in Zurich, Switzerland that also spawned other unique Anabaptist groups who practice only adult baptism, such as the Mennonites and the Hutterites, and a reliance on horsepower for local travel and farm work.

Two dimensions of the Amish subculture help facilitate my ability to conduct a county by county census of Amish religious membership. First, the Amish maintain a small scale to their social organization. For example, church districts (of which there are now over 1,750) are subdivided into separate districts if the number of households exceeds 45, and new church elders (bishop, minister, deacon) are nominated and selected by lottery from among the male members. This form of social organization reflects the strong community orientation of the Amish sect, which also means that it is nearly impossible for an adult, baptized member to be inactive (i.e., nominal membership) for any period of time without pressure and ensuing sanctions (including shunning and excommunication) from their church group (with exception for illness or other forms of incapacitation). Hence, a count of adult, baptized Amish members is 99 percent identical with active involvement or religiosity.

Second, the extended family is important to the Amish as a form of social capital. It is not unusual for grandparents and elderly aunts and uncles to live next door to, or as an extension of the same house. Abandonment of spouse is forbidden and subject to excommunication of the guilty party, divorce is likewise proscribed, and remarriage of widows and widowers, even among surviving spouses in their 60's and 70's is frequent. Unmarried, baptized adults will live at the same place where they were raised, or in a home nearby. Elderly couples and singles are considered to form a separate household and will be listed as such in Amish directories and other information sources from which this census of church membership will be derived. As a result, the average number of baptized adult members per household is nearly two (preliminary results indicate an average of 1.9 – see narrative on data entry below). If specific information about adult members is not available for an Amish church district, then knowledge of the number of households will allow for a reasonably accurate estimate.

Beyond these two advantages, however, the remainder of the task is not so simple, as information for various communities varies in its completeness

and recency. Three concurrent activities took place during the period, July 1 – December 31, 2009 to establish a firm database for counts and reliably valid estimates of Amish religious membership.

First, the names and approximate locations of all existing Amish settlements (their name for a community) were identified and verified. Using a list published in July, 2008 by Pathway Publishers (Amish Communities Across North America), reports from an Amish-based newspaper known as *The Diary*, and two visits to the Heritage Historical Library (HHL) in Aylmer, Ontario, a master list of slightly over 400 settlements has been developed. This task is complicated by two things. (1) over the past 19 years, about 12 new settlements are founded annually, or one per month. Finding reports from members of already established communities in *The Diary* about extended family, neighbors, and friends who may be moving to a new community, plus the report of migration of households at the front end of this same monthly publication, helps identify most of the possible start-ups, and of communities that occasionally become extinct (about 3 per year). These new places are then confirmed during visits to HHL files, and these same files at HHL are used to locate other start-ups that may not appear in the reporter's notes from various established communities in *The Diary*. Of particular importance to county-based estimates of Amish religious membership is that since 1990, over 150 counties (mostly in various Midwestern states) are first-time hosts for new Amish settlements. (2) Places names can be confusing relative to location. For example, there are two places in Pennsylvania with the unusual name of "Glen Campbell." One of those was the location of a start-up community in 2007. Perusing road atlases, detailed topographic maps from the DeLorme company, and computer searches are useful for identifying exact locations within counties, and if either new or previously established communities straddle county lines and therefore are multi-county. Although tedious, it will be possible to specify which households live on either side of a county line.

Second, as many Amish directories as possible have been identified. For a significant share of Amish communities, a directory is published that lists all households within each church district of a community (the majority of Amish communities have only one church district, although there are many well-known, large communities, with the largest containing nearly 220 church districts). By household, directory information typically includes an address, the names and birth dates of the husband and wife, plus the birth dates and names of all their children. Adult children who have married and started their own families are included, but given a code (such as the letter "B" or "C", depending on the directory), to indicate that they have now formed their own household and no longer live at home. Many directories also report the husband's (i.e., "breadwinner's") occupation, listing the occupation of baptized women only if they are single and live as adults independently of their parents, in which case they compose a single person household. Some baptized men, who are bachelors, will also be listed as a single person household. Regardless of marital status, in the vast majority of cases, all adult children can be found listed as baptized members of the community where they grew up, or of another community to which they moved (with their spouse).

Usually, a member of the Amish community takes on the mantle of compiling and publishing the information, and then advertises its availability for purchase. In larger communities, a local printing company (often Amish owned) coordinates receipt and compilation of the information from reporters of each church district. These directories are mostly meant for Amish readers, however, they are frequently advertised through publications like *The Diary*, and a large collection of them are available at HHL, hence, access through direct purchase or through trips to Aylmer is possible. At this point, I have purchased 32 directories with information on over 200 communities (some directories list all communities in a state), and now rely on HHL as a supplemental source.

Third, appropriate data for a count of religious membership have been entered into an excel spreadsheet. The first column includes the name of the community/name of church district, and the date of publication or year of reference the data designates. The second column includes the name of the state. The third column is a household number, which will be used to establish metrics related to mean/median size, variance, standard deviation and standard error of the mean for church district size. The fourth column is a numerical value indicating the number of adult members in each household, which is "2" for 95 percent plus of all households. Most of the remainder are single person households, which means someone who is never/not yet married but lives independently, plus widows and widowers who have not yet remarried. On rare occasion, several unmarried brothers and sisters are listed as a single household. The fifth column designates the number of children still living at home, and the sixth column indicates the number of adult children who are baptized Amish and who have set up an independent household, whether married or single. This information will be used to develop a measure of the number of adult, baptized members from which estimates to mostly smaller communities for which there are no directories can be estimated (in combination with statistics on the average size of a church district).

Since directories are published on an occasional basis, few correspond to either the 2009 or 2010 calendar year. Hence, it will be necessary to enter data from both recent and older directories for the same community so that a projection of membership growth can be established.

Supplementing this task, but performing another function as well, is the development of a second excel file. From numerous settlements in the December through March issues of *The Diary* is information about "community statistics." Generally, a community report will describe the number of church districts, number of households, and the number of parochial schools. Most of these "community statistics" reports are for the smaller and newer communities for which there are no published directories. Although this represents a small share of the Amish population (and of baptized, adult members), they represents a majority of Amish communities and of counties where the Amish can be found. A new excel database will be developed that lists community statistics, year by year, going back to December, 1999 – March, 2000 for as many communities as possible. From these statistics, estimates of church district size can be developed and then compared to information from the directories for the more

established communities. This will allow for a weighted estimate of the number of households, adjusted for the age of the community (or possibly, separate estimates for smaller and newer communities) for those remaining communities for which neither a directory or a report in *The Diary* is available.

Finally, once the excel spreadsheet information is completely compiled, statistical estimates of each of the 400 plus settlements can begin. Concurrent with this effort will be the extensive use of maps to specify the apportionment of membership for settlements that overlap county boundaries (and in the case of at least three settlements, state boundaries).

Submitted by: Joseph F. Donnermeyer

[Donnermeyer's tally is listed as Amish Groups, undifferentiated in the 2010 U.S. Religion Census, part of the Mennonite family of church bodies.]

Amish-Mennonite Religious Counts

A related group of denominations is known as Amish-Mennonite. Cory Anderson of Newcomerstown, Ohio, used much the same methodology as that of Joe Donnermeyer. These are his comments on the methods used for Amish-Mennonite bodies:

Because the Amish Mennonites have meeting houses 99% of the time, . . . all households will be counted as residents of that county. . . . The work will consist of collecting data from four directories, categorizing churches correctly, and extracting and calculating the requested data.

The categorization is going to be based off the past three years of field work I've been conducting, whereby I've been able to categorize each church in this complex, highly autonomous movement of "Amish Mennonites."

Anderson was able to provide information on eight groups, all included in the Mennonite family listings in the *2010 U.S. Religion Census*: Ambassadors Amish-Mennonite; Beachy Amish-Mennonite; Berea Amish-Mennonite; Maranatha Amish-Mennonite; Mennonite Christian Fellowship; Midwest Beachy Amish-Mennonite; Tampico Amish-Mennonite; Unaffiliated Amish-Mennonite.