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1. Interview with Ira Wagler

When did you leave the Amish community?

Ira: The last time was in 1987.

Which community did you belong to?

Ira: A small community in Bloomfield, Iowa. It has since grown to be much larger. It's now eight districts. When I lived there, there were two.

What did your family think about the decision of leaving the Amish?

Ira: It was pretty traumatic for everyone, including me. The last time I left, though, I had inner peace, and they could see that. Still, it made them sad.

Although you left the Amish community, do you still have the same beliefs?

Ira: I am Christian, yes, but not plain in any way. I guess you'd say I'm "English".

Was it difficult for you to start a new life outside the community?

Ira: Not too bad. I had friends and other contacts to help me.

How is your life now?

Ira: Busy, especially since my writing took off. I work full time and write in the evenings and weekends.

What do you miss about the Amish way of life?

Ira: Hard one. I still live around them here in Lancaster County, so I can still have the good things, like food and such. I admire and respect the Amish, but I could never, never live that way again.

Nowadays you are outside the community, have you ever thought about going back?

Do you regret your decision?

Ira: No regrets, I could never go back.

And about your book, why did you write a book explaining your story in the Amish community?

Ira: Well, a writer writes what he knows, I guess. No particular reason. I was just writing on my blog when the book came along. It really happened like that. And now, I'm back to just writing the blog again. We'll see if another book comes some day. If it doesn't, I'm ok with that.

It had been a successful, a New York Times bestseller? Did you expect that?

Ira: You can never expect anything, in publishing, but I am very happy and pleased.

What do you recommend to all the Amish that wanted to leave the community?

Ira: I don't recommend anything, except that they follow their hearts. I can't make that decision for anyone. I could only make it for myself.

2. Interview with Joseph Slabaugh

When did you leave the Amish community?

Joseph: I left three times, when I was thirteen, sixteen and finally when I was eighteen.

Why and how did you do it?

Joseph: I left due to a controlling uncle, my uncle made my family move, and I ran away. Then I went back home after three days. At sixteen I ran away again and I lived with my Mom's second cousin, who was a retired Mennonite pastor. I lived with him for three months and I could not really keep a job. Then at eighteen I finally ran away for the last time.

What was the reaction of your family?

Joseph: Well, I am from a family of eleven kids, one deceased, and about half left before me, so in a sense, they already did their grieving before I left.

Where is the community you were?

Joseph: In Ohio. Wayne, Holmes and Ashland counties mostly.

Do you have any relationship with your family?

Joseph: I have not seen them in few years. I can't see my parents anymore, they are in Indiana, it's like my uncle has them hostage.

How has your life changed since you are outside the community?

Joseph: A lot. I am not sure what I would be doing now if I was still Amish.

And, about your studies? Amish school level is too low.

Joseph: Yes, I was in 4th grade and I got my GED this year. It is the General Education Diploma, like the High School. I would like to go into College, I want to learn more about computers.

3. Interview with Erik Wesner

- First of all, why are you interested in the Amish community?

Erik: They live life in a different way, but are as "human" as the rest of us--sometimes this fact gets lost because there are a lot of illusions or exaggerations about the Amish. I grew up in the city so I think I am attracted to Amish life and rural life in general (though I could never be a farmer!)

- Do you think they are being introduced in our society and modernity?

Erik: I think they are probably encountering more of modernity than say 50 years ago, because they are involved in business, and because they have become a lot more popular in the main culture. People are interested in them, and they are doing business with non-Amish more, so that has led them to have more exposure.

- Was it easy to interview Amish people?

Erik: Pretty easy because I mostly interviewed people who were my previous customers, or ones who I was recommended to.

- Was Kraybill an inspiration to write *Success made simple*?

Erik: Don Kraybill and Steven Nolt's book (*Amish Enterprise*) was definitely an inspiration to write my book. Also my experience selling books in Amish communities and meeting a lot of Amish business people.

- Why did you use this schematic way to write the book?

Erik: I wanted to lay out the ideas in "business book" format. I thought it would be an interesting twist in the genre.

- What kind of reader do you recommend *Success made simple* to?

Erik: I recommend it to business owners who appreciate traditional values and common-sense business solutions.

- Is the book a reality? Do you know if it really helps entrepreneurs from our society in business ownership?

Erik: I have gotten positive feedback from readers as far as helping them with their businesses. Hopefully it has given people something to think about, even if they don't adopt every idea.

- Are you planning to do other things related with economy?

Erik: I am still interested in Amish businesses and have been developing an Amish business directory for my website www.amishamerica.com.