

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 248 178

SC 015 878

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 TITLE Mennonites in American Society.
 PUB DATE 84
 NOTE 24p.
 PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Amish; Comparative Analysis; Cross Cultural Studies;
 Cultural Differences; *Cultural Traits; Elementary
 Secondary Education; *Social Studies; *Subcultures
 IDENTIFIERS Kutterites; *Mennonites

ABSTRACT

Designed for elementary and secondary school social studies educators, this examination of the beliefs, values, customs, and philosophies of diverse groups of Mennonites living in the United States focuses specifically on major differences between and among the Holdeman Mennonites, the Hutterites, the General Conference Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren, and the Old Order Amish. For example, in dress, physical appearance, and the utilization of modern appliances and machines, General Conference Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren basically cannot be distinguished from other citizens in American society, whereas Old Order Amish, Holdeman Mennonites, and the Hutterites are clearly distinguishable. More specific comparisons are made in subsections devoted to each sect with regard to dress and physical appearance, attitudes toward formal schooling, acceptance of modern appliances and machines, acceptable occupations and living arrangements, attitudes toward military and community service, and differences in the teachings of the church. As a result of studying various Mennonite sects as well as other subcultures in the United States, learners may contrast their own values, beliefs, and goals with those of other subcultures. (LH)

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Mennonites in American Society

by

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1984

There are diverse groups of Mennonites living in the United States. These sects differ from each other in inherent beliefs, values, customs, and philosophies. The author has chosen the following groups of Mennonites to make comparisons and clarify likenesses as well as differences within the scope of this paper:

1. The Holdeman Mennonites.
2. The Hutterites.
3. The General Conference Mennonites.
4. The Mennonite Brethren
5. The Old Order Amish.

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THE HOLDEMAN MENNONITES IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

There are diverse Mennonite sects living in the United States. Thus, Holdeman Mennonites, General Conference Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren, and the Old Order Amish, among others, may all be classified as being Mennonites. There are basic differences between and among each of these groups. The Holdeman Mennonites, for example, drive modern cars while the Old Order Amish utilize horses and buggies for transportation purposes. General Conference Mennonites, as well as the Mennonite Brethren, utilize the latest means of transportation.

The Holdeman Mennonites basically are not as well known in terms of values, beliefs, and ideals adhered to as compared to General Conference Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethren, and the Old Order Amish. In physical appearance and in dress, for example, General Conference Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren are no different basically as compared to other individuals in American society. Many people in American society are quite familiar with the dress and physical appearance of Old Order Amish, e.g. men wearing beards with no mustaches and in many situations black broad brimmed hats, while the women wear dresses with very high neck lines, with sleeves extending generally to the wrists, and with the dress length extending basically to the ankles.

The public schools in the United States have, for several decades, emphasized the importance of pupils achieving relevant understandings, skills, and attitudes of diverse minority groups in American society. There are relevant ends that learners may achieve pertaining to the Holdeman Mennonites in the United States.

The Holdeman Mennonites

Vital objectives, among others, that pupils might achieve pertaining to the Holdeman Mennonites might be the following:

1. Holdeman men wear beards. No ties are worn with a suit for Sunday services. Their suits are commercially purchased and are conservative in color. The women rather continuously wear prayer caps with the dress length extending below the knees. The dresses have very high neck lines and sleeves extending to the wrists.

2. The Holdeman Mennonites, generally believe that eight years of formal schooling is adequate for their children. They feel that additional years of schooling are not necessary to engage in farming and farm related work. Exceptions to this rule are made for selected future nurses and teachers among the Holdeman Mennonites.

3. Since farm land is becoming increasingly scarce and expensive, selected male members of the younger generation of Holdemans may work in feed mills, as mechanics, as carpenters, as bricklayers, and in factories in small, nearby cities. Selected women may work in grocery stores, as clerks in stores containing general merchandise, as nurses aides in hospitals, and in restaurants. There are Holdeman Mennonites who own feed mills, service stations, grocery stores, and small restaurants. These places of business are located in small, rural cities (population 2,000 and less, approximately).

4. During times of conscription, Holdeman men of draft age serve as conscientious objectives (rather than military service) in hospitals and other forms of charitable government approved work. Adult men of various ages very frequently assist in cleaning up in disaster areas where floods, cyclones, and tornadoes have taken their toll in life and property. The work is performed voluntarily and without pay.

5. If illness, death, or other misfortunes occur within a Holdeman community, members assist each other in doing needed farm or household work.

6. Modern farm machinery is utilized to do farm work. Thus, tractors with power steering and hydraulic lifts are utilized to plow, disk, harrow, and seed land. Self-propelled combines are utilized to harvest grain.

7. Holdeman homes contain electricity with modern conveniences such as running water, electric ranges, deep freezes, and hot water heaters. The use of television and radio is frowned upon. Radios in cars, of course, also do not exist.

8. Many Holdeman children have attended public schools. This is especially true where diverse Mennonite sects, basically, make up the total population of a school district. Increasingly, however, Holdeman Mennonites are developing their own schools in rural areas. They frown upon increased secularization of the public school setting. The teaching of evolution would definitely be frowned upon (Genesis 1:27—So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.) Glorifying the lives and accomplishments of leaders in the military would not harmonize with Holdeman philosophy (Exodus 20:13—Thou shalt not kill). Also see the Sermon on the Mount—Matthew 5-7.

9. John Holdeman (1832-1900) was the founder and leader of the Holdeman Mennonites. The Holdeman Mennonites worship in church buildings (as contrasted with the Old Order Amish who worship in member's homes). Discipline of Holdeman members is very strict. Church membership may be terminated among other reasons, for implementing law suits, belonging to oath bound organizations such as holding

lodge membership, and attending school beyond the elementary level of schooling. Using tobacco in its various forms, using intoxicants, and being divorced is definitely prohibited. Among others, there are Holdeman Mennonite communities in Kansas, Oklahoma, Georgia, Colorado, Idaho, Mississippi, Michigan, Ohio, and Oregon.

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Hiebert, Clarence. The Holdeman People. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library.

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The Mennonite Encyclopedia. Newton, Kansas: The Mennonite Publication Office, 1959. The content in these encyclopedias is objectively written by scholars in the field.

The Mennonite Weekly Review. Newton, Kansas: The Herald Publishing Company. This weekly newspaper contains news items from diverse Mennonite groups and sects.

Wiebe, David V. They Seek a Country. Hillsboro, Kansas: The Mennonite Brethern Publishing Company, 1959. This book pertains to the history of different Mennonite sects as well as developments of this group up to the copyright date. Pictures within the context assist in clarifying ideas.

THE HUTTERITES IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

Pupils in the school curriculum need to develop vital understandings, skills, and attitudes pertaining to diverse minority groups in the United States. Each minority group needs to have access to the good things in American society. Thus, diverse minority groups need to be involved in obtaining prized jobs and professions, desired housing and education, and respect in the United States, as well as in other nations on the face of the earth.

The Hutterites, a communal subculture, are a minority group in the United States, living among other states, in South Dakota, Washington, North Dakota, and Montana. These people possess unique ideas, values, and beliefs. Thus, there is much that pupils in the school setting, as well as adults, can learn from the Hutterites.

The Hutterites, a Communal Subculture

There are selected key ideas or major generalizations that pupils may acquire pertaining to the Hutterites.

1. The Hutterites believe in group or communal ownership of property. Individuals owning property is definitely frowned upon. The basis for communal ownership of property is Acts 2:44-45-"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

2. The Hutterites live and work on communes or farms. They do not drive to work. The Hutterites utilize modern farm machinery in farming operations such as self-propelled combines to cut grain, and tractors with hydraulic lifts to pull disks, plows, and harrows, as well as milking machines to milk cows. Hutterites generally do not insure their buildings, livestock, and machinery. They are very self sufficient (not interdependent) in providing for their own needs. Thus, the Hutterites raise their own farm animals for an adequate supply of meat for consumption purposes. They also raise and can select needed fruits and vegetables. Hutterites are proficient in the food preparation arena which includes the baking of bread and pies in their own bakery. Generally, sugar and coffee are the only food items purchased. Even soap is made on the commune.

Most of the clothing worn by Hutterites is made in the colonies. One person or several individuals, for example, make shoes for all members on a commune. Work clothes, suits, and dresses are also made on a Hutterite commune.

3. Hutterites clearly distinguish themselves in dress and physical appearance from other

6

individuals in American society. Nonconformity is important here. Hutterite women wear long dresses extending to the ankles. The dresses also have a very high neck line and long sleeves. Hutterite women wear prayer caps. Hutterite men wear beards and black hats. Black is a favorite color for clothes among Hutterite men.

4. The Hutterites have a unique system of government. A business manager is elected by Hutterite men living on a commune. The business manager is in charge of selling farm products and produce from the commune to the outside world. He also is in charge of buying farm machinery, household needs, cloth, and livestock from relevant sources removed from the Hutterite commune.

A work supervisor is elected to place members at tasks commensurate with their abilities. Thus, a Hutterite woman may work in helping to prepare food for members on a commune. Washing, mending, and making of clothing may be assigned as work to be completed by other women on the commune. Taking care of diverse kinds of farm livestock, taking care of repair work of farm implements, and tilling the soil as well as harvesting crops may be assigned as work to be completed by

Hutterite men, Each worker then is assigned to the world of work by the work supervisor. The minister, chosen by lot, is the actual leader of a Hutterite colony. Trustees, generally two or three in number, serve as judges when disputes and disagreements among Hutterites arise.

5. Hutterite members living on a commune eat their meals in a central dining hall. The dining hall is a separate building as compared to the home setting. Generally four Hutterite families live in a rather large house. Each family has modern conveniences in their living quarters. Use of electricity, telephones, and running water comprise a part of the utilization of modern conveniences by Hutterite families.
6. The Hutterites believe strongly in educating their young on the commune. The children attend school up to age sixteen. Classes are taught in both the German and English languages. The German language is the language of their church. Thus, in a Hutterite school, pupils learn much Biblical content in the German language. Learning to read, write, and compute in the English language is also vital for Hutterite children. Science content pertaining to the study of evolution

is forbidden. Instead, the creation story from the book of Genesis in the Old Testament is adhered to. Glorifying the pursuits and endeavors of military leaders in history is also frowned upon.

Hutterite young men of draft age perform alternative service, as conscientious objectors, rather than participate in any form of military service. One of the Ten Commandments is interpreted literally here—Thou shalt not kill. Among other Biblical references, The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 through 7) further substantiates Hutterite thinking against participation in military service. Hutterites refrain from taking oaths; they affirm rather than swear that content written is true, e.g. signing income tax forms. The use of legal procedures is frowned upon also, such as in suing others.

7. The Hutterite way of life was originally determined by Jacob Hutter in Moravia in Central Europe in 1533. In addition to those living in the United States, Hutterite colonies also are in evidence in Paraguay, Uruguay, Great Britain, and Canada.

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Gross, Paul. The Hutterite Way. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Freeman Publishing Company, 1965. There are many interesting illustrations as well as related content in this book.

The Mennonite Encyclopedia, Hillsboro, Kansas: The Mennonite Brethern Publishing House, 1959. Much content is written about the Hutterites in these encyclopedias. The entries are written by scholars highly knowledgeable about Mennonite life.

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Mennonite Life. North Newton, Kansas: Bethel College. This periodical is printed four times a year and periodically contains content on the Hutterites.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE MENNONITES IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

There are numerous Mennonite sects living in the United States. Thus, General Conference Mennonites, the Mennonite Brethern, the Conservative Amish, and the Old Order Amish, among other groups, may be classified as Mennonites. There are major differences, however, between and among selected cultures of these diverse groups of Mennonites. For example, in dress, physical appearance, and in the utilization of modern appliances and machines, General Conference Mennonites basically can not be distinguished from other citizens in American society, whereas, Old Order Amish are clearly distinguishable. They utilize horses and buggies for transportation purposes and draft horses with horse drawn machinery in farming operations.

General Conference Mennonites live in many states in the United States, including Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Arizona, South Dakota, Oklahoma, and Texas.

As a result of studying General Conference, and other Mennonite sects, learners may contrast their own values, beliefs, and goals with those of other subcultures.

Objectives and the Learner

There are many significant ends that learners may achieve in studying General Conference Mennonites.

1. They generally use modern farm machinery in farming including self-propelled combines with air conditioned cabs and power steering as well as tractors with hydraulic lifts to raise or lower attach plows, disks, grain drills, and

11

harrow.

2. General Conference Mennonites through the end of World War II basically were a rural population and earned a living through farming.
3. Those who farm presently find it difficult to earn a living from farm operations alone. Thus, many farmers supplement their income with factory work, working in the building trades, and in the business world.
4. General Conference Mennonites not desiring college or university levels of schooling, locate jobs and occupations in cities. Farm land and machinery are costly, thus increasing the rate of rural to urban movement.
5. Many General Conference Mennonites after high school graduation attend colleges and universities. Bethel College at North Newton, Kansas and Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio are the only two General Conference four year institutions in the United States.
6. General Conference Mennonites serve in diverse professions, such as being nurses, dentists, medical doctors, professors, teachers, nurses, as well as being owners and managers in business.
7. Change is a major concept in the thinking of General Conference Mennonites. A generation ago, children still learned to speak the low

language
 German (plautdeutsch) in the home setting. Church services were still conducted in the German language, approximately one and one half generations ago. It would be rare for a child in these communities to be able to speak the low German language ^{today, and it is also rare to have the German language} utilized in any facet of church services. During times of conscription, most young men enter alternative service (conscientious objectors) as compared to military service. General Conference Mennonites interpret literally one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) which states- Thou shalt not kill. Instead of military service, young men of draft age perform relief work for refugees or teach in needy areas of the world, work in general hospitals or hospitals for the mentally ill, and work with delinquent youth in selected areas. General Conference Mennonites have maintained a consistent attitude toward participating in any and all wars. Adults also take time off from the world of pay for work performed to participate in selected kinds of voluntary service to help needy groups in the United States as well as abroad. The Mennonite Disaster Service provides immediate assistance in the United States in selected areas in which floods, cyclones, and hurricanes have caused loss of life and property.

8. In General Conference Mennonite farming communities, plowing bees and other needed assistance is given to neighbors in times of ill health or death. In a day, large fields can be plowed for a needy person or family with ten or more neighbors utilizing tractors with hydraulic lifts each pulling five to seven shears on a plow for plowing. Helping others in a General Conference Mennonite community, and also needy families not connected with this denomination, has remained a stable value in this subculture.
9. With increased mobility due to attending colleges and universities, performing alternative service, and moving from rural to urban areas, marrying outside of the Mennonite fold has become increasingly popular. Two generations ago and longer, General Conference Mennonites basically married among members of their own denomination. In a homogeneous rural Mennonite community, divorce is still rare.
10. General Conference Mennonites generally refrain from belonging to lodges; using tobacco, liquor, and wine; suing others in courts; dancing; using swear words; taking oaths; and swearing that statements are true in legal documents (affirmations are made instead). Very few General Conference Mennonites indeed have entered the legal profession as compared to other professions in American society.

THE MENNONITE BRETHERN IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

There are numerous Mennonite sects living in the United States. Diverse groups of Mennonites include the Mennonite Brethern, General Conference Mennonites, the Holdeman Mennonites, and the Old Order Amish. Major differences in thought, beliefs, and philosophy exist between and among these selected groups of Mennonites. Thus, for example, the Mennonite Brethern basically do not differ in dress and physical appearance from other citizens in American society. Whereas, Holdeman Mennonite men as well as men of the Old Order Amish wear beards. Both Holdeman and Amish women rather continually wear prayer caps.

There are vital major generalizations which learners may acquire pertaining to diverse Mennonite groups. The balance of this paper will pertain to listing understandings objectives which pupils may attain pertaining to the Mennonite Brethern.

Relevant Objectives and the Learner

Which might be significant objectives for pupil achievement pertaining to studying the Mennonite Brethern in American society?

1. The farm population generally utilizes the latest inventions in farm machinery, such as the use of self-propelled combines with air conditioned cabs, power steering, and hydraulic lifts to raise or lower the height of the platform for cutting grain. The tractors used may also contain air conditioned cabs, power steering, and a

hydraulic lift with an attached plow, harrow, disk, or drill.

2. Many or most homes, rural or urban, have the latest in modern appliances, such as automatic clothes washers and dishwashers, clothes dryers, ranges, and television sets.
3. An increasing number have left the farm following post World War II years. Thus, numerous Mennonite Brethern have entered the professions, such as being medical doctors, dentists, professors, nurses, teachers, and administrators in schools. Many have also entered the business world in terms of being owners and/or managers of selected business. Other nonfarm work pursued by Mennonite Brethern include being carpenters, bricklayers, contractors, electricians, and plumbers.
4. There are two Mennonite Brethern four year liberal arts colleges in the United States: Tabor College located in Hillsboro, Kansas; and Pacific College in Fresno, California.
5. During times of conscription, many Mennonite Brethern young men serve in alternative service (conscientious objectors) as compared to military service. Alternative service performed can include working in hospitals, teaching abroad, performing relief work in countries where disasters have occurred, and engaging in rebuilding of

of houses in ghetto areas in the United States as well as in disaster areas abroad.

Adult Mennonite Brethern may perform diverse kinds of voluntary service including the men working to restore areas in which cyclones, tornados, hurricanes, and other natural disasters have occurred in the United States.

6. Rural orientated Mennonite Brethern generally practice feet washing during communion services in church. They baptize through immersion of the involved individual. Their church buildings, in many situations, are of recent architectural vintage. Divorce of married couples is indeed rare.

7. The forefathers of most Mennonite Brethern living in the United States came from Russia in 1874. Among other areas, Mennonite Brethern also live in Canada, Brazil, and Paraguay. The low German language is spoken by older members of the Mennonite Brethern sect. The taking of oaths and belonging to lodges is frowned upon. In rural areas when members experience ill health, death, or disasters from the natural world, Mennonite Brethern are there to assist each other in farm and home work.

8. Most Mennonite Brethern children attend public schools. Generally, there are other Mennonite groups, such as General Conference Mennonites,

together with Mennonite Brethern young
people which, ^{in part,} comprise the total school population
in selected small cities in the United States.

Selected References

The Mennonite Encyclopedia. Hillsboro, Kansas: Mennonite Brethern Publishing House, 1959. There are four volumes in this set written and edited by scholars in the field.

The Mennonite Weekly Review. Newton, Kansas: The Herald Publishing Company. This weekly newspaper contains news pertaining to diverse Mennonite groups and sects.

Mennonite Life. North Newton, Kansas: Bethel College. This periodical is published four times a year and presents content directly related to various groups of Mennonites.

THE OLD ORDER AMISH IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

Teachers, principals, and supervisors in the school class setting need to understand and accept all pupils within the framework of teaching-learning situations. Units of study emphasizing diverse minority groups in the United States have been in evidence for some time in many courses of study. Studying these subcultures should aid pupils in understanding the self and others better. The Old Order Amish in American society possess a unique culture which may well provide meaningful content for learners in ongoing units of study in the social studies. Teachers, principals, and supervisors need to choose relevant understandings, skills, and attitudes to implement units pertaining to the Old Order Amish, as well as other minority groups.

Objectives in the Curriculum

Carefully selected objectives may well stimulate pupil interest and purpose in learning. The following generalizations pertaining to the Old Order Amish can be translated into general and specific objectives.

1. The Old Order Amish are basically farmers and do not drive to work in cities. They utilize horses and mules to pull farm implements instead of using tractors with power steering and air conditioned cabs. Thus, the Amish utilize binders pulled by mules or horses to cut grain rather than self-propelled combines containing hydraulic lifts to raise or lower the level of the platform for cutting grain.
2. Other mule or horse drawn implements used by the Amish include plows, disks, harrows, and grain drills. Plows, disks, harrows,

and drills, or course, are also utilized in modern methods of farming. These implements are then attached to tractors with the use of a hydraulic lift. A slight pull of a lever by the operator on the tractor raises or lowers the attached implement to a desired level. The Old Order Amish strongly believe that "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. . ."-Genesis 3:19.

- 3. Pennsylvania Dutch is spoken in most Amish homes. The German language is utilized in religious services. The Old Order Amish have no church buildings, but have religious services in their homes. It is felt and believed that God does dwell in a building built with human hands. Feet washing, choosing ministers by drawing lots, and using wooden benches without backs are inherent in Old Order Amish religious services.
- 4. The home is the center of Amish life. Divorce is not permitted. Marriages and funeral services are conducted within a home setting. Modernism in home appliances is frowned upon. Thus, electrical dishwashers, clothes washers, dryers, refrigerators, ranges, and deep freezers are not in evidence. Amish homes, of course, generally do not have electrical wiring. Selected homes have running water due to gravity flow, water pumped by gasoline engines or water wheel. There are no telephones, radios, and television sets in the home setting. Thus, it is easier to control outside environmental influences in Amish culture. Old Order Amish culture is relatively stable; change comes about gradually, but very slowly.



5. Old Order Amish are easily distinguishable from other individuals in American society. The women wear dresses with long sleeves extending to the wrists and the length of the dress extending to the ankles. A very high neckline on the dress is also in evidence. Prayer caps are worn rather continuously. The men wear beards with no mustaches. Black broadbrimmed hats are generally worn in the out-of-doors. Both women and men, as well as children, wear plain colors in their clothing, e.g. women wear black bonnets and cloaks, whereas men, in addition to wearing black hats, in many situations, also wear black coats. Ties are never worn by Old Order Amish men.
6. During times of conscription, Amish young men serve as conscientious objectors instead of in military service. Literal interpretation of the Bible is stressed here-Thou shall not kill (one of the Ten Commandments-Exodus 20:13).
7. Amish children generally attend their own private schools. Eighth grade education is terminal education. Amish culture emphasizes that eight years of schooling is adequate to develop farmers, blacksmiths, carpenters, and homemakers. Adults of their own faith with eighth grade education basically teach in the elementary school. These one room school houses generally contain no electrical outlets, no telephone, and may contain no running water. Water is then pumped from a well in the out-of-doors. Two out door toilets, as well as a small horse barn are generally located on the school grounds.

Moral admonitions are listed on the chalkboard or classroom walls, e.g. "Be so strong, you will never do wrong." Verses from the Bible also are exhibited in the classroom, e.g. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" (Galations 6:7).

Audio-visual aids are not utilized in teaching (Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth- Exodus 20:4). Evolution and its implication are definitely not taught in Old Order Amish schools (So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he them- Genesis 1:27). These children appear to be inwardly disciplined. No doubt, models presented by Old Order Amish parents are effective here, e.g. heavy manual labor performed by adults instead of utilizing modern machinery in farm operations (Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it").

8. The Old Order Amish are exempt from paying Social Security tax money to the federal government. Neither do the Amish want social security payments from the federal government after retirement or in cases of disability. Insurance on personal property also is not purchased generally. It is felt that God protects people from adversities.

In times of sickness or death, neighbors of the Old Order Amish faith will take care of needed farm work. If a disaster strikes a farm, such as a fire destroying a

barn, Amish men of a community will rebuild the barn in a few days. Homes for the aged and nursing homes, basically do not exist in an Old Order Amish community. The elderly are taken care of by their immediate descendants in the farm setting. A strong feeling of togetherness, helping others in need, and taking care of their own personal needs is inherent in Amish beliefs and deeds.

In Summary

The social studies curriculum must strongly emphasize that pupils understand and have desirable attitudes toward minority groups in American society. A democratic ideal is that each pupil achieve optimally in all facets of positive development. Thus, minority groups need also to have access to the good life in the United States, as well as in other nations on the face of the earth.

Teachers, principals, and supervisors need to choose an ample number of units in the social studies which pertain to learners achieving needed understandings, skills, and attitudes relating directly toward relevant minority groups in American society.

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