Ordnungs Briefen of 1865, 1917, and 1939: English Translations of Important Old Amish Church Orders

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Abstract: This is a German-to-English translation of four important decisions made by Amish church leaders. The first, in 1865, was the charter agreement that launched the Old Order movement among the Amish, as the progressive Amish-Mennonites who had been organizing annual conferences since 1863 refused to acknowledge the Ordnung Brief at the 1865 conference. The second, which also affirms the first, was written in 1917. It occurred in the shadow of the Sam Yoder division, and like the first, addresses pressures of the day on Amish practice and thought. The third, written in 1939, affirms the 1917 statement and elaborates with more recent concerns. Statements address relationships in family and church, continued observance of church rituals, views on excommunication and shunning, parental jurisdiction over youth behavior, entrepreneurship and advertising, alcohol and patronization of bars, technology such as refrigerators and automobiles, fashion in garments and grooming practices, tobacco, and reunions. [Abstract by editor]

Keywords: Old Order Amish; church standards; church rules; Holmes County, OH; Diener Versammlungen

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