

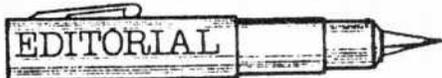


PASTOR'S
CORNER

I agree with the late Martin Luther King, Jr. that people should not be judged by the color of their skin but by the character of their hearts. People also should not be judged by the condition of their homes. I realize I was wrong in thinking that the deterioration of one's house reflected a kind of dysfunction. Maybe sometimes it does, but we cannot make that prejudgment. This week we had another volunteer day to paint one house and replace the roof of another house. In the process of arranging the work day we learned to know a few people in a very different way. It is not so difficult to be a functional person in a supportive environment. But here are people in a difficult environment of alcohol, drugs and theft who have been extraordinarily functional people. In being with their teenage children you sense these children have been parented. These children give me a new hope that there will be some good people in the generation now growing up. Blessed is the person who gives a cup of water to one of the least of these. As Jesus' disciples we must catch the spirit in which Jesus said these words. Among the least of these we don't just see persons with needs but people with big hearts and a kind of wisdom and understanding that we from the quote good neighborhoods unquote cannot understand.

May God give us eyes to see as God sees, and heart to feel as God feels.

Moses Mast, Pastor



Dear Friends,

What do you do when the "light flashes" and the "bells ring"? Do you check the oil, belts and hoses? Those checks may not diagnose a thing or suggest a problem if the symptoms are in your mind and conscience.

Initially I would not have said that my Christian commitment was tested, but portions may have at least been measured to monitor my responses and motives.

How often do we pass by opportunities for service and compassion? I have passed stranded motorists and vehicles often enough - most times thinking "I can't take the time" (meaning "let someone else do it"), but it didn't stop there on 7 September. I was struggling with it, while passing places where I could have turned around to go back, and finally at about a half mile the conflict was over and I was returning. Slumped over in despair, a head raised up in disbelief - "help has arrived." The exchange we had during our brief ride in the next five minutes was not of salvation, orientation to Mennonites, or even as to where our church is - maybe it could have been, but more important, that believers even care about strangers that, rather than pay me, to help someone else when he has the opportunity.

Those were the words we have all heard over and over, not always heeding them, nor am I making any promises to live by it entirely from now on. Intuition can play a role in our decisions - should it? There was a time when it was not so. One picked up hitchhikers and assisted stranded motorists because they were there, and it was a spiritually rewarding thing to have done. As more frequently the helpers were becoming victims, intuition started reasoning that helping carried the risk of a price tag too high to be willing to pay. Is that a sign of too little commitment?

Urie Bender, in his book "Soldiers of Compassion," talks of commitment. It is the story of MCC's PAX program from its conception on. Rather than defining the word, he allows many former "PAXers" to define commitment from their experiences. I may do that myself one day, but for now let's go back to when we first made our "commitment" to Christ - too many years ago for me to wish to remember. It was the expected step to take then.

If the word commitment was used then (back in '48 or '49) how could a 13 or 14-year-old know what it really meant? Looking back, I suspect that as a definition took shape, it became a shield to hide behind. So long as we could claim salvation and talk commitment, we still weren't forced to or capable of facing issues head-on and being counted.

That thought was brought vividly to mind reading books by author Clifton Taulbert recently. "Once Upon A Time When We Were Colored" and "The Last Train North" together are a story of American blacks - they are his story. Living now in Tulsa, Taulbert is one of the best examples of success in America - not a Rockefeller or a Jesse Jackson, nor a Martin Luther King or an O.J. - he is a black American who "overcame." His story is one we, probably most of us, knew before he penned it, but we loved Negroes and didn't mistreat them - we weren't part of Taulbert's story. We had commitment. We only turned our head allowing the injustice to continue to happen.

Each of us must come to grips with how we can and do relate to human need and misery, and how much our definitions help or hinder our commitment.

Let's start preparing for our year's end wind-down. By Thanksgiving we can acknowledge our thanks and be spiritually tuned for Christmas. Best wishes,

Bice Kannon



create
peace

F·E·L·L·O·W·S·H·I·P



It was a heart-warming and inspiring experience for all who attended the 1994 Oklahoma Convention of Mennonite Churches Conference at Eden Mennonite Church in Inola, OK on Saturday and Sunday, 17 and 18 September '94.

Tim Sprunger's messages on Jesus' centered living, giving and serving highlighted the weekend. Tim, son of Rev. John and Romaine Sprunger, and his wife Suanne will return to Hong Kong to continue their ministry there.

John and Carolyn Voth, Faye Pankratz, and so many others too numerous to mention, and the Eden church were gracious hosts in their beautiful worship setting. All of the food was delicious, well prepared and attractively served in ample quantities. Music provided by the Eden Bell Choir was once again delightful. Thanks goes to all at Eden for the beautiful weekend.

The scheduled 24 September workday got extended to a "work week" with the Sunday evening arrival of the Inman Mennonite work force from Kansas. Wrap-up for the work week is still set for Saturday, 1 October - if needed. A detailed report of these activities will be forthcoming after the dust settles - see Moses' reflections on the spiritual side of this type of discipleship in this issue.

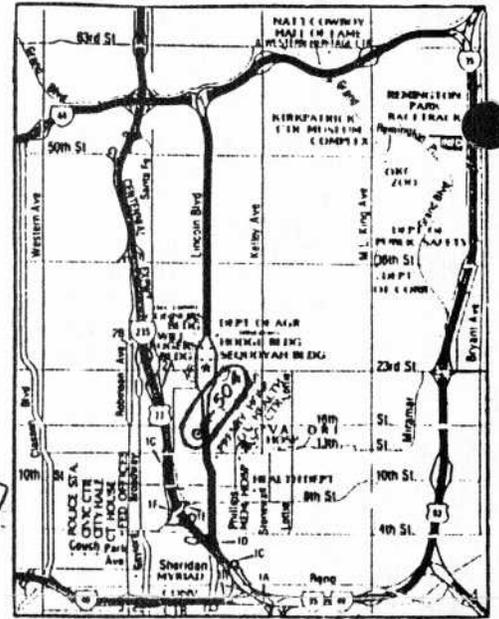
Special thanks go to:

- *Jay Blough who gave us materials at a good price, furnished a dump truck to haul away shingles, and worked on the job.
- *Kenneth Long for managing the job.
- *Leland Clegg Methodist Church for the volunteers.
- *Inman Mennonite Church.
- *All the volunteers.

CROP walk pledge envelopes were circulated at Joy Mennonite Church on Sunday, 25 September, by our four walkers. We thank them for their participation for JMC.



WORSHIP SERVICE
EVERY SUNDAY AT 10 O'CLOCK A.M.



Church Address: 504 NE 16th ST.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sat. 1 Oct. Wrap-up of JMC community work week
- Sun. 30 Oct. End of Daylight Savings Time
- Mon. 31 Oct. Halloween
- Fri. 11 Nov. Armistice Day
- Sat. 19 Nov. Oklahoma City Peace Fest
- Thu. 24 Nov. Thanksgiving
- Sun. 25 Dec. Christmas Day
- Sat. 31 Dec. Last Day of 1994

Leland Clegg Methodist Church has invited Joy Mennonite people to participate with them in a project to provide housing for AIDS victims in Tulsa October 7 and 8.

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