



Joy Mennonite Church Newsletter

PASTOR'S CORNER

I would like to refer to the article Nicole Tabor wrote for the last newsletter about her trip to Chiapas, Mexico. Nicole wrote with passion about what she saw in Chiapas. It is a scene of suffering repeated in many places of the world, in some places hundreds of times greater. Now people may say to Nicole "that was a good article," but compliments of her story do not feed any children. Nicole has also been criticized for her article. She made no mention of God or Jesus and the salvation story, she was said to be concerned for

the temporal instead of the eternal, for the body instead of the soul. She is troubled by these statements and asked us, "am I on the right track?" To answer we turned to the teachings of Jesus. There is a theme of warning against religious traditionalists. It seems so clear, Nicole said, why can my friends not understand. This kind of religion that focuses on religious experience and does not concern itself about suffering is a natural development in an affluent society. This kind of religion is promoted by our state department in

countries like Guatemala in an effort to snuff out a faith that concerns itself about the suffering poor. Here are some of the ways we counseled Nicole. You must respect your critics concerns. You must not think your explanation will convince them. Every person must find their own way. You must focus on your own spiritual journey. By prayer and meditation and acts of kindness you deepen your experience. Mother Teresa was criticized for leaving the sacred confines of the convent and accused of neglecting prayer. Mother

Teresa did not stop to argue but concerned herself about her own spiritual development. Her message to the world were not word but acts of compassion. I just want to say I believe Nicole is on the right track. Jesus counseled us to watch and pray because the concerns of making a living can distract us from the way. If that is true how much more does excess wealth distract us? We wish all of you well. May the life of the spirit of God flourish in your lives

Moses Mart

News from Agape Ranch

My Name is Charlotte Warkentine. My family recently moved to Oklahoma from Kansas. I am sharing with you as the new manager of "The Agape Ranch of Oklahoma." The Agape Ranch is a non-profit organization providing adequate and affordable housing within a Christian community of

unconditional love. We provide encouragement, support, training and mentoring for families in need. We do not discriminate based on income level, race, sexual preference, or religion. Our priority is to provide housing assistance and community for those families trying to get off

welfare and are falling through the cracks due to government cutbacks. It is our goal to have the board of directors comprised of community persons and representatives from other organizations that are sympathetic to our concerns. The Agape Ranch is located near Wellston, Oklahoma.

The ranch is 160 acres of land, located in a very beautiful area of Oklahoma. It has three stocked ponds for fishing and a very beautiful wooded area for hiking, offering a very quiet country atmosphere. The ranch was one of the original settlements when Oklahoma was first homesteaded.

During the past seven years, the ranch has been a non-profit corporation that has provided housing for adults, who are chronically mentally ill. Most of the past residents have moved on to other homes or facilities. Agape Ranch now starts another phase of service to others. Improving and expanding what already exist on the ranch. Making it a safe and welcoming place for all, residents and visitors. The first large project for us, is to find a way of providing more housing for those wishing to live on the ranch. Currently we are fully occupied. In the near future, we will need to either bring in one or two more trailers and/or start new construction on the site. The community is a diverse and inter-generational one. Currently there are seven adults and fifteen children of all ages. One more adult will be joining the group in the next

month or so. Financial support is being met by rental income from the houses on the property and several home based businesses. The businesses include, repairing and upgrading old computers and custom made quilts and wall hangings. Our newest resident plans to start an internet based book and toy store that will sell religious books and non-violent toys. We need people who share our vision. We need diverse talents such as financial consultants and architects. We need people who would be interested in opening or supporting a small business on the ranch. We need outside businesses interested in working with the "Welfare to Work Program" and hire some of our residents. We need people who would be interested in backing our project with loans or contributions. We also need material support. PC computers, a yard light for night time

safety, row and paddle boats, life jackets, driveway rock, a table saw. We need repairs for the ranch and a welder and to teach skills to the residents. If you can help with any of these items, please contact us at (405) 258-4142 or email at aranch@earthlink.net.

Several families from our church were able to attend the Oklahoma convention on Oct. 19-20 at Clinton, OK. Frank Bliss filled pulpit that Sunday.

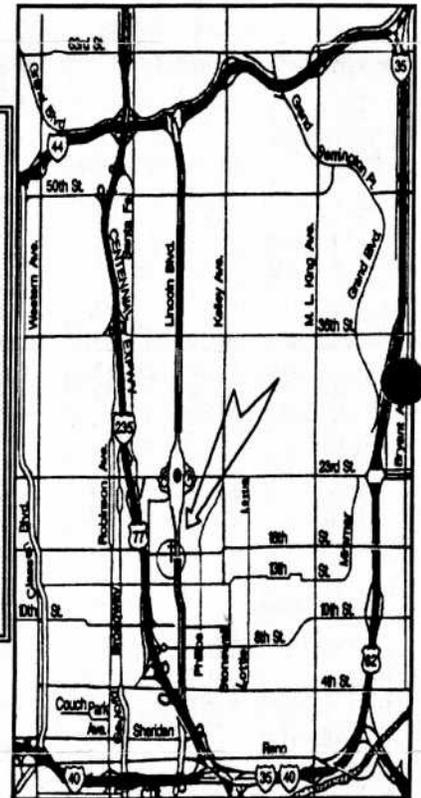
Congratulations! Jack and Debbie O'neal on the arrival of Anna Arlene, September 9
Bill and Thea Klassen are on vacation in Michigan for a Pax reunion.



Calendar
CROP WALK- Oct 11 at stars and stripes park, Lake Hefner.

Speaker for Oct 11- Marvin Penner with MMA followed by potluck dinner.

Business meeting and workday- Oct 10



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