



# JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER

## Pastor's Corner

The New Testament writer, John wrote, "I have no greater joy then to see my children walk in truth." (3<sup>rd</sup> John 1:4) One of the joys of getting older, note not old, is to see the next generation make good and responsible decisions in their own faith journey. Nicole's story in this issue is an example. I would have liked to go to Mexico but I was more pleased that Nicole could go. We cannot heal all the worlds

wounds but we must be aware of them and do something. In fact we must be passionate about some things even if we cannot address all that is wrong. Our son and his wife took training to care for special needs children. In the process they learned how deeply wounded are so many of America's children. It is now their passion to help these wounded children. This was a year of family reunions for us. In Sadie's family it was the next

generation that planned the events and were in charge. Children who were not born when we were married, now led the worship service. Perhaps the best experience was helping milk forty nine goats with a large family of children of Sadie's niece. It was fun to work with the children. It was absolutely delightful to see the respect the children had for their parents, and more important, the respect the parents had for their children

I hope you had a good summer. We are still hot and dry. Maybe the fall will bring us some rain. May god guide your feet and direct your steps.

*Moses Mast*

## Observations by Nicole Tabor

Earlier this summer there was a casual message from Sadie saying something about going to Chiapas. I decided to follow it up, but was not really set on going. As I talked more and more with Sadie about the possibility of going to Chiapas, it started to come together. The Benedictine Sisters wanted to send someone from Oklahoma on a delegation to Chiapas, Mexico with the Mexico Solidarity Network. I would like to thank the Benedictine Sisters for this opportunity. Chiapas is a destitute state in southern Mexico that happens to be very rich in natural resources. The indigenous

people suffer greatly by the terror directed at them by the military and paramilitary groups deployed by the government and wealthy landowners. They live in fear of losing their food, land and lives. The Massacre at Acteal, in December of 1997, proved that no one and no where is safe. Forty-five men women and children were killed when praying for peace at a temple.

I didnt know what to expect in Chiapas. I wasn't even sure what my going to Chiapas would accomplish. I felt that I did not have much to offer. I did not know much about the situation and I don't speak Spanish. I voiced these

concerns and was told that just being there with the people and listening to their stories was important. So that is what I will do.... Tell their stories.

The first of two communities our group visited was Roberto Barrios. Here we met with three men, spokes people of their community. They gave us information on the assassination of one of their men, "Trini", who was killed in February. Five men were arrested for the crime. Despite testimony from eyewitnesses, three were released after one week, one was tried and found innocent and the last man is expected

to go free as well. Then in March the house belonging to the father of the man murdered was burned in retaliation for publicly protesting the freeing of the men arrested. During the fire, a two-year-old died, and two other children received third degree burns. The men also told us how they never go anywhere alone. Men travel in groups to work, but always leave in fear that people will be taken off. They have a clinic but no medicine. Although the government has no problem employing a permanent camp of soldiers outside their community they haven't been able to provide a doctor in the last two

months. The drought has had terrible effect on them their bean crops did not produce and their corn is not expected to mature. They predicted a famine in late August or early September. They are now looking for places and ways to get money for food. They say they must remain strong, not give up and continue to move forward toward their freedom.

The second community was Agua Blanca. The zapatista's were kicked off land by PRI when they could not pay their electric bills. The bills of the zapatista's were raised to cause conflict in the communities. The raises in the bills were so outrageous that they didn't pay. The Pri's didn't want any trouble so they kicked them out in February of 1997. They went to Roberto Barrios, but had to leave because there was no land. Then they went to Nueva Merida, they gave them some land December 2. Then they were kicked off land by officials, but returned May 28. The houses that they had built were taken apart and the materials sold. They are not allowed to return to their land to farm it, and they can not leave where they are or they are harassed by officials, that occupy the roads

surrounding them. They have little food, only beans and herbs that they are able to find.

I saw the good land is used for raising cattle, while displaced persons were forced to take over burnt or unproductive land. In some instances, crops that do produce are burned by the paramilitary. I got queasy feeling in my stomach walking past a man with a gun on his back, not ten feet away from a group of children playing in the street. The indigenous are treated and killed like animals. Observers are virtually the only voice these people have. The government offers them no protection and the media is biased toward the government. All these people want is to be free and recognized in society. As citizens of the free world we must work for the liberation of those oppressed in other countries. Our country that works so hard in fighting terrorism is indirectly funding terrorism in Mexico. Please protest military aid to Mexico and the functioning of the School of Americas in Georgia, where several soldiers arrested for the massacre in Acteal were trained. The Mexico

Solidarity Network is collecting funds for the coming famine. If you would like to give, please send a donation to the Joy Mennonite Church for this purpose, and we will send it on to the Network.

### Welcome!

The Bliss Family returned from Hagerstown, Md where they lived this summer while Beverly worked there as a speech therapist.

Welcome to the Workentime family who moved to the Agape Ranch from Newton, Kansas.

Welcome to two exchange students: Armand from Albania who lives with the Stewarts and Henriette from Germany who lives with the Blisses.

Kay Bruekner spent a week in Indiana with her daughter and family. Her son in law was recuperating from bypass surgery.

Moses and Sadie spent a weekend in Kalona, Iowa for Sadie's family reunion

### Calendar

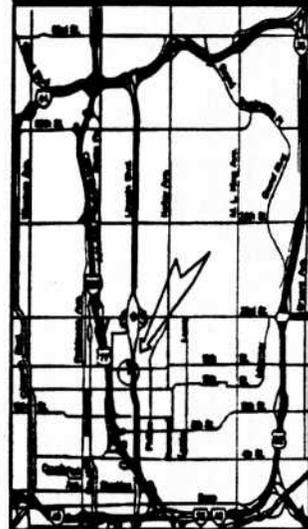
All Oklahoma all Mennonite Women Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> at Memorial Road Mennonite Brethren Church

Art Exhibit: "Artists of a Different Caliber" Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> Individual Artists of OK Gallery. Continuing through Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Oklahoma Convention Sept. 19-20.

Marvin Penner with M.M.A. speaks for Oct. 11 followed by potluck dinner.

Crop Walk Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>



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