



Joy Mennonite Church Newsletter

PASTORS' CORNER

During the lenten season we have read the stories

of conflict with religious leaders that in the end caused Jesus to be crucified. These conflicts center around ministry to the down trodden and religious tradition. John's gospel reaches a climax in the story of raising Lazarus from the dead. This story presents Jesus as a fugitive, having fled across the Jordan River, leaving the jurisdiction of Judea to escape those who tried to stone him. Against

the advice of his disciples who believed he would be killed if he returned to Judea, Jesus decided to return to the house of Martha and Mary whose brother Lazarus had died. I must work while it is day, for the night comes and no one can work, Jesus said, meaning he must take the opportunity when it comes, because the opportunity may not return. This is one of those stories that make us ask what really happened. Instead of getting entangled in a debate about possibilities let us try to understand the point of the

story.

John calls miracles, signs. The miracles point to Jesus as one sent from God and we must therefore listen to him. Those who opposed Jesus said they had no problem with his miracles. Their problem was accepting Jesus' teaching about life when it violated their tradition. When your tradition is challenged so is your authority and your status in the social order. The story of the raising of Lazarus points out the extremes people take to silence the voice of truth that

challenges you. In desperation they considered killing Lazarus to prevent popular support for Jesus and his teachings. The sin of unbelief John speaks about in his gospel is refusing to accept we are the believers because we do not ask questions about Jesus turning water into wine, walking on the water, raising the dead. Remember, even the carnal person desires to see miracles. I want to see miracles. I do not have a rebellious spirit against God if I ask questions.

Moses Mast

We Are Still Around... Now What?

By Cheryl Crichley

During the season of Lent we are called to consider the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Our meditations also include wider contemplations of life, death, the past, present, and future. I recently had the opportunity to hear a talk by Mary Catherine Bateson, the daughter of well-known anthropologists Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson. One of the most interesting things I discovered was that there will be a centennial celebration of Margaret Mead's birth in the year 2001, and Dr. Bateson offered this occasion as a springboard to anyone working for a cause. It was Margaret Mead who said, "Never doubt that a small

group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that every has." This sounds like a wonderful idea, following on the heels of all the hype and hysteria about Y2K and the end of the world. She calls it "Alka-Seltzer for the new millennium." There will supposedly be a web site with more information and suggestions.

This prompted me to think about exactly what we will do when we wake up on January 1st of next year, and we are still around. Where will we go from there? The quote by Mead inspires us to "think globally and act locally." Can we find a relation between this, the life of Christ, and our call as his followers? Both thinking globally and acting locally involve, I believe, prayer, contemplation, learning, time, talent, and resources. It seems that there are some

people who would sincerely like to make a difference at some level, yet do not know how. There are others who are involved in so many activities, and are aware of so many others that cry out to be done, that they are near the point of burn-out. Realistically, we cannot walk in the path of Christ unless we do *something*, yet we have to accept the fact that we cannot do *everything*. Praying is something, giving is something, learning about the stories of others is something, donating our time and energy is something. I also contend that just as important as what we do spend our time and resources on, is what we *do not* spend them on. As Mennonites, we have some rather unique opportunities to be of service and to be good stewards, through Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Disaster Service, Mennonite

Mutual Aid, and the work of our local congregations. We should also be in prayer for people around the world, and the people who live next door to us. Moses and Sadie Mast, among others, are wonderful examples and resources about helping others, here at home and far away. We should not feel bad about the size or importance of any deed we do at any level. If hear the call and heed it we are on the right path. There is much work to be done. Women in Afganistan are being oppressed and even killed in the name of religion, during a wave of radical fundamentalism. May God keep us from the kind of fervor that excludes and harms. Through my association with the Center for Survivors of Torture in Dallas, I am made aware that this fervor extends around the world. **(Continued)**

Most of their new clients are from Africa, and they sorely need our prayers and support. These are only two of many examples. We should also celebrate hopeful signs, as we look towards the new millenium. The Truth Commission Report was recently released in Guatemala, to tearful shouts of "Justice! Justice!" by people who have long been oppressed and ignored. Dr. Clyde Snow from Norman, Oklahoma, and others have been excavating the remains of indigenous people who were slaughtered in several villages in that country. I was reminded of the story in Ezekiel where the valley of bones came to life. In some strange way, the remains of those who were murdered are speaking the truth about injustice. What can we do? I certainly do not claim to have the answers. I do believe that God would have us look ahead, past the hysteria. If you sincerely ask God to give you a part to play, I have no doubt that your prayers will be answered. May we wake up every morning ready to respond.

News

Peter and Kay Bruekner attended the baptismal of their son Robert at the First Baptist church in Paul's Valley on February 21st.

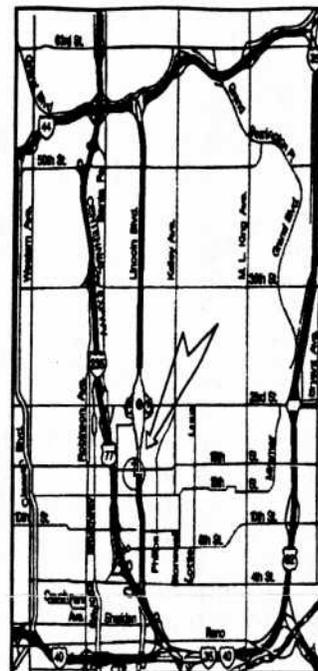
Moses and Sadie Mast attended the Oklahoma pastor-spouse meeting, Mon. March 1st in Meno. Robert and Alice Rauseyer from Ohio gave a report about their recent work in Japan.

Ethel Posar has been at the Healthsouth hospital for several weeks after taking a fall and breaking her pelvic bone. They had here out of bed and walking after a day or two and she is gaining surprisingly well.

Our sympathy goes out to the Ralph Ediger family in the loss of Becky's mother, Vivian Baker of Midwest City on March 18th.

On Palm Sunday our church group enjoyed a potluck. We were glad Robert Bruekner could be with his parents for the weekend and enjoy it with us.

The exchange students who stay with the Warkentine and Bliss families had the privilege of traveling to Disneyland during spring break.



Calendar

On Good Friday, April 2nd, our church group will meet at the Will Rogers Park at 6:00 and be remembering the stations of the cross, weather permitting. In case of rain we'll meet at the church.

On Saturday, April 3rd, some of our group will be going to the Wichita Mountains, where the yearly Easter pageant is held.

April 10th - Business Meeting.



Joy Mennonite Church meets at 504 NE 16th (just west of the oil derrick on Lincoln Blvd., south of the State Capitol.) We meet at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday.

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