

## PASTOR'S CORNER

The Carter Center, founded by Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife Roselyn, sponsored a symposium on the part of the faith community to health and wellness. One of the speakers said that their religious tradition teaches that the greatest sickness of humanity is despair. He added that in their

tradition it is also a sin to stifle hope and the greatest responsibility of their religious leaders is, not to preach against sin, but to inspire hope. The failure to plant, nurture, and inspire others to find the divine purpose for their being on the earth.

Another speaker spoke of the importance of being concerned not only for the well-being of the individual, but for the wellness of the community in which you live. To be a healthy community we must be concerned about the well-being of all its people. If one group or class is neglected and are not well, then, like the human body, if one part is sick, the whole body is sick.

Now back to the illness of despair and the calling to inspire hope. What do we say to those who are ill and have no hope for recovery? One speaker said, the purpose of life is not found in the search to be well. Hope is not found in earthly security or in being well, but in finding the divine purpose for living on this earth. How many people do you know that are afflicted with an illness from which they do not expect to recover, but they make a great contribution to their community and to the well-being of many. Is it not often the afflicted who are the greatest inspiration of hope?

We all know people who are handicapped in such a way that we know they will never have a well paying job. Many of these live in despair. What is the message of hope for these people? Who is to blame for their despair? Here we must speak to a cultural flaw of our western society. We believe that everyone should be educated and trained to make it on their own. I know people who cannot make it on their own, but who would do well in the native american way of life in community. Not everyone can make it on their own, but would do well in community. The purpose of life for these handicapped people is the same as mine and as that of all of us, to find the divine reason for being on this earth. We must find these people a community and we must find them a place in our community.

Hope is found in finding God's purpose for living. We can find God's purpose for living only if we are concerned for the well-being of God's humanity. Our Lord said it this way, the greatest commandment of God is that we love God with all our heart, mind, and soul, and to love your neighbor as yourself.

*Moses Mart*

### Family Camp by Beverly Bliss

The summer of 2001 was another adventure and challenge for the Bliss family and family friend, BJ Wood. We ventured to Maple Lake, Minnesota to work at Camp Courage in a variety of capacities. We started off in two cars for a possible 15 hour drive. However with several engine lights lit up and a car running on "hot" we stopped in Wichita for an extra 23 hour stopover. With that car running but not working perfectly, the other car began refusing to start without a jump. But ignoring all further problems we charged on to Minnesota.

We were given a suite of 3 rooms for our family and began orientation training. We learned camp rules and procedures. However, it's hard to really understand how the sessions will go before you experience them. Scott and Kyle were scheduled to work in the kitchen but had the first week off to attend orientation.

After a week our first campers arrived. They were 7 - 11 year old boys and girls with a variety of communication disorders. In order to attend the camp the kids had to be referred by their school speech language pathologists. The campers had speech therapy time 45 minutes each day which could be done in small groups or individually with their assigned clinician. During their first orientation to speech time, our clinical director tried to lead a discussion with each cabin of kids about speech disorders and the variety of problems they all had, to introduce the ideas of tolerance of differences and diversity. When he questioned the girls about what all campers had in common, they thoughtfully considered the question and answered that they all had "speech problems." The group of little boys, who were experiencing camp for perhaps the first time, were asked the same question. One boy who was sure he knew what was really important, yelled out "We all have flashlights!"

During the days of the camp sessions, Scott and Kyle worked in the kitchen for a few hours before, during and after each meal. BJ initially volunteered at the farm with the horses, then was hired for the kitchen when they needed more help. Between meals and in the evenings, they were expected to join a particular cabin in their activities in order to assist the cabin staff. Brandt spent his days and some campout overnights with a cabin of about 10 boys his age. Gabriel worked primarily with the Campcraft team teaching camping skills, preparing and packing for campouts and boating and sailing. I worked with 6-7 campers a session on their speech and language goals while doing crafts, playing drama games and canoeing. Frank was supposed to be working with the computer program teaching use of the computers, Internet, digital camera and video equipment. However, he was forced to return home after less than a week to take care of our Agape Ranch property and its various problems.

Brandt's responsibility in the cabin was to be a good role

model for the campers by participating in the activities and following the staff's directions. That was a big job for an 11 year old and he did very well at this. He also got to have a lot of fun as he shared in all of the crafts, snacks and games. Gabriel sometimes worked in campcraft when asked, then sometimes rode or skateboarded around the camp helping where needed. He gravitated to the lake usually, frequently helping the lifeguard as well as the nature leader and farm manager. Scott, Kyle and BJ worked in a hot kitchen with steaming hot water cleaning up after more than 120 people each meal. They may not have enjoyed everything about their jobs and they may not want to do that job again, but they kept their cheerfulness and patience in the presence of the kids. They made it look like it was fun to be a kitchen staff at Camp Courage and they were happy to be there.

Except for the ever present fact that Frank was not there to share in the summer with us, we had a lot of fun. The staff at the camp was friendly to all of our family. The kids made a lot of friends and had a lot of new experiences. BJ paddled 30 miles down the Mississippi River in two days on the Great Campout. Brandt had a part in a play and Gabriel learned to sail. I enjoyed seeing the kids make friends with the college age counselors, help out campers learning new skills or needing a hand and being willing to do whatever they were asked. They showed an acceptance of the campers and their problems. They were each an important part of a camper going home with good memories of a great camp experience.

It rained !!! I felt like I had won the Powerball. My son said "See, God didn't forget." Ah, yes, He didn't.

### August Revisited

Moses and Sadie Mast attended WDC/SCC conference sessions at Lawrence, KS. J. Nelson Kraybill was a guest speaker using passages from 1st Peter. Very inspiring!

The Bliss family is home from their camp work in MN this summer- check out Beverly's article in this issue for more. Also welcome home to Peter and Kay Brueckner who spent the summer in Indiana with their grandchildren.

Cameron Bliss and Chriss Jennings are off to college this year, we wish them all the best. Peter and Kay's grandson, Nathan Corbetts, is back in OK for his second year at O.U. Nice to have you back, Nathan.

### September Calendar

A carry-in dinner is planned for Sept. 2nd. All are welcome to join us to celebrate the return of all our travelers, the close of summer, the impending fall, the rain, or just the fact that some of us can really cook.

Sept. 11- The All Okla. All Mennonite Women's meeting at Mennonite Brethren Church in Cordell, OK. Call Sadie for details.

Sept. 14 & 15th - OK Convention in Enid, OK at Grace Mennonite Church. Again, Sadie has details.

### Final Thoughts by Deborah O'Neal

To paraphrase a song I know - is there anybody out there? We are trying to update our mailing list and how you want to receive the newsletter: land mail, e-mail or via the web-site. If we haven't been in contact with you for longer than six months, PLEASE notify us if you wish to continue getting this newsletter, if you wish to cancel, or if you would like to add someone to the mailing list.

You can reach us by phone at (405) 771-4743; by e-mail at mosesmast@aol.com; or by land mail at 4708 Outpost Dr. Spencer, OK 73084.

There are a lot of people in our community, both near and far. Help us to "reach out and touch someone" - maybe you.

### JOY MENNONITE CHURCH

504 NE 16TH OKC OK 73104

Sunday Services 10:00am Sunday School 11:30 am

All are welcome, please join us as you are able

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