



JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 2003



PASTOR'S CORNER

This is the season of peace on earth, good will toward men, yet the prospect of war dominates the news. It was to a people dominated by a foreign power and to a people being taxed beyond

their ability to pay that the good news came. According to the gospel records the news of the baby being born and the message of hope was given to the poorest of the poor. In contrast, in modern times the messengers of the news, (I hesitate to call it good news) come from the nations that dominate the economies of the world. The sound waves of our land carry a distorted message of the gospel. Hope resides not in the news that God has come to dwell among us, but in our military might that we believe will enable us to repel evil intentions directed toward us. In spite of all the religious gibberish, the true message of hope has not been thwarted, in our land there still are the messengers of peace and good will.

In the sermon on the mount, Jesus spoke of his vision that citizens of God's reign would be peacemakers. Jesus gave us a profile of the peacemaker, using the words meek, merciful, one who weeps, pure in heart, one who hungers for the righteousness of God's reign on the earth. In this vision, the peacemaker is one who abandons the desire and intention of dominating others.

To interpret this understanding is more difficult than we can imagine. It would not be so difficult if everyone was my friend and no one tried to hurt me. However, greed and hatred abound and we believe restraint is often necessary. We can never be certain we know the limits of the restraint we should exercise, but we must never give up the struggle to do it right. Conventional wisdom may say there is no limit, for our security we can use the ultimate solution, kill the offender. For national security, conventional wisdom even says we are free to kill innocent people. We must look again at the profile of the peacemaker, meek, merciful, one who weeps, pure in heart, one who hungers for the righteousness of God's reign. We believe in mercy, forgiveness, repentance and reconciliation. Another rule of thumb, never do anything that will interfere with the message of love that has the power to change the offender.

In our society and probably most societies the peacemakers are regarded with some disdain. They are regarded as naive, accused of not understanding the threat we face. Governed by the rule of love, law and order would collapse and the whole world will sink into chaos. The peacemaker is also told how fortunate they are that they have others who fight to protect them.

We rally against going to war. Will we prevent our nation from going to war? Probably not. We witness against the

executions of the state, the executions continue, but we continue our witness. Some day history will tell the story. The test of the peacemaker is not preventing war, or any evil acts, it is the practice of mercy, love and good will and the breaking down the walls of hostility and striving for reconciliation. The peacemakers will be remembered as in the past, as those who did not participate in destructive violence, but as the ones who bound up the wounds, cared for the children made orphans, cared for the sick and rebuilt the homes of those made homeless.

I wish for you blessings and joy for the holidays.

Moses Mast

Being There Terry Hostetler

This year if you missed our Christmas caroling in the neighborhood and at the VA hospital, you missed out on a truly wonderful experience. As I tried to explain to my daughter and her friend on the way up there, it doesn't matter how well we sing, or how many people we notice listening to us. What matters is simply being there. They didn't understand. At least, not fully, until we were singing in the VA, and we got them going to rooms, passing out Christmas cards to the patients. By the time they came out of the second room they both had tears in their eyes. They came to me crying saying "this is so sad, these people are so lonely, they thank us for coming and smile and their faces light up and their eyes sparkle and they invite us to come back, any time, and all we did was hand them a card and say Merry Christmas". I asked them both if they wanted to quit and give me the cards and I would hand them out, but they refused my offer and continued until they ran completely out of cards (then they wanted me to run out and buy more cards), but we were finished by then. On our drive home, they let me know that they now understood what I meant, that just being there was the important thing. Just taking a few moments to say hello and share a smile with someone can make such a difference to them and to you. By the way, I must admit that as I was passing out a few cards myself, I also had to wipe away a few tears. It was truly a very touching experience.

December Revisited

Ever notice how the holiday season is full of food and friendship? Well, Joy Mennonite is no different. This past December was filled with fellowship with old and new friends. On the 15th, Bill & Thea

Klassen were here visiting from Kansas and our current college student, Jessica Warkentine, was home for Christmas break. Our speakers for that special Sunday were Immanuel Sila, from Nairobi, Kenya, and Sara Bedsworth, members of the DEO (Discipleship, Encounter, Outreach) team from Kansas. Mr. Sila told us some about church services he has been to in other places and how glad people are to hear about Jesus. Ms. Bedsworth told us more about DEO and explained some of the aims and goals of this project.

We had decided that our annual caroling party would follow our service that Sunday, after the pot-luck for our guests. This year's caroling party was a great success - see Terry's article on the front. Since the 15th was such fun, some of the congregation decided to carol again on the 22nd at some more homes around the neighborhood.

January Happenings and Coming Events

We have some special treats in store this month. First on the list is the preaching schedule: Jan. 5th, Moses Mast; Jan. 12th, Peter Schaffer, who helped start the fund raising project for the Afghan Relief Fund; Jan. 19th, Karin Evans; Jan. 26th, Moses Mast on World Fellowship Sunday. Our theme for that Sunday will be Living in Hope and Joy, which has been prepared by the Mennonite Churches in Africa.

Coming up Feb. 8th, is the Oklahoma Conference of Churches Women's meeting at St. Luke's Methodist Church in OKC. There will be lots of good workshops to choose from in the morning, including one by our own, Cheryl Crichley. In the afternoon, there will be a worship service. St. Luke's is located at 222 NW 15th and more information can be obtained from Sadie Mast at 771-4743. Everyone is invited to attend part or all of this special event.



Joy Mennonite Church
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Moses & Sadie Mast 771-4743

Hey, go check out our web-site at

New items are in the works for our site and if you have something you would like to contribute, you can contact Cheryl Crichley on-line at _____, or drop us a line at the church, or even call. We would love to hear from you!

FINAL THOUGHTS Deborah O'Neal

A dear friend gave me a saying this past Sunday; don't be afraid to make a mistake, but never make a mistake which can only happen once. I had to stop and think a minute about that. Never make a mistake that can happen only once.... Any mistake can happen numerous times, what is a mistake that can happen only once? I finally realized that when we hurt someone, either physically or emotionally, that changes our relationship permanently. No going back. We can never take back what we said or did, the mistake has been made and can never be undone. One shot, that's all we have. Each day, each hour, each minute, we have choices to make. Will we do this or that, say something positive or negative, build up or tear down. Everything has a consequence, and while we can't foretell the future, there are known results to certain things.

Anyone can choose, the option is open to everybody, everywhere. No one has "a lock" on good or bad decisions. All we can do, is try our best, with God's help, to make the best choice in each situation, every day, every hour, every minute.

JOY MENNONITE CHURCH
504 NE 16TH OKC OK 73104
Sunday Services 10:00 am Sunday School 11:30
All are welcome, please join us as you are able

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