



JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2003



PASTOR'S CORNER

In Jesus time the Jewish people had a law forbidding them to eat with certain people the considered sinful. Very likely the origin of this law had good and righteous concerns, however Jesus rejected the way the law was applied in his time. The very people he was forbidden to eat with were the ones that needed to be invited to the table. They were the rejected and wounded ones, wounded by rejection. It was not the law that was wrong, it was the misuse of the law. The law was being used to draw attention to the righteousness of the religious leaders by focusing on the sins of the rejected ones.

The Mennonite church like most denominations has been dealing with controversy in recent years. Some have left our table for another table. We must not conclude because Jesus sat down to eat with sinners that there is no room for discernment. There are times when it is right to stand firm, to refuse to be enticed, to separate ourselves from the seductive forces around us, to develop an identity that separates us from an evil world. The problem arises when we shift redemptive concerns for the sinner to be concerned about the image we create for ourselves by our association with the sinner. This is the point Jesus made. We want to be seen as the pure ones and we do this by refusing to eat with those our society has condemned.

In our history new believers were instructed to renounce the world and the enticements of the world. The world, was understood as the enticement of wealth, power, and fame. It is not the rejected sinner that we should not eat with lest they ensnare us in their evil deeds, it is the powerful, the wealthy, and the famous who will ensnare us if are not vigilant and careful how we relate to them. The enticement of the rich and powerful is so great because society in general respects and applauds them but as one person said, they tell us truth but truth wrapped in lies. Here again we can go wrong when we treat the brother or sister in the church in the same way we deal with the enticement of the world. When we disagree with one in the family of faith we must hold our convictions more loosely.

While some, as we have noted have left our table for another table, others have agreed to come together at the table again. One of the great measure of our spiritual maturity is how we sit together at the table with people we disagree with. This may be personal maturity as well as corporate maturity of the church. Let us be warned, when one finds it so difficult to accept someone, when we come together at the table there is a danger that we will tolerate rather than accept that one. It is so easy to feel that I deserve to be at the table but another one does not and so I tolerate that one. Let us not squander the opportunity to grow by letting our disagreements divide us. Let us acknowledge our humanity, we can only understand truth in part and we are all alike. None of us has an edge on anyone else.

We hope those of you who have returned to school are doing well and all of you are enjoying the cooler fall weather.

Moses Mart

Hello Mudda, hello Fadda, here we are at ...Camp Courage
By Beverly Bliss

For the third year our family of seven packed up and traveled to the land of a thousand lakes and a million mosquitoes. We spent June and July at Camp Courage near the Twin Cities in Minnesota. This camp is a

speech and hearing camp for kids who are receiving speech therapy services in their schools during the year and can benefit from extra practice on their speech during a one, two or three week summer session.

Of course, the goals of the children are not to improve their speech, but to have fun in arts and crafts, camping, boating, swimming and horseback riding. The parents often express their goal of wanting their child to be able to make friends. Some of the children with speech and language problems have difficulty making friends at school and are often teased and isolated. Some campers make good friends at camp that they look forward to seeing every summer. Other camper's difficulties at being able to understand social cues and express themselves appropriately follows them to camp as well. In those cases the speech clinicians and cabin counselors try to show the children better ways to socialize and try to make friends.

Our son Kyle was a camp counselor for 10 and 11 year old boys for almost three weeks. There was frequent fighting, yelling and crying as the boys struggled to communicate and keep their easily wounded feelings protected. It was a struggle for Kyle and the other counselors. However, at the end of camp some of these boys were crying in sadness at going home, leaving their friends and having to wait until next year to come back to camp.

During our training week prior to camp the staff always have a few sessions on "Assets". This is an area of research being done by Camp Courage directors and others about the assets that are important in a child and adolescent's development and which factors in their lives and combination of factors have the most impact on a person's successful outcome for a positive and satisfying adult life. An exercise we always do is to think quickly of a person who has had an impact on your life. We are not supposed to ponder this, but just to see which name pops into our heads immediately. It is often, surprisingly enough, someone we may have encountered in a brief, but meaningful way that influenced us beyond what they ever would have imagined. It has taught me to be aware of the importance of small words and gestures and also to consider that we may never know the impact we might have on someone's life. We can't judge our "success" by the results that are observed. We are only to walk along

seeking to do God's will and not be looking around to see if we are doing something "right".

It is very likely that someday an adult will remember being a scared, homesick camper and think of his camp counselor Kyle, who joked with him and cheered him up. Brandt was the only person who made friends with two Russian college students who barely spoke English. I know they'll remember a lot of good times with him. Someone will have learned to do something they were afraid of when they rode horses with Scott as the camp Wrangler. There are several women who are confined to wheelchairs that felt like Cinderella at the ball after being Frank's "dates" to a formal banquet and dance at camp. And Gabriel, as always, spread his charm and spirit as he made himself available for odd jobs, chores, and favors that lighten the load of the other staff. And his friendship among the staff knows no boundaries and no divisions.

So we return to the land of the thousand mosquitoes (Why do these mosquito bites seem to itch more and last longer? Is it because I'm not regularly coated with some DEET infested product?) This year of my life I hope to follow God's lead, be loving and kind and not be watching for results and not be discouraged by unresponsiveness. God can make what He wants of my actions, I only need to do what's right.

September Revisited

Hey, Autumn is finally here! Kids went back to school, the fair started and finished, it rained...and rained and rained. Yup, it's September. We at Joy Mennonite have been sort of busy also.

Sept. 19 & 20, Masts, Karin Evans, Martha Shoemaker and Chris Jennings attended the Oklahoma Convention.

Robert & Anna Nolt were our guests on the 21st with a potluck following morning services. I know my son, Jack, won't soon forget that Sunday. He made a good friend in Anna Nolt and talks about when he will get to see her again. My parents, Paul & Inez Gehman, were visiting from Virginia at the same time and realized that they had close friends related to the Nolts.

Cheryl Crichley can tell you how small that world is becoming. European visitors at the Crichley home made a round the world connection with one of Cheryl's friends from South America. You just never know who you will find that will be a friend or who is already one.

Coming Events

Preaching schedule for the month of October is as follows: Moses Mast - Oct. 5th, Karin Evans - Oct. 12th, James Branum - Oct. 19th, Sonja Andreas - Oct. 26th. Sonja Andreas is a peace activist who crossed the line at the School of the Americas in Georgia and served time for her efforts. She will be speaking at the Mayflower Congregational Church the morning of the 26th, so we will be having Sunday school first that day, then Sonja will speak to us at 11:15 am at Joy. Of course we will be having a potluck afterwards to give everyone time to visit.

Crop Walk will be held the 26th also on the Capitol steps on the south side of the building. The walk should start at 2pm.

Oct. 9th is the date for the Celebrate Diversity meeting at the OCU Kirkpatrick Fine Arts Center at 25th and Walker.

Our web site has changed to joy.ok.us.mennonite2.net so log on and visit with us online. Cheryl Crichley's e-mail has changed also to ctcrichley@mail2.mennonite.net I'm still available at mennomomg11@yahoo.com so send us a line or a suggestion.

Running low on apple butter? You know you want more and can you believe how good it is? My kids love the stuff and boy is it good on pancakes. MCC Relief Sale is Nov. 7 & 8 at the county fairgrounds in Enid. Come eat some verenika with me a stock up on that fabulous apple butter. And since its starting to cool off so quickly, you might consider getting one of those beautiful quilts. All proceeds go to MCC and we all know how busy they have been lately, so come on out and help support the cause.

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.



Joy Mennonite Church

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