



# JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER

## PASTOR'S CORNER

As Mark begins to write his

gospel one of the first things he noted was how the common people responded to Jesus' preaching. Jesus taught as one who had authority and not as the teachers of the law. I interpret this to mean that Jesus understood the truth he was proclaiming in contrast to the teachers of the law who repeated phrases they did not comprehend and emphasized traditions that did not make a lot of sense. As Mark develops his gospel he notes that the demons understood who Jesus was. These demons must not be understood only as the primitive understanding of the spirit world where evil spirits caused sickness and suffering. Demons are a dominating force that cannot be seen or easily explained. A demon is the evil that exists in good people and causes them to reject the good, righteous and healing presence of God that threatens them

and their positions of power. In Mark's time religious leaders in alliance with political power dominated the common people. These religious leaders recognized the liberating ministry of Jesus and felt threatened by this ministry. Mark continues by telling stories, stories of liberation. Jesus healed a paralyzed man and said, "son, your sins are forgiven." This pronouncement of forgiveness offended the teachers of the law. Next Jesus ate at the table of a sinful person, a tax collector. This offended the teachers of the law. Then Mark says the teachers of the law were offended because Jesus and his disciples did not fast as their law prescribed. Then Jesus and his disciples were seen walking through a grain field on the Sabbath and plucked heads of grain. This was forbidden by their religious law. Then Mark comes to the climatic story. Jesus heals a man and it was the Sabbath day. One would think all good people would rejoice. At this point,

however, Mark says the Pharisees met with the Herodians and plotted how they might kill Jesus. To understand the seriousness of the situation, think of the American experience of racial violence. If one practiced compassionate care for suffering people but offended the establishment they might burn your house, destroy your property or seek to kill you. It is this kind of situation Mark is describing in his gospel. Religious tradition is a powerful force in society. Maintaining these traditions is how many people stay in power. Mark described how the liberating ministry of Jesus threatened these traditions. The demon in them knew their power was threatened. Every time and place in history is unique. We cannot say our church conflicts are just like the one Mark describes. We certainly do not seek the death penalty for those who offend us. However we hold something in common. We still break fellowship or expel persons

or congregations because ~~the~~ <sup>They</sup> offend us and violate our tradition. Many times it is those who practice compassion to suffering people in various circumstances that are rejected because their compassion is extended to someone that offends us. I would not ask that we compromise our convictions of what is right or wrong, but that we would do as Jesus did, go and eat with those who offend you. Learn to know their concerns, and especially their pain. It is a great tragedy that often we do not know the pain of those we reject. It is easy for us to read the gospel and believe we are sharing the concerns of Jesus but actually act more like the teachers of the law. Only by soul searching, *and* repentant prayer can we know the demon in us that makes us, with our good intentions and concerns for righteousness reject those whom God loves. God bless all of you in your journey of faith.

*Moses Mart*

### Editorial

By Martha Shoemaker

Nov. 5, 1999 My husband was a big man weighing 210 pounds.

He was my protector, my helper. Now he is very sick. He weighs 130 pounds. Saturday around one o' clock in the morning he fell in the kitchen. He woke me up. He was sitting in the

floor trying to get up, he was just crawling around on the floor. I tried to help him. I moved chairs where he might catch on them and maybe get could get up. I brought him a rug and a pillow to

lie on. He kept trying to crawl around to find something to help him get up. I called the fire department to get someone to help him back to bed, the came right away. They helped

him back to bed and they were so nice. It is so sad to see him try to do for himself. I try to help him as much as I can. I can't talk about him without crying or breaking down. He is only skin and bones now and he has bedsores. I know I must give him up. I love him so much. I give him to God. He is in Gods hands now. I wish God take him soon. Relieve his suffering.

**Later:** On Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000 I was with Delmar until he passed. He had many falls after Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> when the firemen cam and picked him up and put him back to bed. When Del got so bad I stayed up nights talking to him and held his hands. Delmar fell the Friday night before he died. Firemen came and put him to bed. Saturday his bowels moved all day. I would change his diaper and clean him up. Sadie called

Sunday morning and asked how Del was. I told her he was real bad. She came after church. She put me to bed about 3 pm and I slept until 8 pm. I got up, ate some food, went and sat with Del some, then went back to sleep. I got up around 3 am and went in to see about Del. I told Sadie to go get some sleep. I don't remember whether she slept or not. I called the nurse, she came out and she left. Later, Del started bleeding from the mouth. I called the nurse. She came, started staying at 3pm until 11. Another nurse came and stayed until Delmar passed away at 8:02 am. He suffered so long. He is at peace now. We prayed together a lot. He asked his sons to forgive him. I told him they forgave him. The morning he died Jesus was calling him to go with him. I asked God to take him. I would miss him but I

would be all right. I would go on with my life. Del is in a better place. And no more suffering. Dell worried about not being a good father.

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*The funeral was for Del was held at the Eisenhower Funeral home. A meal was served by the people of Joy Mennonite church after the funeral.*

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## News

Dorothea Janzen will be at Joy Mennonite, March 5<sup>th</sup> and will bring the Sunday morning message. Dorothea is a member of the Western District Ministerial Commission. The commission is meeting with the Oklahoma Pastors this weekend.

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Joy Mennonite periodically has an intergenerational

Sunday school class with youth and adults. Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> the adults shared their marriage experience with the youth. The message the youth heard most clearly was: do not trust your emotions too much, listen to advice.

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February 13<sup>th</sup>, the men of Joy Mennonite prepared and served a meal at the church as a Valentine banquet. The event was also planned to be a surprise birthday party for Charlotte Warkentine. Charlotte's parents from Kansas, who initiated the event, after much arm twisting from Charlotte were present with us this morning.

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*Joy Mennonite Church is located at 504 NE 16<sup>th</sup> (Just west of the oil derrick on Lincoln Blvd, south of the State Capitol. Worship is at 10 am*

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