



JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER  
NOVEMBER 2001



## PASTOR'S CORNER

I am writing from my sister's apartment in Fresno, CA. We went to the Prison Visitation & Support Group National meeting in Colorado Springs and took the opportunity to continue on

to California to visit my sister.

I want to share in this letter my feelings about the religious movement I sense in our country since Sept. 11. From OK to CA, we saw the banners, "God Bless America". There is no question that people are seeking to connect with God in this time of crisis. Many churches are thrilled to see so many, including our national leaders, turn to prayer in these troubled times. Let us think and discern very carefully.

"God Bless America" has become a national political statement. It does not necessarily mean what the words say. It means what we want it to mean. I believe there are those who sincerely pray for God to be present and bless us in these difficult times. I cannot judge the individual, but I also know the national sentiment, and I feel very out of step. We as a nation, are resorting to an old pagan religion of believing and praying to a territorial god. One church added the words, "by the grace of God, we will win". The national sentiment of this prayer is God will crush our enemies and make America victorious. The terrorists who inflicted so much suffering were also men of disciplined prayer. The crucial question is, what do we pray for. Do we pray for domination over our enemies or could we pray for reconciliation. Reconciliation can bring peace, domination can only hold the lid on for a while.

In the steps of our Lord, let me list some of the attitudes and actions I am seeking to follow.

1. There are relatively few who seek the way of reconciliation in America. There is also hostility toward those who do not support our national policy of violence. We are accused of being arrogant because we dare to differ from the vast majority. I believe history would support the understanding that, in times of crisis like now, it is the lonely voice that speaks truth.

2. Let us seek peace by reconciliation rather than domination. Let us not fool ourselves by thinking the way of love that moves toward reconciliation has no price. Our Lord made it clear that those who would love their enemies will also suffer at their hands. The difference is that when one dies in the act of reconciling love, we call it the waste of another life. When one dies in violent resistance, we call it an act of heroism. I believe that the great desire of God is for humanity to be reconciled, one with another and for domination over others to cease.

3. We must not accept the conventional American

understanding that those who attacked our country have no moral conscience. Moral conscience is simply a reason for their actions and can be dreadfully wrong. I am simply saying, "What are their reasons for doing what they did?" The greatest complaint of the terrorists seems to be that America has supported, and kept in power, corrupt leaders who squandered their nations resources, enriching a few and impoverishing the masses. Also, that we have supported oppressive regimes for our national interests.

4. Follow the steps of Jesus and think on these words:

Turn the other cheek.

Wide is the road to destruction, narrow is the road to life.

Pray for those who spitefully use you.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Hope to see many of you at the MCC sale.

*Moses Mast*

Sometimes when you lose a friend unexpectedly, there are things that must be said.

To My Friend Gary,

I know you won't be reading this, but I want to say it anyway. You've been a great friend & brother these many years. Just being around you always put me at ease. It was nice having someone around who could understand things the way you did. You've been a blessing in my life.

It seems when times were good we could hardly find time to see each other, for that I'm sorry. But I was honored that when things weren't going well for you that you shared that with me. It was an honor to stand beside you in the bad times & to have you stand beside me. I thank you, brother.

I felt inadequate, seeing your pain - knowing your fears these past months, not being able to do anything to help. All I could do was be there. I wish I could have done more.

May GOD Be With You My Good Friend. Terry Hostetler

Gary Laws passed away October 29, 2001 after a long fight with cancer. He will be missed.

### October Revisited

This month Cheryl Crichley has been working diligently on our web site: Hello... Well, I am finally updating the online church directory, however, I am woefully short of information from you! Please send or bring to me the names and dates of birth, wedding anniversaries, date joined or started attending Joy, for

each person in your household. You don't have to be members. If you are, please indicate the date you joined and if you transferred your membership and from where. If you don't remember the date, Thea Klassen has provided most of these for me. If you are not an "official" member, just indicate about when you started attending. This way our directory can really be useful. You can reach Cheryl at ctrichley@mennonite.net or send it to the address on the return address portion. We still need to hear from lots of you. Due to computer problems ( lack of sense on the part of the operator- me ), some things were lost in the black hole of memory. I am working with a friend ( with sense) to retrieve the missing pieces.

Crop Walk was held Oct. 21st this year. Those who participated are still collecting monies until Nov. 1. Those of you who wish to contribute after that time should contact Sadie Mast.

Oct. 4th, Moses & Sadie attended the Diversity Celebration and Candlelight Vigil at St. Pauls Cathedral here in OKC. A candlelight procession to the OKC National Memorial followed.

**November Events**

Nov. 2-3rd- Mennonite Relief Sale at Enid, OK fairgrounds. We will have our drinks booth and look forward to

seeing lots of friends there.

Nov. 5th- We will be having our Worship Comm. meeting. This is a busy month and some things won't make it into this newsletter, but rest assured, you will hear of them later.

Nov. 11- Moses Mast will be in Goessel, KS to give the message there. That Sunday, Karin Evans will be preaching at Joy.

Nov. 16-18th - Moses will be attending Home Missions meetings in Dallas, TX. and attending one of the Dallas churches the 18th. Speaker for Joy that Sunday has yet to be decided. Come enjoy the surprise with us!

Nov. 22nd- Thanksgiving Day - What are you thankful for? A stronger relationship with God? A better relationship with our neighbors, where ever they are? What possessions we have or what we can give to others in God's name? Think about it.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**  
**Deborah O'Neal**

I play a game with my children in the car, "Where are we going, what will we do when we get there?". We come up with all kinds of destinations and activities, the more

outlandish the better. We have "been" to Australia to hunt moose (futile- no moose there), to Grammy & Grandpa's to find a slug ( YUUCCKK), and a dog food plant to ask " how do you know it tastes good?" .

I watch the news and ask myself - where ARE we going and what WILL we do when we get there? No one can tell me what will will happen in the next few weeks or months, or even years.

Right now we are at war with some of the poorest, most downtrodden people on the face of the earth. All I can think of is "That which you do unto the least of these , you do unto Me" I see " God Bless America", "United we stand" and "In God we trust" plastered everywhere and I wonder if anyone is thinking of God's other children and asking God's blessing for them.

I know I will go to stand before God one day and I will have to account for things that I have done in my life. I hope to be able to show that there were no "least" or "most" in my life, but all given the same compassion and love and understanding that God has given me.

Have a good Thanksgiving and go look at the trees. God made them pretty just for people to enjoy.

**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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