



JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER  
JULY 2002



Greetings to all Joy Mennonite Church newsletter readers. We're very happy to have all of you receive our mailing, but it's also good to hear from you and know that you do read it!

For those of you who we have not been in contact with or heard from in the last 5 years, would you be so kind as to write or call and let us know that you want to continue receiving it. Otherwise, your name might be removed, thinking you don't even read it. So, please let us hear from you!!!! Thank you so much to all who have written and love and peace to you all.  
Sadie Mast

## PASTOR'S CORNER

Be grateful for all those praying for peace

While religious extremism is on the rise, there is also a movement of religious tolerance. Conditions of the world seem to dictate it is time to stop

debating who has the edge on truth or whose prayers does God hear and simply urge people to pray for peace. It is good news to hear that Muslims, Jews, Native Americans and others share the concern of Christians and are praying for peace. We hear of those from other faiths who weep at the tragedy of the human suffering they see. We hear them reiterate the words of Jesus that nations who seek safety by a show of strength and the guarantee of revenge to those who hurt them will not know peace. We must learn to absorb hostility and seek reconciliation. This does not diminish my faith or my belief in Jesus. On the contrary, it is an affirmation of my faith that the truth of our Lord is not hidden in some corner of the world or confined to western society.

This understanding of other faiths does not weaken the charge we have of proclaiming to the ends of the earth the good news of Jesus. It does transform us, changing our relationship and our attitudes to the world. Without this transformation our proclamation is meaningless. To understand this transformation we look at Matthew's story of how Jesus began his ministry. Jesus began his teaching ministry according to Jewish custom, when he reached the age of thirty. It seems immediately people were drawn to this new teacher. Large crowds came to hear what he had to say. These crowds were the common people, a class of people who did not contribute much to the national economy. Consequently, as we know, such people are forgotten and ignored, that is until they gather in large crowds. Occupational governments Roman government at that time are especially concerned when the common people gather in large crowds. Normally they are forgotten and ignored, now when they come together they are harassed. Matthew says Jesus saw the crowds and had compassion for them. They were like sheep

without a shepherd, not only so but they were like lost sheep and no one to lead them to safety.

Then Jesus commissioned his disciples to go and proclaim the word. He instructed them, do not go to the gentiles or the Samaritans, but go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Remember Jesus was an extraordinary inclusive person. Jesus instructed them not to take the customary travel bag or a change of clothes of the itinerant teacher. The message you are to proclaim, the kingdom of heaven is near. As we shall see this teacher is truly a transformed person.

1. It is a reality that these people exist but no one notices them. The lost sheep refer to the forgotten and ignored ones. World leaders do not see them as contributing or threatening our security. Jesus had compassion on them.

2. To begin with the forgotten ones is upside down thinking. Modern church planting strategists tell you to begin with people of means and they will help you reach the others.

3. We cannot begin our proclamation from positions of power. Jesus asked his disciples to enter the experience of the forgotten and harassed people. Later Jesus told his disciples they should take the customary provisions, but first you must enter their experience.

4. The message is, "the kingdom of heaven is near." This can be interpreted to mean the same as Moses message to the Hebrew slaves in Egypt, God has heard your cry. We cannot promise an immediate escape from pain and suffering, but we can say God is not far away, God has heard your cry, the kingdom of heaven is near.

5. The concerns of Jesus had to do with the experience of life on earth. This does not negate the eternal, only that now we must concern ourselves with life here on earth and God will take care of the eternal.

I do not claim to understand absolute truth. This is where I find myself in my spiritual journey as we are working for Afghan relief and as I have come to know the concerns of people of other faiths. If this is confusing I invite you to share your concerns. I hope you are having a good summer.

*Moses Mast*

### War & Peace Terry Hostetler

Peace. This word is thrown around quite a lot. It's a nice concept, the idea of everyone getting along, being respectful of each other and their feelings. The idea of people settling their differences by discussing the problem and reaching a solution mutually satisfactory to both parties. But what happens when

either side won't compromise? Or when one side feels they have the upper hand and they don't feel their counterpart has any options that would be a serious threat to them? What if one side turns to violent acts, then in the guise of defense, the other side retaliates? What if one side decides they have the numbers, the power, the moral high ground and simply decide to eliminate the opposition. Sounds terrible doesn't it. What if both sides feel they have the moral high ground?

Do some of these scenarios sound familiar? They should, they are as the expression goes "ripped from the headlines". We as Mennonites are often vocal with our displeasure with the way our government and others respond in such situations. As well we probably should. We object to wars, we object to "Peace keeping operations" with soldiers and guns. We object to any use of force. Even when we know that thousands of people are dying simply because they belong to the weaker group. Of course the other side of that coin is the theory that the only way to stop a violent force is to oppose it with a more powerful force. Which means more killing. Which of course we object to, but the fact remains that something must be done. We know from experience that all the talk and editorials in the newspaper don't do much good. So, I guess what I'm looking for are other options.

Now at this point I'm really in the dark. In my own experiences I've seen that the best way to stop two people from fighting is to put yourself between them, literally, then convince them that they don't really want to hurt each other. This too, often takes a threat of violence on the part of the one trying to stop the fight. But it's generally effective. But how do you do this when you're dealing with armies or mobs consisting of hundreds of people. The frenzy of the moment is generally so overwhelming nobody really knows what's happening anyway? When the overriding attitude is: if you see them, kill them, before they kill you.

So often when you hear people talking (non-military people that is) of wars in the past, they usually come up with political reasons for the conflict. Such as some business interests or oil. I have a different perspective on that. As a former military person I see only one reason for ever going into combat, that is to save lives. Yes, odd as that may sound to you, the reason for war is to stop the senseless killing. And over the years thousands of our young American people have sacrificed their very lives for just that purpose. They give their lives so that others may live. Believe me, please, when I tell you that even the ones who come back from war have made their sacrifices. Unfortunately in some circles the sacrifices go unnoticed.

I know I'm getting several people who are reading this all kinds of stirred up. But that's okay, cause when you live in a world where people are dying over land disputes, religion, skin color, or even to save others, you should get stirred up. Because it is STUPID. Absolutely STUPID that we can't settle disputes without violence. Wouldn't you think the majority of the worlds people are educated enough to understand that life is precious. ALL life. AH, but wait, don't be so smug just yet, you who claim

pacifism, who say killing is wrong, so you won't participate in war. If our soldiers are sacrificing their lives (or their souls) in an effort to stop the senseless killing, what exactly is your contribution to that effort? What are you doing to stop the wars? Criticizing those who are making an effort only makes you look cowardly unless you put your convictions to work. What is your plan to stop the senseless killing?

Imagine for a moment, being huddled in a corner of what was your home, now burning, windows and walls blown out, gunfire ringing in your head, it won't stop and it's getting closer. You're bleeding and so are your children, you're not even sure why, only that the mortar fire that hit the house turned everything you owned into hot, flying, razor sharp splinters. Can you understand that people in war zones need help? They need someone between them and the aggressor to stop the aggression. Think about the women in our little church, good women, caring, loving, outspoken always ready to speak their minds. How many, if any, do you think would have survived Taliban rule?

Now, I'm not trying to convince you that war is good, cause it's not. I am trying to convince you to re-examine your attitude toward the military, in many cases they are what stands between the innocent and the aggressor, making themselves the targets rather than the civilians. Most of all, I'm trying to get your minds working. Picture once again the situations I describe, really think about it, hear the gun fire, people running, mortars, grenades, screaming, fire, smoke.

Now what can we do to STOP it. It's not going to get done if people don't act. Not just us, but we are a start. Look at the effort and imagination that goes into trying to help the people in Afghanistan. Let us put our minds to ways of convincing people not to have wars. Not just get the U.S. out of combat, but everyone. It has to start with plain ordinary people, millions of them. Then spread to religious and government leadership, all countries, all faiths, all people, nobody needs war. Think about this, then act. People need your help.

#### **WEB-SITE NEWS Cheryl Crichley**

Greetings to all! The Joy Mennonite Church website now includes some pictures from our trip to Hammon, OK, and a few other updates. I am working on an interactive church calendar, archiving newsletters and sermons, etc., so there are still voids. The website address is <http://www.joy.ok.us.mennonite.net> and the Hammon pictures are in the photo album on the "Worship" tab. The latest photos from the feeding center in Honduras are under "Ministries," and the dates of the church campout are under "News/Events." Also, look for pictures there later this week of the news conference to be held at the church on Thursday, June 13th. This conference will discuss the Afghan Relief Fund, through which we now have the opportunity to have our donations matched! Please see the website for more details. I expect that someone will bring back pictures from the campout, and these will be

added. Hope all is well with you

### June Revisited

First of all. Campout was  
WONDERFUL!!! We had such a  
good time visiting and  
fellowshipping with each other. Red

Rock State Park is beautiful and there is so much to see and do. Hiking, rock climbing (go, Micayla & Abbey!), swimming at the pool ( thanks to Jessica Warkentine for taking my kids- their own personal life-guard), just sitting and talking with friends. Sunday services were very thought provoking. Wilma McKee was our speaker and showed us that one person can overcome personal reluctance and step out in faith and make a difference in someone's life. That when you do others will also. Lunch was kindly provided by friends from Bethel Mennonite in Hammon. Fabulous brisket and lots of excellent dishes to go with. Of course, good friends are the best complement to any meal and Bethel Mennonite attendees are really good friends!

Grace Roley was able to attend church for the first time in several years this month. Her devoted care of Chester who passed away earlier this year and several illnesses have prevented Grace from being with as much as she wanted. We were so glad to see her again and hope we will see Grace more in the coming months.

Martha Shoemaker has been down with a bout of shingles and prayers and any calls you could make would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks to the group from Salina KS that came to help out at the church and at Martha's house. They were hard at work in other areas of the city also.

### July Happenings

Remember, to have your money doubled, you can give to the Afghan Relief Fund c/o Joy Mennonite Church. That money is then passed on to MCC. Our goal is \$15,000.00 which will be matched by other sponsors. We will send all we can to MCC. They are grateful for all we can send, as are the people of Afghanistan.

We continue with our Friday prayer meetings at noon and welcome everyone to join us, whether in person or in spirit.

We don't have a preaching schedule as of yet for this month, we may just "wing" it. Should be interesting no matter what.

### Final Thoughts Deborah O'Neal

Well, are you mad? Thinking? Wondering? Yes, things look a little different this month, but hey, change is good, right? Sometimes you have to step out a little and see what

happens. I'm poking my head out of my rut a bit and guess what? There's a whole world out there where I have opportunities to do something, say something, contribute something- my time, money, strength, knowledge, etc.

MCC is a major focus for me. Relief sale is only 16 weeks away. Afghan Relief Fund is only a phone call away. Your neighbor is literally only feet away. Step out and see what happens. Yes, I know, I'm only one person but multitudes are just bunches of "one person" standing side by side.

Come see us, we miss you.

### 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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