

Joy Mennonite Church

Pastor's Corner

My mother passed away last week. I feel very fortunate and grateful for the supportive presence of my family and the church community my mother belonged to. Laying to rest a loved one is a painful experience, but it can also be a powerful spiritual experience. When we planned the funeral, we tried to avoid the enticements of the commercial interests and plan a simple Christian burial. We told the funeral director that we only wanted him to prepare the body for burial. The funeral and burial was in charge of the family and the church.

I am aware that not everyone has the option for a simple funeral. Not everyone has the option of an affordable funeral. This is also true for church people. We have surrendered the burial of our people to commercial interests. The professional funeral directors have become the advisors, the comforters, the counselors in these painful moments of grief. I am sure there are some good people who are funeral directors, but it is also widely believed that the funeral service business capitalizes on the vulnerability of people in this moment of grief to increase their profits. We should think about what faith issues we have surrendered to the business world.

I believe the church should also be aware of the pagan social pressures of our society. We are pressured into believing that to show respect for a deceased loved one we must do no less than others do, or simply that lavish spending shows your love and respect for a deceased loved one. I believe this is a form of idolatry. We do want to show respect, but I also believe that as people of faith we do not focus on respect but rather on the sacredness of life and the sacredness of human relationships. When we laid our mother in the ground and closed the grave with earth, it was an act of giving back to God the life that gave my life. I don't understand the mystery of life and I don't understand the mystery of death and eternity, but now in burial, when we commit the body to the earth, we commit the body again to the giver of life and we believe that all is well.



One of the ministries the church could give to our society, would be to provide an alternative burial service, one that would recapture the spiritual experience.

Moses Mart

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August 1995

Editorial



Dear Friends,

By the time you read this, about 70% of the school summer break will be behind us -- at least for those returning to school after Labor Day. It is hoped that your undertakings have been pleasant, safe and uneventful -- for those having attended Wichita '95 even challenging and meaningful.

We (Thea and I) are recovering from 17 hot and strenuous days visiting family and covering about 3800 miles -- a great time was had by all.

It is not uncommon to set deadlines for reviews, evaluations or appraisals -- also not uncommon for them to be set at 100 days. At this writing (Fri., 28 July) we are 100 days past the Oklahoma City bombing tragedy. Amidst reporting on the incident and development of the case, there have been volumes written about Oklahoma and the people who live here -- and those in Oklahoma City. It is obvious that the love and compassion aspects have been emphasized, and rightly so. Tragedy can bring out the best in people in working together, cooperation, common goals, bonding, grieving and healing. Through it all we have also acknowledged all those same qualities in others across the country and around the world who rallied together for us here, many sacrificing greatly in their assistance. Many thanks to them all, and God bless them all richly.

Another quality, not mentioned above, is neighborliness. While very prevalent here, it is not uniquely Oklahoman. Society has made it difficult to know one's neighbors; everyone works more hours, plays more hours, and many of us are cooped up behind our stockade fences. But let an emergency arise (the wind storm early a.m. on 24 July) and the neighbors come out of the woodwork. You may not know many of them, but they are there, making certain that you are all right, sharing equipment up and down the block, and helping clean up. It's been an incredible period for us all here. God did himself proud when he made people.

We still need to work with and pray for all those not included in the "beautiful people" categories above. Most just need help and encouragement.

Best wishes to all.

Bee Klassen

FELLOWSHIP NEWS:

Our deepest sympathies to Moses and Sadie Mast, in the death of his mother on July 17, in Leon, Iowa. May God comfort them and bless them in this time of sorrow.



Several of our members attended all or part of the sessions at Wichita '95, July 25-30. Darlene Powers was our delegate and will be giving her report to the church on August 13. (There is not room here to convey all that happened!) Others attending, who may also share reports, were: Moses and Sadie Mast, Mike Powers, Cristina Kaufman, and Laura Powers, who attended the Youth Conference.



WORSHIP NEWS:

During Moses and Sadie's absence in July, two of our members gave the sermons. On July 16, Mike Powers spoke on the Good Samaritan parable found in Luke. Bill Klassen spoke about service, such as Mennonite Disaster Service, on July 23. We thank them for bringing us these messages.

S.S. NEWS:

Denis Costello, from Ireland, led a group discussion about the

death penalty during our S.S. hour on July 16. He is with Amnesty International, and was staying at our Menno House for several weeks, working with a local group to abolish the death penalty.

COMING EVENTS:

August 6th is the 50th anniversary of the beginning of nuclear warfare at Hiroshima, Japan. Let us remember, not with celebration as so many World War II events have been, but with repentance.

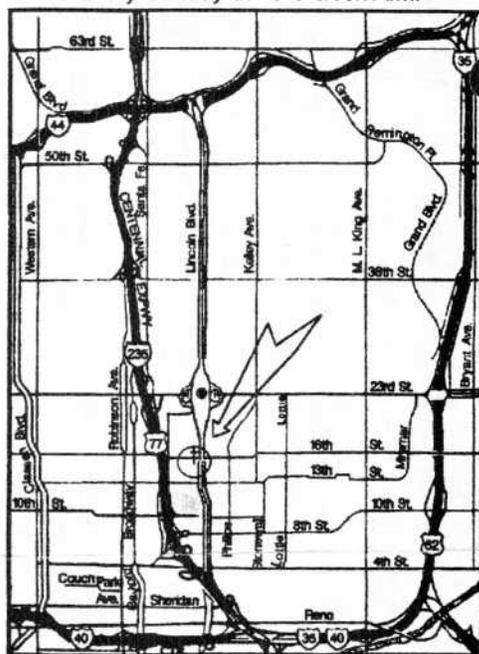
Western District Women's Retreat will be September 9-10, at Camp Mennoscah, Murdock, KS. Gayle Gerber Koontz, from the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN, will be the featured speaker. Cost is \$15.00 per person, and registration is due August 25. Contact Sadie for forms. We hope to have several women (high school-aged and up) from Joy Mennonite attend, car-pooling, of course!

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Aug. 27 Back to School Sunday
- Sept. 4 Labor Day
- Sept. 9-10 Women's Retreat, Camp Mennoscah
- Sept. 12 All OK Mennonite Women's Meeting
- Sept. 16-17 Oklahoma Convention, Grace Mennonite Church, Enid

Worship Service

Every Sunday at 10 O'clock A.M.



Church Address: 504 NE 16th St.

(just west of the oil derrick)

- Sept. 24 MCC Sunday
- Sept. 24 CROP Walk
- Oct. 1 World-Wide Communion Sunday
- Oct. 27-29 WDC annual sessions, Bethel College, North Newton, KS

CHURCHES: Feel welcome to post this newsletter for your members to read. Thanks.

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