



Joy Mennonite Church Newsletter

PASTORS' CORNER

In the discussions of envisioning a new

Mennonite church, the youth of Joy Mennonite also participated. One cannot say the youth tried to envision a new church as much as they thought about their current church experience. However, what the next generation thinks about the current church will bear on what the church will become. The youth had some good perceptions.

First, youth said there should be more respect for each other, not only in church but in our society. Their real concern was respect for them from the older generation and less stereotyping. The youth are right that disrespect for others with views different

from ours is a flaw in American culture and filters into our churches. The Mennonite church is becoming a diverse people. We see and experience life from varied perspectives. When others have a sincere commitment to obey God, I am duty bound by my faith commitment to love and respect that person. In the more diverse church we need a better understanding of grace and be cleansed from our judgmental attitudes of good people who view life differently. Second, the youth believe the church should call people to do right rather than just to be religious. It makes us think of the parable of the good Samaritan, doesn't it. What I perceive the youth to be saying is that the church insists they attend church and urges them to be

baptized etc. youth are human too and not always consistent with their complaints. Perhaps this is why adults tend to ignore the prophetic voices from the next generation.

Third, the next generation may not be willing to pay for the professional spiritual leader. Their understanding of course is not well thought out but I believe from their talk they expect more sacrificial commitment from spiritual leaders.

Fourth, it is not certain the next generation will be committed to faithful church attendance. The question we face is church attendance a test to faithfulness. My perception is that the adult generation may not understand why church attendance is important. Adults tend to support a tradition whether

it has value or not. Youth are less likely to. However it has been historically tested and is part of our human experience that humans need each other. To meet in memory of our Lord's resurrection is a long tradition that has made us a unified people. Another way may evolve for us to bond and support each other but we should not imagine we can suddenly invent a new and better way. Mennonites have a strong sense of Peoplehood that grew out of those times of persecution. This is a good thing we do not want to lose or diminish. Special thanks to the youth for their contribution. We hope to see many of you at the MCC sale. God bless all of you.

Mona Mart

Through a
(Looking) Glass
Darkly
Cheryl T.

I have been asked to write an article for this newsletter about my summer in Nicaragua, where I lived for eight weeks and did pre-dissertation research in the city of Estelí. Since my return I have given several

presentations to a diverse range of audiences about my experiences and findings. These have ranged from an overview of the conditions as I found them there, the stories of the people, especially the women I studied, and the results of structured interviews conducted in a clinic.

I have also spoken to the congregation at Joy about being a Mennonite, and a pacifist, in an area where people had never heard of Mennonites and have also had a long history of participation in armed revolutions. I was certainly out of my element there in many ways, and thus the rather Alice-in-Wonderland

title to this article. I was treated very well by the family where I stayed, yet my conditions were certainly different than those I was accustomed to. The daily struggle to improve my language skills and participate in conversations was especially tiring. I missed my family back in

Oklahoma and wondered how they were faring. Yet my own attempts to understand what I was seeing and experiencing also helped me to realize how easy it is to misunderstand and judge other people and other countries. After I had grown especially fond of my new friends there, I took the time on evening to read a document I brought from the United States. It was former President Reagan's 1984 speech to congress about events in Central America, and especially Nicaragua. Family members and others had opened their hearts and their homes to me, and had told me stories about this same time period from their own perspective. Suffice it to say that the two understandings of what was happening in the 1980's in Nicaragua were not at all compatible. Perhaps on both sides there was a certain level of both "looking through a glass, darkly," and looking through rose-colored glasses.

I can only hope that some

of my future work can bring some clarity and understanding on both sides of this and other issues, these and other people. I was told at work one day that I was a troublemaker, because I made people think. I considered it one of the highest compliments I have ever received. If I have continue to have the opportunity to make people think I believe that I shall find myself in some pretty good company.

A Sunday morning prayer was answered the next day, 18 October 1999, with the speedy and painless death of Bill Klassen's brother Albert D. Klassen in Chicago. The family and Bill and Thea were present for a memorial service at Oak Park Mennonite Church in Chicago on 22 October 1999 to celebrate Al's life.

News

A meaningful worship and communion service was held on World Communion Sunday. October 3.

We also enjoyed several potlucks this month.

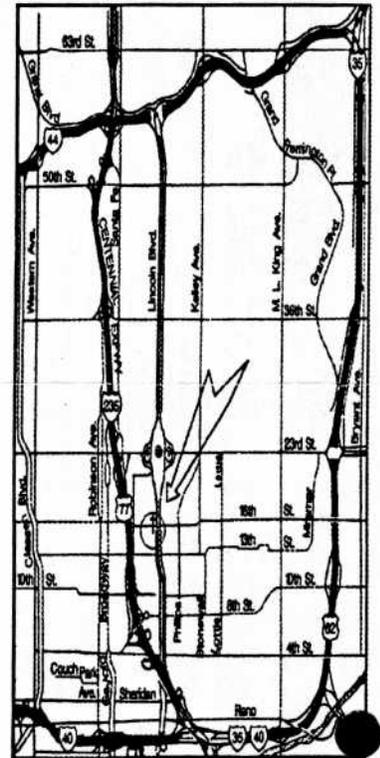
Beverly Bliss' mother Jean Bryan from California spent a week in the Bliss home and was able to come with them to church on the 17th.

Moses Mast was our delegate to the Western District Conference Friday and Saturday, Oct. 22 and 23. On Sunday the 24th there were pulpit exchanges of rural and urban pastors arranged by the conference staff. Moses spoke at Grace Hill in rural Whitewater area and Jim Voth from there was at Joy Mennonite. We think it was great experience for all of us.

Sunday October 32, after church services, several families stayed and shelled out peanuts to make peanut brittle for the MCC relief sale. Others made peppernuts, baby quilts and wall hangings in their homes.

November 5th and 6th. MCC relief sail in Enid, OK.

Nov 20th. Fall Peace Fest at the Myriad convention Center in Oklahoma City. Joy Mennonite will have a booth there focusing on Jubilee 2000.



Joy Mennonite Church meets at 504 NE 16th. Services start at 10:00 AM on Sundays.

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