

JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER

PASTORS' CORNER

Possibly the most cherished belief of the Christian faith is that God

does not deal with us on the basis of what we deserve but by grace. This means that God gives to us not what we deserve but in love gives us that which we need. Jesus affirmed this belief and further stated that this is also the way we should relate to each other. This is not so difficult to practice toward those who are much like myself. I must forgive them their short comings just as others must forgive me. Jesus however said that the really blessed ones are those who treat the least of these by their human need, not by what they deserve. Maybe we would understand better if we say those who are least

deserving. Let me tell you what inspired me to think about this.

Occasionally my wife and I help take children to see their mothers in prison. A week ago we had a van load of teenagers. By their talk one could hear they were familiar with law enforcement and prisons. They were part of a stream of people who had trouble fitting into society. The most sad thing was to see those who were listless and apathetic. It was actually refreshing to hear one, kind of braggingly, speak about getting his drivers license and show us how to drive. We may be turned off by those with no experience brag how they could do better than those with fifty years experience. That however is the normal teenager with life stretched before them they should

have dreams and visions that excite them, and I don't want to stifle that.

These visits are arranged by a dedicated woman who works as a librarian in the prison and does this on the side. It is all privately funded. Visits from their children make a difference in the effort to rehabilitate, although the success rate is still small. Our government is moving away from efforts to rehabilitate because the success rate is so low and these people are not considered deserving. Sadie and I have a family member in prison. We understand this person has problems he did not create and not his fault. We also understand that he must be held accountable for his behavior. But we have always deeply appreciated those who befriended him in ways he did not deserve. I

now believed it is not the hope of rehabilitation that should determine how I treat people. Those for whom there is little hope of rehabilitation should still be treated decently as human beings. They should be allowed choices which is so much a part of being human. They should be allowed to pursue interests of theirs. I wish for them some joy in living.

I know I find myself repelled and sometimes angry with the behavior of dysfunctional people. I also am dismayed when I hear Christian people speak about how prisoners who'd be treated because they don't deserve more., When this includes a family member it seems wrong. Just as God relates to me by grace so I must relate to others, even the least deserving.

A Season For Nonviolence

In memorial of the 51st and 37th

anniversaries of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, 64 principles of nonviolence have been adopted by the Oklahoma Task Force for: A Season For Nonviolence. These are practical ways one can practice peace. 1. Today, I will reflect on what peace means to me. 2. Today, I will look for opportunities to be a peacemaker. 3. Today, I will practice nonviolence and respect for Mother Earth by making good use of her resources. 4. Today, I

will take time to admire and appreciate nature. 5. Today, I will plant seeds or constructive ideas. 6. Today, I will hold a vision of plenty for all the world's hungry and be open to guidance as to how I can help alleviate some of that hunger. 7. Today, I will acknowledge every human being's fundamental right to justice, equity and equality. 8. Today, I will appreciate the earth's bounty and all of those who work to make my food available (i.e., Grower, trucker, grocery clerk, cook, waitress, etc.) 9. Today I will work to understand and respect another culture. 10. Today I will oppose injustice, not people. 11.

Today, I will look beyond stereotype and prejudices. 12. Today, I will live in the present moment and release the past. 14. Today, I will silently acknowledge all the leaders throughout the world. 15. Today, I will speak with kindness, respect and patience to every person that I talk with on the telephone. 16. Today, I will affirm my value and worth with positive "self talk" and refuse to put myself down. 17. Today, I will tell the truth and speak honestly from the heart. 18. Today, I will cause a ripple effect of good by an act of kindness toward another. 19. Today, I will choose to use my talents to serve

others by volunteering a portion of my time. 20. Today, I will say a blessing for greater understanding whenever I see evidence of crime, vandalism or graffiti. 21. Today, I will say "No" to ideas and actions that violate myself or others. 22. Today, I will turn off anything that portrays or supports violence whether on television, in the movies or on the internet. 23. Today, I will greet this day - everyone and everything - with openness and acceptance as if I were encountering them for the first time. 24. Today, I will drive with tolerance and patience. 25. Today, I will constructively channel my

26. Today, I will take time to appreciate the people who provide me with challenges in my life, especially those who make me angry and frustrated. 27. Today, I will talk less and listen more. 28, Today, I will notice the peacefulness in the world around me. 29. Today I will recognize that my actions directly affect others. 30. Today, I will take time to tell a family member or friend how much they mean to me. *Note... The thirty items you just read are part of "A Season of Nonviolence. 64 Ways in 64 Days" For more information about A Season of Nonviolence, contact Sharon Taylor-Wilson. 405-419-4122.*

News

A new year's eve party was held at the Mast residence, with a special celebration of Bill and Thea Klassen's wedding anniversary. Hayley Bliss bake and decorated the cake for the occasion.

Jan 16-17 Scot and Kyle Bliss and Melissa Warkentine attended the "Know Jesus 99" seminar in Hesston, Kansas. They had a great time with the youth!

Jan. 24, Moses and Sadie Mast

visited the churches in Austin and Waco, Texas on behalf of the Home Missions Commission. Peter Bruekner gave the message at Joy that day.

Sunday evening Jan. 17th the Hemisphere Reconciliation group met at the Joy Mennonite Church to see how we can best assist the relief effort in Nicaragua. Beans are being shipped in twenty ton containers from Oklahoma. There is a great need for medicines which can be shipped with the beans. If you wish to help you can send a check to Joy Mennonite, earmarked for Nicaragua relief.

Jan. 30 to April 4th is declared "A Season for Nonviolence." Contact Sadie if you would like a copy of "64 ways in 64 days"

M.C.C. central States annual meeting will be at the Memorial Road Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmond, Oklahoma at 9:30 on Sunday morning Feb. 28. Our church group will be attending that service.

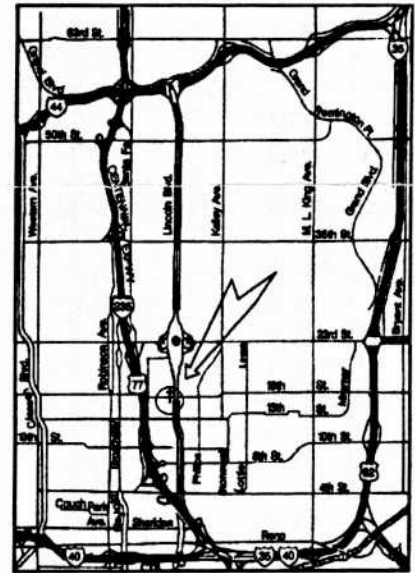
Ash Wednesday Feb. 17

First Sunday of Lent, Feb. 21.

Prayer Concerns

for Del and Martha Shoemaker. Del is not well and they need our prayers

Mrs. Berry also needs our prayers. She's staying with her daughter for awhile until she gets to feeling better.



Joy Mennonite Church is located at 504 NE 16th (just west of the oil derrick on 16th). We meet at 10:00 am on Sundays.

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