



Western
District
Conference

Joy Mennonite Newsletter April 2006

Pastors Corner

Peter Brueckner, a former member of Joy Mennonite, came to America as a young man from East Germany. One of the things that seemed strange to him was that every church from every denomination wanted to grow. This obsession to grow has spawned a science of church growth based on marketing techniques. The result of this seems to be a mixture of patriotism and religion, never quite sure who is Lord.

The desire to grow is not wrong. We have a divine calling to give witness to our experience of the grace of God in our lives and gather people into supporting faith communities. We go wrong when we seek to market our version of faith instead of giving witness to our experience of grace.

At Joy Mennonite we have often thought about our need to grow. I cannot claim that all my reasons of wishing to grow are pure. Growth spells success and we too would like to be recognized as successful. There is however a greater concern, to be a supportive community for those who seek to follow the radical teachings of Jesus, especially as it is recorded in the sermon on the mount. For this we need children, youth, parents and grandparents.

We also want to be a supporting community for some who do not formally join our church, like Jake who after five years in the guard now understands that he cannot follow Jesus and pick up a gun and train to kill. We want to support persons like one who works for the Catholic Worker House and says we must not only give charity to the poor, we must also live with them. Or the youth who not only bring food to the homeless, they eat with them. Then there are those who have become disenchanted with established religion but still want to practice a life of faith. In spite of the mixture of patriotism and religion, the product of our marketed religion, we still find in most congregations of all denominations people who sincerely seek to follow the radical teachings of Jesus. For these faithful witnesses we

want to be a supportive community.

The Red Buds are out and green leaves are appearing. I hope you are enjoying it like I am. I wish for all of you a happy and inspiring Easter.

Moses Mast

Following is an essay in response to an assignment at school in my Jr. English class.

Question: If you turned 18 tomorrow and the draft was enacted, what armed forces would you be in and why?

If I turned 18 tomorrow, the first thing I would do is register as a conscientious objector. I would register that way because I would never want to serve in the army. I could never live with myself having been trained how to kill. If there were a draft, I wouldn't move to Canada or Mexico. I would sell most of what I own and try to promote peace in the country we are fighting. I'm not the type that would really do that, but to me, it's better than being forced to kill. In my opinion, if all the people drafted were used in peace, we would probably get farther than if we gave them each a gun. How? What good would all the violence do? None! It is all just a big cycle of revenge someone does something to you, you get mad, and do something back. Is there any good in this? Did responding with malice make the first problem better? No! If you were to respond in a peaceful way, we would only have one wrong, not two. There is nothing you can do to really make everything better except to try and keep it from happening to others. To do this, you need to help people realize that violence will not make things better.

Getting revenge doesn't really do much good, if any. Take 9/11 for example, they came over here; killed thousands of people out of anger and then we struck back. Now what? Did that bring back those lives? No, it just brought more suffering, more fatherless and motherless families. Are we really

getting rid of terrorism? Terrorism will always be around it is just a part of human nature.

The only way to reduce the terror is to try to spread peace throughout the world. To teach others about acting civilized, we are humans, not animals. We don't need to go out and wage war.

Jeremy Warkentine- Chandler, Ok

We were saddened by the news of the death of Tom Fox from the Christian Peacemaker Team in Iraq. We remembered Tom and his family at the Sunday service following his death and pray that our commitment to peacemaking will be strengthened by the courageous life of Tom Fox.

Preaching schedule for April:

April 9-Norman Berry

April 16- Moses Mast As part of the Easter Service we will show a DVD, Walking the Path that Jesus Walked, the story of the Christian church in the middle east, made by MCC

April 23- James Branum

April 30- Roy Evans

Good Friday, 12:00 noon, the group that meets for prayer every Friday had a special service to remember the stations of the cross at the Jesus

Wept memorial across from the Murrah Building memorial site.

Easter Sunday morning James Branum and Norman Berry served an early breakfast as a fund raiser for the Catholic Worker House.

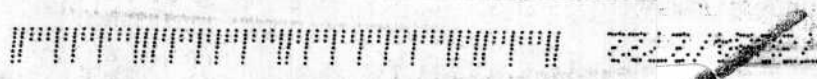
April 9 Moses and Sadie Mast spoke to a class at the Mayflower congregation about the Christian Peacemaker Teams. April 12 they spoke at the United Ministries Center on the O U campus about the Christian Peacemaker Teams.

June 3-4 the annual camping week end for Joy Mennonite members and friends. Lance Schmitz will be our Sunday morning guest speaker

Congratulations to James Branum for passing the bar exam.

Anyone interested in receiving the newsletter via email please contact me at amandahostetler@yahoo.com or give your name and email address to Sadie Mast.

*Thank You,
Amanda*



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