



## PASTOR'S CORNER

Many of us have experienced being with persons of other faiths and wanting to be true to our faith we also do not want to offend those of other faiths. Recently we had a Jewish friend visit our church. We have also been in meetings with those of the Muslim faith. Both of these religions accept Jesus as a teacher and a prophet but not as the savior. If we can understand that we do not have to deny our faith to show respect for their belief then these persons can be a gift to us and a great help for discernment, especially discerning the meaning of that which has become repetitious and traditional.

In the presence of persons of other faiths I am especially aware of how we close our prayers, in the name of Jesus. I have been made to think of why we close our prayers in this traditional way. I assume the practice finds its roots in the early church who did so at the invitation of Jesus to bring our petitions to God in his name. I also assume it has a deep meaning we now miss because it has become so traditional. While Jesus invited us to pray in his name, the principle of praying in the name of Jesus pre dates Jesus. We will find its roots deep in the foundation of the Jewish faith, if you humble yourselves before God then God will hear your prayers. (II Chron. 7:14) To pray in the name of Jesus means I consider myself unworthy to ask for God's favor so I bring my petitions to God in the name of one who is worthy and one who intercedes for me. We share this understanding of coming before God with great humility to make our petitions known, with those of other faiths. Is it not strange that too often those who pray in the name of Jesus think of themselves as the worthy ones, all others are the unworthy ones.

In our Anabaptist tradition we take the teachings of Jesus seriously. We believe the teachings of Jesus are prophetic in that they challenge the socially accepted norm of righteousness. I know a local rabbi who associates freely with Christians. From his faith this rabbi embraces the elements of Jesus teachings that set him apart as a prophet. This stands in contrast to Christians who seem to have the sermon on the mount deleted from their bible. We must not try to understand Jesus as savior apart from his prophetic teachings. When we separate Jesus teachings for living from accepting him as savior we are also returning to an ancient religious practice of ritual and sacrifice as a way to appease the anger of God for my sin and guarantee eternal salvation without affecting the way I live. This kind of religion has great appeal because it develops into a civil

religion, shaped by circumstances that surround us, and addresses the sins that hurt me, my friends and family, and my country, but approves eliminating those who threaten me, my friends and family and my country. We often wonder what kind of effort should we make to convert others to Christianity. Elias Chacour, who operates a school in the nation of Israel for Palestinian children was asked if he seeks to convert the Muslim students in his school. I tell them, he said, "The Jesus I serve told me to love you."

Let us accept the way God has come to us. Let us make our petitions to God with humility, Let us show respect for the way God has come to others.

Wishing you all a joyful thanksgiving. I hope to see many of you at the MCC relief sale.

*Moses Mart*

### If I Were a Rich Man... Terry Hostetler

Jesus once said, "It'd be easier for a camel to fit through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." He even told a rich fellow to sell all he had and give the money to the poor so he could be a follower. So why do so many people spend so much time and effort into making and stockpiling money? Many will argue that we have to be prepared for the future, have a nice little nest egg, for retirement, so we can live comfortably, and he meant that after we had all that, then give any excess to the poor. So why didn't he say that? I've read it several times and still don't get that out of those particular verses. I've even read them in three different translations of the bible. But I still don't see where he says anything about a 401k plan or investments or any of that kind of stuff. He said give it away. This concerns me, because I'll have to admit that I wouldn't mind being "well off" financially, not that I have anything to worry about at the moment. I think though that I may understand Jesus' point. How do you think you can relate to the masses, when you don't have the same concerns they do? I certainly have a hard time relating to rich folks. But I try to be understanding.

Another aspect of this dilemma might be that Jesus was teaching faith. (I read more than this particular story). If you are putting your life in God's hand, having faith that God is leading you and will provide for you, isn't the money, insurance and retirement plan kinda hedging your bets? Like "if the faith thing doesn't work out you'll have something to fall back on?"

Is that then really living your faith?

For the next few weeks, in our Adult Sunday school, we will be discussing "Actually living our Christianity". This should lead us into many interesting discussions on a variety of subjects. I hope to see you all there.

### October Revisited

Cold enough for you? Seems like winter came a little earlier than most folks wanted, not that anyone ever wants winter right?

Anyway, whatever the weather, we always manage to get a lot done. This month Moses and Sadie Mast went to Corn, OK for an MMA meeting and then attended an MDS meeting in Cordell, OK Oct. 8th.

Martha Shoemaker is recovering from surgery on Oct. 10th. It sure was good to see her in church this last Sunday, even driving herself. All your thoughts and prayers have meant so much to her and we continue to pray for Martha's health.

Crop Walk was held Oct. 24th, a cold, blustery day with rain. Kind of dampened spirits a bit, but people still walked.

Every Thursday, several people from Joy Mennonite participate in a public vigil asking our government to NOT go to war. There is an amazing outpouring of support from people driving by.

### November Happenings and Coming Events

This month's worship leader will be Terry Hostetler. Next month's is likely to be someone picked at random (calling all volunteers). Our preaching schedule is as follows:

Nov. 3- Moses Mast, Nov. 10- Karin Evans, Nov. 17- Moses Mast and on Nov 24 a special treat - Mike & Darlene Powers will be here from Newton, KS. We will have a potluck dinner following the service that Sunday, so bring a friend, bring some food, bring an appetite for a good message, good fellowship and good food. Hope to see you there!



### Joy Mennonite Church

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Moses & Sadie Mast 771-4743

Nov. 28 is Thanksgiving this year. What are we thankful for? The house we live in? The clothes we wear? The car we drive? Lots of neighbors don't have a house, nice clothes, a car, but they are still thankful. Remember your neighbors, wherever they are.

### Final Thoughts Deborah O'Neal

It's winter, it's winter, it got cold, it got cold, and I like it - a LOT! This does not make me popular with very many people. But I still like the

cold, crisp days and the still quiet nights. I think better in winter. For lots of people, winter is a time of rushing around from store to store, party to party, house to house, buying, cooking, wrapping, eating, talking, pushing, shoving, rush, rush.....

I like to curl up with a good book and read, make snowflakes with my kids, walk in the yard in the snow, feed the birds, remember a special birth a long time ago and far, far away.

So what if I have to work on holidays? I'm glad I'm able. So what if we don't have turkey with all the trimmings? Chicken is just as good. The older I get (no - not more mature- just older), the more I want to just chuck all the hustle and bustle and remember why it all happened in the first place. Pilgrims came here to find a closer relationship with God. When they got here, they found hardships, famine, new friends and neighbors, room to spread out and .... a closer relationship with God. They didn't have a lot to be thankful for by today's standards - no big mansion, no new carriage, no fancy ball gowns- just a new life with God. Thanks.

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

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