



**Western  
District  
Conference**

# Joy Mennonite Newsletter July 2006

## Pastors Corner

### Memorial Day reflections

Recently we have been in conversation with a father whose son died in Iraq. On Memorial Day he invited us to join him and others of the family at the graveside. The cause of his sons death had been covered up for several months because the military was partly to blame for his sons death. The father desperately did not want his son to be forgotten but be remembered as a hero. The best we could do was listen and pay our respects. This experience, and all the prayers and speeches we heard on this day made me wonder what motivates people to so heroically answer the call to go to war and risk their lives for a class of people whose sons and daughters do not go to war and for the corporations who participate in the decision to go to war and reap unbelievable profits.

Serving our country in war has been made a religious experience. This is not just an American experience or a modern day phenomena. It has been like this from ancient times. In ancient times there were those who believed their kings or emperors were divine. Today we regard this understanding of the king as a God as belonging to a time and to a people before knowledge and understanding had developed to our modern level of understanding. However, in practice the line that distinguishes ancient understanding from our present day understanding is very blurred. When our president calls the nation to war it is regarded as dangerous and wrong to question that authority. We may not regard our president as divine but we do grant him divine authority. From ancient times to modern times we do this for the same reason, we want to be secure and safe. People have always believed that to be secure we must give our national leaders this kind of absolute authority. We can also see how we have not changed from the days of our ancestors by the way we regard the call to go to war as a sacred call. One can sense all the emotions of the worship of God in the speeches and songs that are sung on Memorial Day.

In our conversations, I believe our young men and women can be heroes for risking their lives to answer the call to go to war, and the war still be wrong. It is our religious and national leaders who blend the call of the nation with the call of God. We are told that to answer the call of the nation is patriotic and being patriotic is being faithful to God. Time has not changed our understanding,

we believe just as our ancestors did that if the common folk do not respond to the kings call to go to war the world will fall into chaos. We have a choice, we can follow the Gods of this world who seek security by killing the enemy or we can follow the God revealed to us by Jesus who taught us to seek reconciliation rather than death for our enemies.

### Moses Mast

*If you would like to continue to get this newsletter in the mail as you have in the past we want to continue to send it to you. If you would find it convenient to receive it by e mail this would simplify it for us. But you will have to let us know if this is convenient for you. It would be nice to hear from you however you prefer but especially if you could receive it by e mail. Please let us know.*

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Thanks to you who have responded.*

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Recently, while in Hydro at the camp ground, I got to thinking about the place. I wonder while listening to every one there tell about their experiences at camp, just how many lives this little piece of ground in Hydro has affected. What are the effects the camping experience produces? First I can't tell you how many people the camp has had some influence on. I suspect there are a great many. The how of it I can deal with a little better. Friends, kids make friends at camp both with other kids and with the adults running the camp. Many of these friendships I understand have lasted a good many years. Kids also learn at camp. They learn from the bible and they learn about our Anabaptist traditions. Of course they get this at their home churches and their own homes. But camp is a little more concentrated. Being taught something you've always been exposed to takes on a new dimension when you learn it again. Not only being taught by different people but also being taught with people new to you. These things your learning take on new importance when you first realize its not just mom, dad and the preacher spouting off what they think. But other people in other towns, even other states share the same notions. Other kids are hearing the same things at home and this makes for a bonding kind of experience. I believe this gives the kids a sense, that many of us are more connected by our ideas than they might have thought. And that these ideas we live by are not only shared by many people all across the globe, but have been handed down from generation to generation as we are trying to hand it down to them. These things we want

our young to understand, our traditions our beliefs. And we want them to learn about God and the Life and teachings of Jesus. Both because we want them to understand where we are coming from and we want them to use these lessons in their own lives. We want to give them a good foundation and we want them to grow in their understanding, hopefully far beyond our own understanding. The next thing about camp is that it's fun. The games, the sports the activities and the people all combine to make the whole deal FUN. So if you have kids, send them to camp. If you don't maybe you could volunteer as a counselor or cook or something. Or even just volunteer for a work day cleaning and fixing up all of these options can be rewarding experiences as well as a lot of fun.

Terry

**Coming Events**

Preaching schedule: July 2 Moses Mast  
 July 9 James Branum  
 July 16 Norman Berry  
 July 23 Roy Evans  
 July 30 Moses Mast

July 9-14 Moses and Sadie Mast will be assisting in the children's camp at Hydro, Okla.

**Recent Events**

In June Moses and Sadie Mast attended the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of voluntary service in Northern Alberta.

June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> was the annual campout at Thunderbird. We had a wonderful time as usual.

June 24<sup>th</sup> Terry and Jacob Hostetler assisted in getting the campgrounds in Hydro, Ok ready for all the happy campers.

**- In Closing-**

I want to thank all the people involved in organizing and running the camp at Hydro and also to congratulate them for their many years of hard work. In speaking with my own kids, now grown and with others who have attended camp, it seems you have had a very positive impact on many many young lives and that I believe is a very good thing.

Terry

We cannot do everything  
 and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
 This enables us to do something,  
 and do it very well.  
 It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
 an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,  
 but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.  
 We are workers, not master builders.

Archbishop Oscar Romero  
 murdered on March 24, 1980

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