



# JOY MENNONITE CHURCH NEWSLETTER

## Pastor's Corner

When we attended the Oklahoma Convention of Mennonite Churches we stayed with a local family. Before retiring for the night we sat around the kitchen table and recounted stories of cultural interpretations of faith from our Mennonite past. One person expressed what we all felt; how could our people believe some of their practices were faith-related? Some of these practices did not make sense because the cultural

reasons for the practices no longer existed. Take, for example, there was a time when buttons were symbols of status. Buttons were beautiful and the rich adorned their clothes with buttons. Poor people did not use buttons, but secured their clothes with straight pins and little hooks and eyes. Some believers, as a principle of their faith, believed they should not identify with the rich and fancy but with the common poor. For that reason they agreed not to wear buttons. Time passed and buttons became ordinary. The practice of not wearing

buttons no longer made sense.

I believe the great concern for the church today is the silence of faith to culture. Great renewal movements are marked by times when faith speaks to the culture and identifies sinful practices. It seems to me we hear people talk about sin, the wages of sin, forgiveness of sin, etc., but we do not identify our culture's sinful practices. This is the same kind of idolatry we can identify in other religions, religions we call pagan. It is using religious ritual and rhetoric to assure ourselves of

God's favor in place of obedience. Idolatry in any religion is inventing a religious practice to replace obedience to God.

I have great respect for those people in our past who identified the sins of their culture and society and resolved not to live that way. May God help us to see and name the sins of our culture and society and give us the courage to repent and resolve not to live in those sins, just like many before us have done.

*Moses Mast*

## WHAT IF GOD SHOULD GO ON STRIKE?

by Grace Roley

We pick up a newspaper or turn on the radio or TV and hear about this business or that business going on strike, maybe for more money, better working conditions, or maybe a disagreement that could have been settled by talking about what was bothering them. Sometimes I wonder if people ever stopped and thought what it would be like if God were to

go on strike. I would like to share a poem that I carry in my billfold all the time. I don't know who the author was but it will make people stop and think.

### If God Should Go On Strike

How good it is that God above has never gone on strike  
Because He wasn't treated fair  
in things He didn't like.  
If only once He'd given up and said,  
"That's it, I'm through.  
"I've had enough of those on earth,  
so this is what I will do.

I'll give my orders to the sun,  
'Shut off the heat supply,'  
And to the moon, 'Give no more light,  
and run all the oceans dry.'

Then just to make things really rough  
and put the pressure on,  
'Turn off the vital oxygen, till all our breath is gone.'

You know He would be justified,  
if fairness were the game.

For no one has been more abused or met with more disdain

Than God, and yet He carried on,  
supplying you and me.

Men say they want a better deal,  
and so on strike they go.  
But, what a deal we've given God,  
to whom all things we owe.

We don't care if we hurt to gain the things we like.

But what a mess we would all be in  
if God should go on strike.

Think about this poem and remember it could happen.

## Holy Bible



## Comfort 'n Joy...At Joy!

The members at Joy have recently been challenged to participate in a special project this fall. Damon and Nicole Tabor, our newest members, have already put together two

bundles, as described in the "A Common Place" insert in the most recent issue of The Mennonite. These include common toiletries, a stuffed animal, and perhaps a photo of the givers. Bundles have been sent by MCC for many years,

and these will be going to Bosnian and Serbian refugees who are still unable to return home. Sadie encouraged us to get busy, and this was echoed by Bill Klassen on Sunday. Thea Klassen gave testimony to the joy of receiving such a

gift. Rumor has it that some of our cluster groups may planning to put more together. Let's all be involved in this example of hands-on Christianity, or, as Moses said, just an ordinary deed that anyone ought to do!

## A Friend of Joy...

Our group was saddened to learn of the recent death of Dale Bachman from Newton, Kansas. Dale and his wife, Elda, were with the Abraham and Sarah group who came down to give us a hand several years ago. His family is in our thoughts and prayers.

## News items...

The Klassens, Tabors and Masts attended the Oklahoma Convention at Meno over the weekend of September 20th and 21st.

Moses Mast worked (and supervised) during the '97 Building Blitz for Habitat for Humanity here in Oklahoma City, September 13-19.

Several members and friends gathered to help renovate a rent house belonging to the O'Neal family, so that it could be occupied by the Smith family on September 27th.

Damon and Nicole Tabor were baptized and received as members here at Joy during a joyful communion service on September 14th.

A picnic at the Harn Homestead was attended by some 75 members of our church and the neighborhood this month. (Harn Homestead is a great place, just down the street from our church. A real, old-time farm in the heart of the city!)

Nicole Tabor is attending Rose State College, in Midwest City, Oklahoma, taking her general education courses. Cheryl Crichley is attending graduate school for medical anthropology at SMU in Dallas during the week, and home on weekends.

## Upcoming events...

The annual Crop Walk is on Sunday, October 5th. Several from Joy will be walking, the rest are encouraged to sponsor them. We will have a simple, "third world"

lunch, between church and the walk, with beans and rice, etc. Contact Sadie if you don't already know what to bring.

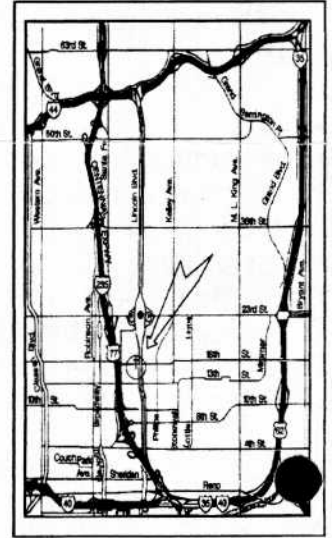
An outing at the zoo is planned for October 26th, with a brown-bag lunch. More details to follow.

Our cluster groups are reported to be planning meetings in the near future. These groups help to give us a sense of community in a metroplex in which we are all so scattered. (Perhaps a bundle-making contest could be in order?)

## Ten Thousand Villages...

Some organized people have already begun their Christmas shopping! It would be good to remember the impact our shopping choices might have. Ten Thousand Villages (formerly SELFHELP Crafts) participates in fair trade, which means that they work to improve the living conditions of the poor and oppressed in

developing countries, rather than exploiting them. The Fall Peace Festival, here in Oklahoma City, is another "good" place to shop for gifts. Those of you with access might check out the website for Ten Thousand Villages at: <http://www.villages.ca>. There is a lot to learn there, and good links.



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. Come and visit!

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