

Mustard Seed

Kalona Mennonite Church

Open to New Possibilities

May 2011

Volume XXI,

The other day, Glenda Seward shared in her Caring Bridge page, "The garden this time of year is filled with so much promise. The ground is waking up, things are beginning to grow, the weather is so pleasant, and so many of the nastiest weeds haven't awakened yet." I would add that the nastiest bugs have also not awakened yet!

Her statement leads us to consider what new possibilities we envision God doing in our lives. What has been frozen and needs to come to life? What has been in hibernation and wants to be active once again? What seems hopeless and dead and yet has the potential to be turned

into abundant life? Life has different seasons. There are times when we feel less hopeful, and yet the Good News of the Gospel is that we are given new opportunities to enter into a new season of life, a season of active growth and renewed strength and vision.

As we enjoy the beauty of the month of May, may we also see Christ at work in our lives. Christ in His mercy is inviting us to come to the springs of living water and get a new start and a new joy for living in the abundance of God's Kingdom.

Scott Swartzendruber



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Special points of interest:

- it's time to remind you to think about how you can help MCC. Put this on your daily prayer list!
 - This is still a strange message. Popular wisdom tells us that enemies are defeated by overwhelming force. The New Testament teaches us that enemies are defeated by overwhelming love.
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BEYOND OURSELVES

Here are some facts about, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), our churches international relief agency. MCC started in 1920 to address needs in the Ukraine of our Russian Mennonite brothers and sisters. Today we have persons in 53 countries working with local churches and communities in the following areas:

DISASTER RELIEF

Meeting basic needs for life with canned meat, comforters, school kits, and health kits.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Working alongside local churches and communities to seek LONG TERM solutions to poverty, hunger and poor health.

JUSTICE AND PEACE BUILDING

This is at the heart of ALL of MCC's activities and it's mission. MCC supports local peacemakers, congregations and communities in efforts of healing reconciliation, and peace, especially in regions torn by war

and militarism.

This is all done IN THE NAME OF CHRIST, and is truly the face of Jesus to the many people of the world that do not know Him.

Locally our unofficial KMC MCC worker is Aline

Schipper. Recently, with the help of the Venture Club girls, Mary Fern Chupp, Gayle Garner, Verla

Lewis, Dave and Anna Mae Graber, Ted and Doris Redding, Dave and Wanda Beachy, the Leon and Robin Schrock family, and WMSC, over 70 baby health kits were sent to MCC. Ask Aline sometime how many kits she has sent on her own. She may or may not be able to tell you the exact number, but, I know



Mennonite Central Committee

The annual MCC sale is on June 3rd and 4th and any help to

make this a successful sale will be appreciated. Also, consider helping out at the Crowded Closet. The majority of proceeds from this store go to MCC programs. As volunteer coordinator, Karen Schrock will be able to find the right job for you even if it is just a few hours a month.

dave koerner

It's time to remind you to think about how you can help MCC. Put this on your daily prayer list!

Notes from Crowded Closet

The Crowded Closet Association meeting was held at Sunnyside Church on April 17, 2011. Devotions were given by Pastor John King . He said he looked in the Bible for Crowded Closet and the only thing he found was "Go to the closet to pray". He thought that was appropriate because we always start the day with prayer and we have prayer partners. He also read from John 17. Jesus prayed

for his disciples and for all believers. It reads: "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray for those who will believe in me through their message that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I in You.



May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me".

The Financial Report was given by Margaret Miller. Her report was for September 2010 through March 2011. The Crowded Closet sent \$350,000 to MCC during that time. They are committed to send \$40,000 each month but as you can see they send more than (cont. p.3)

How Does God Deal With Enemies?

During this Easter season our minds focus on the death of Jesus and the victory demonstrated in the Resurrection. To sinful humans, dying is obviously contradictory to triumphing over enemies.

Several weeks ago the Sunday morning scripture reading was from Exodus 15. This song, as Scott pointed out, was a spontaneous outburst of praise by Israel for the great triumph that God had demonstrated through the destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea. God's "right handshattered the enemy" v6. Terms "enemy" and "adversary" are paired with "shattered", "overthrew", "consumed", "fury" and pictures of drowning. (see especially v 4 -10) "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously, the horse and rider he has thrown into the sea" Ex. 15:1b

The theme of triumph by destruction of the enemy is repeated numerous times in the Old Testament. See how often you find it as you read the

Psalms.

Paul lived in the Roman empire that also knew how to deal with enemies. Its great armies and navy swept in every direction, conquering and destroying. Defeated kings and generals were taken to Rome where they were paraded in disgrace in the streets, behind the triumphant army.

When Paul wrote to the Romans who lived in the heart of the empire he used terms that were no doubt used to describe Rome's enemies: "weak", "ungodly", "sinners", "enemies" (Romans 5:6-11) These are the ones who died. But Paul reverses the picture "Christ died for the ungodly" v 6, "while we were still sinners Christ died for us" v 8, "we have been justified by his blood" v 9 "...while we were



LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son..." v 10. "Christ died" is the message of the New Testament. This is the way God deals with enemies.

Obviously not everyone accepted this strange message. As Paul notes, as he writes to the Corinthians, "...we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles." I Cor. 1:23. Both Jews and Gentiles gloried in their great military triumphs. The Greeks had defeated the Persians. The Romans had defeated the Greeks. The Jewish Maccabees had defeated the Syrians.

This is still a strange message. Popular wisdom tells us that enemies are defeated by overwhelming force. The New Testament teaches us that enemies are defeated by overwhelming love. Instead of being destroyed we, God's enemies, are reconciled - turned into friends. As God's army, we also use God's tactics. The Resurrection of Jesus displays the victory of God's way.

(Notes cont.) that when they have it. EBay income for that time was \$10,136. Salvage income was \$19,431. That includes the scrap metal Wilbur Mast hauls for them, cardboard, shoes, etc. Baked goods sales were \$1340, cash boxes we have at register for people to drop their change into was \$820, thrift sales was \$409,309 and Ten Thousand Village Gift shop sales was \$48,990 with

cost of goods at \$27,661.

New Board members will be Julie Bartel, Ted Redding and Eileen Roth. The replace Gerald Yoder, Erma Coppinger and Janice Wenger.

Connie Freyenberger gave the manager's report. They have purchased a big trash compactor and also a scale so they don't have to handle boxes of salvage so many times. She is still asking churches to commit to groups from their

church to come once each month.

Marvin and Neta Faye Yoder shared a little about their 35 years in Japan. They helped plant churches, taught school, and served as pastor. They were on the northern island of Hokkaido from 1961 to 1996. He gave a history of how Christians came to Japan in 1549. The Christians were much oppressed in that time.

Elsie Mast

WHAT'S HAPPENING!!!

So, it's another cold wet evening. A perfect time to write this article. Hopefully there will be something in this article that is newsworthy. If not, just let us know of news items for the next issue. Now for the news.....

Recently the Lamplighters S.S. Class had an open house party for Lynn & Mary Brennehan and also Ed & Marge Hershberger. The class had decided on a finger food potluck and they ended up having 6 plates of deviled eggs. Sounds good to me!

Recently we attended the Mid-Prairie High School play "110 in the Shade." We got to see Nicole Murray & Kyle Bontrager in the play and they both did a very nice job! It was very entertaining and a fun night together.

Kelby Bender attended the NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four in Houston, Texas. If I was a BB coach I would want to make the final four my national convention

every year possible. Way to go, Kelby.

Graduations are approaching for high school & college students, however we just want to mention several from our congregation that will receive advanced degrees. Joel Koerner will be graduating from Law School at Drake University in Des Moines. Amanda Beachy will graduate from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary with a Masters of Divinity Degree in Primary Pastoring. Beth Miller will also graduate from AMBS with a MDiv in Pastoral Care and Counseling. Good job, we are proud of you and your accomplishments.

The IMS Choir traveled to Puerto Rico for the Mennonite Choir Festival. Mollie Ferguson, Jacey Dehogues & Zach Weiss were KMCer's that were a part of the choir. They got very little sleep, but had a great time, including a hike in a rain forest. Sounds like a good time!

Jonathan Koerner is working at Plow Creek Farms as an intern for the next 6 months. His address is: Jonathan Koerner, %The Gales, Box 321, Tiskilwa, Illinois 61368. You can read more about Plow Creek Farm on the internet. His e-mail: jonathank1@yahoo.com

John Wallerich found his 1st mushrooms of the season, the week before Easter. And here I thought it was too cold yet. Well, get out there and get to hunting and oh yes, "watch out for those ticks."

Well, that's all the news for now.

Blessings to all, Ed V. & Carol Miller



Library Notes

Have you stopped by the library recently? The shelves are stocked with great reading material for most everyone. If you are looking for ways to strengthen your Christian life or inspirational books to help you along the way, we have them. If you are looking for biographies or books about those serving on the mission field, we have them. Looking for help with health or aging issues, or grief? We have it. If you are looking for books for children or for middle readers, we have them. Are you looking for

reference books, or books teaching about the Mennonite faith? We have them. If you are looking for good fiction books, we have a lot. Books on family life and parenting? Yes, we have them. We also have several large print books.

Some recent donations to the library include a reference book, **Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970** by Paul Toews.

Childrens books include, **The Very Hungry Caterpillar, The Lost Sheep, Berenstain Bears and Too Much TV, Pond Life, Spiders Spin Webs, and My Life as an Afterthought Astronaut** (a Wally McDougal book).

Stop by to say Hello, and check out a book soon!

Shirley Hochstedler



In Pursuit

Faith is a word that gets thrown around a lot. We use it so much that at times I think we forget what it means. At least I do. So I looked it up in the dictionary. Faith is believing without proof. Now isn't that a foreign concept in this day and age, believing without proof. Look at how many television shows are based on finding proof to figure something out. Whether it is a detective show or "Mythbusters" or a news show, they set themselves out to find proof in one form or another.

God goes His own way. He doesn't really tell us to go prove that He exists. He tells us to *believe* that He exists. Hebrews 11:6 goes so far as to tell us that we can't please and be satisfactory to God without faith. That means that God wants us to believe without proof. The verse goes on to say that if you want to come near to God you must necessarily believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Now I say that I have faith in God, but how true is that statement and how fully do I live it out? I am an independent person. It is much easier for me to help someone else than to have someone help me. Some would say that is a servant mentality, but I am not so sure. It leads me to want things to be done my way. When I do things myself for myself (Can you see my self-centeredness here?) they are done my way.

The last couple of months have been challenging ones for me, particularly at work. We have had surgeries, cancer, illness, family struggles, and unexpected death, in addition to the usual assortment of equipment breakdowns, miscommunications and other day to day "opportunities" as we call them on a good day. It has reminded me over and over and over again that maybe I am not meant to be independent. There have been many times I have been at the brink of overload.

One of those times came this past week. By the grace of God a verse I had recently memorized came to my mind. It was Isaiah 26:3 "You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind (both in its inclination and its character) is stayed on You, because he commits himself to You, leans on You and hopes confidently in You." It changed my whole day. I went from stressed on the brink of breakdown to a total sense of peace. God is so good. He always comes through. I don't need proof that He will come through. What I

need is faith that God will come through. That faith will bring me inner peace no matter what physical, emotional or mental situation comes my way.

All praise be to God! Over the last couple of months He has come through for me in amazing ways time and time again. There have been words of encouragement, moments of peace when there was no earthly reason for peace, and things working out in ways we didn't see coming. God is amazing!!

Slowly, I am learning to step out in faith. I am learning to lean on God and His way of doing things as opposed to my way. I am learning to expect God to take care of everything even when my logical mind tries to tell me differently. My goal is to keep my mind focused on God. It is the ultimate way to live. Oh, how I look forward to seeing what God will do in my life as my faith grows. He has never let me down and promises in Hebrews 13:5b that He will never fail me or abandon me. That is a verse I will use to help my faith to grow. I hope that you do too.

As always, in pursuit, Dawn Wyse

My goal is to keep my mind focused on God. It is the ultimate way to live.



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Our Visions is to be a life-giving church: Presenting the life-giving message of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior to the people of the Kalona area and the world, challenging them to accept Christ, worship Him and serve Him.

Our mission is to fulfill the Great Commission: Leading people to Christ; disciplining them in the faith; equipping them to witness; and sending them out to serve.

We are on the web:
kalonamennonitechurch.com

Did You Know?

- That the KMC website is up and running? You can access bulletins, previous issues of the Mustard Seed, times of services, and the audio of memorial services. Check it out at kalonamennonitechurch.com
 - That you can send email greetings to someone in the hospital? Both Mercy Hospital and University Hospital offer this volunteer service. Simply go to the website and look for online services. You will find "email a patient". Your message will be delivered to the patient in his/her room. Addresses for the hospitals are www.mercyic.org and www.uihealthcare.com
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