



Mennonite Church
Of the Servant

Newsletter

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In this issue

Relational and Accountable Community.....	2
The Heart of a Disciple	2
Worship in July.....	3
Introducing Randy Ruth.....	3
Servant Groups.....	4
Childcare.....	4
June Attendance	4
Calendar	5

A MONASTIC ANABAPTIST MANIFESTO:

PART TWO



By Pastor Jerry Truex

What follows is part two of a Monastic Anabaptist Manifesto for the Mennonite Church of the Servant. A manifesto is a public declaration of intentions. In our case, it articulates our Anabaptist identity and our intention to identify with the emerging new monasticism.

In part one, I talked about what it means *to commit ourselves to radical and biblical spirituality*, the first of our three identity statements adopted in 2008.

- We commit ourselves to radical and biblical spirituality
- We live in relational and accountable community
- We seek Christ's peace within and in the world

To read part one, go to our website at www.mcswichita.net/newsletters.htm and click on the June 2011 Newsletter.

RELATIONAL AND ACCOUNTABLE COMMUNITY

Here I would like to expand on the second identity statement, what it means *to live in relational and accountable community*. At the most basic level, it means we are dedicated to fostering healthy interdependent relationships as a manifestation of the Body of Christ. I want you to consider two key concepts: *relational community* and *accountable community*.

Relational Community

By saying we strive to live in *relational community* we affirm that human beings are created to live in healthy social relationships. Human beings were created in the "image of God, both male and female" (Gen. 1:26-27). The image of God is a relational term. Our very nature moves us to find meaning and fulfillment in our relationships with God, one another, and the created order.

Conversely, separation or alienation from God and others is the greatest tragedy of human existence. Unfortunately, all of us experience varying degrees of alienation. Overcoming alienation in all its forms is nothing less than redemption. It is to live in peace and harmony with God, others, and the created order. That is our goal. It is nothing less than salvation. (Continued on page 2)

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Spirit Life

Do you think outside the box? Then this might be for you. You are invited to participate in a 2-yr process of spiritual formation sponsored by Heartland Center for Spirituality in Great Bend, KS. Classes are held one Saturday per month, beginning Aug 27. A wide range of courses are offered and can be taken individually or as part of the 2-yr program. See www.heartlandspirituality.org/spiritlife or ask Jerry how his class went.

RADICAL AND BIBLICAL SPIRITUALITY

(Continued from page 1)

We find meaningful life, not in isolation, but in healthy relationships within the Body of Christ. Created for relationships, we are called to transcend selfishness, isolation, and individualism.

Our very nature moves us to desire “I-Thou” relationships in contrast to “I-It” relationships. An “I-It” relationship is a subject-object relationship. “It” refers to objects or things that can be used, manipulated, or ignored. In an “I-It” relationship we relate to things, including other people, as objects for our use. When we relate to people this way, we dehumanize them. We treat them as other than the image of God.

In contrast, to say we are *committed to relational community* means we are dedicated to fostering “I-Thou” relationships. “I-Thou” relationships are subject-subject relationships. “Thou” refers to subjects or persons who are ends in themselves, not as means to some other end, not something to be used, manipulated, and thrown away. Commitment to fostering “I-Thou” relationships means treating others with respect as unique and valued persons, distinct centers of identity that have the capacity for reciprocal relationships with God and others.

Accountable Community

2. By saying we are committed to *accountable community* we affirm we have moral obligations to each other in the Body of Christ. When we commit ourselves to Christ and the Body of Christ, the church, we assume a social and moral compact, a covenanted relationship, with others in the Body (1 Cor. 11:25). To fulfill our covenanted obligations to each other, we are called to live in a “right relationship” with God, each other, and our selves.

Living in a “right relationship” is referred to as “righteousness” in the Bible. It refers to living in just, harmonious, and peaceful relationships. The welfare of every person is important. No one is expendable. In the Bible, a “righteous” person relates to God and others in just and harmonious ways, loyal to our covenant in Christ. If a person is righteous, he or she is faithful or loyal to God and other members of the Body of Christ. This entails accountability.

In our community, *accountability* refers to giving permission to others to hold us responsible for our commitment to Christ, especially as that commitment is expressed in Our Covenant. Accountability assumes we need each other to walk the path of Christ.

We need each other to love and be loved, to feel valuable to ourselves and others. We need each other to avoid delusion, self-centeredness, and isolation. Accountability does not refer to a top-down authority checking on people, but to equals giving humble encouragement to one another in matters of faith and life, belief and practice, love and truth.

Practices & Disciplines

3. How do we nurture and express relational and accountable community? We promote community by keeping certain *community practices* and *spiritual disciplines*. *Community practices* are group activities that remind us of our organic unity and interdependence, including participation in potlucks, the sharing fund, connecting in servant groups, sharing our spiritual pilgrimages during Lent, and discerning spiritual gifts after Pentecost. There are also *spiritual disciplines* that foster community, including practicing Nonviolent Communication (NVC) and the Rule of Christ (Matt. 18:15-21).

(To be continued in the August Newsletter, “Seeking Christ’s peace within and in the world.”)

The Heart of a Disciple

In the heart of a disciple there is a desire, and there is a decision or settled intent...the disciple of Christ desires above all else to be like Jesus. Thus, “It is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher” (Matthew 10:25). And moreover, “everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher” (Luke 6:40).

In contrast, the non-disciple, whether inside or outside the church, has something “more important” to do or undertake than to become like Jesus Christ. He or she has “bought a piece of ground” perhaps, or even five yoke of oxen, or has taken a spouse (Luke 14:18, 19). Such lame excuses only reveal that something on that dreary list of security, reputation, wealth, power, sensual indulgence, or mere distraction and numbness, still retains his or her ultimate allegiance. (Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*, 7-8).

Special thanks to

Tom Ewert

for working on
the church’s flower
bed!



Worship in July

Theme	Worship Leaders & Teachers	Mission Focus
<p>In July, we continue studying the book of <i>Thessalonians</i>.</p> <p>On June 12, we invited Casa Betania to our service and potluck. We had a total of 70 people that day, a wonderful day of worship, sharing, and learning. Thanks again to Pastor Jaime, Casa Betania, and members of the support group from Hope and Lorraine who also attended!</p>	<p>July 3—Worship leader, Doug; teaching by Jerry; Communion; potluck; 1 Thess. 2:13—3:5</p> <p>July 10—Worship leader, Vangie; teaching by Lois Barrett; 1 Thess. 3:6—13</p> <p>July 17—Worship leader, Nita; teaching by Pat Cameron; 1 Thess. 4:1-8</p> <p>July 24—Worship leader, Doug Von; teaching by Lois Barrett; 1 Thess. 4:9-12</p> <p>July 31—Worship leader, Geneva Hershberger; teaching by Pat Cameron; healing prayer; 1 Thess. 4:13-18</p>	<p>July 3: Proposed bus fare increases in Wichita—Belinda</p> <p>July 10: WDC overview—Jeanette</p> <p>July 17: WDC Immigration Task Force—Nita</p> <p>July 24: WDC Stewardship Commission—Jeanette</p> <p>July 31 Immigrant Family Support Network—Pat</p>



Introducing Randy Ruth

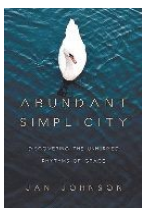
I grew up in Wyoming in a Lutheran family that only went to church a few times a year. I gave my heart to Jesus when I was a young teenager, but that didn't stop me from falling headlong into drugs and alcohol when I was 14. Drugs were my whole life as a teenager until I joined the army at 17 and spent 2 ½ years in Germany. There I didn't use drugs as much but took up drinking. I moved to Denver, Colorado when I got out and gave up drugs a year or 2 after I got out, but I got into drinking with the same passion I gave to drugs. Within 5 years, I was drinking a 1.75 liter bottle of whiskey every day. Eventually I stopped drinking the whiskey and only drank beer, but it wasn't until 2003 that I got sober.

During this time I remained somewhat interested in Jesus. I did a lot of reading but not much going to church. I never went to AA because the Pentecostals consider it to be a cult. Jesus delivered me from smoking and drinking in 2003. When I moved from Denver, I gave up smoking and drinking and never looked back. In 2003, my stepdad died and I moved to Grand Island, Nebraska to help my mom get things in order and help her move to Wichita where we have family. Having given up drinking, I started attending a local Pentecostal church, studying the Bible and reading regularly.

In October 2006, my life really

changed when a gunman entered an Amish schoolhouse, killing and injuring several students before killing himself. During the aftermath of the shootings, people from all over the world sent them money but the Amish insisted on giving some to the family of the shooter, and then about 100 of them went to the funeral of the shooter himself, knowing that if they didn't attend, the family would be there grieving alone. They got a lot of flack about that but I thought that was one of the biggest acts of love and forgiveness I'd ever seen.

That caused me to look into Anabaptist beliefs, and when mom and I moved to Wichita I considered myself an Anabaptist. When I got here, I looked into several churches, visiting all of the Anabaptist churches several times, but it was as if God kept saying 'that's not the one for you, keep looking.' When I came to the MCS for the second time this spring, I immediately knew that I was home.



Recommended Reading by Randy

I highly recommend reading *Abundant Simplicity* by Jan Johnson (IVP 2011). This book will help you find abundant simplicity in your own life. Johnson writes that simplicity is not a discipline, but a way of being, a single-hearted focus upon God and his King-

dom that results in an outward lifestyle of modesty and openness.

The point of simplicity, as she describes it, is *hanging out with God*, which results in organically grown fruit of the Spirit. By *inhaling* (practicing disciplines of engagement such as Bible study, prayer, service and fellowship) without *exhaling* (practicing disciplines of abstinence such as fasting, solitude, silence and simplicity), we become bloated Christians who remain irritable, impatient and don't experience the transformation we want. Disciplines of simplicity don't have to be difficult or complicated. We do what we can do, not what we can't, trusting in the slow work of God.

Chapters include simplifying our speech and living frugally as well as the other side of frugality – generous giving, slowing down and living intentionally instead of letting everything push us. It includes simplicity in free time and vacations, and every day simplicity. Every chapter includes questions and exercises that can be adjusted to fit the reader. She emphasizes that God draws us into unusual and appropriate practices of simplicity. From them (and the conversations with God that they create), comes simplicity of life. This book teaches specific practices of simplicity, but more importantly, it teaches principles you can use to find disciplines of simplicity that fit your own life.

Servant Groups



A servant group is an intentional face-to-face group (3-12

people) who meet at a regular time (often twice a month) to grow in Christ and actualize God's reign. We have seven groups.

NT Greek Reading Group. This group focuses on reading and translating the Greek New Testament. Currently, we are working through Luke's Gospel. Each person reads a verse in Greek and then translates into English, using "whatever it takes," including computer programs (Bible Works and Logos), interlinear Bibles, and other helps. We meet on Wednesday from 1:30 to 3:00 pm at LAMC. Contact Jerry (263-0204).

Psychosynthesis Study Group. Currently, we're reading *Psychosynthesis*, by Will Partfitt and *Natural Spirituality* by Joyce Hudson. We discuss the books and

talk about the spiritual exercises we practice. We meet on the 2nd the 4th Wednesday of each month. Contact Cindy (832-0050 or Jerry (263-0204).

Servant Group: We meet for worship, study, sharing, prayer, and focus on its "outward" mission as well as bringing a religious perspective to immigration issues. This group plans to meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month, 7:30-9:00 p.m. In July, they will meet July 12 and July 28. They are currently studying the book: *Christians on the Border* by Daniel Carroll. For more information, contact Pat (371-8274).

Ladies Reading Group. This is a women's reading and discussion group that meets on alternate Saturday afternoons for about 90 minutes. Currently, we are studying *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor. We invite women who want to nurture their faith through intentional, focused discussion on faith issues to join us. Contact Vangie (263-0204).

Women's Discipleship Group.

This is a women's group focusing Bible Study, discussion, and prayer. We meet on the 4th Sunday of every month after church at Cindy's home. Contact Cindy (832-0050; cgswriter@aol.com).

The Path of Discipleship. We meet to encourage each other in the life of discipleship, learning about Jesus' transformative vision of the future for present action. Currently, we are reading *Renovation of the Heart* by Dallas Willard. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 pm. Contact Randy (243-7314) or Jerry (263-0204).

Hospitality Group. Although we are not technically a servant group, our purpose is to serve people by making people feel at home at MCS. We are responsible for greeting people on Sunday morning, organizing "coffee time," inviting newcomers, organizing potlucks, and providing meals on special occasions. Contact Geneva (262-2544), Doreene (265-3848), or Vangie (263-0204).

Childcare

July 3—Jennifer/Sally
 July 10—Alex/Doreene
 July 17—Jennifer/Sally
 July 24—Alex/Geneva
 July 31—Jennifer/MC



Attendance in June

June 5	35
June 12	70
June 19	27
June 26	24

MCS July 2011

www.mcswichita.net/calendar.htm

Verse of the Month: "Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do so more and more." (1 Thes. 4:1; NRSV)

Song of the month: "In the Lord I'll be ever thankful"

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 <i>Happy Birthday, Jerry Truex</i>	2
3 10:00 am Worship; Doug leads; Jerry teaches on 1 Thess. 2:13—3:5; Communion. Potluck at 12 Noon	4	5 7:00 pm <i>The Path of Discipleship</i> meets as Jerry & Vangie's	6 1:30 pm NT Greek Reading Group	7	8	9 <i>Happy Birthday, Vangie Truex</i> 4 pm. Ladies Reading Group meets at Jeanette's
10 10:00 am Worship; Nita & Steve lead; Lois teaches on 1 Thess. 3:6-13.	11	12 7:30 pm. Immigration Servant Group at Pat's	13 1:30 pm NT Greek Reading Group 7:00 pm Psycho-synthesis Group at Jeanette's	14 <i>Happy Birthday, Bridget Siedler</i> 6 pm Immigration Discussion with Sunflower at MCS. OSHA reps present	15	16
17 10:00 am Worship; Vangie leads; Jerry teaches on 1 Thess. 4:1-8.	18	19 7:00 pm <i>The Path of Discipleship</i> meets at Jerry & Vangie's	20 1:30 pm NT Greek Reading Group	21	22	23 4-7 pm Mothers 4 Mothers potluck picnic at Central Riverside Park. All welcome!
24 10:00 am Worship; Doug leads; Jerry teaches on 1 Thess. 4:9-12.	25	26 7:30 pm Worship Committee at Lois's	27 1:30 pm NT Greek Reading Group 7:00 pm Psycho-synthesis Group at Cindy's	28 7:30 pm. Immigration Servant Group at Pat's	29	30 <i>Happy Birthday, Warren Cheaney</i>
31 10:00 am Worship; Geneva leads; Pat teaches on 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Healing Prayer.					July 29-30: WDC Annual Assembly Bethel College Mennonite Church	



Mennonite Church Of the Servant

Our mission is to welcome all people into a community covenanted to follow the way of Jesus Christ through

- Practicing peace and reconciliation,
- Sharing our lives in love and accountability, and
- Bringing the good news of the reign of God to the world.

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