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Spirit Life

You are invited to participate in a 2-yr process of spiritual formation sponsored by Heartland Center for Spirituality in Great Bend. Classes are one Saturday per month; the next is Oct 15. See page 2 for an update.

The Pure in Heart

By Pastor Jerry Truex

In the Sixth Beatitude, Jesus promises that the “pure in heart will see God” (Matt. 5:8). He is referring to Psalm used in the Temple worship.

Psa. 24:3-4: ³ Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? ⁴ Those who have clean hands and pure hearts.... (NRSV)

In ancient Israel, there was only one Temple, which was in Jerusalem on Mount Zion. The Temple was the place and the presence of God where God’s glory was thought to manifest.

However, access to God was restricted. Only the ritually pure were allowed to approach and enter the Temple. To be ritually pure, a person had to avoid defilement, which meant not eating, touching, or going near certain foods, people, places, and things. If a person became defiled, he or she underwent ritual purification or washings to dispel the impurities. To be ritually impure was not sin, but it kept one from God.

Purity of Heart

Jesus challenged the purity system. For Jesus, being in the presence of God did not require ritual purity, but it did require purity of heart. In Hebrew thought, the heart is the seat of emotions, will, and the intellect. The heart was the deepest level of a person. For Jesus, what defiled a person was not what a person ate or touched, but what came from the heart!

Mk. 7:20-23. ²⁰ And he said, “It is what comes out of a person that defiles. ²¹ For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²² adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” (NRSV)

For Jesus “purity of heart” involved moral integrity, a correspondence between inner attitudes and outer actions. Actions reveal the heart: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21). Thus, purity of heart means a continuity between actions and intentions. It is a single-minded dedication to please God and do God’s will. In short, *purity of heart is to will one thing*—God’s will.

Jesus taught that purity of heart allows a person to approach and enter the presence of God.

For him, the Temple was not located somewhere, like Jerusalem, but wherever people worshiped God “in Spirit and in Truth” (Jn. 4:20-24). In effect, Jesus claims that true worship takes place in the Temple of one’s own purified heart.

Confession and Repentance

Jesus taught that one must be morally clean to “see” God. Scripture teaches that we can be clean, if we confess our sins and walk in the light of Jesus. Then we are forgiven and cleansed (1 John 1:7-9). Repentance cleanses a us within and confession sets us right with God.

Seeing God within the World

With a pure heart, I notice I don’t hide from God. I stop pretending that God is deaf, blind, or dead. With a pure heart, the existence of God becomes incontrovertible. With a pure heart, I embrace God in the sunset, I see God in animals, I feel God welling up within me like a stream of living water. With a pure heart, the log is removed and I see more clearly than before. I stop projecting my “shadow” (my own negative traits that I hate) onto others. I am less judgmental, less prejudice, and I don’t take myself so seriously.

Seeing God within the Heart

With Jesus, the physical Temple receded and the Temple within our purified heart has arisen. In the Temple of our heart, and by God’s grace, we have direct access to God.

Not surprisingly, contemplatives refer to “the prayer of the heart” as a non-discursive, deeply meditative, silent openness to God in prayer. This prayer of the heart often includes using the “Jesus prayer,” repeating the phrase, *Kyrie eleison*, “Lord, have mercy” or *Maranatha*, “Come, Lord!” The purpose of repeating the word over and over is not to think about the word, but to shut down temporarily the internal noise and the external distractions. The repetition of the word creates stillness or emptiness and it invites God to fill it.

By divine initiative, God can become immanent within the heart, an *awareness of the Self and God* in union at the deepest center of one’s being becomes possible. For contemplatives, in the prayer of the heart, a mystic vision of God may be granted.



Spirit Life

On September 17, Pat, Jerry, and Vangie returned to Great Bend for another weekend of Spirit Life. Sister Renee taught our first session on the spirituality found in the New Testament, focusing on parables. She encouraged us to form communities of faith that have the opposite goal of terrorist cells; communities that plot to do good, doing anything creative to bring about the Kingdom of God. Phil St Romain focused his session on personal spirituality by examining Jung's view of the psyche, Loevinger's stages of ego development and the Johari window. Through these tools, he encouraged us to grow in humility, in accurate knowledge/acceptance of oneself, in concern, freedom, and responsibility. Connie Burkholder led a discussion on personal discernment; a process of finding one's own way of discipleship in a particular set of circumstances. As always, there was time for discussion around the table with people of faith with differing expressions. The sisters explained how each order had their own unique charism. How would we describe our charism as MCS member? All in all, it was truly an enriching experience!



Psalm 1

Happy are those
 who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
 or take the path that sinners tread,
 or sit in the seat of scoffers;
 but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
 and on his law they meditate day and night.
 They are like trees planted by streams of water,
 which yield their fruit in its season,
 and their leaves do not wither.
 In all that they do, they prosper.

The wicked are not so,
 but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
 nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
 for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked will perish.

Hands of Christ Mennonite Church - Manos de Cristo Iglesia Menonita



Jerry and Lori Acosta, with their 4 sons: Dyran, Jonathan, Nicholes, and Joshua, have now moved into their own home at 1657 S Green. They are getting settled into their work and school. Please continue to pray for them as they adjust to life in Wichita. Pray for wisdom and grace in meeting and communicating with people. Pray that people they meet would grow in their knowledge of God.

Installation Service

For Jerry Acosta

Sunday, Oct 9

7 pm

Hope Mennonite Church

All welcome!

Offering will be taken for their ministry

Cookies and cider to follow

Special Thanks to Nita and Cindy

I would like to thank Nita and Cindy for their dedicated service as Shepherds for the past two years.

Both contributed significantly to the spiritual direction and nurture of our church. They handled unique and difficult pastoral issues that, at times, seemed overwhelming. They met the challenges in an exemplary way.

Although both contributed in many ways, I am especially grateful for Nita's preparation and presentation of the caregiving seminar we had in March 2011. In addition, I am thankful for Cindy's dedication and organization of our successful retreat in May 2011. — Pastor Jerry Truex

Worship in October

Worship Leaders & Teachers

Oct 2—Shepherds will lead a service on Spiritual Gifts; Communion; potluck

Oct 9—Worship leader, Doug; teaching by Jerry (Virtues/Vices)

Oct 16—Worship leader, Bret; teaching by Jerry (Virtues/Vices)

Oct 23—Worship leader, Nita & Steve; teaching by Lois (taking on the character of Christ—Col 3)

Oct 23—Worship leader, Vangie; teaching by Pat ((Virtues/Vices)

Mission Focus

Oct 2—CROP Walk

Oct 9—Hunger in Wichita

Oct 16—Immigration

Oct 23—Mennonite Housing

Oct 30—Alternative Gifts Market

Mothers 4 Mothers

Mothers 4 Mothers will meet three times during October. The first gathering is at our church October 8 for crafts and reflection.

October 15 is the City Wide Baby Shower at the County Extension on the corner of Ridge and 21st. Please donate gently used baby clothes.

The third meeting is October 29 at our church again, for discussion and reflection.

Mothers 4 Mothers will also be participating in the next Alternative Christmas Gift Market November 12, from 9 am—4 pm. They will be hosting two tables, selling pins by Lucinda. The proceeds from one table will support a school in Nicaragua that receives books from Trees for Life; the other table will benefit our Mother 4 Mother program. Please come and support this venture.

Caregiver Support Group

All caregivers are invited to join a new small group. Please join us at MCS October 12 at 7 pm for encouragement and support. Contact Sally at 871 8306 for more information.

Everence

Everence Federal Credit Union is donating \$12,700 to Brethren Disaster Services and Mennonite Mission Network. Each year, the credit union tithes a percentage of its income from its Visa credit cards. To learn more how you can use your credit card to support this unique service, see www.everence.com

For more information as to how to integrate your faith and finances, view the animated video on the Advice and Education page at www.everence.com

Prayer Requests:

1. Please pray for our church as we discern our individual roles within the church.
2. Please pray for Jerry and Lori Acosta and their 4 children as they adjust to their new environment. May their ministry be fruitful!
3. Please pray for Erna and Russell; for their health and their ability to cope with life as it is.
4. Please pray that those in public office make decisions that will promote the welfare of those they serve.

No Sunday School Oct 16

For elementary students (Geneva's and Cindy's classes)

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 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

Oct 2—Jenny/Geneva
 Oct 9—Kierra/MC
 Oct 16—Alex/Doreene
 Oct 23—Jenny/Sally
 Oct 30—Alex/Geneva



Attendance in September

Sept 4	34
Sept 11	27
Sept 18	20
Sept 25	28

MCS October

www.mcswichita.net/calendar.htm

Verse of the Month: Psalm 1

Song of the month: Oct 2 & 9: Chant (Lois to lead)
 Oct 16 & 23 & 30: "I shall not, I shall not be moved"

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 10:00 am: Worship 11:45 am: Potluck 12:30 am: Worship Leading Forum	3	4	5	6	7	8 M4M: crafts and reflection
9 10:00 am: Worship 7:00 pm: Installation Service at Hope for Jerry Acosta <i>Happy Birthday, Fred Miller</i>	10	11	12 7:00 pm: Caregivers Group at MCS	13	14 <i>Spirit Life in Great Bend</i> <i>Happy Birthday, Isabella Mayo</i>	15 City-wide baby shower at Sedgwick County Extension
16 10:00 am: Worship No Sunday School for elementary students	17	18	19 7:30 pm: Worship Committee <i>Happy Birthday, Clemente Mayo</i>	20	21 <i>Happy Birthday, Doug VonEhrenkrook</i>	22 M4M: reflection
23 10:00 am: Worship 11:40 am: Church Life	24	25	26	27	28	29 4:00 pm: Ladies Reading Group
30 10:00 am: Worship <i>Happy Birthday, Doreene Esau-Rutherford</i>	31					



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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