

FAITH AND FAVORITISM
ACTS 10:34-43
JANUARY 9, 2011—EMMAUS ROAD MENNONITE CHURCH
STEPHEN “TIG” INTAGLIATA

JESUS’ BAPTISM STORY BRINGS A PICTURE IN MY MIND FROM MY THE ISRAEL/PALESTINE CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE I CO-LED THIS PAST MAY

ON OUR FIRST SUNDAY THERE, WE HELD BAPTISMS IN RIVER JORDAN, AT THE LOCATION WHERE JESUS WAS SUPPOSEDLY BAPTIZED AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY.

8 STUDENTS CHOSE TO BE BAPTIZED THAT DAY, COMMITTING THEIR LIVES TO JESUS PUBLICALLY. IT WAS AN EMOTIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE FILLED WITH SINGING AND WHERE STUDENTS SHARED PART OF THEIR FAITH JOURNEY AND REASON BEHIND THEIR DESIRE TO BE BAPTIZED.

APPARENTLY WE DID IT JUST IN TIME, BECAUSE ABOUT A MONTH AFTER WE RETURNED I READ IN THE NEWSPAPER THAT ISRAEL HAS **BANNED BAPTISMS IN THE JORDAN RIVER** BECAUSE THE WATER IN THE RIVER HAS BECOME TOO POLLUTED (I HOPE IT WASN’T OUR GROUP THAT WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POLLUTION)!

MY OWN EXPERIENCE WITH BAPTISM INTO THE CHURCH BEGAN IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN WHICH I WAS RAISED. LIKE ALL GOOD CATHOLICS, I WAS BAPTIZED OR “CHRISTENED” WHEN I WAS AN INFANT.

THEN DURING MY YEARS IN MVS IN COLORADO, I GOT INVOLVED WITH THE **ARVADA MENNONITE CHURCH** AND DECIDED I WANTED TO JOIN THE CHURCH.

I HAD HEARD THAT SOME MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS REQUIRE THAT YOU GET REBAPTIZED IF YOU WERE BAPTIZED AS A CHILD, IN ORDER TO BE TRUE TO THE MENNONITE CHURCH’S BELIEVER’S BAPTISM TRADITION.

RAISES THE QUESTION: SINCE WE AS ANABAPTISTS PLACE A HIGH VALUE ON ADULT “BELIEVERS” BAPTISM, HOW DO WE DEAL WITH PEOPLE WHO VALUE AND PRACTICE INFANT BAPTISM?

IN MY CASE, IT WAS A QUESTION OF “WILL ARVADA MENNONITE CHURCH WELCOME ME AS A MEMBER WITHOUT BEING REBAPTIZED, ACKNOWLEDGING MY INFANT BAPTISM AS LONG AS I HAVE A SINCERE CONFESSION OF FAITH?”

THE ANSWER WAS “YES”, THEY WOULD, BUT I DECIDED THAT I WANTED TO BE REBAPTIZED AS AN ADULT TO SYMBOLIZE THIS NEW STEP IN MY FAITH JOURNEY AS A MEMBER OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH.

IN THE EARLY CHURCH, **CIRCUMCISION** WAS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS BAPTISM IF YOU WANTED TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE FAITH COMMUNITY.

THE CHURCH WAS BORN ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST IN THE CITY OF JERUSALEM, THE MECCA FOR THE JEWS.

SINCE THE FIRST CHRISTIANS WERE JEWISH, ALL THE MEMBERS OF CHURCH IN FIRST FEW YEARS WERE CIRCUMCISED.

IT WAS A VISIBLE SIGN OF THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE. IT WAS A GIVEN FOR ANYONE WHO PUT THEIR FAITH IN THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB.

AND IT WORKED FINE AS LONG AS THE EARLY CHURCH WAS MADE UP STRICTLY OF BELIEVERS FROM A JEWISH BACKGROUND.

BUT GOD’S PLANS FOR THE CHURCH WERE NEVER FOR IT TO STAY CONFINED TO ONE PLACE OR EVEN ONE CULTURAL GROUP. THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL WAS MEANT TO CROSS BOUNDARIES AND BARRIERS IN ORDER TO BRING RECONCILIATION WITH GOD AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT GROUPS OF PEOPLE.

AND SO THE BOOK OF ACTS BEGINS WITH JESUS’ FINAL ADDRESS TO HIS DISCIPLES BEFORE HE ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN:

ACTS 1:8: YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES IN JERUSALEM, JUDEA AND TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

SOMETIMES IT TAKES WHILE FOR THE TRUTH TO SINK IN. RIGHT? THIS WAS CERTAINLY THE CASE WITH THE FIRST CHURCH IN JERUSALEM. THEY COULDN’T IMAGINE A CHURCH THAT INCLUDED GENTILES.

GENTILES WEREN'T CIRCUMCISED. THEY DIDN'T PRACTICE ALL THE DIETARY AND PURITY LAWS OF THE JEWS, SO THEY WERE CONSIDERED UNCLEAN BY JEWS. THEY WERE THEIR ENEMIES AND BY JEWISH LAW WERE NOT SUPPOSED TO AND DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE ANY CONTACT WITH THEM.

ESPECIALLY NOT WITH A GENTILE LIKE CORNELIUS WHO WAS A CENTURION, A ROMAN MILITARY COMMANDER IN CHARGE OF 100 SOLDIERS, WHO LIVED IN CAESAREA, WHICH WAS BASICALLY A MILITARY BASE.

THE ROMAN SOLDIERS WERE THE ONES RESPONSIBLE FOR CARRYING OUT JESUS' CRUCIFIXION, THEY WERE PART OF THE OCCUPATION FORCES ALWAYS TRYING TO MAKE THINGS DIFFICULT FOR THE JEWS TO CARRY OUT THEIR WORSHIP OF ONE GOD AND THEIR DISTINCT WAY OF LIFE.

ONLY AN **EXTRAORDINARY ACT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** COULD BREAK DOWN THE BARRIER AND BRING PEACE AND RECONCILIATION BETWEEN JEWISH PETER AND THE ROMAN CENTURION CORNELIUS.

AND THAT'S JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED. PETER HAD A VISION. CORNELIUS HAD A VISION. CORNELIUS SENT MESSENGERS TO PETER TO TELL HIM TO GO VISIT CORNELIUS.

PETER WENT TO CORNELIUS PLACE AND SHARED THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST WITH CORNELIUS-

“GOD DOESN'T SHOW FAVORITISM BUT ACCEPTS THOSE FROM EVERY NATION THOSE WHO FEAR HIM AND DO WHAT IS RIGHT, HE SAID.”

“JESUS CHRIST, WHO BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION, IS LORD OF ALL PEOPLE, NOT ONLY OF THE JEWS.”

THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS Poured OUT ALL OVER THE PLACE WITH NO ONE LEFT UNTOUCHED. CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSEHOLD CAME TO FAITH AND PETER BAPTIZED THEM, RIGHT THERE ON THE SPOT. JEWS AND GENTILES ALIKE WERE BAPTIZED INTO ONE SPIRIT.

WELL IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR THE NEWS OF THIS **PENTECOSTAL PARTY** TO REACH HEADQUARTERS IN JERUSALEM. IT SPREAD SO FAST YOU WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THEY HAD ACCESS TO FACEBOOK AND TWITTER.

I CAN JUST SEE THE **POSTS FROM NEIGHBORHOODS IN JERUSALEM AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE:**

“ARE YOU SURE THIS WAS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT? I THINK THEY ALL WERE JUST UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF SOMETHING ELSE!”

“A GENTILE CENTURION BEING ACCEPTED INTO OUR CHURCH AND BEING BAPTIZED WITHOUT BEING CIRCUMCISED”? RIDICULOUS!”

“AREN’T THERE ANY STANDARDS ANYMORE” THEY JUST LET ANYBODY INTO THE CHURCH NOWADAYS” “THIS CHURCH IS GOING DOWNHILL REALLY FAST”

THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH CALLED A MEETING TO FIGURE IT ALL OUT. IT’S KNOWN AS THE **JERUSALEM COUNCIL**, AND THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE MEETING IS FOUND IN ACTS 15.

PETER IS THE MAIN WITNESS CALLED TO THE STAND AND HE REPEATS WHAT HE EXPERIENCED AT CORNELIUS’ HOUSE. PAUL AND BARNABAS ALSO TESTIFIED OF HOW THEY SAW GOD AT WORK AMONG THE GENTILES.

ALL THE EVIDENCE PRESENTED WAS OVERWHELMING, AND THE COUNCIL HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO WELCOME GENTILES INTO THE CHURCH AS FULL MEMBERS. THEY WOULD NO LONGER BE CONSIDERED SECOND CLASS-CITIZENS BUT WOULD BE WELCOMED INTO THE CHURCH WITHOUT GETTING CIRCUMCISED.

TO US LOOKING AT THIS STORY, WE MIGHT BE APPALLED BY THE JEWISH CHURCH’S NARROWMINDEDNESS, BY THEIR PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, BY THEIR DISCRIMINATION AND THEIR FAVORITISM.

IT’S ONE THING TO KNOW IN YOUR HEAD THAT GOD’S LOVE REACHES OUT TO ALL. BUT IT ENTERS A WHOLE OTHER LEVEL WHEN WE ARE FACED WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING SPACE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT FROM US IN OUR CHURCH, IN OUR COMMUNITY, EVEN IN OUR COUNTRY.

THAT’S WHERE IT REALLY HITS HOME. THAT’S WHERE THE **NIMBY** CHANTS BEGIN—NOT IN MY BACKYARD.

I WONDER IF MANY OF US ARE NOT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

LIKE THEM, WE WANT TO KEEP OUR FAITH PURE. LIKE THEM, WE WANT TO STAY TRUE TO OUR TRADITIONS AND PRESERVE OUR WAY OF LIFE.

LIKE THEM, WE WANT TO BE CLEAR ABOUT OUR IDENTITY AND NOT LET ANYTHING COMPROMISE OUR FAITH CONVICTIONS AND HOW WE BELIEVE THEY SHOULD BE LIVED OUT.

AND ALSO LIKE THEM, **SOMETIMES WE GET HUNG UP ON CULTURAL PRACTICES AND TRADITIONS** THAT ARE REALLY IMPORTANT TO US, BUT MAY NOT HAVE MUCH TO DO WITH THE CORE OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE.

LIKE CIRCUMCISION FOR THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS, SOMETIMES THESE CULTURAL **PRACTICES SEPARATE PEOPLE INTO INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS,**

THEY PUT UP BARRIERS AND ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES THAT EXCLUDE OTHERS, MAKE THEM FEEL UNWELCOME,

BARRIERS THAT SEND A MESSAGE TO THESE OUTSIDERS THAT SAYS SOMETHING LIKE “YOU REALLY AREN’T ONE OF US BECAUSE YOU DON’T SHARE OUR CULTURE AND OUR BACKGROUND,

“YOU DON’T SEE CERTAIN THINGS THE WAY WE DO, SO YOU DON’T REALLY BELONG HERE”, YOU ARE A SECOND-CLASS CITIZEN IN OUR EYES.

THIS KIND OF ATTITUDE CAN TAKE PLACE ANYWHERE, MAYBE EVEN HERE IN BERNE. THE FIRST TIME KAREN BROUGHT ME HOME TO MEET HER FAMILY IN THIS COMMUNITY, IT WAS KIND OF A CULTURE SHOCK FOR ME. AND PROBABLY FOR HER FAMILY AND OTHERS IN THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY.

I WAS AN **ITALIAN** COMING INTO A CLEARLY SWISS COMMUNITY (AND THAT WAS EVIDENT EVEN BEFORE THE CLOCKTOWER PLAZA WAS BUILT!). SOME PEOPLE IN BERNE DIDN’T HAVE A CLUE ABOUT WHAT NATIONALITY I WAS, THEY JUST KNEW I WASN’T SWISS.

BY THIS TIME I KNEW WHO MENNO SIMONS WAS, BUT I DIDN’T KNOW WHAT **RUSHTI** WAS (STILL CAN’T PRONOUNCE IT).

I WAS FROM A **CATHOLIC** BACKGROUND, AND THERE WERE SOME STEREOTYPES ABOUT CATHOLICS THAT PEOPLE HAD, MOSTLY BECAUSE THEY HADN'T HAD MUCH EXPERIENCE WITH CATHOLICS.

I QUICKLY REALIZED THAT MY PERSONALITY WAS A LITTLE MORE ANIMATED THAN A LOT OF PEOPLE IN BERNE, INCLUDING KAREN'S FAMILY.

BUT IN SPITE OF THE DIFFERENCES IN PERSONALITY, CULTURE AND CHURCH BACKGROUND, **KAREN'S FAMILY WELCOMED ME WITH OPEN ARMS**...WELL, AT LEAST OPEN HANDS—NOT REALLY INTO HUGGING THAT MUCH, BUT THEY SHOOK MY HAND.

KAREN'S **GRANDPA FLICK** BECAME A GRANDPA I NEVER REALLY HAD. SOME OF MY FAVORITE FIRST MEMORIES OF BERNE HAVE TO DO WITH HANGING OUT IN HIS MOWER SHOP CHEWING THE FAT.

YEAH, THEY THOUGHT I WAS A LITTLE STRANGE, BUT THEY ACCEPTED ME AND HAVE ALLOWED ME TO BE MYSELF. ONCE IN A WHILE, THEY EVEN LAUGH AT ONE OF MY JOKES. PROBABLY JUST TO BE POLITE.

I ALSO AM GRATEFUL TO GOD THAT I'VE FOUND A HOME IN THE MENNONITE CHURCH. SINCE I'VE LIVED SO MANY DIFFERENT PLACES, I CAN EVEN PLAY THE MENNONITE GAME WITH THE BEST OF THEM!

I AM ONLY ONE OF LOTS OF PEOPLE FROM NON-MENNONITE BACKGROUNDS WHO ARE FINDING THEIR WAY INTO THE MENNONITE CHURCH.

MANY OF US ARE ATTRACTED BY THE VALUES MENNONITES PLACE ON COMMUNITY, ON SERVICE, LIVING SIMPLY AND PEACEMAKING. ALONG WITH THAT, SOME OF US ALSO ARE ATTRACTED BY A SPECIAL SOMEONE WHO HAPPENS TO BE MENNONITE! (I'LL ADMIT THAT WAS PART OF THE ATTRACTION FOR ME!).

ANYWAY, THE REALITY IS THAT WE WHO ARE PART OF **MCUSA** ARE PART OF A VERY DIVERSE GROUP OF PEOPLE AND CONGREGATIONS.

THE TRUTH IS THAT WE DON'T ALL SEE EVERYTHING THE SAME WAY. WE HAVE **DIFFERENT VIEWS** ON ISSUES LIKE WOMEN IN MINISTRY, MILITARY PARTICIPATION, WEALTH AND PROSPERITY, POLITICAL VIEWS,

HOMOSEXUALITY, AND HOW WE INTERPRET SCRIPTURE. THIS IS TRUE BOTH BETWEEN CONGREGATIONS AS WELL AS WITHIN CONGREGATIONS.

WE HAVE DIFFERENT VIEWS ON WHETHER COMMUNION SHOULD BE OPEN TO ALL OR ONLY FOR ADULT BAPTIZED MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH, OR WHETHER WE SHOULD SING JUST HYMNS OR ALLOW “OFF THE WALL MUSIC” IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICES.

SOMETIMES THE BEST OPTION WHEN THERE ARE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT THEOLOGICAL ISSUES AND DIFFERENT VISIONS FOR THE CHURCH IS TO BRANCH OFF AND BEGIN NEW CONGREGATIONS, LIKE YOU HAVE DONE HERE AT EMMAUS ROAD.

THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO TREAT EACH OTHER WITH GRACE, BOTH AT THE TIME AND INTO THE FUTURE. TO FIND WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED TO EACH OTHER AS MEMBERS OF CHRIST’S BODY. YOU CAN STILL WORK TOGETHER AND EXPERIENCE UNITY IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS. IT SEEMS LIKE YOU ARE DOING A GOOD JOB OF WORKING AT THIS WITH FIRST MENNONITE CHURCH.

I’M CONTINUING TO LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO RELATE TO OTHERS WHO ARE DIFFERENT FROM ME AND APPRECIATE THE NEW PERSPECTIVES AND GIFTS THEY BRING TO MY LIFE AS WELL AS TO OUR CAMPUS COMMUNITY AT BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY.

BLUFFTON—UNIQUE SITUATION-DISTINCTLY MENNONITE BUT HAVE STUDENTS AND FACULTY/STAFF FROM ALL DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS. MENNONITE STUDENTS ARE A MINORITY—WE HAVE MORE CATHOLIC THAN MENNONITE STUDENTS.

I HAVE LEARNED A LOT FROM SO MANY OF THEM—STUDENTS FROM A STRONG EVANGELICAL BACKGROUND WHO REALLY WANT TO GROW DEEPER IN THEIR FAITH;

NEW MUSIC PROFESSOR CRYSTAL SELLARS FROM AN AFRICAN AMERICAN GOSPEL CHURCH IN COLUMBUS. CRYSTAL IS OUR SHINING THROUGH VOCAL COACH AND STARTED A GOSPEL CHOIR I AM SINGING IN. WE ROCKED THE HOUSE IN OUR NOV. CONCERT!

SOME OF OUR STUDENTS COME TO BLUFFTON **NOT KNOWING ANYTHING ABOUT MENNONITES**. AND IT'S NEAT TO SEE HOW SOME OF THEM GET EXCITED ABOUT THE ANABAPTIST WAY OF FAITH.

I THINK OF MAGGIE, A SENIOR WHO GREW UP IN ANOTHER DENOMINATION, AND HAS BEEN DRAWN TO ANABAPTISM DURING HER YEARS AT BLUFFTON. SHE IS COMING REGULARLY TO FIRST MENNO. WITH HER FIANCEE CHAD.

AND JUST LIKE IN AMERICAN SOCIETY TODAY, WE AT BLUFFTON ARE FINDING OURSELVES RUBBING SHOULDERS WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER RELIGIONS, PARTICULARLY **MUSLIMS**.

WE ALL KNOW ABOUT THE FEAR AND SUSPICION AND SOMETIMES ANIMOSITY THAT EXISTS BETWEEN **CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS**—FROM STORIES OF TERRORIST ACTS IN THE WORLD TO NEWS OF A PASTOR THAT THREATENED TO BURN THE KORAN, TO THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE PROPOSED ISLAMIC CENTER NEAR GROUND ZERO IN NYC.

SHAHAD/TAMARA AND ZABI)—MUSLIM STUDENTS—MINORITIES IN A CHRISTIAN SETTING. SOME ARE WITH THE IRAQI STUDENT PROJECT, AND THEY'RE SUPPORTED BY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

I ASKED SHAHAD TO SPEAK IN MY CHRISTIAN MISSIONS CLASS: SHE SAID THAT HER FAMILY'S CONCERN THAT WE AT BLUFFTON WOULD TRY TO CONVERT THEM.

WHAT WOULD IT FEEL LIKE FOR US TO BE IN THEIR SHOES? IF I WAS IN THEIR SHOES, WOULD I TAKE THE STEP AND THE RISK INVOLVED?

I HAVE LEARNED FROM SHAHAD AND OTHER MUSLIMS—DEDICATION, OUTWARD PRACTICES OF FAITH, FASTING, GRACE AT BEING THE MINORITY ON OUR CAMPUS.

WE ARE TRYING TO SHOW HOSPITALITY TO THEM; NOT TRYING TO "CONVERT" THEM, BUT DIALOGUE WITH THEM; WALK WITH THEM, THEY PROBABLY FEEL EXCLUDED FROM SOME THINGS, I.E. CHAPEL, BIBLE STUDIES, SO WE NEED TO FIND WAYS TO INCLUDE THEM.

I'VE FOUND THAT WHEN I TAKE THE TIME AND THE RISK TO BECOMING FRIENDS WITH PEOPLE WHO AREN'T LIKE ME, I CAN LEARN TO APPRECIATE THEM MORE AND STEREOTYPES ARE BROKEN DOWN. JUST LIKE WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN PETER AND CORNELIUS.

ONE OF OUR BIGGEST PROBLEMS IN OUR COUNTRY IS THAT EVERYONE SEEMS TO HAVE AN OPINION AND STRONG ATTITUDES ABOUT MUSLIMS, BUT READ RECENTLY THAT 3 OUT OF 4 AMERICANS DO NOT EVEN KNOW ONE MUSLIM PERSONALLY.

EVEN THOUGH WE FIND OURSELVES PART OF THE **MAJORITY VIEW**, WE STILL ARE CALLED TO TREAT THOSE IN THE MINORITY WITH RESPECT, SENSITIVITY AND TREATING ALL PEOPLE WITH GRACE AND MERCY.

AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS, WE ARE CALLED NOT TO SHOW FAVORITISM TO THOSE WHO ARE IN THE MAJORITY FAITH, WE ARE CALLED TO RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO INFLUENCE BY COERCION OR FORCE OR DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THE MINORITY AND THOSE WHO ARE MOST VULNERABLE IN OUR MIDST.

THE PROPHECY ABOUT JESUS IN THE ISAIAH PASSAGE AS WELL AS THE WAY HE LIVED HIS LIFE REMIND US OF THAT: "A BRUISED REED HE WILL NOT BREAK, A SMOLDERING WICK HE WILL NOT SNUFF OUT, IN FAITHFULNESS HE WILL BRING FORTH JUSTICE".

SO AS WE CONTINUE OUR JOURNEY AS FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, MAY WE REMAIN TRUE TO OUR BAPTISMAL VOWS TO STAY COMMITTED TO HIS CHURCH AND FAITHFUL TO GOD'S WORD AS REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE,

MAY WE PRACTICE THOSE TRADITIONS AND LIVE OUT THOSE VALUES THAT ARE PART OF THE FOUNDATION OF OUR CHRISTIAN FAITH, AND THAT HAVE SPECIAL MEANING TO US,

MAY WE ALSO TREAT THOSE OUTSIDE OUR CONGREGATION AND OUTSIDE OUR FAITH TRADITION WITH GENTLENESS AND HUMILITY AND RESPECT AND GRACE,

MAY WE ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE USED BY GOD AS A LIGHT TO OTHERS, AS AGENTS OF HIS RECONCILIATION AND PEACE,

AND LIKE PETER AND CORNELIUS, MAY WE CONTINUE TO BE OPEN **TO THE MOVEMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT** TO LEAD US INTO **NEW REVELATIONS/NEW EPIPHANIES** THAT BRING US TO NEW UNDERSTANDINGS AND PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO WELCOME NEW PEOPLE INTO OUR MIDST.
MAY WE ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND THAT **GOD IS STILL SPEAKING** IN OUR WORLD.

MAY WE SHOW LOVE AND HOSPITALITY TO ALL, REMEMBERING THAT WHEN WE MAKE ROOM AT THE TABLE FOR OTHERS, WE ARE OFTEN **'ENTERTAINING ANGELS UNAWARE'** (HEB. 13:2)