


Joy Mennonite Church



**PASTOR'S
CORNER**

I am writing this from Guatemala. We came to Guatemala with a group of young people who are taking a special three-week course at the Mennonite Seminary in Guatemala City. This course is designed to help people from the first world understand the realities in the third world. It is amazing the observations the youth have made after one week with Guatemalan families. They observed that these families spend time together. In contrast to North Americans who invest most of their time and energy to acquire things, Latin Americans invest much more in family and human relationships.

It has been pointed out to us by people here that North Americans have more to give up to become part of God's kingdom than Latins do. Wealth also blinds us, keeps us from seeing or understanding what the kingdom of God is to be. But we must also remember that neither Latin culture nor North American culture will bring us naturally to the kingdom. Jesus spoke of the kingdom in the context of survival needs, food and clothes, etc. The kingdom of God is greater than any and more to be sought than personal survival. We can understand that the kingdom of God is greater than earthly wealth but when Jesus said it was to be sought more than personal survival it truly becomes a counter culture value. No culture teaches such a value, and we do not acquire such a value naturally.

Maybe that is why Jesus used the term "seek the kingdom." It does not just happen. It is the work of God in the world. It is the spirit of God calling us. It is the spirit of God teaching us. We will never understand everything all at once, but as we commit ourselves to one step we can see the next step. As kingdom people then we will always be a seeking people.

Your Pastor,

Moses Mast



Dear Friends,
We hope that wherever you are spending your summer, things are well with you. Our prayers are with all of you - enjoying vacation and family reunions, or facing natural disasters.

This month is our third newsletter with questions to the reader, and your responses are important to us - but if you have at least given other questions some thought, that's a start.

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August 1993

We don't know how controversial we can get without offending - or must get to elicit a response. My wife tells me not to get political, but politics doesn't have the corner on the controversy market.

Last month: Christian vs. American, with a threat to explore allegiances and how they might be displayed. Allegiance (by Webster): (1) Fidelity, or obligation of fidelity, to a government or sovereign (Caesar); (2) fidelity in general, as to a principle (God). Number one may be viewed to include mandated allegiance - legislation, ordinances, codes, etc., while number two seems to allow for opinion, judgment, and personal decision. Caesar would rather we had no other choice, while God wishes us to be able to make the right choice.

I won't write it out - we all know our pledge of allegiance - after "the flag" (a piece of cloth) it continues "and to the republic for which it stands." It appears that's where most cease comprehending that pledge - it ends "with liberty and justice for all" (we may deal with that next month). But we wanted to explore our displays of allegiance - now that we have defined the word.

On "Caesar's" side, through the ages there have always been armies with the standard (banner or flag) bearers leading the charge while the "flag wavers" stayed home talking of their patriotism and "fidelity." I have been told that carrying or waving banners or flags was a barbaric expression.

Webster also states: (1) Flag - a piece of cloth...bearing devices and colors to designate (show affiliation or association with, or allegiance to) a nation, state, or organization. (2) Banner - a flag or standard bearing a motto or device. These definitions don't exclude our attitudes that we may project to observers with our lives and actions.

Well, Mennonites (probably others also) are on a banner binge - we even started a pool for borrowing or loaning banners for display, but it appears that the universally accepted Christian flag is being banned from our churches. Our American flag goes first and is accompanied by the Christian flag.

Whether we like it or not, the organized church as well as individuals are matter-of-factly living with and displaying allegiances to God, and also to Caesar, and rightly so. I hope the readers do not feel that to be a compromise, after all, the laws of the land have made it possible to experience the freedom to worship, and the opportunity to perpetuate our beliefs.

Hopefully, this is not seen as a trade-off - there may be no need for conflict if in thanking God for his grace we show respect to Caesar for our freedoms.

Oh yes, this month's question: Do or must flags diminish our loyalty and allegiance to God and Christ's teachings? If we keep our allegiances in perspective, do not support, but openly oppose injustice, immorality and the undesirables, then I think not.

Love and best wishes to all,

Bie Klassen

F·E·L·L·O·W·S·H·I·P



In our family participation in preparing worship services during Moses and Sadie's absence, we've had interesting to exciting participation. Bill and Thea held a second worship service after sharing in the worship service in the chapel at Presbyterian Hospital (special thanks to Shirley Watkins). The group was blessed with additional fellowship with Norma Maxwell. We hope to have her in our fellowship again when she can.

Jerry and Marlis Nickel brought our group a service with a message, and very rich in special music and group singing. What talent they have brought us.

Cheryl Critchley and the women of the church brought an "Are we worthy God Vessels?" service to us. Makes us stop to think what we are and what we do in this world of turmoil and violence. David Craighead once again worshipped with us.

Peter and Kay Brueckner will be back from their vacation in time to bring us the service and message on Sunday, 1 August. It is our desire that these "lay" messages together with Moses and Sadie's message from Central America will assist our spiritual growth in the Joy Mennonite Church.

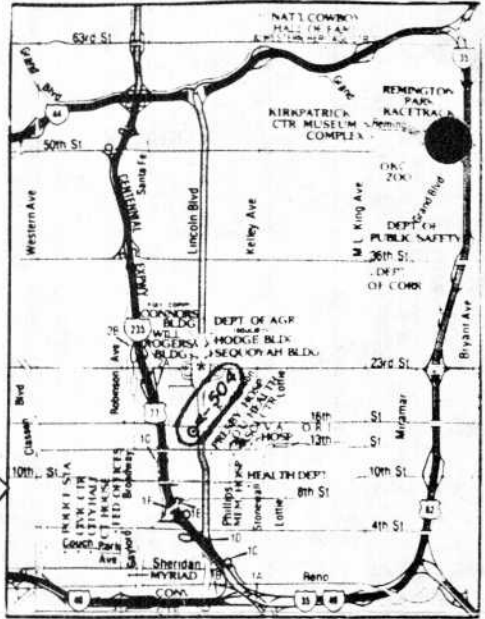


peace



WORSHIP SERVICE

EVERY SUNDAY AT 10 O'CLOCK A.M.



Church Address: 504 NE 16th St.

DATES TO REMEMBER

D o g D a y s o f S u m m e r
Monday, 6 September 1993 - Labor Day



We do hope that churches receiving this letter are also posting them to be seen or read.



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