



April 1994



PASTOR'S
CORNER



We are a consumer society. We know a bargain when we see one. A consumer interpretation of the Easter story makes it the greatest bargain of all time. We get the greatest gift a person can receive, and we say it is free. We only need to follow a prescribed prescription of affirming that we believe Jesus died on the cross for us, and we are assured of eternal life. Modern consumer society's interpretation has ignored what Jesus said about life and death and the cross.

Jesus said anyone not willing to take up their cross is not worthy of me and cannot be my disciple. Does this mean that the redemption of the cross is only for those who take up their own cross? The modern church, however, has not defined well the meaning of the cross. Jesus understood the cross as the price you pay to be faithful to your commitment to the God of unconditional love, the God of the covenant.

Jesus was committed to the covenant relationship of unconditional love that God had promised humanity. The people wanted Jesus to be their king. A good king may care about the interests of some but not for the world. The motives of Judas for betraying Jesus remain a mystery for us, but it may well be that Judas tried to force Jesus to take some assertive action for their liberation. Jesus refused to be a king or a warrior but was committed to the God of the covenant, a commitment to unconditional love. Jesus refused to participate with the powers of this world, many of whom were part of the religious establishment, and for this refusal they killed him.

Our part of the covenant is to be God's people. Does not Jesus' teaching about our cross tell us that we must make the same radical commitment to be of God's people as Jesus made to the God of the covenant? By consumer standards this is no bargain. This is a costly price. But then, consumer standards do not lead to life but death. The way of the cross leads to life.

May you have a joyful Easter, and may the renewal of Easter be with you always.

Moses Mast

Dear Friends,

By the time you read this all of the Lenten services "produced and directed" by our Joy Mennonite Church fellowship families will be history. With all the loving innovative talent in our small fellowship, each service came off very inspirational and challenging. These and other activities initiated by our "shepherd" have created a closer bonding and togetherness in the work and recreational activities of the church.

Those who took our March invitation seriously, could and wished to do so, will have been at our Maundy Thursday communion service. A "seder" celebration in mock-miniature, instigated by Mike and Darlene Powers, was possible only with contribution and participation of all our fellowship families. We try to make communion a new experience each time. A number of guests were present by special invitation - initiated by Moses and Sadie.

We may only write once a month, but our hopes are that our mind processes are at work continually between writings, contemplating Jesus - His teaching and His life here on earth. Appropriately we celebrate His birth joyously at Christmas, but may scarce acknowledge the impact of His death 1900+ years later as more than Easter parades and fashion reviews. Lincoln wrote and spoke of the civil war dead having "given their last full measure of devotion" - did not Jesus do this 1900 years earlier on the cross - not just for a country or a people, but for all humanity?

His words live on also, but to many they have become shallow echoes of habit within the confining walls of the organized church. Most of us can live with His teachings as a matter of social convenience up to the point of personal pain (lack or absence of comfort) and sacrifice (identifying with and equalizing our affluence with those less fortunate).

I believe it is safe to say that daily one can read in a major newspaper somewhere, someone believing that the morals of this country will one day do us in, and urging a return to God, values, love, tolerance. Some refer to II Chronicles 7:14. Isaiah is also full of these types of exhortations. They may be right, and he who has ears

Wishing you all an inspired Easter.

Bret Klassen



create
peace

F·E·L·L·O·W·S·H·I·P



As usual, our meeting with the JMC Support Committee was warm. We regret the loss of Ted Kuschel from the group who is leaving Enid for another pastoral challenge. We have enjoyed Ted and Linda, thank them warmly, and wish them the very best.

Also leaving the area, going "home to Kansas," is Peter Neufeld. He remains on the committee where he and Onalee will continue to work with and support JMC. We wish them well.

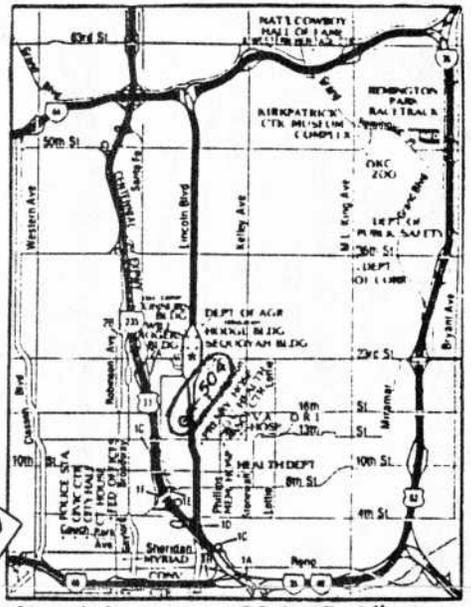
Sam Harris, founder and executive director of RESULTS International, will be at Mayflower Congregational Church at 3901 NW 63rd St on Monday, 11 April 1994. He will speak about ending hunger and poverty and reclaiming our democracy. A quote from Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a handful of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Our March issue announced arrival of the Abraham and Sarah Caravan in Oklahoma City on Friday, 15 April. Other scheduled central Kansas activities are forcing a delay until Monday, 18 April, and the caravan may stay the rest of the week. The JMC work day set for Saturday, 16 April, is still on line for coordinated activities in the community. For update info as this all develops call Moses and Sadie at 771-4743 or Bill at 324-7644.

Webster defines sympathy as "a feeling of compassion for another's sufferings." Joy Mennonite Church wishes to convey this compassion to the Floyd Bartel family of Newton, Kansas, in the passing of a beloved wife and devoted mother on 11 February 1994 in Newton. The family was with her at her passing and is yet with her in spirit. Our Christian love, caring and support go to Floyd especially as dear friend and supporter here in our church fellowship.



WORSHIP SERVICE
EVERY SUNDAY AT 10 O'CLOCK A.M.



Church Address: 504 NE 16th St.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Fri., 1 Apr. Good Friday
- Sun., 3 Apr. Easter Sunday
- Sat., 16 Apr. JMC/Community Work Day
- Mon., 18 Apr. . Abraham & Sarah Caravan Arrival
- Sun., 8 May Mother's Day
- Mon., 30 May Memorial Day

We hope that churches receiving this letter are also posting it to be read by their church members.

Joy Mennonite Church shares their love and comfort with Ron and Judy Perkins in the passing of his grandmother, Iva Titsworth, in Sayre, OK, on Saturday, 19 March 1994. Services were held for her there on Monday, 21 March. May the family find the thought comforting that she is now at peace, her suffering done, and remember her life warmly.

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