

Joy Mennonite Church

Pastor's Corner

Since the last newsletter, I have been to Chiapas, Mexico to be present at the peace talks between the Zapatista rebels and the Mexican government. I went as part of a team for Pastors For Peace, at the request of Bishop Samuel Luis. Samuel Luis has been the Catholic bishop in this area, the heart of rebel territory, for thirty-five years. Bishop Luis has been a voice for the rights of Indian people for many years. Consequently, he has been dubbed "the Red Bishop". He faces opposition and hostility from local ranchers, land owners and business people. They would like to keep these people as a servant class. The bishop also faces opposition from the local and national government as well as the military. Perhaps however his greatest opposition comes from other bishops and church leaders. These people spread rumors and disinformation that endanger the bishop and his parish workers. That was one of the reasons Bishop Luis asked for international observers. We were told that we were not there to even suggest solutions, but to observe and to be able to confirm and speak the truth.



I was surprised by the intense interest shown by all Mexican people. The talks are understood as a watershed moment in the history of Mexico. The poor masses believe the Zapatistas are speaking for them, and the elite are afraid of what they may lose.

Since I returned I have been asked several times if I believe I made a difference. I do not believe my presence made a difference. There were several thousand others present who as individuals did not make a difference. Collectively we may have, but that is not the important question. What is infinitely more important is that I add my voice to truth and right. A hundred years from now, will Mexican people look back as we do and acknowledge how horribly we treated our native people?

How I wish that in the story of Wounded Knee there would be a story of Pastors For Peace speaking truth and denouncing the evil. Whatever the outcome of these talks, I hope it will be noted that Pastors For Peace cared enough to come and join their voices to the voices of care and compassion, to truth and right. I know now it is not making a difference that counts. It is truth and righteousness. That is what I want to strive for and speak for. It made me feel very special to be able to be at these peace talks.

Moses Mart

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June 1995



Editorial

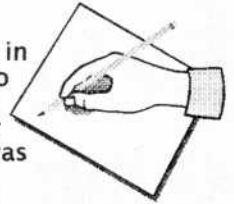
Dear Friends,

I have felt to be in trouble a number of times writing this column, but never quite like this time.

Being given knowledge and awareness should eliminate excuses for ignorance and apathy, but one should take care not to blame that source of knowledge for situations that may develop from feelings and actions generated by that awareness. In honesty one should rather give that source credit -- enough of this riddle?

We here at Joy Mennonite Church have been given a course on the history of Anabaptist theology and how it relates to Mennonites, to our heritage, and to us in our daily lives, decisions, priorities and choices. What an eye opener this has been.

Many martyrs for the cause had things in common -- discontent or resistance to civil authority, so it is not surprising that Christian response to or our involvement in civil authority was discussed.



At one point I stated "my mind is made up," not thinking how it sounded. Simply stated, my opinions had been formed -- at a place and time when they were even to some degree acceptable. Now having them challenged at my advanced age was a shock -- shocked to see how shallow my Christian beliefs had been, or at least based on incomplete study or exposure. Some differences may also be due to context or definition, which can be equally frustrating.

We are now hearing and facing issues brought to the forefront quickly after our 19 April Oklahoma City tragedy: love vs. hate, capital punishment vs. forgiveness, race relations, brotherhood, crime, street violence, values, government intervention in our lives, etc.

I am always reminded not to get political in this column, but I have made no promises. When we are shown countless exposes of our government violating American lives, and/or those of others worldwide, and view our officials in denial, falsehood and cover-ups, it is not difficult for me to harbor feelings of distrust, skepticism or even hate against them -- feelings that our "bombers" may have felt.

It becomes a matter of how one deals with those feelings, deciding to go through channels to struggle and strive for change, or to be a vigilante in our world of chaos.

Hopefully one day, I will get comfortable with my level of forgiveness and eliminate the hypocrisy in my ability to love. Maybe for openers I should try more humility.

Wishing you all a pleasant and safe summer.

Bill Klauen

FELLOWSHIP NEWS:

MDS volunteers, including several from our church, have helped with moving people out of an apartment building that was within a block of the Federal Building that was bombed on April 19. Thanks again for all the calls and expressions of concern we have received since this tragedy occurred.

Congratulations to Jamie and Modesto on the birth of their son, Modesto R. Villa, born on Easter morning, April 16, 1995. The proud grandparents are Terry and Donna Hostetler. We wish God's blessing and pledge Christian support for this new life and his family.

We also extend our congratulations to Ron Perkins who has graduated from OU.



Cheryl & Tim Crichley wish to announce the coming wedding of their son Shawn to Sarah Bryant, on June 16. We wish them God's blessing and much happiness.

Welcome to Peter and Kay Brueckner's grandson, Nathan,

who is visiting this summer.

WORSHIP NEWS:

Start collecting your pennies, nickels, dimes, little or big bills to buy supplies to fill MCC school kits. Sadie will then buy what is needed and Darlene will make the bags. The last Sunday of June, offerings may also be designated for MCC.

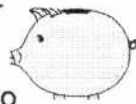
COMING EVENTS:

The Pastors For Peace Caravan for Cuba is making a stop here in OKC, Monday, June 12. All are invited to a potluck at our church at 6pm.

June 15-18, we will be hosting a youth group from Wichita, KS, coming to work and learn about our neighborhood.

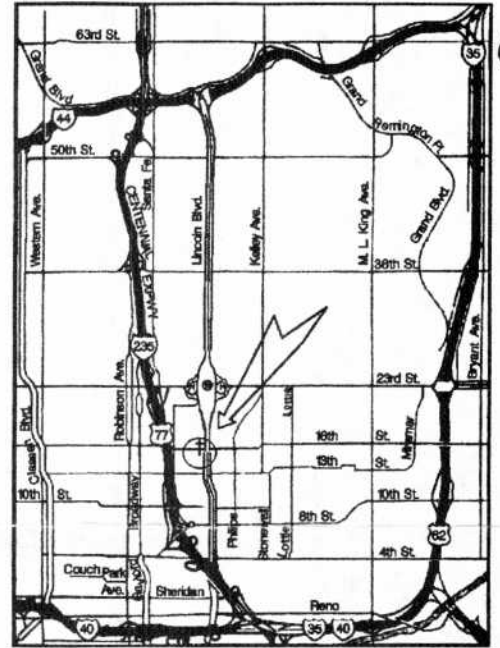
Saturday, June 17, will be a community workday, with an 11:30am picnic at Harn Homestead (one block west of our church). Come join us!

Our annual camp-out will be June 23-25, at Red Rock Canyon State Park. We are looking forward to this fun time of food and fellowship, and hope many of you can join us!



Worship Service

Every Sunday at 10 O'clock A.M.



Church Address: 504 NE 16th St.
(just west of the oil derrick)

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- June 11 (Sun) Red Earth Festival
- June 15-18 Wichita youth to OKC
- June 18 (Sun) Father's Day
- June 23-25 Church camp-out
- July 25-30 GC/MC Joint Conference, Wichita

OKC-AREA READERS: "I've enjoyed visiting or talking by phone with many of you in the last month or two. Others I don't have the phone numbers, and would be happy if you'd give me a call. Thank you." Sadie Mast, 799-7836

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