



February 1995

PASTORS CORNER



Sadie and I just got back from a trip to Mexico we made with a group of Amish. The purpose of this trip was to understand the work of MCC in Mexico. We visited several of the Mennonite colonies in Mexico. We also visited churches in Mexico City and went on to Cuernavaca where the MCC director lives. In this article, however, I would like to reflect on our visit with the Old Colony Mennonites.

To bring together Amish, Old Colony and General Conference Mennonites made for an interesting combination of ideas. Colony Mennonites feel threatened by outside influences, and we were from the outside. I think they had a curiosity and some respect for the Amish which helped to bridge the gap between us.

Colony Mennonites are facing the reality of running out of land for the next generation and economic difficulties for the young farmers. They are being forced to look to alternative ways to earn a living. Yet their zeal for separation, which includes a language barrier, and their bias against education leaves their youth ill-prepared to leave the confines of their farms to earn a living. The Amish told them that, while they are not prepared to become doctors or lawyers, they are prepared to participate in the business world of the U.S. They said, "we teach English in school and retain German in our religious services, and we are not losing our youth." The Colony bishop said, "I still think we need a language barrier." We saw people living in poverty because they were landless, but they lived beside a farmer with a large acreage and modern equipment. Some lived in poverty because their religious quarrels prevented them from accepting the employment available. Some of the progressive Mennonites had been excommunicated. The jobs they offer are unacceptable. These realities raised feelings with us including the Amish. The group, however, agreed instead of being critical we must discern our own conduct.

I often had to think of Jesus' words, "He who seeks to save his life shall lose it, but he who loses his life for me shall find it" (Matt. 16:25). The Colony Mennonites' zeal for separation and their focus on self-preservation could one day be the major reason for losing the next generation. We must also pay attention, in our own country this is not a Mennonite distinction, it is American. Isolationism, our national interests, exclusion of intruders is the current mood of America. We must feel deep in our hearts that this trend is not the way of our Lord.

Moses Mast, Pastor

Dear Friends,

As we enter the second month of 1995, what are we looking forward to? Our "dates to remember" in January show only two February celebrations. Can't be very important - not universally recognized as holidays in the work places. They are more like reflection days, or remembering days, so what do we wish to reflect on or who do we want to remember?

I'll pick the reflections - it is not sour grapes that there will never be a Klassen day, but celebrating people? It is difficult to compete with the person whom we have only recently celebrated in a "recognized" holiday (Christmas). Oh, Washington and Lincoln were great people, and there are many rights, privileges and circumstances for which we owe them a debt of gratitude and honor.

But wait, Valentine's Day? Because of it we call February the love month. That's no big surprise - we are a country of lovers. We have love affairs as though it was going out of style - well maybe (from appearances) love is out of style. We tend to interchange love and worship in secular things - homes, cars, lawns, appearance, bodies, sex - whoa, like someone other than our mate - or someone else's mate. With all that love around how does hate still get a toehold in our lives so often? Maybe we are just talking about two different kinds of love.

The love we all can thrive on is the kind that makes all humankind brothers - where Christian compassion for others' miseries comes from the heart, and we share each other's burdens and are tolerant of one another's religious, racial, ethnic, or political differences.

If acquiring and showing this love has anything to do with the Lenten spirit, attitude and atmosphere, we have only February to practice it before Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 1 March 1995.

Best wishes to all,

Bice Klassen



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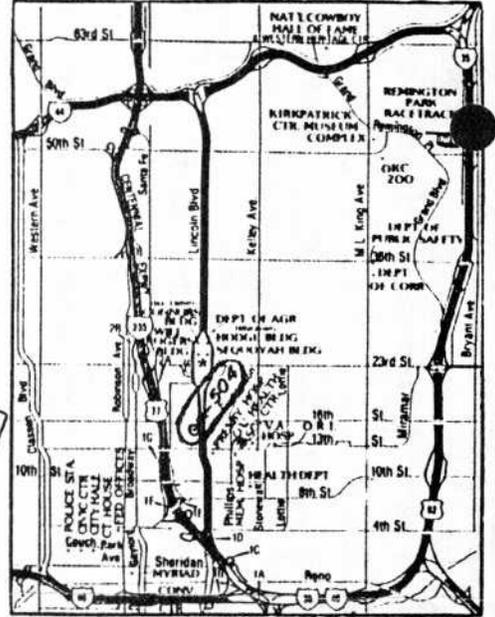
WORSHIP SERVICE
EVERY SUNDAY AT 10 O'CLOCK A.M.



JMC family fellowship is celebrating with Jack and Debbie O'Neal the birth of their 10 lb. 2 oz. son in the wee hours (4:00 a.m.) of Sunday, 22 January '95. We pledge our support in the Christian nurture of Earl Arron.

Moses and Sadie having toured Mennonite colonies in Mexico (see Pastor's Corner), they returned on 19 Jan. with glowing partial (appetizer) reports of their experiences. We look forward to an evening of "storytelling" with them.

Out of our fellowship came a man called Peter, and a lady named Cheryl to share of their lives and experiences on the two Sundays respectively during Moses and Sadie's absence. Many Thanks.



Church Address: 504 NE 16th ST.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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peace*

- Sun., 12 Feb. '95 .. JMC Business Meeting 12:30 pm
- Tue., 14 Feb. '95 Valentine's Day
- Mon., 20 Feb. '95 President's Day
- Fri. thru Sun., 24 thru 26 Feb. . Western District Pastor/Spouse Retreat in Great Bend, Ks
- Wed., 1 Mar. '95 Ash Wednesday
- Fri., 17 Mar. '95 St. Patrich's Day



Happy Valentine's Day

Wichita '95



Wichita Watch. Preachers for the Wichita '95 adult convention will include Renee Sauder, Mesach Krisetya, Marilyn Miller, Nzash Lumeya and Mike Yaconelli. Plan now to attend the third joint convention of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference, in Kansas July 25-30.

MOSES AND SADIE MAST
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