

# Anabaptist Mennonite Church asks for a more just, peaceful and happy Guatemala



GUATEMALA-

Casa Horeb, Iglesia Anabautista Menonita de Guatemala (Anabaptist Mennonite Church of Guatemala), celebrates 37 years of testimony in this country. During election times—September 6 is the date for general elections— a lengthy document was issued in which a call is made, “based on the radical demands that God’s Kingdom requires, especially in this country that considers itself Christian”.

We reproduce the entire document:

*We are a Christian community that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, announces the Good News to every people and every nation and proclaims the Kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus of Nazareth and works to present it today.*

*We are in this particular historical juncture that our country is going through:*

- 1. A widespread citizen movement that has risen to protest and to resist the corruption of the state. It is a peaceful but energetic and determined public response.*
- 2. An electoral landscape that offers outdated political options, with no true representation. Parties unable to substantiate and support a constitutional state that meets our right to resolve the huge need for a truly participative democracy that will strengthen us as a nation.*
- 3. We are facing a crisis, the result of a weathering produced by the fallacies of an outdated corrupt political leadership, which runs with its back to its people favoring themselves. A perverted state, to the point of losing the parameters and values that point to human dignity. The critical level we have reached, has stimulated a national clamor of our citizens demanding —with all rights—deep transformations to build a better society.*

*It is with humility that we express our call, founded in radical claims demanded by the Kingdom of God, especially in this country that considers itself as Christian: love, that makes us see one another as neighbors, justice, demanding from us to be welfare builders, and peace which compels us to live a life of service (not for selfish advantage, assaulting everybody's heritage and cynicism to find justifications):*

We thank God who walks in our history to awaken a people who have been silenced for so many years. We are amazed and at the same time grateful for being part of this movement that claims and promotes a dignified life for all.

The people claim a different Guatemala. For this purpose, the transformation of the state is a must, a new homeland where we can live in peace and prosperity. The Shalom mentioned in the Bible that means prosperity for all; a dignified life in justice and freedom.

As a people, we ask for forgiveness for our apathy and indifference to so many years of robbery and dispossession of public funds. As a church, we also ask for forgiveness, along with other churches, because many times we have not raised our prophetic voice to denounce injustice, with our testimony, to announce a Kingdom of fellowship and solidarity.

From our identity of Jesus' disciples, humbly we offer our contribution today:

We are part of this people who want to live in peace and now have risen against corruption and demand a radical change in our country. As Jesus' disciples, we are heirs to a legacy of peace and reconciliation. We have received it from him and that is why we can offer it to all peoples.

Faithful to the teachings of Jesus, we especially identified ourselves with those who suffer the most and are marginalized by society. So we join the popular demand of those who have fallen into the clutches of corruption, return what you have stolen and let that money go back to the social services whose funds have been denied.

This historic moment is a call to reconciliation. We propose a restorative justice, to return dignity to the poor and compensate for so much damage.

***We call:***

- *Those of us who have been offended and wronged and offer our forgiveness and friendship.*
- *Those who have defrauded the people, to turn their lives around, change their lives and return what was stolen.*
- *To create a society of reconciled, happy and at peace people.*

### **We long for a dignified life for all:**

- This includes food, housing, health, education and jobs with fair wages.
- The restructuring of the country, on firm foundations of justice and common good.
- The transformation of the political system to make it inclusive and participatory.
- The prompt reform of the electoral laws and political parties so they can come into effect in next elections.
- The Constitutional Reform to ground these changes for the good of the country and its citizens.

Let us become aware of our responsibility to elect new representatives, with a new authority, not aiming to control but to serve. Only then will we be able to live in peace with justice.

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world gives.*

*Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27)*

Here the churches have an important role to play in educating about values, Christian and civic education, and mainly on being an example of transparency, searching the common good and building a new country.

It is a time of hope. The God of life and history *“has heard the cry of his people and has come to free us” (Exodus 3, 9–10)*. For Jesus, money is not the core, but the human being. It is up to us today to make it real, as a country and as a Church.

It is an invitation to everyone to be an active part and also responsible of the restructuring of the state and the building of a new country, in peace, unity and solidarity. *“Whoever does the will of God lives forever” (1John 2:17)*.

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Mathew 5:9)*

Peace is not exclusive to Christians. It is owned by the entire creation, is a fundamental part of God’s plan for all human kindness and a condition to make his Kingdom present, for us to reach God’s promise of *“a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelations 21:1)*.

### **OUR COMMUNITY PRAYER:**

*Aware of the crisis the state is facing and committed to be companions and participants in seeking solutions to shape a peaceful, just Guatemala, we join the popular outcry, and today we intercede before our God of Peace, for the following:*

*May the peace of God reign in every family and in every home.*

*May the peace of God reign in the Church and that as one body we may show Jesus' lifestyle. That we may show a forgiving, loving and peaceful God.*

*That justice may reign and prevail in Guatemala.*

*That every personal, community and government action in the country and from any sector may be conducive to life and reject all acts of violence and death.*

*That equality and inclusion reign in our country. That is inclusion of race, gender, age, economic status, etc.*

*May the Lord guide the authorities to make wise decisions that will lead us to live together in peace and harmony.*

*To cease all act of corruption, influences and misuse of public funds. That we may all act as faithful stewards.*

*That as churches –guided by the Holy Spirit– we are a prophetic voice to announce and denounce.*