



Dan Dyck

Drives, bikers, passersby, cyclists, and a Fed-Ex courier honked and flashed the two fingered peace sign to our small group of peace pray-ers.

As a virtue, peace is a value that's hard to disagree with. But how to live it has many different expressions.

Forty-four youth and their leaders from Manitoba got a condensed learning tour at six social service agencies in downtown Kitchener-Waterloo, each playing a strategic role in helping to create the conditions for peace in the community.

The K-W Reception Centre, a large older home that offers a first-stop residence to 280 refugees each year, resonated with Youth Assembly planner Tran Trang from Calgary Vietnamese Mennonite Church. Sponsored by a family from Foothills Mennonite Church, Trang also lived in a reception centre with her parents in Calgary when she first arrived in Canada at the age of four.

Lance greeted me at the Charles Street Men's Hostel when our group arrived. He's been living here for a month to visit a friend and escape "the cage in Toronto" where people were "poking me all the time and testing my patience."

The slim middle-aged man has been intimate with the streets of Vancouver, Winnipeg and Montreal. "The food is really good here [at the Charles Street Men's Hostel]. This is a good place to get healthy."

On learning about our peace prayer delegation, he said simply, "This is a good thing. Kids need to see this side of life. Thanks for coming."

Additional stops included Mary's Place, a centre for distressed women and children, the Working Centre, which empowers the unemployed, ROOF, a street ministry for youth, and the K-W Multicultural Centre, which helps newcomers adjust to Canadian systems and culture.

At each stop, tour leader Margaret Nally, Chaplain at Mary's Place, prayed with the group for the staff, clients, and funders of each agency. Participants

threaded beads onto bracelets that they would take home to symbolize each of the agencies they visited and to remember the work of similar organizations in their own communities.

With each visit, every peace prayer group of four dropped off a hospitality gift of homemade cookies – a total of four dozen cookies at each agency.



(l-r) Renae Friesen and Carly Giesbrecht offer a hospitality gift of homemade cookies to Jacob Letkemann, staff at the ROOF, a ministry to youth who live on the street. Photos by Dan Dyck

Giving strong for first four months of 2011

No-deficit budget pitches \$150,000 challenge

Dan Dyck

During his financial report on the morning of July 6, Randy Wiebe, Chief Financial Officer for Mennonite Church Canada, graciously thanked congregations, corporate, and individual donors for their support, noting that as of May 31, giving was \$2,000 ahead of projections for the first four months of the current fiscal year. The June postal strike delayed mailed in donations, so more current data was not available, he noted.

But, he cautioned that “It’s too early to read too much into this.”

Wiebe issued a challenge to raise \$150,000 in additional donations of ministry support for the fiscal year ending Jan. 21, 2012, for a total income budget of just over \$5.5 million. “Our financial policies do not permit deficit budgets,” he noted.

However, careful management has resulted in strong overall financial health for Mennonite Church Canada. The negative 2010-11 outcome was softened somewhat by under-expenditures and delayed hiring for vacant staff positions. Wiebe reported that assets-to-liability ratios are well within safe limits and that the national church aims to have a three month operating reserve.

In his reporting on the fiscal year past, Wiebe noted that the pattern of year-over-year declining income for Mennonite Church Canada continued in the fiscal year ending Jan. 31, 2011. A donation shortfall of \$194,000, in addition to ongoing inflationary cost increases resulted in program, staff, and grant reductions for the upcoming fiscal year, with severances being absorbed in the current fiscal year. “Reduced support along with inflationary increases cannot sustain the current program,” he emphasized.

Delegates passed the budget for the fiscal year ending Jan. 31, 2012 without discussion.



Randy Wiebe, Chief Financial Officer for Mennonite Church Canada, reported strong giving for the period Jan. 31, to May 31, 2011, but cautioned that “It’s too early to read too much into this.” Photo by Dan Dyck

Greetings to the gathered delegates of Mennonite Church Canada.

On behalf of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, we want to extend to you God’s blessings and encouragement as you gather this week in Waterloo, Ontario. We want you to know that our prayers are with you as you pray, discern, and decide on the important issues before you.

As you remember your past and God’s faithfulness to you, we are also reminded that our own history is rooted with you. We have much in common in confession and practice, and we are grateful for the partnership in ministry that has been granted to us for over 150 years. Many of the Mennonite Brethren ministries are built on partnerships that we trust will continue into the future with strength and power for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our prayer for you this week is that you will discern the voice of the Holy Spirit with clarity. May you be firm in the written word of God and faithful to the Living Word, Christ Jesus himself. May the outcomes of your time together spur you on to greater witness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We know that the evidence of the Kingdom of God has been evident in your

past and we are recipients of that blessing; now may it continue forward. Our hope is that the mission of Christ will unite you and that the message of the Gospel will be with power to a world that desperately needs the “peace that passes all understanding.”

We echo the prayer of the Apostle Paul for you: “We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will...so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might...” (Colossians 1:9-14).

In His Mission,

Paul J Loewen, Moderator,
Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches

Willy Reimer, Executive Director, CCMBC.

Epic News is the daily news sheet for the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2011 in Waterloo, Ontario. It will be brought to you daily from July 4 – 8, 2011. Full colour editions of *Epic News* will be available in PDF format at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1389. We will print an ecologically friendly quantity of hard copies for distribution on site – please share. Comments, questions, and affirmations can be sent to ddyck@mennonitechurch.ca.

Editors: Dan Dyck, Deb Froese; **Design by** Megan Kamei, Ryan Roth Bartel

Care and compassion needed by all people

Rachel Bergen, National Correspondent at *Canadian Mennonite*

Many people struggle emotionally, physically or mentally at some point in their life and turn to the love and support of their congregations to deal with grief and pain.

But for some people, that kind of care may seem elusive or even withheld.

At the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Waterloo, Ont. a document called "Being a Faithful Church 3" (BFC 3) was a significant agenda item. This document seeks a way forward in the discussion of difficult or challenging issues affecting the body of Christ. One of these topics is human sexuality, including but not limited to non-heterosexuality.

The recommended BFC 3 document – which outlines a process for dialogue – is broadly based on all aspects of human sexuality, but for non-heterosexuals along with their friends and families, it is particularly poignant. They say they are often excluded by churches, sometimes harshly. They hope the discussions shaped by BFC3 will lead to a more compassionate reception, and result in greater access to congregational care for those who need it – including those who may struggle with less visible issues such as extra-marital sex or addiction to pornography.

Those who have witnessed a lack of congregational compassion say that its availability

is critical. Victor and Rebecca Fast of Valleyview Mennonite Church in London, Ont. are among them. They have a lesbian daughter.

Though Valleyview has been very supportive of the Fast family, not every church that their daughter has attended or led worship in has been.

"Our daughter was invited to lead worship at a church in [another province]... a man got up and left because she is a lesbian... that was very hurtful," Rebecca said.

According to Rebecca, "It's so important to find support in a community." Victor "... can't imagine what it would be like for a [non-heterosexual] person to try to relate to an unsupportive community."

Scott Bergen has also felt the pain of being excluded by the church.

Bergen was born into a Mennonite church. At a young age he knew that he was attracted to the same sex, but didn't know what his church taught on sexualities other than heterosexuality.

"It scared me because I didn't know any openly gay people. My parents never talked about it and my church never talked about it."

Later on, he discovered that his church overwhelmingly felt that "to be anything but heterosexual was a perversion," he said.

Bergen did all that he could to be accepted by the church, and by extension God, by taking on more and more leadership. But in order to be accepted he hid his sexuality. Bergen was constantly afraid that he would be discovered to be gay.

"I survived being queer in the church until my 20s by drawing a sharp divide between who I am and who I found myself to be in the church... When people would make jokes about people who weren't straight, I wasn't fazed because I separated that part of my life," he said.

This meant paying close attention to his wardrobe, his manner of speaking, and the people he spent time with in order to appear straight.

"It was beyond exhausting and played a very large role in an emotional breaking point in my early 20s."

Bergen believes that he and other people who are non-heterosexual are marginalized by society, including the church.

"I struggled against being gay for literally half of my life with everything in me, very fervently... It has done irreparable damage to my life," Bergen said. He no longer attends a Mennonite church and has left the Christian faith entirely.

Wet your whistle

Mennonite Church Canada is sponsoring the Quench Buggy located on the footpath near Ron Eydt Village.

Stop by and re-fill your water bottle here at your leisure, and invite anyone else on campus to do so as well!



Walking the Path to Truth and Reconciliation in Saskatchewan

Renata Klassen, Moderator, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) national events began in July 2010 at The Forks in Winnipeg. The goal of this process is to hear and work for healing of the legacy of pain left by Canada's Indian Residential Schools.

In the summer of 2013, the TRC will come to Saskatchewan. We as Mennonite Church Saskatchewan have committed ourselves to preparing for this meeting through a process which we are calling "Our Shared Path".

The first step on that path occurred at our annual delegate session, which was held in North Battleford on March 18 and 19, 2011.


But it is only the first step. We plan to be intentional and deliberate as we continue to walk this path.

June 21 is Aboriginal Day in Canada. There will be events planned by First Nations in or near our communities. These are open to all. Let us heed the invitations and participate.

In late August there will be a celebration of the 135th anniversary of the signing of Treaty Six on Stoney Knoll, near the town of Laird. This location has a very special significance, in that it was the location of a reserve that was granted to the Young Chippewyan Band. This reserve was taken from that group within a few years of being granted to them, and it was added to a reserve for Mennonite settlers. Since then, most of the land has been farmed by Mennonite and Lutheran settlers. The August event is being jointly planned by representatives of First Nations and local Lutheran and Mennonite churches.

The second Spruce River Folk Fest will be held on August 27th just north of Prince Albert. Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan and Mennonite Church Saskatchewan are sponsors, along with the Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert.

June 21st is National
Aboriginal Day
celebrate First Nations



liveforpeace.org

A planning committee representing Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historical Society, and Mennonite Church Canada continues to meet to define other steps on this path. A brochure with some of the plans is available from the MC Sask office (10A-301 Pakwa Place, Saskatoon; phone 306-249-4844; email mcsask@mcsask.ca.)

As future events emerge, regular updates of this brochure are planned. We invite others – individuals, congregations and denominations – to join us as we walk the path to truth and reconciliation together.

Just wanted to let you know

that as a member of Ottawa Mennonite Church who couldn't make it to Assembly 2011 I have found your daily publication of the Epic interesting. Normally I wouldn't take time to comment, but I just wanted to let you know that reading through the articles gives me a good impression of how things are going. I wish I was there!

Sometimes you may have space for the occasional bit of humour and just this morning my sister sent me the following collection of what she referred to as religious humour. You may find something that just fits the bill. Enjoy and share as you see fit.

June Kaethler

While driving in the country, a family caught up to an Amish carriage. The owner obviously had a sense of humour because on the back was a hand painted sign...

Energy efficient vehicle

Runs on oats and grass

Caution: Do not step in exhaust.



A big thanks to Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) for providing snack during the first coffee break on Tuesday morning. As Vic Thiessen announced, a mix up had caused the coffee to be delivered late and the snack to be missing. Those in the balcony found MCEC's table, stocked with red lollipops and helped themselves. Ken Hawkey (AMBS) and Peter Haresnape (CPT presenter) offer each other a snack.

Photo by Dave Rogalsky

Nurturing a vision for peacemaking in Korea

Abe Bergen

Her son had been waiting in line to buy his lunch at school when a bully pushed him out of his place. A fight broke out and the boy ended up in the hospital.

The victim's mother, a single parent whose husband had died in an accident 12 years earlier, felt alone and frustrated. Many who spoke to her after this violation were dismissive—"It's no big deal. It happens all the time. That's what boys do," they commented.

She was under a lot of pressure to let it go and make nothing of it. In her view, forgetting about it was not right; the bully needed to be punished. This was the only way for justice to be served.

Confused, alone, vulnerable, and afraid, the victim's mother did not know what to do until she learned about a mediation group sponsored by the Korea Anabaptist Center (KAC), a partner of Mennonite Church Canada. They told her about an approach that would bring justice for the victim and resolve the situation in a healthier way. This was the restorative justice model. She was interested, a mediation committee was put in place, and conversations began.

During the mediation process, victim impact statements were read, apologies were expressed, monetary compensation was arranged and reconciliation happened. She agreed not to press charges. The perpetrator did not go to jail or receive a criminal record. The court decided that a just resolution had been reached and no further punishment was required.

The woman had grown up in the church in Korea, but left many years ago. Now she became interested in connecting with this Christian community and has since become active in the work of KAC.

KAC is a beacon of peacemaking in the city of Seoul, Korea and beyond. From their studies at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (CMBC),

now Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), leaders like Kyong-Jung Kim, Director of KAC and Jae Young Lee, Peace Program Coordinator are bringing a theology of peace and models of peacemaking to the churches and other institutions. Through their efforts, mediation committees are being established within the judicial system. And acceptance for another way of resolving conflict is increasing.

In addition to the work of restorative justice, KAC established Northeast Asia Regional Peacebuilding Institute (NARPI) and developed a regional network of 200 individuals and organizations interested in collaborating on peace efforts. When tensions between North and South Korea erupted in a Nov. 23 artillery exchange, KAC and NARPI issued a proposal for peace that called for the resumption of dialogue, disarmament, and respect for the previously established demilitarized zone.



Kyong-Jung Kim, Director of KAC (left) and Jae Young Lee, Peace Program Coordinator, are two of several Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University) graduates who translated the spirit of Anabaptism into a Korean context for church and wider society.

Korea Anabaptist Press, KAC's publishing arm, has also translated 19 core Anabaptist books into the Korean language to help nurture an understanding and a vision for peacemaking within Korean society, through churches, and through a network of congregations called Korean Anabaptist Fellowship (KAF). Witness Workers Marian and Erv Wiens are currently serving both the KAC and the KAF.

Since 2002, Mennonite Church Canada has sent CMU interns to serve at KAC, and graduates to work at Connexus, KAC's English teaching ministry. With the ongoing support of Mennonite Church Canada Witness and Mennonite Mission Network, and further training at Associate Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Eastern Mennonite University, efforts toward nurturing restorative justice in Korea are being strengthened.

Abe Bergen, Director of Enrolment Services, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), visited the Korea Anabaptist Center in Seoul in early November 2010. He participated in a restorative justice workshop and joined in KAC's 9th Anniversary celebrations. This article first appeared in the CMU Spring 2011 issue of Blazer and has been adapted for use here by permission.

Erv and Marian Wiens, Mennonite Church Canada workers in Korea are at Assembly 2011 to share what they've learned about the dynamic, emerging South Korean Anabaptist movement that is making waves across Asia and North America.

Voices from the past

No creature has been found to express, teach, and to witness and state with power what love is, along with its virtues and powers except the Man Jesus, Jesus, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Pilgram Marpeck (died 1556)

Loren Johns: Discern and Follow

Deborah Froese

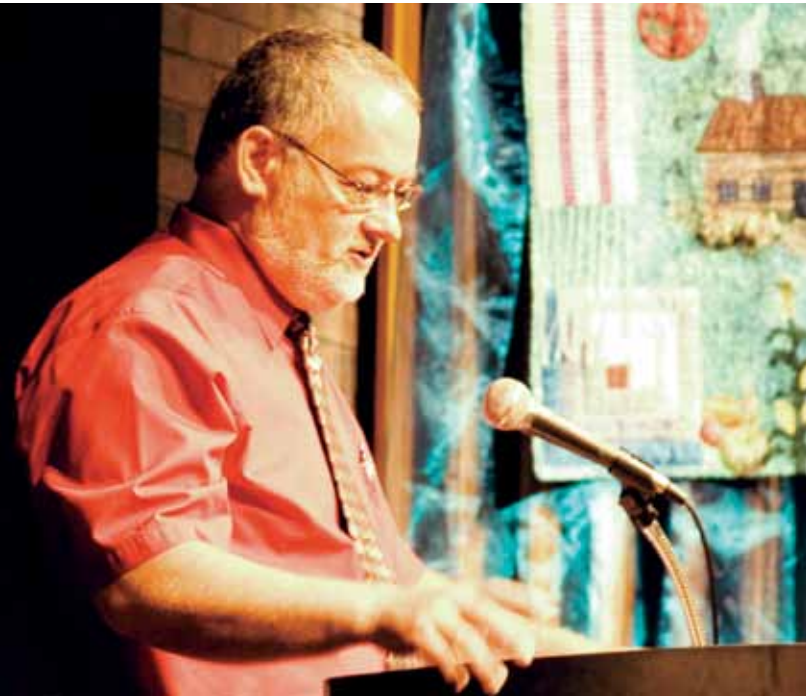


Photo by Deborah Froese

Loren Johns has produced a wide range of scholarship studies, from diversity and unity in the church to pastoral ministry and studies of Revelation.

In an email interview, the Professor of New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, IN and one of three keynote speakers at Assembly 2011, wrote that the breadth of his research interests reflects his interest in the life of the church.

“As I see it, since life is not one-sided, my intellectual interests are multi-dimensional...too.”

His interest in unity and diversity stems from his belief that the ability to negotiate in the midst of differences is one of the most important challenges facing the church.

“My work on the Damascus Road Anti-Racism Team at Associated

Mennonite Biblical Seminary is one expression of this interest,” he wrote.

The theological questions he hears raised at AMBS are often directly related to the challenges of pastoral ministry, and what a particular issue will look like in terms of the challenges and opportunities pastors are facing in the church.

“It seems to me that whatever I can learn in this regard should inform my teaching and research on every other issue. Even with the book of Revelation, the issues that fascinate me the most are those that deal with how the book’s Christology or eschatology touch on the life of the church today. For instance, why is Christ portrayed consistently as a Lamb in this book? What message was this supposed to communicate to the churches for whom the book was written? And what is it about the New Jerusalem, or the new heaven and new earth that John’s readers were meant to understand? How and why did John see this vision as relevant for them? How did it affect their daily lives ... and by extension, ours?”

Johns explained that a clearer understanding of the situation facing the first-century churches of Asia helps us to see our own circumstances more clearly. Just as today, the most important challenge before those churches was the need to discern the difference between inconsequential pressures of society and those with deeply spiritual consequences. He referred to the book of Revelation as “resistance literature”.

There is a consensus among scholars, he wrote, that pressure to worship the emperor came from leading, influential families in Ephesus, or in the Roman province of Asia, not from Rome itself. He pointed to evidence gathered by his fellow Assembly 2011 keynote speaker, Nelson Kraybill, that being involved in trade guilds in the first century came with pressure to offer small sacrifices to the emperor to begin meetings.

“...So what if the emperor were praised as saviour of the world? It’s no big deal. [But] Apparently [Revelation writer] John disagreed: it *is* a big deal. Those who worship the God of Israel must say no to such compromises of allegiance and worship.”

Johns is presenting a series of Bible studies on Revelation during Assembly 2011. He noted that the most important concepts for people to “take home” from the studies is that the book’s call to ethical discernment in the present - let anyone who has an ear hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches (Rev. 3:22) – and its Lamb Christology. Jesus, the One we follow, maintained his faithful witness to the point of death, as we are called to do as well.

“[These] are far more central to the book than is speculation about the future.”

Follow audio recordings of Loren Johns’ Bible studies on the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2011 webpage at www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/ Waterloo2011/

From the Archives

Restoration Dreams



Simeon Martin preparing to close John E. Brubacher house, built in 1850, for protection from the elements. In 1967 the historic farmhouse, home of the John E. Brubacher family, suffered a devastating fire. The fully restored farmhouse is on University of Waterloo lands and is operated as a museum by Conrad Grebel University College. However, this 1968 photograph graphically depicts the difficult restoration task ahead.

Prepared by Laureen Harder-Gissing, Mennonite Archives of Ontario

Photo credit: MCC Ontario photo collection, Mennonite Archives of Ontario (grebel.uwaterloo.ca/mao)

No temple needed with God and Lamb - Wednesday Bible Study

Deborah Froese

In his second Bible study of Assembly Week, Loren Johns explored the image of the lamb as a Christological placeholder. In the New Jerusalem, he said, “We don’t need a temple because God and the Lamb will be there in person.”

Although the image of Christ as the Lamb appears about 28 times in the book of Revelation – more often than any other image is presented – Johns said that the writer purposefully avoided referring to Christ as the Lamb before Revelation 5:6 to create a dramatic entrance:

Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

But what does all of this tell us about how we should view the Lamb?

Johns shared a series of pictures depicting Christ as the Lamb, based upon artistic interpretations of Revelation. Worshippers saw cartoon-like images of fluffy Little Bo Peep lambs, a lamb that appeared to be taming a lion, and images of lambs with seven horns and seven eyes.

“[Revelation descriptions] make it tough for artists,” Johns said, and he went on to explain some of the pros and cons regarding commonly accepted interpretations of Christ as Lamb.

For example, while we think of the Lamb as slain or slaughtered in sacrifice, Johns says that a bull would more likely be used for such purposes in Old Testament times. In addition, a sacrifice is offered as an atonement for sin, but the Greek word used for lamb in Revelation is more closely linked to martyrdom.

Johns concluded that the ethical message of Revelation is this:

- Worship God and the Lamb
- Resist the temptation to compromise your allegiance and worship the emperor
- Maintain faithful witness to God and to the Lamb
- Remember that you may die but your death will be victory
- Don’t worry - God is in control.

Follow the audio recordings of Loren Johns’ Bible studies on the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2011 webpage at www.mennonitechurch.ca/events/waterloo2011/

Training for non-cooperation

Emily Loewen, Canadian Mennonite Young Voices Editor

Stand up, raise your arms above your head, bring them down a little, now just hold that position, keep holding, keep holding — how are your muscles feeling now? Instructions you might expect to hear at a bootcamp, but these exercises were designed to strengthen the peace builder’s mind, not muscles.

In Tuesday afternoon’s “Boot Camp for Peace Builders,” seminar Matthew Bailey-Dick, from Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, encouraged youth to think about how today’s violent society has influenced them, and then to break that pattern and find non-violent solutions.

Throughout the presentation Bailey-Dick had the teens stand and follow his instructions without giving them a reason. He later explained that in society people tend to accept the belief that more

violence is the proper response to violence, without asking questions – just like they obediently followed his commands. An important part of boot camp for peace builders, he told them, is training to be un-cooperative in a non-violent way.

That series of activities and the message of disobedience was a highlight for Simon Friesen, who chose the seminar wanting to learn more about peace building strategies for his own life.

Youth also got to witness a few techniques for physically responding to violent behaviour, though there wasn’t time for the group to test them out. But Bailey-Dick suggested youth find a way to learn those skills on their own because just like the best way to describe a drum is to play one, the best way to describe peace building is to live it.



Music for all ages!

Community Service Radio!

For a listing of our radio stations and online portals in your area,
please go to:
www.goldenwestradio.com

Announcements

Seminar Room Changes

Please note the following changes to Seminar room locations:

Friday, 4pm Seminars:

- “Is the end near?”HH150
- “Humour Me” ML 246
- ”Join the Anabaptist Party” ML349
- “In the Spirit of Humanity” ML212
- “On the Hot Seat”HH336
- “We Have \$\$\$ For You!”ML311

Note: Please pay careful attention to verbal announcements regarding additional seminar location changes.

Due to the mail strike you probably have not received the last edition of the *Canadian Mennonite* dated June 27. Feel free to pick up a copy at our display on second floor of Hagey Hall next to the refreshments area. We had extra copies printed for you to take home with you. --Dick Benner

An invitation to women of all ages

Build a chain of connection ... with Mennonite Women Canada

Visit our display on the second floor of Hagey Hall and add your name to the paper chain.

We will share this chain with Mennonite Church Canada Assembly 2011 on Thursday afternoon, June 7.



During the Friday (July 8) afternoon break time.

Kids from the Children’s & Jr. Youth Assembly will be selling bracelets and necklaces created from seeds and carved clay beads indigenous to the West African country of Burkina Faso. Proceeds will be used for a church building for the Foyer Evangélique Mennonite de Ouagadougou (FEMO), and a proposed Children’s Ministry program there.



Children’s Ministry That Fits author David Csinos will be signing books with MennoMedia today over the lunch break at the dining hall, Ron Eydt Village.

Prayer time

Each morning during Assembly at 8 a.m. at Conrad Grebel Chapel, Mennonite Spiritual Directors of Eastern Canada are leading a time of prayer especially with and for church leaders. Others are welcome. Prayer time is based on the daily scripture focus.

Git’yer free

commuter mug and luggage handle tag holders at the **Resource Centre in room HH 139!**

KPMG
cutting through complexity™

Proud to support the Mennonite Church of Canada

For more information on how KPMG can help you, contact Austin Abas at 204-957-2217.

kpmg.ca

MENNONITE FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Gift & estate planning advice you can trust

1-800-772-3257 | www.mennofoundation.ca

Faithful Joyful Giving



MennoMedia
An agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada

Visit the MennoMedia Book Table in Hagey Hall Room 139. Open daily from 8 till late! Check out new title specials; meet authors, enter draws and browse and buy great books, CD’s and DVD’s!