

May 07, *Equipping* #76



For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

~1 Corinthians 3:11

Worship Materials

Mennonite Church Canada Assembly Sunday – July 8, 2007

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The themes for the six worship services that are being planned for the Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in Abbotsford, July 3-6, are the skeleton for this service. The hope is that your congregation will get a “reader’s digest” experience of the assembly. It is expected that you may want to substitute music, draw on only some of the materials or rearrange them to fit the needs and resources of your congregation.

We encourage you to use these resources on “Assembly Sunday” – July 8, 2007 – or on another Sunday that is suitable, such as when your assembly delegates report back to your congregation.

The six themes are:

- Built on Christ**
- Built with Grace**
- Built in Love**
- Built through Community**
- Built for Purpose**
- Built to Last**

We will be celebrating communion and commissioning of MC Canada elected volunteers in one of the final two services at the assembly. While that has not been included in this service, it is something you may want to consider for your service.

Special instructions are included in italics before each section in the service as required. Please note that the readers have been assigned as a consistent group throughout the service, but you may want to change them with each section depending on how many people you have to draw on that enjoy leading worship through word.

BUILT TO LAST

Assembly Sunday

Note: HWB refers to “Hymnal: A Worship Book”

STJ refers to “Sing the Journey”

“Sing the Story” is a new hymnal supplement that will be launched at Abbotsford 2007 and that will be available from Mennonite Publishing Network after the assembly.

Prelude

This is a good time to introduce to your congregation some worship music that has been used at assembly but may be new to them. This may be a new song from a familiar resource, or from the new resource, “Sing the Story,” which was launched at assembly.

Here are some suggestions:

Santo, Santo, Santo	#400	HWB
Here in this place	#6	HWB
Come, let us all unite to sing	#12	HWB

Welcome

Welcome the congregation and guests to the service in the manner you are accustomed to and give a brief explanation about the tone and content of the service as a representation of the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Abbotsford, July 3-6.

Prayer of Invocation

Lord, thank-you for gathering us together in your presence this morning, and for the gathering you have called us to from across Canada. Thank-you for going before us in our planning, for walking along side us in our worship and discernment, and for strengthening us from within in our sending. Be with us in our worship now, so we may hear your voice. In Christ’s name, Amen.

Call to Worship

For the following reading, lines that are in italics are meant to be translated into other languages. They have not been translated for you, as we encourage you to use the languages that can come from your congregation. If you don’t have at least four languages that can be represented other than English, try some accents or ethnic idioms, i.e., a Scottish brough or “Good-dai, mate”. You can have fun with the diversity.

Reader 1 is the main worship leader for this service. This reading is also meant to be underscored with a hand drum or two if you have, like a djembe or conga drum. Start with the drums on a single beat in 4/4 time with the accent being on 1. Once the beat is established, add the reading on top, dropping the volume of the drums to keep a balance.

Reader 1: Listen! Can you hear?
It is the heartbeat of God, calling his children to Him.
Calling them from the four corners of the earth.

(the drum beat can change to a heartbeat pattern, kathump, kathump...)

From the North

Reader 3: From the north (perhaps in German)

Reader 1: From the south

Reader 4: From the south (Spanish possibly)

Reader 1: From the west

Reader 5: From the west (An Asian translation would be good)

Reader 1: From the east

Reader 6: From the east (French seems appropriate)

All: LISTEN!

Reader 1: It is God's love song calling us, His children, to gather together, Saying...

Reader 2: Come, draw near.

I want to hold you close to me.

So close that you can hear the beating of my heart.

All: Can you hear? Listen.

Reader 1: It is God calling to his people,
Speaking to each in the language of their heart.

Reader 2: Come, gather together on the rock,
The foundation that I have laid for you in Christ Jesus.
The stone that was rejected has become the corner stone,
That you might know that I am the Sovereign Lord your God,
The Alpha and Omega, who has loved you from the beginning,
Even before you drew your first breath,
And who has claimed the victory for you now and forever.
Come. Come and worship.

All: LISTEN!

Reader 1: You have been called by name from all corners of the earth,
From every tongue, tribe and nation
To stand together on the solid rock and worship
To cry holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!

Readers 3,4,5,6: And we have come, and together we cry

The following is meant to happen in canon beginning with Reader 1. The entry of the next reader is on the third holy of the reader before them. They are meant to do it in the language they used at the beginning.

Reader 1: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!

Reader 3: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!

Reader 4: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!

Reader 5: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!

Reader 6: Holy, holy, holy is the
Lord God Almighty!

Reader 1: And all God's people say. . .

All: AMEN!

Congregational Singing

He Reigns – Peter Furler & Steve Taylor, CCLI 4026635
Come, now is the time to worship #9 STJ

Reader 1: Built on Christ

I Corinthians 3:11

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid,
Which is Jesus Christ.

Reader 2: Matthew 7: 24 – 27

Every one then who hears these words of mine and does them
Will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock;

Reader 3: And the rain fell,

Reader 3/4: And the floods came,

Reader 4/5: And the winds blew and beat upon the house,

Reader 6: But it did not fall,

Because it had been founded on the rock.

Reader 2: And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them

Will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand;

Reader 6: And the rain fell,

Reader 6/3: And the floods came,

Reader 3/4: And the winds blew and beat against that house,

Reader 5: And it fell;

And great was the fall of it.

Now a clip could be shown from the movie "The Miracle Maker". It is a Russian puppet animation released in 1995. You can purchase it from www.crownvideo.com or borrow it from www.mennonitechurch.ca/resources. The film uses an interesting technique in mixing animation mediums. The 3D puppets are used in stop motion for the story, while 2D animation is used for Jesus to tell stories or to give voice to inner thoughts, dreams, or temptations of Christ. There is a scene near the beginning of the movie in 2D animation where Jesus tells the story of the wise and foolish builders. It's about 2-3 minutes long and is wonderfully done. If you have the media resources and licensing, this is wonderful to show.

Congregational Singing

My hope is built on nothing less #343 HWB
How firm a foundation #567 HWB
Faithful One Brian Doerksen 1989 Mercy Publishing
We worship God the Rock #28 STJ

Reader 1: Built on Christ

Reader 3/4: Built with Grace

Reader 1: Ephesians 2: 8-10

For by grace you have been saved by faith

Reader 5/6: And this is not your own doing

Reader 2: It is the gift of God

Reader 1/3/4/5/6: LEST ANYONE SHOULD BOAST.

Prayer of Confession and Thanksgiving

Reader 1: Lord, we confess that we easily get caught in self righteousness,
Quick to justify ourselves to you with our good works,
While slow to confess where we have stumbled,
And even slower to consider where our words and actions or omissions
May have caused others to stumble.
We are thirsty for your mercy.
We are hungry for your grace.

Congregation: Lord, forgive us.

Reader 1: Lord, we confess that we are often lured into tuning our hearts
To the love song of the world,
Becoming deaf and dumb to your voice.
We are here this morning to retune,
To fix our hearts and minds on you.
We are thirsty for your mercy.
We are hungry for your grace.

Congregation: Lord, forgive us.

Reader 1: Lord we confess that we frequently get stuck in the difference between the Use
of tradition as stabilizing roots,
And justification for rigidity and lack of curiosity and imagination.
Give us the courage to really be here as your children,
Brimming with enthusiasm and fearless curiosity,
Eager to employ your imagination.
We are thirsty for your mercy.
We are hungry for your grace.

Congregation: Lord, forgive us.

Reader 1: Thank- you, Father, for never giving us a stone for bread,
Or leaving us in the desert, without your living waters.
Thank-you for being faithful even when we are not.
And when we cry out to you in hunger and thirst,
You fill us with good things.
We are reminded that you truly love us best.

Congregation: Father, for you mercy and grace, we give you thanks.

Reader 1: In the name of Jesus Christ

Congregation: Amen

Congregational Singing

Amazing Grace #143 HWB

There are many different versions of this hymn. It might be interesting to sing a couple of them together, or to choose a different style for a couple of verses. The version in HWB can be sung in unison in canon. This is great for the last verse. It can also be sung to the tune of "House of the Rising Sun" a la Blind Boys of Alabama. There is a current rendition out right now entitled "Grace Like Rain" on the album of the same name by Todd Agnew – www.toddagnew.com.

Reader 1: Built on Christ

Reader 3/4: Built with Grace

Reader 5/6: Built in Love

Reader 1: John 3: 16

I John 3: 1, 16, 18, and 4: 7, 18 – 19.

Reader 2: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
So that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Reader 1: See what love the Father has given us,
That we should be called children of God;

Reader 3/4/5/6: And so we are.

Reader 1: By this we know love,
That he laid down his life for us;

Reader 3: And we ought to lay down our lives for our sisters and our brothers.

Reader 5: Little children, let us not love in word or speech,

Reader 4/6: But in action and truth.

Reader 1: Beloved, let us love one another;
For love is of God,
And he who loves is born of God and knows God.

Reader 4: There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

Reader 3/5: For fear has to do with punishment,

Reader 6: And he who fears is not perfected in love.

Reader 1: We love because he first loved us.

Congregational Singing

Jesus loves me! # 341 HWB
My Jesus, I love thee # 522 HWB
Loving Spirit # 34 STJ
Don't be afraid #105 STJ
Jesus loves the little children

It would be wonderful to invite the children forward during the singing of "Jesus loves the little children" for the next part of the service.

Reader 1: Built on Christ

Reader 3/4: Built with Grace

Reader 5/6: Built in Love

Reader 3/4/5/6: Built for Community!

Reader 1: Ephesians 4: 15 – 16

I John 4:11

Speaking the truth in love,

We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head,

Reader 2: Into Christ

Reader 4: From whom the whole body,

Reader 5: Joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied

Reader 4: When each part is working properly

Reader 3/6: Makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.

Reader 1: Beloved, if God so loved us,

Reader 3/4/5/6: We also ought to love one another.

For this children's time, have some of your church leaders, some new members of different ages, backgrounds and genders, and some church "founders" sitting in the front pew. What we are hoping for is a good representation of diversity of the body. Invite the children to face the congregation. You will want to tailor the questions to your congregation. I have listed suggestions. You do not need to use them all. Use some questions to amuse and relax, some to inform, some to cause reflection. Use themes of history, personal preference, faith. Be careful to stay away from questions or language that manipulate or shame. We want to inspire community. You may want to include some of the children in your church in asking the questions are even designing them. If so, be sure to do this ahead of time so you can keep it safe for all. Have fun!

Children's Worship

I thought we would conduct an experiment this morning on how well we really know the people in our church. I'm guessing all of us know somebody a little bit. Many of us know many people really well, but others not so much. Some of us know very little about most of us, and very few of us, if any, know each person here by name. And truth be told, all of us would probably secretly prefer not to know at least one other person here. Shh! Remember, it's a secret. And yet, we are the body of Christ and God wants us to be knit together at every joint. This has made me very curious. And wanting some support in this experiment, I thought I would invite some of the best curious minds that I know to help. Yes, that's you. Here's the plan. We will ask the congregation some questions. If anyone's answer to the question is yes, they are to stand up. We will take a quick photo of them of them with our photographic memory to record the data and then they can sit back down. Let's first of all take a family photo for posterity. Ready? Hold up your camera. To take the picture, push down with your finger and blink really hard. On the count of three, everyone say cheese and we'll take the picture. No intentionally silly faces, this goes in God's album. Ready, 1,2,3!

Ooops, there's always one in the crowd. Try again. Ready 1,2,3! Very nice.

You can answer the questions by standing up too, if your answer is yes. Pay special attention to the front row. I'm going to ask you to make some observations about them at the end to see what we have learned. A good experiment always requires some evaluation.

Let's start with an easy one just to make sure everything is working.

- 1) Did you wake up and make it to church this morning?
- 2) Were you born outside of Canada?
- 3) Can you speak 2 or more languages?
- 4) Is English your first language?
- 5) Do you have brown eyes?
- 6) Do you shave? Anything?
- 7) Can you do the splits?
- 8) Could you do the splits at one time?
- 9) Are you an early morning person by choice?
- 10) Is your favorite season winter?
- 11) Is your favorite season summer?
- 12) Do you have a birthday this month?
- 13) Is dessert your favorite part of the meal?
- 14) Do you have a food allergy?
- 15) Do you like individual sports like golf or tennis better than team sports?
- 16) Do you play a sport?
- 17) Do you prefer to watch sports?
- 18) Do you play an instrument?
- 19) Were you ever forced to take piano lessons against your will?
- 20) Do you participate in performing arts?
- 21) Do you participate in visual arts, like drawing, sculpting, painting?
- 22) Have you shared a meal with someone from this church in the last 3 months?
- 23) Have you shared a meal with someone from your neighborhood, but not from this church in the last 3 months?
- 24) Do you prefer to sing tried and true traditional European hymns to new ones written in our time?
- 25) Do you like to sing hymns that come from other parts of the world?
- 26) Does having to learn new hymns make you a little uneasy?
- 27) Do you prefer faster hymns to slower ones?
- 28) Have you ever attended a Mennonite Church Canada assembly?
- 29) If not, would you like too?
- 30) Have you needed forgiveness this week?
- 31) Would you like to get to know at least one other person in this congregation better?
- 32) Are you ever afraid of speaking to someone you don't know yet?

So, what did you observe? What did some of the people in the front row have in common with each other? How did they differ? What did you have in common with some of the people in the front row? How did you differ from them?

God teaches us that we are all a part of the body of Christ, and we have to work together to keep it healthy and have it grow, but we don't have to be all the same. When we love each other, we don't need to be afraid of being different, just curious, because you never know what fun and friendship is waiting for you to say hello.

Let's pray.

God, thank-you for using your amazing, mysterious imagination when creating us – and then making us in your image, gifting us with an imagination of our own. Thank-you for creating us to have things in common with each other, so that we can know we belong, but different from each other, so that we keep being interested in each other and you. Give us courage to continue to use the blessing of your imagination to build relationships with you, each other and the world. Amen.

Congregational Singing

Bind us together Lord	CCLI #1228
You are salt for the earth	Bob Gillman 1977 Thank-you music
Holy Spirit, come to us	# 226 HWB (Sing the Story)

Reader 1: Built on Christ
Reader 3: Built with Grace
Reader 4: Built in Love
Reader 5: Built through Community
Reader 6: Built for Purpose

Reader 1: Ephesians 2: 19 – 22
I Corinthians 3: 16

Reader 3: So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners,

Reader 4/5: But you are fellow citizens with the saints

Reader 3/6: And members of the household of God.

Reader 2: Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

Reader 1: In whom the whole structure is joined together
And grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In whom you are also built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Reader 2: Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

You may or may not choose to have a regular sermon in this service. You could have a few people share reflections on the various themes, have a shorter meditation or ask your congregational delegates to reflect on a highlight from the assembly. This point in the service is a good spot for people to share an experience or thoughts about what it means to be the living temple of God on earth, or to have a meditation or sermon on that theme.

Congregational Singing

Beauty for Brokenness	(Sing the Story)
Hallelujah! We sing your praises!	# 88 STJ
Let us talents and tongues employ	(Sing the Story)
Will you let me be your servant	# 307

Prayers of the people

This is a good time for your personal prayers for the congregation and community. It would be good to also include the broader area church and Mennonite Church Canada on this Sunday.

Offering

God calls us to celebrate in the blessings we have received and to respond by giving of our gifts, our resources, our talents and our time. While we commission the leaders in our churches and in the broader community of Mennonite Church Canada, we are all called to the great commission. When we pray for the offering, let us conclude in praying together #796 HWB.

Lord, thank-you for giving us an appetite and thirst for you, and then filling us with good things to sustain us. We bring the bounty of those gifts back to you for your blessing and use. Please accept our offerings graciously as we pray together. . . (#796 HWB)

Amen.

You might choose an instrumental piece or sing together during the offering. If you choose to sing a suggestion would be "We will take what you offer" from the book "There is One Among Us", GIA Publishing.

Reader 1: Built on Christ
Reader 3: Built with Grace
Reader 4: Built in Love
Reader 5/6: Built through Community
Reader 3/4: Built for Purpose
All: Built to Last!

Reader 1: Revelation 21:1-4
Reader 2: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth
Reader 5: For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away,
Reader 6: And the sea was no more.
Reader 1: And I saw the holy city,
Reader 2: New Jerusalem
Reader 1: Coming down out of heaven from God,
Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,
Reader 2: Behold, the dwelling of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people,
And God himself will be with them
Reader 3: He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,
Reader 4: And death shall be no more
Reader 5: Neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more.
All: For the former things have passed away.

Congregational Singing:

New earth, heavens new #299 HWB

Benediction

You might choose an instrumental piece or sing together during the offering. If you choose to sing a suggestion would be "We will take what you offer" from the book "There is One Among Us", GIA Publishing.

Congregational singing as the congregation leaves:

Siyahamba (We are marching in the light of God)
African Folk Song from the book "Freedom is Coming", Walton Music

Ameni
From the book "There is One Among Us", GIA Publications