

NEWS RELEASE

October 31, 2003
For Immediate Release

***Strengthening Civil Societies:
One-Day Conference Joins
Voices from Communities Around the World***

WINNIPEG—The concept of civil society is gaining popularity in government, academia, and the popular media. But what does it mean, and what does civil society look like in different geographical and cultural settings?

From Winnipeg's North End to the Middle East's West Bank, global experts will share their experiences and ideas at an upcoming conference, hosted by Menno Simons College.

***Strengthening Civil Societies:
Voices from Communities Around the World***
Tuesday, November 4, 2003
9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Booth College Auditorium
Winnipeg, MB
(Corner of Ellice and Colony)

When asked for their views on civil society, conference speakers had a variety of responses:

•**Dr. Kabiru Kinyanjui** is the Esau Distinguished Visiting Professor in International Development Studies at Menno Simons College this year. His home is in Nairobi, Kenya, where he is Chair of the Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa, and serves as a consultant in peace and development issues in several countries.

What does civil society mean to you?

It means citizens getting together to act in a way that expands their space in dealing with concerns, which in normal circumstances are not dealt with by the state or the market.

What one thing could an individual do - starting today - that would make a contribution to civil society?

The one thing I think a citizen can do is to join with others in working in areas of human concern. This can be in a neighbourhood, or an area of international development.

•**Josie Hill** is the Executive Director of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in Winnipeg. She has worked in Aboriginal social services in the inner city for 25 years. Previously, she served as the founding director of the Andrew's Street Family Centre and directed the Native Women's Centre.

What does civil society mean to you?

Everyone is respected and included.

What one thing could an individual do - starting today - that would make a contribution to civil society?

Take time to get to know people ... building relationships and recognizing individuals' strengths.

•**Hani Alubeady** was born in Iraq and lived there until he was exiled in 1990. He completed his undergraduate studies in political science and religious studies in the Middle East. He currently works for Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council as a counselor in its settlement department.

What does civil society mean to you?

Civil society means the fertile land in which to plant the seed of freedom and genuine democracy.

What one thing could an individual do - starting today - that would make a contribution to civil society?

To gain a universal knowledge about the main causes of humanity's suffering, and find the practical solutions for it.

For more complete details on this one-day conference, please read the attached brochure text or visit www.uwinnipeg.ca

For more information, please contact:

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Strengthening Civil Societies: Voices from Communities around the World

A one-day conference

November 4, 2003

Presented by

Menno Simons College

Affiliated with the University of Winnipeg
A College of Canadian Mennonite University

In Cooperation with:

Authur Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice
Booth College
Canadian Lutheran World Relief
Manitoba Council for International Cooperation
Mennonite Central Committee Canada

Location: Auditorium, Booth College (Corner of Ellice & Colony) Winnipeg

Overview

The concept of “civil society” is gaining popularity in academic and government circles, and in the popular media. What does civil society look like in different geographical and cultural settings? How do we strengthen civil society? Is “civil society” simply the latest remedy of Western development agencies, or does it have currency elsewhere?

In this conference, we will hear the accounts of individuals working to strengthen civil society in a wide range of settings around the globe. They have been chosen because they represent or work in non-Western settings. Listen to their voices, reflect on your own experiences, and ponder the similarities and differences.

In cooperation with our co-sponsors, Menno Simons College presents *Strengthening Civil Societies: Voices from Communities around the World* for the university and general community. It is an opportunity for academics and students to interact with practitioners and alumni.

Speakers:

Josie Hill is the Executive Director of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in Winnipeg. She has worked in aboriginal social services in the inner city for 25 years. Previously she served as the founding director of the Andrew's Street Family Centre and directed the Native Women's Centre.

Dr. Kabiru Kinyanjui is the Esau Distinguished Visiting Professor in International Development Studies at Menno Simons College this year. He lives in Nairobi, Kenya, where he is Chairman of the Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa, and serves as a consultant in peace and development issues in several countries.

Nanette McKay is the Executive Director of the North End Community Renewal Corporation in Winnipeg. She grew up in Fisher River, Manitoba, studied Arts at the University of Winnipeg and theology at St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon, but is learning all her best stuff in the North End.

Ed Nyce is a Peace Development Worker with Mennonite Central Committee in Israel and Palestine. He previously was the Assistant Director of the Lombard (IL) Mennonite Peace Center, and worked in peace education through other church-related groups in the United States.

Gladys Oyat is the Head Teacher at Y.Y. Okot Girls College, Kitgum, Uganda. Her many activities include being President of the Mothers' Union of the Anglican Church of Uganda, and serving as an advisor to the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative.

Program

- 8:15 a.m. Registration
- 9:00 a.m. Welcome –Jerry Buckland, Menno Simons College
- 9:15 a.m. Keynote Address
“Questioning Civil Society” –*Kabiru Kinyanjui*
NPI-Africa, Esau Distinguished Visiting Professor at Menno Simons College
- 10:15 a.m. Break
- 10:45 a.m. “Strategic and Spontaneous Community Economic Development” – *Nanette McKay*, North End Community Renewal Corp., Winnipeg
“Aboriginal Value-based Services: Our Capacity Building Journey” -*Josie Hill*, Ma Mawi Chi Itata Centre, Winnipeg
- 12:00 Networking Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. “Peace and Development in the Midst of War” - *Gladys Oyat*, Y.Y. Okot Girls College, Kitgum, Uganda
- 2:00 p.m. Break
- 2:15 p.m. “Stones, Walls, and other Challenges in Building Civil Society” – *Ed Nyce*, Peace Development Worker, Mennonite Central Committee, Israel and Palestine
- 3:30 p.m. Reflection and Integration
Moderator: *Dean Peachey*, Menno Simons College (MSC)
Kabiru Kinyanjui, Visiting Professor, MSC
Ruth Rempel, International Development Studies, MSC
George Richert, former President, MSC
Ray Vander Zaag, International Development Studies, MSC
- 4:30 p.m. Adjournment