



# Anabaptist Network News

## Conferences ... Conferences ... Conferences

Generally the Anabaptist Network organises one or two conferences a year in various locations and on different topics, often in partnership with other groups in order to benefit from cross-fertilising. In November 2006 we co-sponsored an event at Cliff College exploring the contributions of Anabaptist and Methodist traditions to the subject of discipleship, which 50 people attended (a report can be found on our website).

But over the next few months we are either organising or participating in several conferences or courses:

### 14 April 2007: Preaching in a Changing Culture

Co-sponsored with Cell UK and YWAM in Harpenden (Herts), an opportunity to explore alternatives to monologue sermons and the development of learning communities. Further details in the accompanying brochure.

### 26-28 May 2007: Anabaptist Network Residential Conference

Once again at Barnes Close, near Birmingham, the theme this year is *Worship and Mission after Christendom*, with guests Alan & Eleanor Kreider, who will be exploring themes from the book with the same title they are writing in the 'After Christendom' series. Not many spaces left so book soon to secure your place.

### 30 May-2 June: Post-Christendom: a short course

Scargill House conference centre (North Yorks) has invited Jonathan Bartley and Stuart Murray Williams to present a short course on the subject of post-Christendom, drawing on the first three books in the 'After Christendom' series. For details contact [www.scargillhouse.co.uk](http://www.scargillhouse.co.uk)

### 6-8 June: Anabaptist Theology Forum

We are taking advantage of Alan & Eleanor Kreider's visit to the UK to schedule a meeting of the theology forum at which they will be the guest speakers. This will be held at Launde Abbey in Leicestershire (£61.50 for the 25-hour event). If you are interested, please contact us for further details.

### 3 May 2008: Anabaptist Network and Northumbria Community

Looking rather further ahead, we have fixed a date for another conference co-sponsored with the Northumbria Community. Each of our three previous joint events has attracted over 100 participants, so we are looking forward to another stimulating conversation. More details to follow, but this is advance warning.

We are also exploring other conference possibilities, including:

- A Baptist/Anabaptist conference in Prague
- A joint Quaker/Anabaptist event
- A second Anabaptist/Methodist conference

## Stop Press!

On **Friday 23 February**, Lloyd Pietersen is hosting a 'Morning with Tom Finger' in Bristol, inviting him to present insights from his *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology*. For details contact 0117 969 9993 or [lloyd.pietersen@btinternet.com](mailto:lloyd.pietersen@btinternet.com)

## Events

### 23 February 2007

Morning with Tom Finger in Bristol

### 24-25 February 2007

Second weekend of the *Crucible* course in Birmingham

### 24-25 February 2007

SPEAK's annual gathering in London

### 19-23 March 2007

Bridge Builders 5-day course at Swanwick

### 14 April 2007

Anabaptist Network/Cell UK: *Preaching in a Changing Culture* at Harpenden, Herts

### 13 May 2007

Urban Expression 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary event at Toynbee Hall, London

### 26-28 May 2007

Residential conference at Barnes Close with Alan & Ellie Kreider

### 30 May-2 June 2007

*Post-Christendom: a short course*: Scargill House, Yorkshire

### 6-8 June 2007

Anabaptist Theology Forum: Launde Abbey

### 11-15 June 2007

Bridge Builders 5-day course at the London Mennonite Centre

### 30 June-1 July 2007

Third weekend of the *Crucible* course

## The Kreiders are coming!

We are looking forward to a further visit to the UK of our dear friends, **Alan & Eleanor Kreider** – their final working trip here.

They will be arriving on 22 May and returning to the USA on 11 June. Their schedule is a mix of visits to friends, speaking at events and some free time to reconnect with England, where they lived for 30 years until 2000. Full details of their schedule will be on our website, so check this out if you are hoping to meet up with them while they are here.

We are delighted that they will be joining us for our residential conference on 26-28 May and for a theology forum on 6-7 June. They will also be speaking at events in Swindon (24 May), Leeds (30 May) and London (2 June).

For further details or to find out about meeting up with Alan & Ellie, please contact us.

## After Christendom Series

Reviews of Jonathan Bartley's *Faith and Politics after Christendom* (generally very positive) are starting to appear. Jonathan presented material from his book on 5 & 12 February at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity and will do so again at Scargill House (30 May-2 June).

Lloyd Pietersen is currently writing *Reading the Bible after Christendom*, and Alan and Eleanor Kreider are writing *Worship and Mission after Christendom*. We hope both these books will be published in 2008. Other authors and subjects are still being finalised – more news soon.

We have also been encouraged that references to and extracts from the first two books in the series are appearing in other publications – not least in two recent books that both operate with the same 'after Christendom' framework:

\* Craig Carter's *Rethinking Christ and Culture: a post-Christendom perspective* is a critique of H. Richard Niebuhr's classic, *Christ and Culture*, offering a constructive alternative approach to how Christians after Christendom engage with culture.

\* Michael Frost's *Exiles: living missionally in a post-Christian culture* is a call for the creation of missional communities that incarnate the gospel authentically in a post-Christendom culture.

We have also learned that Epworth Press have commissioned a multi-authored sequel to David Clark's *Breaking the Mould of Christendom* (this also refers to our series), and David has invited Stuart Murray Williams to write a chapter in this, offering an Anabaptist perspective.

The 'After Christendom' series and many other books on similar subjects can be ordered via [www.metanoiabooks.org.uk](http://www.metanoiabooks.org.uk)

## Study Groups

The re-launched **Bristol** group has already met three times with 15-16 present. For information, contact Sian Pullin: [sianpullin@hotmail.com](mailto:sianpullin@hotmail.com)

In March 2006 **David Kirkman**, who convenes the Lockerbie group, hosted an Anabaptist day conference near his home in Scotland. He has posted a report on that event on our website and hopes to organise a further event, probably in March or April 2007. If anyone is interested, please contact him on 01576 510440.

## Greenbelt 2007

The Anabaptist Network, rather than having its own stand at the Greenbelt Festival (on 24-27 August), will partner with other Root and Branch groups in a dedicated zone that will give us all a higher profile and an opportunity to put on some seminars during the event.

If you are coming to Greenbelt and would like to be involved in this, please let us know.

## Invitation to Join a Community

We have received some information that might be of interest to some readers. *The Neighbours Community*, founded in 1984, a residential ecumenical community in Northampton, expects shortly to have space for new members. The accommodation available is three houses and totals ten bedrooms and six living rooms. These can be divided in various ways to accommodate 'households' of any size between one person and six people. There is a large shared garden. One house is for sale and the others are for rent or for sale, whichever is preferred.

For more details, contact Pam (01604 635853 or Roger (01604 633918), email [rog@fish.co.uk](mailto:rog@fish.co.uk)

## Root and Branch Partners

We have quite a bit of news from some of our partners in the Root and Branch network, so we are devoting a larger than usual section of the newsletter to them this time:

### SPEAK

Jo Frew writes: 'Soundcheck on 24-25 February is the annual gathering of the SPEAK Network; a network of students and young adults who pray and campaign on issues of global injustice. Tony Campolo, a leading speaker and activist, will help us to explore the exciting promises of justice and freedom for the oppressed found in the Bible. Come and join us as we celebrate our hope for real change and be empowered and equipped to campaign, pray and share our faith. The programme includes workshops, creative activities, worship, prayer, networking and time to find out more about an inspiring project – the Big Dress Tour.' For details ring 020 7249 4309 or visit [www.speak.org.uk/sc07](http://www.speak.org.uk/sc07)

### Workshop

Noel Moules reported in the last newsletter that plans were afoot for redesigning the course. He writes now with an update: 'We are planning in detail now the new shape we are bringing to the programme from September 2007 (in Bristol and Birmingham) and from September 2008 (in London and the North). The idea is to make the course available to more people around the country, by running it as self-contained themed weekends. People can attend as many, or few, as they choose, giving much greater choice.

'Workshop will be comprised of twelve themed weekends, running over a cycle of two years (six weekends, one every other month, each year). The programme should be imagined as a continuously gently turning carousel which you can jump on and off of as you wish. The details will be available on [www.workshop.co.uk](http://www.workshop.co.uk) in the very near future.

'Workshop will be accredited by the University of Wales, Lampeter at Level 1 HE. While people can study on Workshop for enjoyment with no portfolio requirements, those who are looking to achieve an academic qualification can work towards 10 credits per weekend. Over a period of 18 months to two years they can gain the 120 credits needed to fulfil the requirements of the first-year Certificate stage towards a university degree. This opens the door to further study on Advanced Workshop (also accredited by Lampeter) – either towards a Diploma (Level 2

HE) or a License in Theology (Level 3 HE) – depending on what prior learning credit people bring to the course.

'Please pray for us in this vital planning period. We will run the "traditional" form of the course in London and Leeds (for one last time and ideal for people who want to do everything in just one year) from September 2007. From the same date the new format will begin in Birmingham and Bristol. Pray that the response will be very positive to both formats next year and that the teams and the administration will manage to run both forms of the course at the same time (just for one year!).

'If you have any thoughts about these new Workshop ideas please don't hesitate to send them to me via e-mail [office@anvil.org.uk](mailto:office@anvil.org.uk).'

### Advanced Workshop

Lloyd Pietersen writes: 'On 20 January 2007 the first cohort of Advanced Workshop students received their Licence in Theology (LTh) from the University of Wales Lampeter. Ten students achieved the award (the equivalent of the third year of a theology degree) with three gaining a distinction and the others passing with merit. There was an excellent speech by Minna Shkul of Lampeter praising the students on the quality of their work, and an inspiring address by Noel Moules, the founder of Workshop.



'Advanced Workshop is now taking bookings for the next course which starts in October. AW runs over two years with students attending lectures in Birmingham over the course of one weekend every other month. If you have done Workshop before and have a first degree in any subject, or professional equivalent, then you are eligible for the LTh. AW involves an in depth examination of Christian Ethics, Apologetics and Hermeneutics. A key feature of the course is genuine inter-faith dialogue with scholars who are committed practitioners of other faiths.' For further details please email Lloyd Pietersen at [advancedworkshop@anvil.org.uk](mailto:advancedworkshop@anvil.org.uk).

## Urban Expression

On Sunday 13 May there is an afternoon event at Toynbee Hall, East London, to commemorate *Urban Expression's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday*. Juliet Kilpin writes: 'Since the first team settled in Shadwell, Urban Expression has grown and developed – often quite unexpectedly. Seven teams have invested time and energy in East and South-East London throughout these ten years.

'Then in 2006 a team emerged in Manchester and leaders were appointed to develop a work in Glasgow. Over 40 people have given at least three years to inner-city church planting, many longer. And we now have a network of 130+ Associates in Britain and overseas.

'We feel that it is the right time to reflect on what we have learnt and celebrate our ongoing development. This event is also an opportunity to launch a booklet Stuart Murray Williams and I have written on inner-city church planting.' For an invitation, contact Lisa Young on 0207 790 0106 or [enquiries@urbanexpression.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@urbanexpression.org.uk)

## Crucible

The *Crucible* training course (run by Workshop, Urban Expression and Alove) is in its second year. 27 people participated in the first weekend in Birmingham in October and 30+ are already booked in for the second weekend on 24-25 February, when the subject is *urban mission*. The final weekend this year is on 30 June-1 July. Still room for anyone interested. Details can be found at [www.cruciblecourse.net](http://www.cruciblecourse.net)

## Bridge Builders

Alastair McKay describes forthcoming courses:

\* 22-25 May 2007: *Church Leadership and Family Systems*, led by Richard Blackburn at the London Mennonite Centre. This course is designed to enhance the ability of participants to function as mature leaders in their churches. It will provide a safe forum for processing challenging situations in ministry, while also facilitating reflection on a way of thinking about the human condition which has implications for all aspects of life. With today's rising level of anxiety in society and its resulting impact on families, such anxiety will affect the church with increasing intensity in the years ahead. The resulting heightened pressures in congregations and the increasing demands which that places

on clergy make it vital that leaders step back occasionally from the fray to assess their own capacity to manage themselves in a calmer, more differentiated way.

\* 11-15 June 2007: *Skills Training for Mediation and Facilitation in the Church*, led by the Bridge Builders team. Conflict is normal and inevitable – but Christians often feel ill-prepared to handle conflict in the church. This course is designed to equip us with skills for responding constructively to conflict. It explores conflict within us, between individuals and within the congregation. It aims to raise self-awareness, develop understanding of conflict and teach how to facilitate resolution and transformation of conflicts, particularly via mediation.

## An Anabaptist Limerick!

Many thanks to Alan Kreider for sending us this Anabaptist limerick written by T F Schlabach:

In Mennonite lore,  
You need not say more,  
One word is always the aptest,  
What 'ere we construe  
To be good, to be true  
We dub with the word 'Anabaptist!'

## Contact Us

For further information about anything you have read in this newsletter, please contact us. And if you have information you would like included in the next newsletter, please let us have this by **30 April 2007**.

Please let us know if you change your address, if you would be willing to receive newsletters by email to help us save postage costs, or if you no longer wish to receive them.

You can also contact us via the contact form on our **website** (our apologies that this was out of action recently for a while). Do visit the site from time to time as we continue to add material to it. This month we have added a further article on interactive preaching and some more book and film reviews. If you have suggestions for content or spot problems on the site, do let us know.

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