



Anabaptist Network News

Youth Work after Christendom

The fourth title in the 'After Christendom' series is now with the publisher and we are looking forward to launching this at an event in Birmingham on **8 July**.

When we were planning the series, we expected to commission volumes on worship and mission, faith and politics, using the Bible, church life, discipleship and ethics, and several other topics. Some of these have since been published; others are being written and will be published in the next couple of years. But *Youth Work after Christendom* was not on our list.

But when Nigel and Jo Pimlott approached us and proposed this additional title, we were both surprised and delighted. They had read *Post-Christendom* and had realised that this perspective on mission and culture had many implications for youth work, especially youth work on the margins of society. Youth work, in fact, was another lens through which to investigate the Christendom legacy; just as post-Christendom was a new lens through which to search for appropriate and creative forms of youth work in a changing culture.

It has been fascinating to learn more about the influence of the Christendom mindset on youth work practice and to imagine alternative approaches that may be better suited to post-Christendom. Those who engage with young people and youth culture have long been aware of the impact of the cultural shift from modernity to post-modernity. Here is an invitation to take a fresh look at current and future youth work assumptions, expectations and priorities in light of a rather different (though not unrelated) cultural shift.

If youth culture represents the leading edge of cultural and societal change, or at least reflects the pressures and possibilities emerging in our society, this volume may be one of the most important in the 'After Christendom' series. For if we can re-imagine and re-shape youth work for a post-Christendom culture, perhaps other dimensions of ecclesial and missional transformation will follow.

Our hope is that *Youth Work after Christendom* will be an invaluable resource to youth workers, stimulating their thinking and enhancing their ability to engage sensitively and contextually with young people in and beyond the churches. We hope, too, that this volume will introduce post-Christendom perspectives to those who might otherwise not recognise their significance, but who will be inspired by reading this book to look at many other dimensions of life and faith from this distinctive angle of vision. And for those who have read the earlier volumes, here is another – maybe unexpected – subject that cannot remain unaffected by the demise of Christendom and the coming of the strange new world of post-Christendom.

If you are free to join us for the launch event, you would be welcome. The event will be hosted by Anthony Collins Solicitors at 134 Edmund Street, Birmingham B3 2ES. The cost is £17.50, but this includes a free copy of the book, lunch and refreshments. To book a place, send your contact details and a cheque made payable to 'FYT' to Jo Fitzsimmons, Frontier Youth Trust, Unit 208b, The Big Peg, 120 Vyse Street, Birmingham B18 6NF. Or you can download a booking form from www.anabaptistnetwork.com/node/449

Events

2-7 March 2008

Bridge Builders event:
Skills Training for Mediation and Facilitation in the Church in London

8 March 2008

Jesus and Muhammad for Muslims and Christians event at the London Mennonite Centre

3 May 2008

New Habits for a New Era? Anabaptist Network/Northumbria Community event in Coventry

5-6 July 2008

Third weekend of the *Crucible* course in Birmingham

8 July 2008

Youth Work after Christendom: launch event in Birmingham

18-20 July 2008

London Mennonite Theology Forum near Bath: *Responsibility to Protect*

9 October 2008

Incarnational Mission Conference with Mike Frost in Oxford

18 October 2008

Second Preaching in a Changing Culture conference in Selly Oak, Birmingham

Events

In addition to the book launch mentioned on the front page, we are also looking forward to some other events in 2008.

Coming up fast is ***New Habits for a New Era*** on Saturday 3 May, sponsored by the Network and the Northumbria Community. More details on the accompanying leaflet. Please book in for this soon if you plan to be there – and apologies to Baptists that this clashes with their Assembly.

Then there are two events in October. The first is on 9 October in Oxford, organised by our Root & Branch partners, Urban Expression, at which Michael Frost will explore the subject of ***Incarnational Mission***. Michael is the author of *Exiles: living missionally in a post-Christian culture* (which resonates strongly with our own 'After Christendom' series). Further information at www.urbanexpression.org.uk or on request.

The second, ***Preaching in a Changing Culture*** at the International Mission Centre in Selly Oak, is on 18 October. This is an opportunity to take further the ideas we explored last April in a day conference on this subject, especially practical alternatives to monologue sermons. Details at www.anabaptistnetwork.com or on request.

Peacemakers

Ruth Carter and **Karen Stallard**, members of the Anabaptist Network, have developed a new children's holiday club called ***Peacemakers***, which they have run twice now in East London. Ruth explains: 'The main aim of the clubs is to respond to the words of Jesus, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God", in a non-coercive and inclusive way.

'***Peacemakers*** helps children aged between four and eleven to build relationships across cultural boundaries and provides opportunities for them to see positive relationships modelled across different cultures. It enables them to explore for themselves what a peacemaker's response to a situation might look like.

'***Peacemakers*** is a themed learning experience for children of different ages. This has been well received and through it we have made contact with fifty children over the two years. Almost all of the children who came the first year returned for the second year and are already asking for a third year!

'***Peacemakers*** has just been published. It has absolutely everything you need to run a holiday club set in a circus for four-to-eleven year-olds for two hours a day for five days. The material includes a CD of all the songs, drama scripts, policies ... everything! It is on sale for £10.00 plus p+p from Metanoia Book Service (0845 450 0214 or www.metanoiabooks.org.uk

Study groups

Meg Harper, who convenes and hosts the new study group in Warwick, invites anyone nearby who wants to join this group to contact her. She reports on their recent meeting: 'Six of us met for our evening of sin and a merry old time we had! For our next meeting, we're going to bite the bullet and (now we know what sin actually is [yeah, right]) we're going to look at Atonement. The date will be May 24 at 6.30pm, starting with a shared meal. We will meet at 6 Turner Close, Warwick, CV34 6PZ.' meg4ever@greenbee.net

Joan and Barry Williamson, who host the study group in Leyland, have a new email address: banjoq@phonecoop.coop

An invitation

We've just received a letter which might be of interest to some of you. **Daniel Rutland** writes:

'I'm writing to let you know about a project being developed by folk connected with *Servants to Asia's Urban Poor*, www.servantsasia.org. This is an organisation that has so far confined its main activities to Asia's megacities, but is now exploring the possibility of starting communities in the west, especially in neighbourhoods with a high Asian population. The first team in the UK is likely to relocate to Southall, London, in the autumn.

'*Servants* is not a member of the Anabaptist Network, but we share many values. Our key principles of incarnation, community, holism, servanthood and simplicity connect with many concerns I have encountered in the pages of the Anabaptist Network newsletter.

'We are keen to draw on the experiences of others and hope that there will be opportunities to make contact with Anabaptist folk as we set out on this journey. The details are sketchy at the moment, but I'd be happy to pass on more to anyone interested as things develop. We

are also looking for people who might be open to joining this missional community.

'My thanks for all the insight and inspiration that I have drawn from your way of understanding and living the gospel.'

For more information, contact Daniel Rutland at daniel.rutland@yahoo.co.uk

London Mennonite Theology Forum 2008: Responsibility to Protect

What is the responsibility of the international community when a state is unable or unwilling to protect its own people? This question, long debated under the heading of "humanitarian intervention", has, in recent years, been a major focus of attention in both the United Nations and the World Council of Churches.

In 2001, the UN's International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty released a report entitled 'The Responsibility to Protect' which concluded that sovereign states have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from avoidable catastrophe. If they fail to do so, that responsibility must be borne by the international community. This may necessitate the use of armed intervention.

Since 2001, the WCC has been involved in discussions about the Church's support for what has become known as R2P. The Historic Peace Churches, represented by the Mennonites and Quakers, were involved in these discussions and their input was taken very seriously. The result of the discussions was an affirmation of R2P by the WCC's 9th Assembly in February 2006, even if such responsibility requires the use of force. Recently, the WCC's executive committee declared that this applies to the Darfur region of Sudan and Chad.

For Christian pacifists who oppose the use of violence, this is a serious dilemma. Should we support R2P on the grounds that such armed intervention, while always destructive, might sometimes be required to protect human life? Is such a response a compromise of the radical non-violence of Jesus, which prohibits us from supporting any standard that might require armed force? Is there a middle ground, or a way to promote a non-violent understanding of R2P? Can Christian pacifism be flexible?

We will explore this at the London Mennonite Theology Forum (18-20 July), which will be held in conjunction with the regional conference of Church & Peace Britain & Ireland.

Joining us will be Doug Hostetter, Mennonite Central Committee Liaison to the UN, who has been involved in discussions on R2P at the UN level; Hansuli Gerber, coordinator of the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence, who has been involved in the discussions; and Marie-Noëlle von der Recke, General Secretary of Church & Peace.

The forum will be held at the beautiful and irenic Ammerdown Retreat Centre, near Bath. The cost for the weekend, including registration and an en-suite room, is £110 for a double and £125 for a single. To book, contact Janelle Thiessen on 0208 340 8775 or jthiessen@menno.org.uk. For more information, email Vic Thiessen at victhiessen@menno.org.uk

Root & Branch Partners

If you thought you were a subscriber to the bi-monthly Root & Branch emails but wonder why you have not received these recently, we have just discovered that an upgrade to the system accidentally knocked out the address list!

If you want to continue to receive these emails (which are free of charge), please go to the website (www.rootandbranch.org.uk) and sign up again. We're sorry about this glitch.

Urban Expression

Wanted – pioneers with Anabaptist values to join inner-city church planting teams in London, Manchester and Glasgow. To find out more, visit www.urbanexpression.org.uk

The **Crucible** course continues in Birmingham. The third and final weekend is on 5-6 July on the subject of *Emerging Church*. For information and to book, see www.cruciblecourse.net

Speak

'SPEAK is looking for an energetic project/event co-ordinator with experience of incorporating artistic and creative contributions into events and skilled in administration.

'SPEAK seeks to bring together campaigns with creativity and spirituality and you will work with

a varied group of passionate young adults to implement their vision for global justice. You will be responsible for co-ordinating our activities, including our Big Dress festivals, and also for developing the participation and input of the Network.

'This is a maternity cover post with evening and weekend commitments compensated for by a time in lieu system, to start in March 2007. Pay begins at £16,000 depending on experience.

'Contact Tamara on tamara@speak.org.uk for more details and an application pack.'

Workshop

'The new-style Workshop programme is well underway in Bristol and Birmingham. Please pray for increasing numbers and that this will become more widely known.

'We are planning towards the expansion of the programme in London, Leeds and Manchester from September 2008. The aim is to make the Workshop experience more widely available to more people in a much more flexible format with the opportunity either to participate in individual weekends or link them together to make a more complete programme.

'Why don't you come and see for yourself, enjoy two themed weekends during March and June, bring along friends?'

Peace & Power: 1-2 March 2008 (Bristol); 5-6 April (Birmingham) 09.00-17.00 (both days)

Mission & Compassion: 3-4 May 2008 (Bristol); 7-8 June (Birmingham) 09.00-17.00 (both days)

Cost £80 (this includes teaching, group work, handouts, refreshments, full notes available on-line after the weekend) – bring a packed lunch, £40 for students and unwaged. Discounts for groups can be arranged. Pre-book or enrol on the day.

Call 01142888816; visit www.workshop.org.uk (for more details) or email admin@anvil.org.uk

London Mennonite Centre

The library, which contains the best selection of Anabaptist-related books in the country, is now online at www.menno.org.uk: go to the website and click on 'library'.

The Cross-Currents programme includes the following over the next few months:

8 March: **Jesus and Muhammad for Muslims and Christians** with Chris Hewer. Chris will be exploring the role of Jesus in the Qur'an, in Muslim tradition and in the lives of Muslims today, and offering some reflections on these from a Christian perspective. He will also help us gain a deeper knowledge of Muhammad and his importance for Muslims, and discuss how Muhammad might be an example to Christians.

4-6 April: **Finding God at the Movies 2: A Weekend on Film and Spirituality** with Vic Thiessen

26 April: **The Church as a Hostel: Living Hospitality** with Andrea Lange. The church is a community of guests and hosts. Hospitality is a prominent feature of Anabaptist-oriented church life. Hospitality offers challenges and surprises: the Bible says we may even be accommodating angels. This seminar will explore the biblical features of hospitality as well as the ways our churches can put these into practice.

For further information contact 0845 450 0214 or see www.menno.org.uk/crosscurrents.

Contact Us

For further information about anything you have read in this newsletter, please contact us.

And if you have information or news items you would like included in the next newsletter, let us have these items no later than **30 April 2008**.

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.

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