



# Anabaptist Network News

## Anabaptists at Greenbelt 2007

We mentioned in the last newsletter that the Anabaptist Network, rather than having our own stand this year at the Greenbelt Festival (on 24-27 August), will partner with other **Root and Branch** groups in a zone in the main marketplace tent. This will give us all a higher profile and an opportunity to organise some seminars in this zone during the event.

Eight groups will be involved in this partnership: Urban Expression, Workshop, Crucible, London Mennonite Centre, Wood Green Mennonite Church, Ekklesia, Peace School and the Anabaptist Network. We are involved in a wide range of activities – church planting, training, media work, mediation, etc. – but have shared values and strong relational links. This offers the chance to put on some interesting and boundary-crossing seminars and to encourage visitors to think about what holds such diverse groups together.

If you are coming to Greenbelt and would like to be involved in this zone, either helping with the stands or participating in a seminar, please get in touch with Vic Thiessen on 0845 450 0214.

## Anabaptist Network Residential Conference

Our residential conference at Barnes Close on 26-28 May was fully booked and we welcomed back to the UK Alan & Eleanor Kreider, who took the opportunity to test out the ideas they will be exploring in their forthcoming contribution to the 'After Christendom' series, *Worship and Mission after Christendom*.

Alan and Eleanor spoke eight times over the weekend and the response to their teaching was enthusiastic. Worship, they said, enables us to celebrate the big story of God's mission to reconcile and restore the whole of creation and to be shaped by our worship of God so that we can participate in God's mission. The rituals and practices of the gathered Christian community are to build us up and to inspire and guide us as we scatter throughout the week and look for ways of joining in with what God is doing. Worship should not be designed primarily to attract outsiders but to equip Christians to live attractive and question-posing lives.

This was a rich and challenging weekend, enlivened further by dramatic storytelling based on sixteenth-century Anabaptist texts and by worshipping together with the help of *Take our Moments and our Days*, the Anabaptist prayer book which Eleanor is helping to develop (and which can be downloaded from the website [www.ambs.edu](http://www.ambs.edu)).

Alan and Eleanor (who were founder members of the Anabaptist Network) also spoke at Bristol Baptist College and at a well-attended event in Swindon before the residential conference, and travelled on to meet up with old friends and to speak again at the London Mennonite Centre, at the Anabaptist theology forum and in Portadown before returning to Elkhart, Indiana, where they now live. This was their last official teaching trip to the UK but they may well be back again to visit friends.

## Events

**30 June-1 July 2007**  
Third weekend of the *Crucible* course

**30 June 2007**  
Scottish Anabaptist conference *Church and State: the need for role definitions*

**2-6 July 2007**  
Bridge Builders: five-day *Congregational Conflict Consulting* course at LMC

**13 September 2007**  
LMC table talk on *Corruption and the Work of Transparency International*

**19 September 2007**  
Bridge Builders' first *Church Mediation* conference in East London

**29 September 2007**  
Cross Currents day on *Storytelling*

**8-12 October 2007**  
Bridge Builders *Skills training for mediation and facilitation in the church*, in Durham

**13 October 2007**  
Cross Currents day on *Photography as a spiritual discipline*

**20-21 October 2007**  
First weekend of *Crucible 2007-2008*

**3 May 2008**  
Anabaptist Network and Northumbria Community event

## Interactive Preaching

Over 50 people took part in the *Preaching in a Changing Culture* conference on 14 April, which the Network organised in partnership with Cell Church UK and YWAM. This was the first joint venture with these groups and might lead on to further partnerships.

If you want to listen to the main talks by Stuart Murray Williams and Laurence Singlehurst, CD recordings can be obtained for £4 each from Cell UK Ministries: Highfield Oval, Harpenden, Herts AL5 4BX (01582 463232).

We have received an enquiry about running this event again in a different location in the autumn – more details on the website if we are able to respond to this invitation.

There was considerable interest in interactive and multi-voiced alternatives to the monologue sermon and a request for practical resources. One participant in the event immediately bought the domain name <http://interactivepreaching.net> in the hope that we might be able to construct a website offering such resources and enabling us to share experiences. If you are interested in contributing towards this, please let us know.

## Study Groups

There has been a sudden burst of interest in starting new study groups:

**Northampton:** Graham Old is hosting a new study group here, which met for the first time at the end of May. Contact Graham at The Manse, Welland Way, Northampton NN5 7NB (01604 510893) [geold@anabaptist.co.uk](mailto:geold@anabaptist.co.uk).

**Warwick:** Meg Harper is starting a new group here in June. Contact Meg at 6, Turner Close, Warwick, CV34 6PZ (01926 400450) [meg@the-harpers.fslife.co.uk](mailto:meg@the-harpers.fslife.co.uk).

**Teesside:** there is interest in starting a group in this area too. If you want more details, contact Ian Guy at [iantguy@gmail.com](mailto:iantguy@gmail.com).

## Penal Substitution Revisited

During the long-running debate on the issue of atonement and the motif of penal substitution, in which some Network members were involved,

some people wondered about Tom Wright's position. Respected New Testament scholar, his endorsement on the cover of Steve Chalke's *The Lost Message of Jesus* (which sparked the debate) provoked much interest. But he did not choose to contribute – until now.

In April a lengthy article on the Fulcrum website ([www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk](http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk)) offered him an opportunity to comment on this debate, critique a lengthy defence of penal substitution, *Pierced for our Transgressions* by three conservative evangelicals, and set out his own thinking.

Those interested can read this long article, but essentially Wright suggests that *Christus Victor* is the overarching framework for understanding atonement; that there are different forms of penal substitution, of which he endorses one that differs from the crude retributive version; that atonement should be understood in the biblical narrative context rather than extracted from this; that Jesus left us with a meal rather than a theory as we reflect on the meaning of the cross; and that atonement theories must not marginalise the Gospels.

Although not all will find this argument entirely persuasive, it is a helpful contribution. Readers of this newsletter may be intrigued by various Anabaptist resonances (focus on the Gospels, narrative, meal and the *Christus Victor* motif) in the writings of someone who is no Anabaptist!

## After Christendom Series

Our publisher has informed us that nearly 9,000 copies of the first three books in the series have now been sold, and they continue to sell well. It has also been encouraging to hear that they are appearing on various college reading lists. The 'after Christendom' lens is being used by people from many traditions now to think about mission and discipleship in contemporary culture.

Three further books are currently being written: Lloyd Pietersen is writing *Using the Bible after Christendom*; Alan & Eleanor Kreider are writing *Worship and Mission after Christendom* (about which they spoke at the Network's residential conference) and Nigel Pimlott is writing *Youth Work after Christendom*. We hope all three will be published by the end of 2008.

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

We are also planning in the next few weeks to develop further the website that offers people an opportunity to debate the issues raised by the series ([www.postchristendom.org.uk](http://www.postchristendom.org.uk)). We will include an article by John Colwell entitled 'In defence of Christendom', which we hope will be helpful in stirring up further debate.

## Scottish Conference

**David Kirkman** writes: Following the success of last March's Scottish Anabaptist Conference, which looked at the history and contemporary application of Anabaptist principles, we have decided to run another conference. The theme of the day will be: **Church and State: the need for role definitions**. This event will be held on Saturday 30 June at Kettleholm Village Hall, Kettleholm, Lockerbie DG11 1BU.

The talks and discussions will be based on Jonathan Bartley's book, *Faith and Politics after Christendom*. While it would be helpful if people attending had read it, it will not be essential, as materials will be provided.

For further details and to book a place, contact: David on 01576 510440.

## Root and Branch Partners

### 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](http://www.urbanexpression.org.uk).

And if the inner city is not for you, we are now also recruiting team members to join our sister agency, the newly launched **Rural Expression**.

The story of Urban Expression is told as part of a short book on urban church planting: *Church Planting in the Inner City* by Juliet Kilpin and Stuart Murray has just been published by Grove Books and is available for £2.95. You can order it from [enquiries@urbanexpresion.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@urbanexpresion.org.uk).

### SPEAK

We are looking for a **Campaigns Officer**, a committed campaigner to take on SPEAK's campaigns in the Network Support Team. You would be responsible for developing the *Big Dress* campaign on corporate accountability

and other important aspects of trade justice, for our *Counting the Cost* arms trade campaign, and for working in national coalitions. You would also be responsible for supporting the network campaigns team and helping develop ideas and strategy with them.

Ideally you would have experience in working with the 18-30 age group on campaigning, researching and writing campaign materials, organising national events, campaigns training, facilitation and taking part in coalition meetings. You must be committed to expressing SPEAK's ethos and core values through the campaigns and have a vision for how these values can be integrated.

Please contact [tamara@speak.org.uk](mailto:tamara@speak.org.uk) for a job description and application pack. The hours are negotiable (but at least 3 days). Salary: Support raising based. Starting October 2007. Deadline for applications: 13 July 2007.

### Crucible

The *Crucible* training course (run by Workshop, Urban Expression and Alove) is moving into its third year, still based in Birmingham. The first weekend of the 2007-08 course is on October 20-21. Some bursaries are available. Further details at [www.cruciblecourse.net](http://www.cruciblecourse.net).

### Workshop

The new version of the Workshop course will be operating in Birmingham and Bristol from the autumn, with themed weekends running every other month in each venue.

The original course will be running for one final year in London and Leeds from September. For further details, see [www.workshop.org.uk](http://www.workshop.org.uk) or ring Noel Moules on 0114 288 8816.

### Advanced Workshop

Advanced Workshop (AW) has been designed for those who have done Workshop and want to take aspects of the course further. AW offers undergraduate level study in apologetics, ethics and hermeneutics, accredited by the University of Wales, Lampeter for a Licence in Theology (LTh) which is the equivalent of the final year of a degree in theology. The LTh is recognised by both Lampeter and the University of Bristol as an appropriate qualification for those who want to pursue postgraduate studies in theology. The entrance requirement is a first degree in any subject or equivalent professional qualification.

The first AW course, which ran from 2004-2006, received high praise from the external examiner for the quality of its delivery and the standard of essays submitted by students.

The next course starts October 2007 and runs for two years with contact time consisting of a whole weekend for 12 weekends over the two years – roughly every other month. The course, based in Birmingham, costs £1,250, payable by a non-refundable deposit of £50 and 24 monthly instalments of £50. There are still a few places available, but you are advised to book soon to secure a place.

For further details, contact Dr Lloyd Pietersen at [advancedworkshop@anvil.org.uk](mailto:advancedworkshop@anvil.org.uk) or explore the website: [www.workshop.org.uk/advanced](http://www.workshop.org.uk/advanced).

## Bridge Builders

**Church Mediation: An Ecumenical English Conference** in London on 19 September 2007.

We are hosting our first conference on church mediation. This will give an opportunity to hear from senior representatives of some of the main Christian denominations in England on their vision for mediation in the church, discover what progress has been made over the last 10 years and more, and explore possible future steps.

**Skills Training for Mediation and Facilitation in the Church** at Ushaw College, Durham on 8-12 October 2007.

This course is designed to equip Christians with the practical skills to respond constructively to conflict. It explores conflict within us, between individuals and within the congregation. The course aims to raise self-awareness, to develop understanding of conflict and to teach methods to facilitate resolution and transformation of conflicts, particularly through mediation.

More information, including application forms available for download, can be found on the website: [www.menno.org.uk](http://www.menno.org.uk)

## London Mennonite Centre

The Cross Currents programme in the autumn includes the following events:

*Thursday 13 September 2007:* 'Corruption and the Work of Transparency International (an Anabaptist perspective)': a table talk with David Nussbaum.

*Saturday 29 September:* 'Christian Storytelling: A Workshop' with Shan Stephens.

*Saturday 13 October 2007:* 'Seeing the Light: Photography as a Spiritual Discipline' with Howard Zehr.

*Wednesday 24 October 2007:* 'Jesus Facing Conflict: An exploration of Matthew's narrative' with Colin Patterson.

*Saturday 1 December 2007:* 'The Emerging Church: An Anabaptist Perspective' with Stuart Murray Williams.

For further information on all these events, ring 0845 450 0214 or email [lmc@menno.org.uk](mailto:lmc@menno.org.uk)

## And Finally...

What do the following films have in common?

- Perfume: the story of a murderer
- Merry Christmas
- The Nativity Story
- The Passion of the Christ

Answer: they have all been reviewed by Vic Thiessen on the Anabaptist Network website ([www.anabaptistnetwork.com](http://www.anabaptistnetwork.com)). If you have not yet explored this website, which has extensive and varied resources and attracts many visitors, why not have a look – or contribute something yourself? (Our apologies, by the way, for some very unsavoury spam comments posted on the website recently, which we have now removed).

## 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 September 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.

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