

Anabaptist Network Newsletter

October 2002

Hello and welcome ...

Thrice-yearly newsletters from the Anabaptist Network are sent free of charge to subscribers to our journal, *Anabaptism Today*, and to others who are on our mailing list because you have asked to be or have attended events we have organised. The newsletters report on recent activities and contain news of future events arranged by the Network or our partner organisations.

However, if you are surprised to receive this and would prefer not to receive future issues, please tell us and we will remove your name from the distribution list. We do not want to send you unwanted mail. See back page for contact details.

Please also contact us if you would like to receive email versions of this newsletter, a complimentary copy of *Anabaptism Today*, or if you want further information about anything. For more information about the Anabaptist Network and activities mentioned in this newsletter, you can also visit our website: www.anabaptistnetwork.com

If you have news or events to advertise, please send this to us. We cannot promise to include it – this will depend on available space and relevance – but we are happy to receive contributions.

Jared Diener

For a year from 20 August 2002 Jared Diener will be working with the Anabaptist Network as a volunteer research assistant. Jared is an American Mennonite on the short-term programme of the Mennonite Mission Network. Jared will be concentrating on three main areas: reviewing the work of the Anabaptist Network over the past decade and recommending future developments; upgrading existing resources for individuals and congregations and developing further resources; and helping to produce books and articles that draw on the Anabaptist tradition.

As part of his work he will be contacting people on the network mailing list to invite comments and ideas. So you might get a call from him. If you have comments or suggestions to make, feel free to make contact with him. He can be contacted at jdiener@fish.co.uk or via the Anabaptist Network address.

Opportunity in Anabaptist Ministry

Wood Green Mennonite Church in North London expects to need a paid part-time leader in the elders' team from December 2002, following the call of Tim Foley to Northern Ireland. Housing is available. WGMC grew out of the work of the London Mennonite Centre. 'Today we are a small network church whose members are drawn from across London. As a peace church, we seek to follow Jesus together in the Anabaptist tradition.'

Informal enquiries to Jane Collett at the London Mennonite Centre jcollett@menno.org.uk.

Study groups

Study groups meet in various parts of the UK – contact details are given below. If you want to join a group or try one out, ask for dates and venues.

Study Group Convenors

Northern Ireland: Janet and Joe Campbell, 17 Church Avenue, Holywood, Co. Down BT 18 9JB (0123 175 974)

Bristol: Ruth Gouldbourne, Bristol Baptist College, Duncan House, The Promenade, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3NF (0117 946 7050)

Oxford: Steven Willis, 2 Wales St, Kings Sutton, Banbury, Oxon OX17 3RR (01295 811 264)

East/North London: Tim Foley, 3 Teynton Terrace, London N17 7PZ (020 8808 9042)

South London: Alun Morinan, 37 Piquet Road, London SE20 7XY (020 8778 7018)

South Hants: Les and Lin Gibbons, 7 Jacomb Place, Bridgemary, Gosport, Hants PO13 0LS (01329 312553)

West Midlands: Barbara Smith, 3 Highland Road, Cradley Heath B64 5NB (01384 412 656)

Yorkshire: Jonathan Blakeborough, 20 Arundel Grove, Woodthorpe, York YO24 2RZ (01904 703 710)

Recent Events

Anabaptist Network Residential Conference

About 45 adults and children participated in the residential conference in June at the Community for Reconciliation near Birmingham. The theme was 'Re-imagining Church' – a chance to hear stories, share concerns, dream dreams, and reflect on the shape and mission of the church at the start of the 21st century.

Alan & Eleanor Kreider were our guest speakers, although much of what happened was multi-voiced. We used a subversive liturgy based on the demand for a monarch in 1 Samuel 8 as an unusual way to mark the Queen's golden jubilee! The weather was wonderful, the centre was very hospitable and we enjoyed good conversation and learning together.

A full report of this conference, written by someone who had not been to a network event before, appears in the current issue of *Anabaptism Today* (and can be sent on request).

Future Events

We feature here events run by the Network or other organisations that may be of interest to you. If you have information about events we can mention in future newsletters, please send this in.

Two conferences in one week!

Our conferences are normally spread out more than this, but we are looking forward to two conferences in the same week of November.

6 November 2002

Mission in Post-Christendom

What might mission look like in a society where the church is marginal? Where do Christians find effective and meaningful forms of evangelism? How might the post-Christendom church engage in political and social affairs? This day of shared learning will address these crucial questions and so help equip us to be missionary people. It will include opportunity to listen and engage in interactive reflection on the issues.

The training day, co-sponsored with the Mission Department of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, will run from 10.30 to 3.30 at Barnt Green Baptist Church, Bittell Road, Barnt Green, Birmingham

(near to motorways and train station). The cost will be £5 (bring sandwiches – drinks provided).

To book a place or for more details, contact Fiona Pollock at Baptist House – 01235 517716; email: fpollock@baptist.org.uk

9 November 2002

Men, Women and God's Word

The Anabaptist Network, Men Women and God network and the London Mennonite Centre are collaborating to offer a day of exploration of ways that the Bible has been used to oppress and to liberate, to invite and to exclude. Participate in interactive workshops. Listen to speakers – among them, Mary Evans, Fran Porter and Stuart Murray Williams. Rachel Edwards-Grundy will be artist-in-residence for the day. Elaine Storkey – who has been associated with Men Women and God since its earliest days – has said she's coming.

Venue: Cholmeley Evangelical Church, Archway Road, London N6.

Cost: £18 (£9 unwaged) for the day, drinks, light refreshments and a vegetarian lunch for those who have booked by 28 October.

Further information from Men Women and God's Word Conference, London Mennonite Centre, 14 Shepherds Hill, London N6 5AQ. Or email us at: admin@anabaptistnetwork.com

Question: What topics would you like to see addressed at future conferences?

As we look ahead to 2003 and 2004, we have a number of ideas for future conferences, but we welcome further suggestions. Please let us know if you have any comments.

Anabaptism Today

The October 2002 issue includes the following articles:

- An interview with David Nussbaum, the new managing director of Transparency International, chair of Traidcraft, and a trustee of the Anabaptist Network.
- The second of two articles by Darren Blaney on Anabaptists and evangelism.
- A report by Jeff Wright on the growth of Anabaptist churches in Los Angeles.
- An exploration of the first of the 7 core convictions of the Anabaptist Network.

Sale!!

As *Anabaptism Today* enters its second decade of publication, you can buy back issues at half price, postage free! Send orders for issues 15 to 28 to AT Back Issues, London Mennonite Centre, 14 Shepherds Hill, London N6 5AQ. Please make cheques for £2 per issue payable to 'Anabaptism Today', and don't forget to include your name, address and post code! First come – first served!

Theological Forum

For 24 hours twice a year the Anabaptist Network theological forum meets, usually at Offa House, near Leamington Spa. This consists of 12-15 people from various traditions (currently Baptist, Anglican, House Church, Quaker and Mennonite) interested in exploring Anabaptist theology.

It was this group that commissioned the book *Coming Home* that tells the stories of sixty or so British and Irish Christians who have been drawn to Anabaptism (this can be ordered from Metanoia at the address below). The forum is currently working on another book idea for a series on Baptist history and theology.

The forum convenor is Ruth Gouldbourne, Bristol Baptist College, Duncan House, The Promenade, Clifton, Bristol BS8 3NF (0117 946 7050). Please contact her if you want further information.

Urban Expression

Urban Expression is an inner-city church planting agency with Anabaptist values that works through self-funding teams. Some recent news:

- The five Urban Expression teams have been joined by a sixth team in Plaistow, in the London borough of Newham. Another team may be added early in 2003.
- Another successful Open Day was held in September for those interested in finding out more about Urban Expression. The next UE Open Day is planned for Saturday 8 February 2003.
- There are increasing opportunities for the CRE8 team, Urban Expression's schools ministry, to engage with excluded pupils in East London.

For further details, write to Urban Expression, PO Box 35238, London E1 0YA or visit the website: www.urbanexpression.org.uk

London Mennonite Centre

The centre offers encouragement and resources to those seeking to learn more about radical Christian discipleship in the Anabaptist tradition. Current ministries include seminars, Metanoia book service, Bridge Builders mediation and conflict transformation service, a library and retreat facilities. Contact the London Mennonite Centre for more information at 14 Shepherds Hill, London N6 5AQ. Tel: 020:8340 8775, email: lmc@menno.org.uk, website: www.menno.org.uk

New Director

'In June we said goodbye to Mark Thiessen Nation, our director for 5½ years, and his wife Mary, who also worked at the LMC as consultant in urban mission and spirituality. Mark is now associate professor of theology at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Virginia, USA.

'In August we were delighted to welcome our new director, Vic Thiessen, his wife Kathy and their daughters Janelle and Katrina. The Thiessens are from Canada. Most recently they were based in Edmonton, Alberta, where they were running a project for at-risk families, the Welcome Home Community. Work prior to that has included directing a Mennonite resource centre in New Brunswick and a Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Germany (working with US armed forces personnel). Vic is enthusiastic about the prospect of working closely with the Anabaptist Network.'

Bridge Builders

Bridge Builders offers mediation services and training/consultancy in conflict transformation for churches.

Future dates include:

31 March–4 April 2003: London. Skills Training for Mediation and Facilitation in the Church, led by Alastair McKay and Kirsten Zerger.

16-19 June 2003: London. Advanced Mediation Skills Training course, led by Dave Brubaker and Alastair McKay.

6-10 October 2003: Skills Training for Mediation in the Church, led by Richard Blackburn and Alastair McKay, possibly in **Coventry or Bristol.**

For further information, please contact Alastair McKay, Bridge Builders, 14 Shepherds Hill, London N6 5AQ (alastairmckay@menno.org.uk).

Disestablishing the Church of England?

At a table-talk event on 30 September hosted by the London Mennonite Centre and co-sponsored with the Anabaptist Network and the Jubilee Group, 20 participants engaged in a lively discussion (over an excellent dinner) on the theme of disestablishment.

Almost everyone acknowledged that the link between Church and State (via the Monarchy) was untenable and that disestablishment was coming sooner or later. Some welcomed this as offering new opportunities for mission and prophetic witness; others expressed concern that the pastoral role of the Anglican Church, especially in inner-city areas, might be diminished.

To explore this issue further, you might read a collection of essays in a book edited by Kenneth Leech, *Setting the Church of England Free*, published by the Jubilee Group in 2001 and reviewed in the Summer 2002 issue of *Anabaptism Today*, or visit a new website launched earlier this year to argue the case for disestablishment: www.disestablish.co.uk.

Cross-Currents seminar programme

Forthcoming events include on 22 November an evening table talk with Dave Nussbaum entitled 'Globalisation? Who Rules the World? And What Should We Do about It?'

For more information or to book for this event, please contact Jane Collett at the London Mennonite Centre on 020 8340 8775 or email: crosscurrents@menno.org.uk.

For your 2003 diary

The 50th anniversary of the London Mennonite Centre will be celebrated the weekend of 7-8 June 2003. Programme details will be available nearer the time.

Metanoia Book Service

Some recommended recent titles:

Ryan Ahlgrim

Not as the Scribes:

Jesus as a Model for Prophetic Preaching,

£13.25 Herald Press (2002), 144pp.

David Wood

Poet, Priest and Prophet:

Bishop John V Taylor

£14.95 Other British Publishers (2002)

Tim Chester (ed.)

Justice, Mercy and Humility:

Integral Mission and the Poor

£8.99 Paternoster (2002), 240pp.

Bonhoeffer, Lewis, Merton et al

Watch for the Light:

Readings for Advent and Christmas

£10.00 Plough (2001), 200pp.

Back in print:

James Stayer

Anabaptism and the Sword

£27.75 (Delivery expected 01/11/2002)

Workshop

Noel Moules writes: 'Our 20th anniversary year programme of Workshop began in September, but additional participants are welcome. If you know anyone who would like information please phone 0114 2888816 or email office@anvil.org.uk and we will send you our prospectus. Or visit our new website at www.workshop.org.uk. 'Remember that you are always welcome to visit any of the centres at any time; just turn up with a mug and sandwiches for a day or a full weekend. We would love to see you.'

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