



The London Mennonite Centre
*rooted in the Anabaptist tradition,
cultivating Christian discipleship
as a way of life*

- Cross-Currents seminars
- Bridge Builders –
Transforming church conflict
- Metanoia Book Service
- Library
- Prayer Hut
- Guestrooms
- Facility hire



Seminar Calendar
February – June 2006

Cross-Currents

The Teaching Programme of the
London Mennonite Centre



Photo: Martin Atkinson

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London Mennonite Trust
Registered Charity No. 227410

Dear friends:

It is a real privilege to share some exciting news from the London Mennonite Centre. We are very pleased to welcome Colin Patterson to our staff as part of our Bridge Builders team. He will continue living in Durham and will represent the LMC in the north. Colin will be an excellent addition to our staff team and we look forward to working together.

If you have not visited the LMC recently and do not know our staff, I encourage you to check out our new web site and read the introductions to staff. Then make plans to visit us!

The eagerly-anticipated Cross-Currents seminar, **Film and the Meaning of Life**, with Gareth Higgins was very well received by the 25 participants. Likewise, the **Apocalyptic Religion and American Empire** seminar led by Michael Northcott was received by an enthusiastic audience. The table talk on **The Nicene Creed and Peace Theology** also went well but drew only a small number of participants. I take delight in meeting so many friends of the Centre at these stimulating events.

Here are some of the past year's highlights: Kim Broodie's arrival as our new finance administrator; hiring Colin Patterson (see above); the dedicated work of volunteers Dave Graybill and Brenda Martin in sorting out the data entry of our library, and Robin and Cynthia Miller's renovation of the library and extra help in the office. I note also the wonderful work of our Bridge Builders staff and the training courses they offered (especially the one in Ireland). The BB annual report provides statistics to show how this programme has exceeded most of its goals during the past five years. Our well-used guest rooms, the delightful visits of former residents, the possibility of Metanoia becoming an electronic book shop, and overall goodwill of staff are among other highlights.

Having completed our first three years in London, it was time for our family to head back to North America for our three-month North American Assignment. We spent May to August visiting churches in Canada and the USA, attending the annual assembly and mission seminar and visiting family and friends. We found these visits to be extremely valuable, giving us the opportunity to share the work of the London Mennonite Centre with Mennonites in North America.

This is exciting work and I never cease to be amazed at how God has used and continues to use the LMC, to spread the gospel in the UK. It's an expensive place to have a mission project, but I believe it is worth a hundred times the cost. The LMC is not going to revitalise Christianity in the UK all by itself, but I believe it has already played (and will continue to play) a huge role in that revitalisation.

Vic Thiessen
Director

Cross-Currents Booking Form February – June 2006

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS. IF MORE THAN ONE PERSON PLANS TO COME, PLEASE ALSO USE SECOND BOOKING FORM OVERLEAF.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

TELEPHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Please tick each seminar you wish to attend, and write the amount enclosed in the space provided. Please include full fees for seminars 231-3 & 235 inclusive with this booking form, to be returned at least five days before the seminar date.

Please make cheques payable to:
"London Mennonite Centre".

231 Encounters with Jesus
Saturday 11 February
Fee £20 (£10 unwaged) £ _____

232 Passing on the Comfort
Saturday 11 March
Fee £20 (£10 unwaged) £ _____

233 Dissident Discipleship
Saturday 8 April
Fee £20 (£10 unwaged) £ _____

235 Violent God, Nonviolent Jesus
Saturday 24 June
Fee £20 (£10 unwaged) £ _____

Would you like to make a donation toward our work? (optional) £ _____

Total amount enclosed £ _____

To help us plan for catering, tick if you are ___ vegetarian ___ vegan. If you have any dietary restrictions or food allergies, please explain:

Please tick the appropriate box below if you want further information about the following:

- Full Skills Training for Mediation & Facilitation for Senior Church Leaders**
Mon-Fri 13-17 March at High Leigh
- Church Leadership & Family Systems**
Tues-Fri 6-9 June at LMC
- London Mennonite Theology Forum**
Thurs-Fri 22-23 June at Guy Chester Centre
- Skills Training for Mediation & Facilitation for Senior Church Leaders**
Mon-Fri 26-30 June at Guy Chester Centre
- Becoming a Friend of the**
London Mennonite Centre

If you do not want to receive future mailings from us, please tick

If you would like to receive mailings by email, please tick

Please return to:
LMC, 14 Shepherds Hill, London N6 5AQ

About Cross-Currents February – June 2006

Cross-Currents seminars are a feast of learning, discussion, worship and fellowship – and, of course, good food! We invite you to participate, to bring friends and to pass this brochure on to others who may benefit from this teaching programme. We welcome enquiries about bringing all or part of a seminar to your congregation, college or organisation.

One-day seminars start with morning coffee, include lunch, and continue through teatime. At our evening table talks, presentations and discussion take place over a meal. All meals include vegetarian options. If you have dietary restrictions or food allergies, please note them on the booking form. Books, especially titles dealing with seminar themes, are offered for sale by Metanoia Book Service. Please note the scheduled times for each seminar you choose, as starting and ending times may differ.

To book for seminars 231, 232, 233 & 235 please complete and return the enclosed booking form plus the full fee. A limited number of bursaries are available. To ensure a place and to help the staff in planning food and resources, please book at least five days prior to the seminar date.

Cancellations must take place five days in advance of a seminar in order for a refund, less a £5 handling fee, to be issued.

Please note that Bridge Builders courses 225-227 and the London Mennonite Theological Forum 234 require a special application process, and have a different cancellation policy.

The London Mennonite Centre is a Victorian building with access difficulties for non-ambulant people. However we want our facilities to be enjoyed by all people so please contact Jim Bare (jimbare@menno.org.uk), if you have any special needs, to discuss how they can be accommodated.

If you do not want to receive future mailings, please tick the box on the booking form.

Saturday 11 February 2006

Encounters with Jesus

Vivienne Lassetter

The New Testament contains many dramatic stories of encounters with Jesus, including a number of astonishing stories of his encounters with women. In the time of Jesus, these encounters were highly unusual and often controversial. Taking a closer look at these stories can provide much food for thought and discussion.

Join us for a special day of storytelling and reflection with Vivienne Lassetter, who is known for her dynamic presentations of Bible stories.

Saturday 11 February
10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Fee: £20 (£10 unwaged)
Fee includes VAT and meal
C-C Seminar No. 231

Vivienne Lassetter is a Baptist Minister currently working as Ministries Adviser for the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Cross-Currents Booking Form February – June 2006

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NAME _____

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The London Mennonite Centre is a member of **Root & Branch: Radical Christian Vision Network**. **Root & Branch** is a network of Anabaptist-oriented organisations. Its current members include: the LMC (with Bridge Builders and Metanoia), the Anabaptist Network, Workshop, Ekklesia, Urban Expression, SPEAK, Christian Peacemaker Teams UK, Wood Green Mennonite Church and Peace Church. To subscribe to the monthly email bulletin of Root & Branch, contact info@rootandbranch.org.uk

Anabaptist Network events

The Anabaptist Network offers resources to Christians exploring what it means to be radical followers of Jesus in a world in which the church is now on the margins.

Saturday 14 January

Creating Church on the Margins: East Midlands Anabaptist Day in Melton Mowbray

Saturday 25 March

South-west Scotland Anabaptist Day in Annan

For further details of either event, please contact admin@anabaptistnetwork.com

Crucible: Creating Church on the Margins

25/26 February - The Urban Challenge

8/9 April - Emerging Church

Weekends 2 & 3 of the new training programme being offered by Urban Expression, Workshop and ALOVE UK

For further details:

www.workshop.org.uk/crucible

Bridge Builders

offers a range of services including:

- coaching for church leaders facing conflict
- consultancy for those intervening in church conflicts
- interpersonal, leadership team and congregational mediation and conciliation services for those needing outside assistance.

For further information, please contact Alastair McKay, director of Bridge Builders
 Email: alastairmckay@menno.org.uk

To receive further information about this and other 2006 mediation skills training courses once available, please contact Charletta Erb
 Email: charlettaerb@menno.org.uk

Mediators' Network Dates

Follow-up training days for "graduates" of the five-day mediation skills courses:

Thursday 19 Jan 2006 London
 Thursday 26 Jan 2006 Durham
 Thursday 2 Feb 2006 Coventry
 Thursday 11 May 2006 London
 Thursday 18 May 2006 Bristol
 Thursday 15 June 2006 Leeds
 Thursday 7 Sept 2006 London
 Thursday 14 Sept 2006 Coventry
 Thursday 28 Sept 2006 Durham

Saturday 11 March 2006

Passing on the Comfort

Kathy Thiessen

Throughout the centuries women have "passed on the comfort" by creating blankets and quilts. These have given warmth in time of crisis: sickness, mourning, and war. During the morning hours of this seminar we will be looking at the story written in the book *Passing on the Comfort* (An Keuning-Tichelaar and Lynn Kaplanian-Buller). An was a member of the resistance movement in the Netherlands during WWII. Just after the war ended, she provided sanctuary for Mennonites fleeing from Russian forces.

North American Mennonites heard of the need for comfort and sent hundreds of quilts over to England. They were dispersed to Holland from a house on Shepherds Hill, run by the Mennonite Central Committee, just a few doors down from where the LMC is now. Decades later Lynn discovered some of these quilts in An's house and decided their story needed to be told. Thus the book was written.

In the afternoon, the group will continue the tradition by creating together a simple quilt to be given to a charity (participants will decide on the charity).

Saturday 11 March

10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Fee: £20 (£10 unwaged)

Fee includes VAT and meal

C-C seminar No. 232

Kathy Thiessen is the resident quilter at the London Mennonite Centre. Kathy has been quilting for almost twenty years and especially enjoys hand-appliqué. She is a member of the London Quilters guild and chaired the exhibition committee.

Bridge Builders
Monday-Friday 13-17 March 2006

Skills Training for Mediation & Facilitation for Senior Church Leaders

Venue: High Leigh Conference Centre,
Hertfordshire

Alastair McKay, Colin Patterson & Charletta Erb

Bridge Builders is pleased to offer, for the first time, their acclaimed mediation skills course specifically for senior church leaders.

The course is designed for senior church leaders who want to equip themselves with practical peacemaking skills in the service of the church. The course explores conflict within us, between individuals and within church groups. It is geared to help senior leaders develop the ability to work constructively with conflict in the church, to assess levels of intensity of conflict, and to identify appropriate interventions.

Please tick the booking form to request a full programme and application form. Spaces on the course are limited to only 20, and priority will be given to participants who can put this training to practical use.

13-17 March. NOW FULLY BOOKED
Course begins 9:00 am on Monday, ends 2:00 pm Friday and includes two evening sessions. Fee: £675. Fee includes VAT, course manual, style booklet, food and residential accommodation.
C-C Seminar No. 225

For details of the presenters see 26-30 June

Continued from facing page

journey about the transforming power of love. Don't miss this opportunity to hear one of the best-known and most-captivating Mennonite speakers!

NOTE: David's new book will be available for the first time anywhere on the day of the seminar. If you cannot attend the seminar, you may still order the book from us for shipment on the 10th of April.

Saturday 8 April
9:30 am – 4:00 pm
Fee: £20 (£10 unwaged)
Fee includes VAT and meal
C-C seminar No. 233

David Augsburg is Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Fuller Theological Seminary. He is a well-known speaker and the author of twenty books on pastoral counseling and conflict and human relations, including Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures, Conflict Mediation Across Cultures, Caring Enough to Confront and Helping People Forgive.

Recommended reading: *Hate-Work: Working Through the Pain and Pleasure of Hate* by David Augsburg (available from Metanoia)

Bridge Builders
Monday-Friday 26-30 June 2006

Skills Training for Mediation & Facilitation for Senior Church Leaders

Venue: Guy Chester Centre, London N10

Alastair McKay, Colin Patterson & Charletta Erb

Bridge Builders is offering their acclaimed mediation skills course in London, for the first time on a residential basis, at the Methodists' Guy Chester Centre in Muswell Hill.

The five-day course is designed to equip participants with practical skills for responding constructively to conflict, particularly in church settings but with much wider application. The course explores conflict within us, between individuals and within church groups. It is geared to help church leaders and lay people develop the ability to understand conflict and its sources, and learn methods to facilitate its resolution and transformation using mediation and group facilitation.

Please tick the booking form to request a full programme and application form. Spaces on the course are limited to only 24, and priority will be given to participants who can put this training to practical use. There is the option of attending non-residentially.

Monday-Friday 26-30 June
Course begins 9:00 am on Monday, ends 4:30 pm Friday and includes two evening sessions. Fee: £585. Fee includes VAT, course manual, style booklet, food and residential accommodation.
C-C Seminar No. 227

Alastair McKay is director of Bridge Builders at the LMC, offering consultancy, mediation and training services to British churches. He has been leading training in handling church conflict since 1995, working in the UK and the USA. Alastair has an MA in Conflict Transformation, and contributed a chapter on congregational decision-making to the book Making Peace With Conflict (Herald Press, 1999).

Colin Patterson is assistant director of Bridge Builders, and an Anglican priest. He is an experienced adult educator, who worked for 11 years as a training officer for the Diocese of Durham, and is author of the Grove booklet How to Learn Through Conflict.

Charletta Erb is a trainer and mediator with Bridge Builders. She is a Mennonite from the United States, with a degree in Peace, Justice and Conflict Studies from Goshen College, a Mennonite liberal arts college.

Saturday 24 June 2006

Violent God, Nonviolent Jesus, Violent Christians: The Tragic Legacy of Biblical Violence

Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer

The Bible is diverse and complex but it is dominated by violent images of God, violent story lines, and violent expectations and explanations of history. The Exodus involves genocide and ethnic cleansing but is understood within the tradition as a story of God's liberating violence. Exile stories explain the people's horrible historical plight under one crushing empire after another as a consequence of their sin and God's punishing violence. Prophets promise that repentance and right conduct can lead to another round of liberating violence, historical reversals in which God "saves" Israel by crushing Israel's enemies. Apocalyptic writers and prophets, including John the Baptist, portray violence as part of a cosmic struggle, with historical consequences, between the forces of good and evil, with hope rooted in God's vindicating violence at the end of history as we know it. The Gospel writers offer competing and arguably irreconcilable portraits of Jesus: Jesus who loves enemies and calls us to be peacemakers; and Jesus who will return as violent, apocalyptic judge.

Violent images of God also frame many Christian rituals and have been used by Christians to justify violence, including Christian support for, and complicity with, destructive empire. The seminar will focus on these issues and explore alternatives to violent images of God and expectations of history rooted in the radical nonviolence of Jesus.

For what promises to be a very stimulating and controversial seminar, we are pleased to welcome Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, author of *Jesus Against Christianity: Reclaiming the Missing Jesus, Is Religion Killing Us: Violence in the Bible and the Quran* and *Saving Christianity From Empire*. You will not want to miss this one.

Saturday 24 June
9:30 am – 4:00 pm
Fee: £20 (£10 unwaged)
Fee includes VAT and meal
C-C seminar No. 235

Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer is Assistant Professor of Justice and Peace Studies at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. For more than twenty years he has studied and written about the relationship of religion, violence and peace.

Recommended reading: *Jesus Against Christianity: Reclaiming the Missing Jesus* and *Saving Christianity from Empire* by Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer; *God and Violence* by Patricia M. McDonald (all available from Metanoia).

Saturday 8 April 2006

Dissident Discipleship: Hearing the Call to be Subversive in Spirituality

(A presentation of Tri-polar, not Mono-polar or Bi-polar, Spirituality)

Dr. David Augsburger

Much popular contemporary spirituality is a quest spirituality, mono-polar in its primary direction, with the primary goal of connecting with one's depths, attuning oneself with essential humanness and shared universal humanity. Traditional Christian spirituality is bi-polar - "to know one's true self and to know the true God," said Augustine. Jesus, unlike his followers, did not teach a bi-polar spirituality of such individual encounter with God as the goal of the inner life. He was utterly clear, unequivocal, in teaching authentic tri-polar spirituality - discovering and knowing the self by knowing and loving God through the experience of loving the neighbour who images God.

Mainstream spirituality traditionally affirms poles 1 and 2, rarely a full "3". Most common is a 1.5 spirituality that worships a god of one's creation through projection of self onto the divine. In much writing and practice, spirituality settles for a supposed necessary compromise at the point of a "2.5" spirituality that cares about self, God and the neighbour, in-as-far as possible without sacrificing one's safety or survival, but is willing to sacrifice the other when there is "just cause." Tri-polar spirituality affirms that in one's love of neighbour, brother, sister, enemy and persecutor, one is loving God, who is present in "the least of these".

These categories of mono- bi- and tri-polar spirituality open up a more particular way of looking at the familiar and oft-stated. Proponents of Tri-polar spirituality have emerged in many ages and traditions. A few communities have sought to live it out in obedient discipleship; Anabaptism is one of the longest experiments in such faithful corporate tri-polar spirituality. Not always successful in the pursuit, it learns from many others who have sought to embody such faithfulness, but continues to witness to this path of dissident discipleship.

Tri-polar spirituality will be explored in this seminar as a way of understanding love (and hate), compassion (and violence) radical discipleship (and cultural dissidence) that is stubbornly attached to Jesus and His way.

For this fascinating look at Anabaptist spirituality, we are pleased to welcome back David Augsburger, Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Fuller Theological Seminary. Drawing from his new book, *Dissident Discipleship*, which he began writing at the London Mennonite Centre, as well as from his recent book: *Hate-Work: Working Through the Pain and Pleasure of Hate*, David will be leading us in this

Bridge Builders
Tuesday-Friday 6-9 June 2006

Church Leadership and Family Systems

Richard Blackburn

We welcome Richard back to work with Bridge Builders for the eleventh year running. This course on church leadership and family systems is designed to enhance the ability of participants to function as mature leaders. The focus is on exploring the impact of generational family ways of relating on an individual's leadership in the church.

The course provides a safe space for processing challenging situations in ministry, while also offering reflections on a way of thinking about the human condition which has implications for all aspects of life. This builds on the work of Edwin Friedman, in his book *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, which applies Murray Bowen's family systems theory as a tool for understanding congregational systems.

The course was first offered in 2005, of which one participant said: "This course is an invaluable resource for all church leaders and for the health and well being of churches. It offers a challenging opportunity to examine self - to self differentiate and see the implications for healing within the system."

Please tick the booking form to request a full programme and application form. Spaces are limited to only 20, so early booking is advised.

Tuesday-Friday 6-9 June
11:00 am - Friday 2:00 pm
Fee: £290. Fee includes VAT, a book (*Extraordinary Relationships*), course handouts and one meal each day.
C-C Seminar No. 226

Richard Blackburn is director of the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, Chicago, USA. He has extensive experience as a trainer, mediator, and consultant with conflicted churches and their leaders. He has developed a transformational approach to mediation in the church, placed within the context of Bowen family systems theory. For several years he participated in a postgraduate clergy seminar run by Edwin Friedman, and also in the Georgetown Family Center's Postgraduate Program in Family Systems Theory and Its Applications.

Thursday-Friday 22-23 June 2006

London Mennonite Theology Forum

Venue: Guy Chester Centre, London N10

Special guest: Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer

Mennonites are no longer debating the questions of whether our theology should be pacifist (it should) or whether our pacifism should be active (it should). However, along with this new assurance comes the need for a comprehensive theology of nonviolence to undergird our pacifism. Such a theology of nonviolence includes the foundational question: "Is God Nonviolent?" On this question, there is still much debate among Mennonites. How do we, as Christian pacifists, view God? And, related to this question, how do we read and interpret a Bible that seems to depict a violent God?

These are the questions we will be addressing at the second London Mennonite Theology Forum. Our special guest for this forum will be Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, well-known author and Christian peace activist, who is the Assistant Professor of Justice and Peace Studies at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The forum will once again be held at the Guy Chester Centre in Muswell Hill, not far from the London Mennonite Centre. To book, call or email Janelle in the LMC office at crosscurrents@menno.org.uk. Please note that we will be offering a one-day seminar with Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer on the day after the forum (advertised elsewhere in this calendar), so you may wish to stay on for that (if so, please book separately).

Thursday-Friday 22-23 June
11:00 am - 6 pm Thursday and
9:00 am - 4 pm Friday
Fee: £44
Fee includes VAT and 3 meals
Overnight accommodation for one night is available at £69 including bed and breakfast. Other options available
C-C Seminar No. 234