

Mediators' Network Newsletter

June 2005

This winter and spring has been incredibly busy for Bridge Builders, and so our latest newsletter has been delayed. In this issue, we bring you some resources and opportunities that may spur you on the action or further learning.

We would also like to hear from you and give opportunity for you to interact with the Network by sharing your thoughts on mediation issues. We need your input for the upcoming issue asking *What's different about church conflict?* That is, what is different about conflict in churches compared to conflicts in other contexts? Let us know what you think by responding to this message! Then look for this discussion in the next newsletter.

We are also looking for your responses to a question posed by a recent graduate of the week long mediation course. She wonders whether anyone has gained experience working with more inclusive models of decision-making, such as consensus. Read her thoughts and questions at the end of this newsletter.

We hope that this is a useful resource for you; something which keeps you aware of conflict transformation and the skills you've gained from courses with Bridge Builders.

Blessings in Christ

Charletta Erb
for the Bridge Builders team

In this issue...

Meditation - Only Connect

Programme Updates - Diary Dates

Resources – New Metanoia Titles, Events and Online Resources

Opportunities – Join the Church Conciliation Network listserve

In the next issue – Respond to a question about decision-making in groups

* **NOTE FOR NEW MEMBERS** – As members, you receive our quarterly Mediators' Network email newsletter. This seeks to highlight mediation issues, programme updates, book reviews, and opportunities to develop your skills. We hope that this newsletter will be a helpful supplement to Mediators' Network days, and a way of exploring issues around conflict in the church. Please give us feedback on what can be most helpful to you. If you are interested in receiving previous issues of this email newsletter, reply to this email with a note to request them.

* **LMC MAILINGS** - Please let us know if you are interested in the possibility of receiving other Bridge Builders and London Mennonite Centre publicity only by email rather than post.

Meditation - Only Connect

Anne Morrow Lindbergh

This excerpt from the Daily Dig illustrates the necessity of being connected with others first by being self-differentiated and self-knowing ...

“It is not physical solitude that actually separates one from others; not physical isolation, but spiritual isolation. It is not the desert island nor the stony wilderness that cuts you from the people you love. It is the wilderness in the mind, the desert wastes in the heart through which one wanders lost and a stranger. When one is a stranger to oneself then one is estranged from others too. If one is out of touch with oneself, then one cannot touch others. How often in a large city, shaking hands with my friends, I have felt the wilderness stretching between us. Both of us were wandering in arid wastes, having lost the springs that nourished us - or having found them dry. Only when one is connected to one's own core is one connected to others, I am beginning to discover. And, for me, the core, the inner spring, can best be refound through solitude.”

Source: Gift from the Sea, From Daily Dig, inspirational daily emails from the Bruderhof

<http://dailydig.bruderhof.org/>

Programme Updates

Bridge Builders Diary Dates

Mediators' Network Days

8 September 2005 at the **London** Mennonite Centre, 9:45-4:15

15 September 2005 at **Coventry** Cathedral, 9:30-4:15

22 September 2005 at South Parade Baptist Church in **Leeds**, 9:30-4:15

3 November 2005 at St Michael's, Stoke Gifford in **Bristol**, 9:30-4:15

Forthcoming Training Courses

4-8 July 2005: *Congregational Conflict Consulting*

led by Dave Brubaker at **LMC**.

Further information: www.menno.org.uk/pdf/CCC20050704.pdf

3-7 October: *Skills Training for Mediation and Facilitation in the Church*

led by Alastair McKay, Colin Patterson, and Charletta Erb at Ushaw College **Durham**.

Further information: www.menno.org.uk/pdf/MSTCOct2005PublicityApplication.pdf

If you would like to book for an event, please contact Charletta Erb bb@menno.org.uk

Resources

New Metanoia Titles

Participatory Decision-Making in a Cross-Cultural Context. Bruneau, R. (2003) CWY

<http://www.augustana.ca/rdx/bruneau/documents/PDM%20in%20an%20Intercultural%20context.pdf>

On facilitation skills: This is a great free resource that gives solid information on facilitating group decision making.

Beyond Intractability

The website where you can listen to practitioners in the field of conflict transformation, exploring more constructive approaches to dealing with conflict. A wonderful way to continue your education.

<http://www.beyondintractability.org/iweb/>

Public Conversations Project is a wonderful resource in shaping dialogue events around difficult issues. Coming soon to St Ethelburga's, Sallyann Roth of PCP will present a practical workshop. I [Charletta] look forward to being there! <http://www.publicconversations.org/pcp/index.asp>

The Power of Dialogue with Sallyann Roth

Saturday, 9 July 2005, at St Ethelburga's, London

A practical workshop designed to develop your planning and facilitation skills. The Dialogue approach, pioneered by The Public Conversations Project (PCP), offers a means of creating fruitful communication between people with conflicting views about divisive public issues. People who have regarded each other as adversaries or threatening strangers are invited to engage with each other in new ways—ways that can reveal previously obscured possibilities for empathic, constructive engagement and sometimes, cooperative action. If you are interested, do email Simon Keyes simon.keyes@stethelburgas.org

How to Learn Through Conflict

An additional resource to Colin Patterson's booklet <http://www.grovebooks.co.uk/resources/P96-Resources.html> Read Colin's commentary on the booklet at: http://www.grovebooks.co.uk/acatalog/Grove_Books_Online_Pastoral_5.html#aP96

Are you interested in further materials on the **Gilmore Fraleigh** instrument? Friendly Press website lists the additional resources. <http://www.friendlypress.com/> Also available from Metanoia Book Service by contacting Will Newcomb, manager (metanoia@menno.org.uk)

Opportunities

Join the Church Conciliation Network coordinated by St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, tel: 020 7496 1610, e-mail: steve.alston@stethelburgas.org This network is being coordinated by St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace. They email a newsletter weekly, reflecting on Christian conflict resolution. Members, including Bridge Builders staff, also contribute responses directly to the listserve. To learn more, visit: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ChurchConciliationNetwork/> To subscribe, email: ChurchConciliationNetwork-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Volunteer as a Community Mediator

You can find out if there is a project near you from Mediation UK, the national co-ordinating body for community mediation, tel: 0117 904 6661, e-mail: enquiry@mediationuk.org.uk web: <http://www.mediationuk.org.uk/home.asp> or from the Scottish Mediation Network, tel: 0131 556 1221, e-mail: ewan@scottishmediation.org.uk web: <http://www.scottishmediation.org.uk/> .

Contribute to the next newsletter!

Consensus decision making

Submit your comments— what's worked in your congregation? What's your experience?

Ellina Rosen, recent graduate of the week-long course asks ...

When a group learns to use those various techniques for listening to one another and learns to make consensus decisions, do they really get better at it over time? Does it continue over a long time with a group to become more natural and easier? Or is it always a terrible struggle?!! What effect does this approach have on a congregation, I wonder, over a period of a couple of years, or longer?

Does anyone have experience of a congregation moving into consensus decision making. Did the experience of this get any easier with time?

What's Different about Church Conflict?

Send your thoughts on the unique challenges of Church Conflict and we'll post them in the next newsletter! What are the blessings and challenges faced in church conflict?

Share your comments and feedback by responding to Charletta at bb@menno.org.uk