

Mediators' Network Newsletter

24 July 2006

Summer greetings from Bridge Builders: we hope you're finding ways to stay cool!

In this Mediators' Network newsletter, we again offer resources and news to maintain our connection with you as we work together to promote a healthier Church.

On a personal note, I am thrilled to join the Bridge Builders team. I arrived 4th July for likely three years of life in London. I came open and willing for the unknown and uncomfortable, and I have experienced both since my arrival. However, I have also experienced profound resonance. I use the term resonance in applying the musical experience which happens when a tone finds its resting place in a particular "container" and the sound is therefore amplified because of this resting place (for example, when one blows over a bottle and a tone is formed, or if when singing into the bottle, certain notes will fill the space, while others will not). Resonance in my life is found when something external finds itself at home and at rest within me.

Soon after my arrival I celebrated, along with 40 other people (including some of you reading this), ten years of Bridge Builders' ministry in Great Britain. It was there, amid the music, conversation, and stories, that I experienced resonance. The hope which had settled deep within me - hope for a resurrection of the vibrant, living church - was rejuvenated in the words spoken and sung at the celebration. My spirit's inner yearnings were spoken and sung aloud, and my soul resonated. The network of friends of Bridge Builders is truly a gathering of a great cloud of witnesses here on earth; a fellowship of believers that are active vessels of God's message of reconciliation to the world and especially to the Church.

The Church, through the living Jesus Christ, has the ability to restore what has been broken, redeem what has been lost, and reorient the followers of Jesus Christ to the resurrection, wherein rests our hope. The Church may be fraught with conflict, with human-made structures which impede and obstruct the Spirit's flow, and with areas of darkness which appear to block the light, but at its heart sits the truth of Jesus - a gift of unconditional love and open forgiveness, ready to redeem the world's brokenness and bring light out of the darkness.

All of us who consider ourselves hypocrites, stumblers, divergent seekers, and lazy conformists can take hold of these truths and realise yet again that we have been given Grace. And we stand in awe of the God of redemption, rejuvenation, restoration, resurrection, and resonance.

Sharon Kniss
for the Bridge Builders team

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Opportunities – CRE seminar

* **NOTE FOR NEW MEMBERS** – As members, you receive our quarterly Mediators' Network email newsletter. This seeks to highlight programme updates, book reviews, opportunities to develop your skills and wider mediation issues. 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 is helpful to you or what you would like to read about. If you are interested in receiving previous issues of this email newsletter, reply to this email with your request.

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

Programme Updates

Church Mediation: an Ecumenical English Conference – 9 November 2006

We are delighted to confirm that our first conference on church mediation is going ahead. It will be a one-day event only, on Thursday 9 November, from 9:45am until 5:45pm (with the option of evening dinner at 6:00pm). The conference will be held at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine's in Limehouse, in the East End of London (see <http://www.stkatharine.org.uk/> for details of this lovely venue, where you can book to stay the night before or after the conference).

The cost of the conference is £60 (£70 with dinner) – however Bridge Builders' Network Members will benefit from a £10 reduction, making it £50 (£60 with dinner). We hope to have speakers from all the major denominations, as well as a representative from the Scottish Churches Mediation Network. A publicity brochure and application form will be available next week. Please let Sharon Kniss bb@menno.org.uk know if you would like to receive details.

Bridge Builders 10th Anniversary Celebration

We hosted a wonderful celebration on Thursday, 6 July 2006 here at the London Mennonite Centre to mark 10 years of Bridge Builders' ministry. Our thanks to all of you who joined us and made it such a special occasion. Our thanks also to the many people who sent in messages of support and encouragement, and have been praying for us. Thank you.

We are grateful for donations, given to mark the anniversary, of over £2,100 to assist Bridge Builders' ministry, including this week from one member of the Network who generously gave £400. Please contact Alastair at alastairmckay@menno.org.uk if you would like to help us reach the £2,500 target.

Bridge Builders' Diary Dates

Mediators' Network Days 2006 & 2007

The 2006-2007 Network Days will focus on facilitating meetings of small groups, practising mediation skills through role-play (using a single scenario throughout the day), and in January a special focus on dealing with difficult behaviour. If you would like to join us, email bb@menno.org.uk.

7 September 2006 at the **London** Mennonite Centre, 9:45-4:15: facilitating meetings of small groups
14 September 2006 in **Coventry** at Queens Rd Baptist Church, 9:30-4:15: mediation skills practice
21 September 2006 in **Durham** at St Nicholas' Church, 9:30-4:15: facilitating meetings of small groups

11 January 2007 at the **London** Mennonite Centre, 9:45-4:15: dealing with difficult behaviour
18 January 2007 in **Leeds** at South Parade Baptist Church, 9:30-4:15: dealing with difficult behaviour
22 February 2007 in **Reading** [venue tbd], 9:30-4:15: mediation skills practice

3 May 2007 in **Coventry** at Queens Rd Baptist Church, 9:30-4:15: mediation skills practice
10 May 2007 at the **London** Mennonite Centre, 9:45-4:15: mediation skills practice
28 June 2007 in **Durham** at St Nicholas' Church, 9:30-4:15: mediation skills practice

6 September 2007 at the **London** Mennonite Centre, 9:45-4:15
13 September 2007 in **Leeds** at the South Parade Baptist Church, 9:30-4:15
25 October 2007 in **Reading** [venue tbd], 9:30-4:15

Diary dates: forthcoming training courses

Please see our website www.menno.org.uk for brochures and application forms.

Mediation and Facilitation Skills Training

9-13 October 2006, Foxhill Conference Centre, Frodsham, Cheshire **FULLY BOOKED**

Training of Trainers

21-23 November 2006, at LMC **Spaces still available – do sign up now!**

Mediation and Facilitation Skills Training for Senior Church Leaders

19-23 March 2007, The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire

Mediation and Facilitation Skills Training

23-27 April 2007, Lindors Country House, Lydney, Gloucestershire

Mediation and Facilitation Skills Training

11-15 June 2007, Guy Chester Centre, London

Congregational Conflict Consulting

3-7 July 2007, with Dave Brubaker and Alastair McKay, at the London Mennonite Centre

Mediation and Facilitation Skills Training

8-12 October 2007, Ushaw College, Durham

Training of Trainers

13-15 November 2007, at LMC

Resources

New Article: What is Distinctive about Church Conflict?

As mentioned in our last newsletter, Bridge Builders is expanding its sections of the LMC website. As a taster, take a look at the short article entitled *What is Distinctive about Church Conflict?*

[\[http://www.menno.org.uk/bbarticles/distinctive\]](http://www.menno.org.uk/bbarticles/distinctive)

We hope to have some of the contributions to the 10th anniversary available in the early autumn, if not before, and new articles coming on stream throughout the autumn. So do keep checking out the site.

Opportunities

Christian Resources Exhibition (CRE) seminar Many of you will know of the Christian Resources Exhibition, held regularly at different locations around the UK. In October 2006, it will be in Harrogate, its most northerly location yet! Colin Patterson will be giving a seminar with the title **Handling Conflict: How to grasp the nettle and help congregations walk the path of reconciliation**. The seminar is timed for 11.30am – 12.15pm on Thursday 19 October. So why not visit CRE, see lots of good resources for Christian ministry, and fly the flag for conflict transformation. More details about CRE at www.creonline.co.uk