

ON THE ROAD

**Newsletter of the Anabaptist
Association of Australia & New
Zealand**

**No. 9
October 2000**

A focus on mission

**Homepage on the Internet
<http://www.anabaptist.asn.au>**

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From the editor's desk

An invitation from a friend to participate in a course which he was teaching on Kierkegaard took me back into reading and re-reading the works of this nineteenth century Danish theologian. Kierkegaard's passionate critique of the Christendom state church, nineteenth century Danish style, is sketched out as a vivid contrast with the suffering and offensive character of the discipleship that he found in the New Testament. I found that reminder sobering at a time in Australia where, while the outer structure of Christendom has been deconstructed, there is still a degree of comfort and social status associated with the membership of the institutional church.

Reading Kierkegaard today raises questions not only about the remnants of Christendom that still prop up the major denominations but also about the comfort and the social location of those like the myself and the readers of this newsletter. We agree with the critique but still find themselves comfortably at ease in other dimensions of our lives.

That reading has also made me aware of the importance of the theme of being on the 'way' for Kierkegaard and its connection with his emphasis on hope. David Gouwens in his book **Kierkegaard as religious thinker** (Cambridge University Press, 1996) notes:

Because the risen Christ is not only prototype but helper along the way and the goal of the way, Christian imitation and suffering can be eminently hopeful. (p.180)

Focus on Mission

This issue has a focus on mission. Courtesy of Mark Hurst I am able to bring you a report and a vision statement from a recent Mennonite consultation on mission. Before embarking on his summer travels Mark also provided me with a survey on some recent publications on mission in a post Christendom and post modern context.

These issues are not academic and the challenges they present are ones for the church in Australia regardless of its tradition or institutional structure.

There is in addition to all these good things news from the Hursts, news about their return and the work that the committee has to do to provide the framework for their employment and ministry when they return. Check out both the President's and the Treasurer's report.

The Newsletter also contains a brochure information on the conference in Melbourne in January. Please plan to be there to join in the study and learning and build community. And finally the Resources section in this issue also highlights a couple of web sites that readers might find of interest. A copy of a press release is also included. Please feel free to include in any church magazines or newsletters.

Doug Hynd

President's report

While Australia, New Zealand and probably the rest of the world were glued to their TV sets during the recent Olympics, your committee has been very busy! Well some of the time, anyway. I'm happy to report that we have now finalised the details for our Melbourne Conference (referred to elsewhere in this newsletter). Again I would urge you to make an huge effort to attend this important Anabaptist event for Australia and New Zealand. Bessie Periera and her Melbourne sub-committee have organised an excellent diet of Anabaptist fare, historical, theological, spiritual and practical. The theme of the conference of Peacemaking, Reconciliation and Mission allows for exciting possibilities. If you are interested in the following Jesus and particularly his Sermon on the Mount in contemporary Australia and New Zealand, then this is a conference not to be missed!

We have now finalised a Memorandum of Agreement between the Association, Eastern Mennonite Missions and Mark and Mary Hurst. The agreement formalises our relationship with the Hursts and their sending agency Eastern Mennonite Missions and clarifies the accountabilities of each party. Mark Hurst will be the designated pastoral worker and Mary will be free to seek external employment to assist with their support. However Mark and Mary always work as a team and so we are really getting two pastoral workers! AAANZ has committed itself to raising \$5,000 of support in the first year. Under the Memorandum of Agreement AAANZ is also responsible for program costs and workers compensation. Our plan and hope is to gradually increase the level of support over time until they can be fully supported from the antipodean base. Although Mark and Mary have not at this stage raised all their North American support, Eastern Mennonite Missions has given them the green light to make their travel arrangements believing by faith that their full support will be forthcoming in the next few months. Mark and Mary are planning to arrive mid-December 2000.

One other item of news is the visit of Dr. Stuart Murray of Spurgeon's College London, an Anabaptist scholar and practitioner. Stuart is editor of the British magazine **Anabaptism Today**, and active in the British Anabaptist movement. He will be meeting AAANZ members in Perth, Canberra and Melbourne and will have teaching duties at Morling College in Sydney. We look forward to Stuart's input coming as it does from a more mature Anabaptist movement that has inspired some of the founding principles behind our Association.

Shalom

Ian Duckham

Treasurer's report

We remain in a positive balance with no outstanding debits. Thank you to all that have made donations. In the first 3 months of the new financial year \$1,330 has been donated. A deposit of \$700 has been made for the January Conference venue, which will be reimbursed from registration fees in January 2001. The current bank balance is \$1,477. An audit for the last financial year is in progress.

Regular donations are helpful. An estimated annual donation of \$5,000 has been projected by the Association for the next year to meet funding of AAANZ activities. This will require an increase above the current level. Periodic donations are helpful.

For periodic donations please ensure that your surname will appear on the receiving banks receipt. This is important for the record of our transactions for audit purposes. For periodic transfers, the AAANZ's National Australia Bank account number is 46 486 7622 and the branch number is 082-407. Donations made out to the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand Inc (or AAANZ) can also be sent to me, at PO Box 1514 Armidale NSW 2350 Australia.

Shalom

Gary Baker

E-mails

I have included a couple of e-mails forwarded to me to indicate the international nature of the Anabaptist movement and the impact that communication technology is having.

From Japan: Katano.hiromiwako@ma.neweb.ne.jp
To: <gbaker@northnet.com.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 29 August 2000 22:39 PM
Subject: Greetings and request from Mennonite World Conference

Dear Gary,

I am Miwako Katano, a member of Communication Team of Mennonite World Conference. And I am assigned as regional editor of Asia. This time I would like to invite you to tell us briefly about AAANZ. Every year on the last Sunday of January we celebrate it as World Fellowship Sunday and pray each other among member churches of MWC all over the world. Every continent takes turn at preparing the material for prayer. Then 2001 is Asia's turn. I am gathering information from Asian countries as much as possible. Milka Rindzinski gave your mail address to contact to.

But I need your information by 31. I know it is very very short but we really like to have the report and prayer requests from you. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Peace,
Miwako

From Ukraine:
mila@sapr.frunze.com.ua>
to: <dantho@northnet.com.au>
Sent: Friday, 11 August 2000 2:51:am
Subject: Search

We greet you, brothers and sisters.

We are the descendants of ethnic Germans and we want to revive religion of our ancestors - Mennonite movement in our city Sumy, Ukraine. We are ten yet and we are the only Mennonite community in Ukraine, only in Zaporozhje city we expect to find some, but our search was not fruitful so far.

Three years ago we united and studied learning our history and stages of Mennonite development. We know that there are many powerful Mennonite communities in the western Europe largely in Germany, Holland and in Canada and USA. The Mennonites left for other countries only when the former tsarist rein refused them of their inherent privileges. And at the beginning of this century in the territory of Russia there were many descendants of them who also left to seek a better life.

We hope that with a help of Internet it will be easier for us to break through a distance barrier and maintain traditions and culture of our historical predecessors. Our target is to establish our community on an ideologically profound basis, expand it and bring it to work and develop in quality and quantity. For this reason we have been looking up any related literature in the libraries but we could secure little. We have to know more about the way the service is done in Mennonite churches, internal structure of the community and many other peculiar details. For this purpose firm relations are vital and indispensable and we ask all concerned communities, organizations and individuals give a helping hand to a small but striving organization.

Unfortunately we are not registered with the Municipal Council of our city but that will happen soon. There are strict regulations for establishing a youth organization, which we are to abide. First they have to provide us with a headquarter where we could say prayers and run the community and only after that we can register officially. We could tell about ourselves in more details to those interested in our community and intended to establish ties. Now we are looking forward to Your answering letter and remaining sincerely yours

The Sumy Mennonite Community.

Please, address your letter to our E-mail: udacha2000_ua@yahoo.com
Unfortunately we have no official address yet otherwise we would give it to you with pleasure. Please give us addresses of Mennonite communities in Europe and Worldwide if you can.

(I have been in contact with the Mila and forwarded them some information about the Association. If you are in a position to communicate with them by e-mail i am sure that they would appreciate it very much.)

Doug Hynd

News

Greetings from the Hursts.

I was just going to send out an update to our support group here in Pennsylvania but then thought that others in our network of friends would also be interested. We returned earlier this week from a Missions Seminar in Goshen, Indiana held jointly by the Mennonite Board of Missions (MBM) and the Commission on Overseas Missions (COM), two U.S. Mennonite mission boards in the process of joining together.

I've included a report on the seminar by Sheldon Sawatzky as well as a report on an international Anabaptist missions conference held recently in Guatemala.

Mary and I felt very much at home in Goshen with this group of experienced and newly appointed mission workers. The times of worship led by Allan, Eleanor, Andrew, and Katie Kreider fed our souls. We found many like-minded friends over long conversations at meal times and during breaks. It was a refreshing week for us.

We spent a couple of days visiting at the seminary in Elkhart before the seminar and got to visit Micah at his camp in Michigan. During those days and all through our week in Goshen we had the same reaction from people as they asked "Why are you still here and not in Australia?" When we told them we are having to raise funds before we can go, they looked at us as if we just told them a family member died. Nobody did, but it seemed they wanted to reach out and pat our back in comfort. The idea that Mennonite mission workers need to raise their own support is so foreign an idea to many of these people that it seems un-Mennonite. We received lots of consolation for our plight.

Following are some events planned for us over the next few months (barring some quick infusion of money to send us on our way):

- Aug. 26 - Take Micah to Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia
- Aug. 27 - Speak @ East Chestnut Street Mennonite Church
- Sept. 3 - Speak @ Carpenter Community Church
- mid- Sept. - Travel to Goshen, Indiana for Moriah's baptism
- Oct. 15 - Speak @ Krall Mennonite Church
- Nov. 5 - Speak @ Chambersburg Mennonite Church
- Nov. 12 - Speak @ New Holland Mennonite Church

Shalom,

Mark and Mary Hurst (as of 5-31-00)
269 Heatherwood Dr., Ephrata, PA 17522-2665 USA (717) 721-6255
m5hurst@juno.com. Please send e-mails with attachments to 5hurst@hotmail.com.

Report on the Global Anabaptist Mission Consultation

Sheldon Sawatzky's report on the Mission Seminar and the gathering in Guatemala reads as follows:

In the grace and peace of our Lord, greetings from hot Kansas during these dog-days of August. I am back in the office for a few weeks. Today I want to report briefly on the recent missions seminar held at Goshen College, July 24-31, and the Global Anabaptist Mission Consultation (GAMCo) held in Guatemala City, July 12-16.

Missions Seminar

Based on the theme, "Translating the Message," the seminar included Bible studies on Acts by Don Blosser of Goshen College, and missiological sessions in which workers shared from their field experiences in evangelism, church planting, development, and leadership training. The afternoons were given to a variety of helpful workshops, and evening worship was led by the continental groups. The days began with worship and prayer.

Tacked onto the week was a weekend workshop on "Developing an Anabaptist Theology of the City." The main presenters were Stuart Murray from London, and John Powell of MBM. The weather was pleasant, the meals delicious.

GAMCO

Held at the Mariapolis Retreat Center in the city of eternal Spring, Guatemala City, delegates from Anabaptist churches around the world gathered to celebrate and discuss what God is doing in mission with a view to working on cooperation in the task. The gathering was sponsored by the Mennonite World Conference, and the Council of International Ministries.

A large donation from a couple in Indiana covered much of the travel costs for many of the delegates. East Asian countries represented were Indonesia, Philippines, Japan and Korea. Though invited, delegates from Hong Kong and Taiwan did not show. The number of North American participants was intentionally limited.

Each morning began with a concert of prayer, focusing on a different continent each day. Plenary sessions included a Bible meditation on Acts 2, testimony on "How the Gospel Came to My People" and an address. Daniel Ahn from Korea led the meditation the last day. Plenary speakers included Eloise Meneses of the USA, Nzash Lumeya of Congo, Luis Bush of the AD 2000 and Beyond Movement, and Phill Butler from Interdev. Butler spoke on principles of partnership and also presented a workshop on this theme.

One afternoon was given to workshops, and other times were spent in continental and regional interest group caucuses. In the Asia caucus, the various churches and mission agencies reported on their activities. Discussion on collaboration centered on the idea of developing an Asian Mission Training Center. This concept was given to the MWC for consideration and counsel.

During the consultation a vision discernment team met to produce a statement of what they heard. The draft of that statement is enclosed below. The statement will be sent to all groups for further discernment and input. In such a short time, it was not possible to move toward the formation of any kind of structure for global mission collaboration; however, it was decided to form a continuation committee to work at this issue. A prayer network will also be developed. The survey of mission will be updated and churches asked to submit their mission statements and define their mission goals.

As is usual in such gatherings, the real work took place outside the formal meetings. Networking was taking place in a significant way, and even some new partnerships emerged. For instance, Daniel Ahn of Korea connected with Werner Franz of Paraguay, and in a short time they had arranged to have a guest lecturer exchange.

In the final plenary, an interesting dynamic occurred. In a time of evaluation, the North Americans began by analyzing and critiquing the sessions, but the mood shifted to the experiential when the delegates from the South stood up to express their deep appreciation for what the gathering meant to them.

On Sunday morning, the delegates were dispersed to the Mennonite congregations in the city, along with believers from the Kekchi churches who journeyed four hours by bus to the city. I attended the worship at the Church of Jesus the Good Shepherd in a poor neighborhood. After a lively two-hour worship we were hosted for a simple Guatemalan lunch in the homes of members. The consultation concluded with a mass worship service and mission rally at a high school stadium, attended by delegates and members of the Mennonite churches. Johannes Reimer of Germany preached on the consultation theme, "Behold I set before you an open door," and gave an invitation for people to commit their lives to mission service. The service concluded with communion and a candle lighting.

All in all, GAMCo was an inspiring and invigorating experience as global Anabaptists focused on God's mission in the world at the beginning of the new century.

Final Draft - Vision Discernment Team, Global Anabaptist Missions Consultation, Guatemala 2000 July 15, 2000

Introduction

We are gathered together in Guatemala City, from many nations of the world, speaking many languages, to think together about our mission. We celebrate together what God is doing through our global family of faith. At times we have been amazed at how much is being accomplished. We have heard about how God is moving among us: new churches, the training of missionaries, outreach among unreached peoples, younger churches sending out missionaries, prophetic voices related to peace and justice, care for the weak and downtrodden in our societies, faithful witness in the midst of persecution, the breaking of regional barriers and the creative use of resources in the midst of need. During our days here sisters and brothers have also begun planning new ways of doing mission together.

We are also perplexed as we address the complexities of our world. We live in the midst of alienation from God as evidenced by war, poverty and affluence, persecution, the secularization of society, the challenges of technology, pandemic diseases, globalization and environmental degradation. We are challenged by these needs to seek new ways of sharing the Good News of Christ in our world.

We recognize that this challenge is not easy. As we seek ways to work together as a global Anabaptist community we recognize that:

1. There are differing views of the mission or the church among us. We see tensions among us as we bring together being and doing, the Great Commission and the Great Commandment and how we understand Shalom and the Kingdom of God in relationship to our mission. We seek to multiply faithful fellowships of followers of Jesus Christ, but we still have work to do in defining how to establish those fellowships and what those fellowships should look like.
2. How we live and work in relationship with each other, our understanding of what it means to be the church, is not always clear. We need to find language and metaphors that help us define how we will work and celebrate together that we are the body of Christ. We need more communion among us and to walk with our sisters and brothers who live in difficult situations, often in the midst of persecution.
3. We need to develop new more effective models for sharing and using the resources God has given us. Our worldwide resources are not evenly distributed, so we need to seek ways to share our material, human and spiritual resources so that they are used most wisely for the Kingdom.
4. As we organize ourselves for the task before us we need to look at our structures so that they create the space that allows us to work together. Our models of organization need to affirm our Kingdom and Anabaptist values, calling us to be radical Christians, involving all of the body and all our gifts. Our organizational models of mission need to be incarnational, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Our vision as an Anabaptist Global Community

We acknowledge that God has given us some unique gifts through our Anabaptist heritage for the use in His Kingdom: peace building, faithful communities developed around the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and a historical zeal for evangelization and a prophetic voice. We need to reaffirm the vision of our Biblical and Anabaptist ancestors, calling people to conversion and following Jesus Christ in our various 21st century contexts.

We lament:

- Our lack of conscious dependence on God.
- Our loss of zeal and vision in living and proclaiming the Kingdom of God in our world.
- Our limited Christian peace witness in the midst of violence and our passivity in the face of injustice.
- Our failure to participate adequately in the suffering of our sisters and brothers.
- The divisions and conflicts within our family of faith.
- The excluding ethnicities and ideologies that have distorted our concept and practice of community.
- The undiscerning acceptance of the spirits of the age: spiritism, consumerism, materialism, individualism, etc.
- Our passive acceptance of the political boundaries of the world
- as the basis for our mission strategies.
- The squandering and hoarding of our resources.

We commit ourselves:

- To Missio Dei, acknowledging our reliance on God, through worship and prayer.
- To recapture the historic Anabaptist zeal for proclaiming and living
- the Gospel as expressed in the New Testament, e.g., Acts. 2.
- To mission strategies that fully embrace the Biblical insistence and teaching on peace and justice.
- To active participation in the suffering of our sisters and brothers, through prayer, through prophetic witness, through incarnational presence and through solidarity networks.
- To active pursuit of reconciliation and communion within our faith community.
- To multiplying faithful, welcoming accountable communities of faith, in acknowledgement of our need for one another.
- To a Biblically holistic appreciation for and critique of cultures and powers.
- To redefine our mission strategies in ways consistent with our distinct identities as members of one global family of faith.
- To intentionally function as healthy interdependent members of the global body of Christ.
- Going Forward as a World-Wide Community

We encourage:

1. The MWC General Council to establish a permanent, facilitated global mission council. For the gathering and dissemination of information about our many mission efforts around the world.

- To provide forums for missiological discernment and training
- To promote regional and national mission consultations and projects
- To facilitate the exchange of resources for use in new and
- Ongoing mission efforts beyond the local congregations.

2. Existing mission agencies, departments, committees and commissions of all MWC member churches, to commit a fair share of their budgets for the implementation of the MWC mission council, to assure the carrying out of the tasks listed above.
3. Council of International Ministries, to move toward framing its work within regional mission structures so that USA and Canadian mission efforts become more integrated with and accountable to efforts of the churches in the various regions of the MWC.
4. Church bodies:
 - To draw together and mend broken relationships for the purpose of common witness.
 - To acknowledge and affirm women, youth and the disabled in their mission efforts and incorporate them into the mission planning and decision making processes.
5. Existing regional councils to intentionally develop regional mission consultations and projects

Faithfully submitted,
Vision Discernment Team
GAMCo

Mission In A Postmodern /Post-Christendom World by Mark Hurst

Following is an article growing out of some reading and speaking I have been doing on the theme of "mission". An excellent series of books called "Christian Mission and Modern Culture" (Trinity Press International, P.O. Box 1321, Harrisburg, PA 17105, USA) has given me much food for thought and reflection.

This is a series of over twenty small volumes authorized by the Institute of Mennonite Studies, research agency of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, with the aim of (1) examining modern/postmodern culture from a missional point of view, (2) developing the theological agenda that the church in modern culture must address in order to recover its own integrity; and (3) testing fresh conceptualizations of the nature and mission of the church as it engages modern culture.

Many of the books in the series study Christendom and the affect it has had on the mission of the church. Alan Kreider's contribution entitled **The Change Of Conversion And The Origin Of Christendom** (Trinity Press International, 1999) gives helpful background on the history of the early church, the rise of Christendom, and how conversion was changed in the process. I will be drawing from his book in the article that follows.

Another helpful book that I read recently but do not quote in my article is John Drane's **Faith In A Changing Culture, Creating Churches For The Next Century** (Marshall Pickering, London, 1997). Stuart Murray includes this book in his course on evangelism

One of the passages I keep returning to for insight into how that great first-century mission worker Paul confronted his world with the good news of Jesus Christ is Acts 17:16-34. Paul was on his second missionary journey through Asia Minor and Macedonia. Some friends dropped him off in Athens where he chose to wait for Silas and Timothy.

Paul used his time in Athens to explore the city. He travelled through the city ... *and looked carefully at the objects of [their] worship* (23). He read their poetry. He visited Jewish synagogues and the Athenian marketplace. He listened to and debated the philosophers of the day. He was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. (16).

In all of this activity, Paul was getting to know the Athenian context before he began confronting it with the good news of Jesus. He was studying the Athenian culture so that when he spoke, he could speak with authority. Paul learned that the people of Athens ... *would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.* (21). They must have been well-off because only those who are well-off can sit around being entertained by something new. Poorer people need to concentrate on eking out a living.

The more I study this passage the more similarities I see to life in North America in the year 2000. Most North Americans are well-off with time and money on their hands and are constantly looking for something new to entertain them. They - or should I say "we" - have more material goods than ever before but are not happy with what we have. We keep looking for something new.

Just looking at Americans from the 1950's to today we find that: *...the average American owns and consumes much more today than in the fifties. We are twice as affluent as we were then. We own twice as many cars and TV sets, plus a spectrum of new technologies that weren't available then, such as VCR's and computers. And on average we are considerably larger and spend two and a half times more money on eating out in restaurants and bars than Americans did in the sixties. But despite the fact that we have more than doubled our level of consumption, the National Opinion Research Center reports that people aren't any happier than they were in the fifties.* (Tom Sine **Mustard Seed Versus McWorld**, 159-160)

Like Athens we are a culture "*full of idols*" (16) but constantly looking for something new. We accumulate more but are less satisfied. I read recently that: *...the amount of living space per person in the United States has doubled since 1970. At the same time, we now have 40 times as many commercial self-storage facilities - to take care of all the extra stuff that still won't fit in the extra living space...Affluenza has become an American epidemic.* (YES! Summer 2000, p.55)

Paul studied the culture in Athens even though he was there only a short time. If we are going to effectively share the good news with people in our culture, we will need to do the same. There is a helpful series of books published over the last few years called "Christian Mission and Modern Culture". The focus of these books is the church in modern culture and how we can best be missional churches in our settings.

Most of the books in this series deal with some aspect of Christendom. Alan Kreider in his book entitled **The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom** says: ...we will not fully understand the current malaise of Western Christianity until we come to terms with the phenomenon of Christendom in its many dimensions. (xiv) And "malaise" - a feeling of moral and social decline - is the right word when talking about the church and mission. Tom Sine says that when it comes to mission:

What isn't generally realized is that we are going backward, not forward, in world evangelization ... The people who are doing a brilliant job at world "evangelization" are the marketers of McWorld, who are persuading the young everywhere to change their values so they will all buy the same soda, watch the same MTV videos, and wear the same clothing. (96,97)

The marketers of McWorld (globalization) are "converting" people all over the world to their way of thinking, belonging, and doing. This is the task the Christian church has been given - to convert people to a new way of believing, a new way of belonging, and a new set of behaviors. Jesus did this. Paul did it. The early church did it and it is our challenge today.

One estimate is that at the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine in 312 AD, approximately 10% of the Roman population was Christian. That means that during the previous three centuries the churches grew at an average of 40% per decade. Kreider says: *That is impressive. Despite disincentives, despite the scorn of the powerful, despite persecutions, the early Christian movement was growing. Something was deeply attractive about it.* (10)

The church did not grow because of public evangelistic programs - that could get them killed. It did not grow because of spectacular public worship services - they often met in secret with only baptized members allowed to attend. What caused it to grow was its ability to live as "resident aliens" among the people and to live out good news in a way the people could understand. The early church lived out an alternative lifestyle that was attractive to others. Octavious, an early Christian writer said: *...beauty of life encourages...strangers to join the ranks... We do not preach great things, but we live them.* (Kreider, 18)

The early Christians not only lived an attractive life that was an alternative to the culture around them but they were also well taught. They went through an extensive teaching time before they were baptized - often three years of training! So the lives they lived were not only "attractive" and "alternative" but "articulate" - the early Christians knew why they were different and why they lived the way they did.

Douglas John Hall in a book entitled **The End Of Christendom And The Future Of Christianity** (Trinity Press International) says:

...If Christians today and tomorrow want to preserve the faith and not just some of its moral and aesthetic spin-off, they are going to have to become more articulate about their basic beliefs and about the manner in which these beliefs, when taken seriously, distance them from many of the values and pursuits of our society at large. (32)

Hall goes on to argue that *... Christians must learn how to distinguish the Christian message from the operative assumptions, values, and pursuits of our host society.* (45)

And further: *Insofar as we are committed to genuine renewal...there are no shortcuts: we must begin with basics...I doubt that any North American Protestant denomination stemming from the central streams of the Reformation could measure up to the minimal standards of catechesis assumed by the sixteenth-century reformers.* (47) [Let alone the membership training of the early church!] *Until a far greater number of church-going Americans and Canadians [Aussies and Kiwis?] have become more articulate about the faith than they currently are, we cannot expect the churches to stand back from their sociological moorings far enough to detach what Christians profess from the mishmash of modernism, postmodernism, secularism, pietism, and free-enterprise democracy with which Christianity in our context is so fantastically interwoven...ministers today are recalled to the teaching office.* (48-49) [And we are all called to more serious discipleship!]

Before Paul confronted Athens and the other cities of his day with the good news of Jesus Christ, he spent time in the wilderness being taught by the Holy Spirit and among other brothers and sisters who nurtured him in the faith. We can do no less if we are serious about mission today.

I have mentioned Christendom several times now without defining it. In 312 AD Constantine had a vision before he went into battle. In the vision he was told to paint the sign of the cross on his soldiers' shields and he would be victorious - he did and he was. He then sent for some Christian priests to find out what this sign of the cross was all about. He issued an Edict the following year that took Christianity from being an illegal religion and made it legal and in a privileged position with other religions of the day.

Constantine did not go through the rigorous training of converts before him and was not baptized until he knew he was dying. Kreider says:

...throughout two decades of his reign, Constantine offered the world a new possibility of an unbaptized, uncatechized person who nevertheless somehow was a Christian - a Christian lord who had not bowed his knees to the Lord of the Christians. (36)

When Christianity became the official religion of the empire, the nature of conversion changed. No longer did new Christians go through rigorous training and have to prove they were living a new life to be baptized. Now you could be baptized at birth and join the Christian empire. Rather than Christianity being a set of beliefs and a lifestyle that challenges whatever culture it finds itself in, Christianity was sucked up into the culture of the empire.

As Europeans were converted and Europe became Christendom, the host cultures exercised a tremendous power over the emerging religion of the West. (Kreider, 85)

Christendom tried to be a Christian culture seeking to subject all areas of life to the Lordship of Christ. But it did not work that way. The way of the cross and suffering love got squeezed out by the way of coercive power and the demand to conform. The "church" became a building where people came to perform religious rites instead of an alternative community of resident aliens living a life that challenges the status quo. Mission and evangelism were replaced with infant baptism and instant membership into Christendom.

Anabaptists have been denouncing Christendom for centuries but now many other Christians are realizing its weaknesses and proclaiming the death of Christendom. The linkage between church and state and the power Christendom once had is crumbling all over the world. This presents Christians with a real opportunity. Herbert Butterfield, a Cambridge Professor of Modern History is quoted in Alan Kreider's book saying:

After a period of fifteen hundred years or so we can just about begin to say that at last no man [or woman] is now a Christian because of government compulsion, or because it is necessary to qualify for public office, or because public opinion demands conformity, or because he would lose customers if he did not go to church...This fact makes the present day the most important and the most exhilarating period in the history of Christianity for fifteen hundred years ..We are back for the first time in something like the earliest centuries of Christianity, and those early centuries afford some relevant clues to the kind of attitude to adopt." (Kreider, xvii)

We are back to a time like Paul's - Christianity is just one "ism" among others that needs to compete in the marketplace of ideas and lifestyle choices. We need to do our homework like Paul did to be effective in mission today.

A recent document from the Mennonite Church in North America says: *God calls us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to challenge the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ, demonstrating compassion, inviting conversion, promoting discipleship, and extending Christian community.* The document goes on to give some criteria for this:

Creativity, consensus and planning are necessary. Keep word and deed together and ensure that evangelism, peace and justice are seamless. We must listen to our partners around the world. We need to let the Holy Spirit transform us first. The congregation is the most important focus for mission. Everything the church does (the members, the congregations, the area conferences and the national body) should be oriented to doing mission. The foundational idea is that the mission is not ours but God's.

If this vision is to be fulfilled, we as the church will need to take mission more seriously. David Bosch in his book **Believing In The Future** (Trinity Press International) talks about the view of mission we will need:

...mission refers to a permanent and intrinsic dimension of the church's life...Because God is a missionary God, God's people are missionary people...The church exists by mission, just as fire exists by burning...Mission is more than and different from recruitment to our brand of religion; it is alerting people to the universal reign of God. (32-33)

The issue is not to talk more about God in a culture that has become irreligious, but how to express, ethically, the coming of God's reign, how to help people respond to the real questions of their context, how to break with the paradigm according to which religion has to do only with the private sphere. (34-35)

To be involved in mission today in our postmodern/post-Christendom world, churches themselves will need to be different. Stuart Murray is a church planter in Great Britain who has given this much thought. He asked the question, "What features might characterize post-modern churches?" and gave the following suggestions in his book **Church Planting** (Paternoster Press, 1998):

- They will be communities where doubts can be expressed without fear of censure...Such churches will make more use of dialogue than monologue. They will recognize that the lecture format represented by the traditional evangelistic address or teaching sermon is culturally rather than biblically determined, and a very ineffective tool in a post-modern culture. Authoritative pronouncements from experts who do not allow opportunity for feedback or challenge are not conducive to sharing faith with those who are not Christians or to stimulating growth in understanding within the Christian community. [In a footnote he quotes someone who said a "sermon = a monstrous monologue by a moron to mutes"] (185)

They will embrace enthusiastically the renewed interest in spirituality evident in contemporary culture...Recent research found: most new converts defined their faith in terms of a relationship with God rather than in terms of theological beliefs...the intellect is not the necessary starting point for faith, and that propositional approaches to evangelism may make little impact... Spirituality may be the bridge over which doctrinal truth can be carried. (186-187)

In their evangelism, post-modern churches invite others not only to join them on a journey but also to participate with them in a story, to contribute their own story to the many other stories that together comprise the big story. (188)

This story is the story of community... Community will not be achieved by the proliferation of church meetings, but by their reduction. (Let a good number of institutional forms of being church die with dignity.) (189-190)

Rediscover being powerless - powerless churches have an opportunity to abandon the Constantinian 'moral majority' stance that understandably irritates a post-Christendom

culture, and recover their biblical calling to be a 'prophetic minority'...Rather than pontificating on what people ought to do, or moralizing about how they ought to behave, post-Christendom churches will concentrate on living distinctively and provocatively, inviting others to consider new possibilities. (192)

Post-Christendom churches, responding to the challenge to be good news to the poor, may explore creative ways of practising Jubilee ...Liberated from the system of tithing, and inspired by the Nazareth manifesto, churches may no longer be alienated from the poor, but communities of good news to the poor. (195)

- Will revel in the freedom this pluralist society offers to commend the gospel humbly, boldly and sensitively to any who will listen, including those who are currently adherents of other religions or secular ideologies. (196)

Like Paul, let us boldly go into the marketplaces of our world with the good news of Jesus Christ. Be alternative. Be attractive. Be articulate. The end of our reading today says: *We will hear you again about this.* Paul caught their attention. At that point Paul left Athens. ... *But some of them joined him and became believers. (17:32-34)*

May God use each of us as faithful workers like Paul, to fulfill the work of the kingdom, to share the good news, and see some become followers of Jesus Christ in this exciting age.

Shalom,

Mark Hurst

Reviews

The Challenge Of The City, A Biblical View, Stuart Murray, Sovereign World, Kent, England, 1993.

In July I attended a seminar on creating an Anabaptist theology for the city. Stuart Murray was one of the two featured speakers for the event. He proudly proclaimed himself an "urban Anabaptist" and after reading this book one can see why. Most books on the city fall into one of two categories - they either blindly praise the city or only see evil in the city. Murray seeks to give a balanced perspective. He says: My concern is to chart a course between unrealistic optimism and unjustified pessimism. (15) and he pulls it off.

But more important than our opinion of the city is God's opinion of the city. Murray presents an overview of the biblical picture of the city. In the more than 1400 biblical references to cities we gain ... *insight into the meaning of the city, why it exists, what God thinks of it, its spiritual significance, its role in a fallen world, its influence on those who live in it or around it, how the Church is to approach it and what the future holds*". (16) The bulk of the book is taken up with exploring these themes.

Murray believes ... *the city is not just a shorthand for those who live in it. It is more than the sum total of its citizens, their homes and possessions. The city has a corporate personality, a life of its own, that transcends its component parts.* (37, 38)

The city also ... has a supernatural dimension as well as a natural one. These dimensions reinforce each other; the destiny of the city is bound up with what takes place in the spiritual realm as well as with events on earth. (39)

In avoiding the "unrealistic optimism" of some writers, Murray points out that ... Satan has hijacked the city. Just as he invaded the garden to spoil God's beautiful creation, so he has pounced on the city and wrested control from men and women, ruining the city in the process. (40) *Cities are places ... where human sin is concentrated ... centres of operation for demonic powers ..., and ...centres of spiritual warfare.* (41)

And yet Jesus tells his followers .. *Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.* (Luke 24:49) I have never heard a sermon on Jesus saying "Stay in the city" but after reading Murray's comments I am ready to preach one. Murray reminds us that "we do not need to go out of the city to meet God, for He comes to us where we are." (53) But he makes it stronger. *"I do not believe that every Christian living in the inner city must stay there for life, but I do believe that no Christian should move without a clear call of God...it is tragic that 'while God can be seen moving towards the city, God's people move in the opposite direction.* (84)

In his balanced approach to the city, Murray says ... *just as Jesus was rejected by the city, so his followers can expect similar antagonism. We are called to the city but will not be received gladly. What motivates us is the assurance that there is a new city coming. It is to this hope that we are to bear witness in these seemingly powerful cities that in reality will not endure.* (58)

The Bible plays off Babylon against the New Jerusalem, particularly in Revelation. The future for us lies in a city, the New Jerusalem. It gives us hope to work in the present, often in the midst of Babylon. There is no going back to some rural paradise - as most other religions yearn to do. We look forward to a city, but his city will contain the heart of Eden within its walls. The tree of life is here, having disappeared from view at the Fall, and from the throne of God flows the river of the water of life. (61)

In Part III, "Strategies for the City", Murray the author becomes Murray the preacher. His passion for the city and for Christians to answer the call to ministry in its midst comes through clearly. Along with providing useful biblical insights and information about today's cities, he asks some tough questions. In New Testament times urban mission was a top priority: why is it given such low priority and so few resources today?" (68) What would God put His finger on in our city? (100)

Murray says: *If the Church in the city is to fulfill God's intention that 'through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms' (Eph. 3:10), it must be present in strength, prophetic in lifestyle, clear in proclamation, joyful in praise and powerful in deed. Such a church has the potential to make a real difference to the city.*" (130)

Australia is one of the most urbanized countries in the world. Mission in Australia is mostly "urban" mission. If we are to take this seriously we need the help of Biblical surveys like Murray provides in this book and also the wisdom he shares from years of church planting in English inner city areas. The book is very readable and ends with a two-page list of books for "Further Reading".

Biblical Interpretation In The Anabaptist Tradition, Stuart Murray, Pandora Press, Kitchener, Ontario, 2000.

This new volume by Stuart Murray is part of a series of books called "Studies in the Believers Church Tradition". The series was established "with the aim of publishing scholarly works in the field of the so-called 'Believers Church' or 'Free Church' tradition."

(Inside Cover) It is immediately clear that this book is for readers who have some background in Reformation studies and biblical hermeneutics.

Murray deals with the question of whether or not there is a distinct Anabaptist hermeneutic (way of interpreting the Bible) growing out of the sixteenth century and concludes ... *there is a coherent and distinctive Anabaptist hermeneutic, as evidence from their writings will show us.* (30) Much of the book is spent on an exploration of ... *six important facets or principles of this Anabaptist hermeneutic: The Bible as Self-interpreting; Christocentrism; The Two Testaments; Spirit and Word; Congregational Hermeneutics; Hermeneutics of Obedience.* (31)

I was impressed with the amount of material covered in the chapters dealing with these six principles. Murray has done his homework. The chapters on the last two principles pull together material in a way I have never read before. Here are some comments from these chapters to whet your appetite:

Anabaptists believed sola scriptura meant that Scripture must be free to challenge all other authorities, however firmly established and influential. (45) ...*sola scriptura meant Scripture judging doctrinal commitments instead of being interpreted in the light of such commitments.*(47)

Anabaptists felt the Reformers were relying too heavily on reason and thus were being inconsistent with what they taught about the Fall's effects. (51) They ...*were disappointed, impatient, and at times outraged by the Reformers' unwillingness to teach and practise what was crystal clear.*(53) *Among Anabaptists, theological and intellectual sophistication was suspect, not because they lacked theologians but because they did not like what they saw of the fruit of such sophistication.* (53)

The interpretation of Scripture was within the competence of every believer, but the locus for it was the community of believers, and reliance on the Holy Spirit as the interpreter of the Bible was essential. Individuals were not to rely on their own understandings, nor to discount the contributions of brothers and sisters. The ideal Anabaptist interpreter was a Spirit-led believer-in- community.(58)

The first step in hermeneutics was to ask how Jesus would interpret a passage. (76) *Anabaptists acknowledged the Christ of the creeds, but they were captivated by the Jesus of the Gospels.*(78) *Christocentrism meant for many Anabaptists that a living experience of Jesus was a prerequisite for understanding Scripture.* (79) ...*Jesus was central not only for salvation but for their lives as saved people. He was the example they were to follow, the model they were to imitate, the Master they were to obey, the Captain who would fight with them in the battles they faced.* (81) *Anabaptists ...stressed the discontinuity between the Testaments.* (106)

It is clear from the way Anabaptists spoke about their experience of the Spirit that their focus was on ethical change and power for holy living, not on spiritual phenomena. (133) They believed that through discussion and readiness to learn from each other and to test what was said, the Spirit would lead them into truth." (146)

The history of Anabaptism suggests the communal emphasis [congregational hermeneutics] was well-established in the very early years while the movement still had some scholars and theologians at its head. Locating hermeneutical authority in the congregation thus seems to have been a preferred option, not a counsel of necessity. (173) Their hermeneutic...was 'ecclesiocentric,' in that they not only gave the congregation a crucial role in interpreting Scripture but judged any interpretation by its usefulness to the congregation. (176)

The Reformers chose an approach which widened the scope of Scripture [a hermeneutic for a whole civil society] but tended to dilute its message. Most Anabaptists opted for a restricted scope [within the church ,community] but a determined effort to apply it without evasion." (181) *The hermeneutic community...was perhaps the most radical and valuable aspect of Anabaptist hermeneutics.* (182)

Anabaptists believed Scripture was difficult to apply because of its costly challenge, but not difficult to understand. (187) *Communal hermeneutics, as practised by Anabaptists, stressed application rather than interpretation.* (187) Anabaptists did not regard as genuine hermeneutics an increased biblical knowledge which failed to result in changed living. Readiness to change rather than desire for information was a key to biblical interpretation. (194) Therefore, one mark of true interpretation was that it resulted in the kind of behaviour Christ called for and modelled. (195) *...the ethical focus of Anabaptist hermeneutics could easily have degenerated into legalism. But equating obedience with following Christ rather than obeying rules, and identifying the kingdom as the ultimate goal of discipleship offered some protection from such a fate.* (200)

Murray takes time in each chapter to evaluate these principles. As one who has come recently to the Anabaptist fold, Murray does not just give us the party line. One of his strengths as a writer is the balanced and well-reasoned approach he brings to the material. In looking at the writings of sixteenth century Anabaptists he concludes that: Anabaptist hermeneutics was not unified or fully integrated. It developed in a piecemeal fashion under pressurized circumstances and among a variety of groups. (215) So the model that emerges is a "synthetic" one -... *that of a Spirit-filled disciple, confidently interpreting Scripture within a community of such disciples, aware that Jesus Christ is the centre from which the rest of Scripture must be interpreted.* (216)

Murray believes ... *that Anabaptist hermeneutics has a distinctive contribution to make.* (216) in the whole church. His last chapter examines Anabaptism as a "conversation partner" with other traditions, specifically Latin American liberation theology and the charismatic movement. Here Murray is breaking new ground and pushes Anabaptists to take their place in the broader church

The summary of "Christendom and Hermeneutics" in the beginning of Chapter Ten is excellent. Even when the official relationship between church and state is dissolved, the Constantine mindset within the churches (and within society) will persist and many will seek a return to a supposedly more Christian society. It is the mindset, not a political arrangement, that is the heart of Christendom." (222)

The book ends with some suggestions of how Anabaptist hermeneutics can overcome some of its limitations and reach its full potential. These suggestions include finding ways to include the gifts scholars bring to the interpreting task, looking again at writings from the early church and others in the church outside the Anabaptist tradition, including interpreters from diverse social, political, and cultural backgrounds, and remembering the role of Scripture in creating faith and bringing new believers into the interpreting community.

How we interpret the Bible is one of the most important questions facing the church in any age, including our own. Murray's book shows that the Anabaptist tradition has a contribution to make in answering this hermeneutical question.

Resources

Courier: a Quarterly Publication of the Mennonite World Conference Second quarter 2000, volume 15 no.1

This issue is devoted to the theme of *75 Years Later - Where is the Mennonite World Conference Headed?*

In addressing this theme the editor has assembled a variety of articles on the present, past and questions about the future of the Mennonite World Conference. There is no doubt that the future is now moving the conference well beyond its ethnic roots. The possibilities and the tensions that this raises are clearly acknowledged by the contributors.

Requests for subscription should be addressed to Courier PO Box 346 Lancaster PA, USA 17608-0346

Web sites

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Established as an independent mission project in February, 1996, the Church of the Brethren Network or COB-NET receives material through submissions from various sources, including the national offices, the general membership, interested visitors, and numerous projects developed by Ron Gordon, the founder and web administrator. We strive to maintain a quality product for everyone who is interested in learning more about the Church of the Brethren and other related agencies.

We especially desire to present wholesome information for the entire family, specifically with children in mind. You may confidently surf our web site because we have been fully accredited with Family Friendly and rated with SafeSurf, which are content monitoring organizations. Great care and respect is employed in our continuous development and interpretation of the Brethren cultural experience. Thank you for stopping by and please come again when convenient. You are encouraged to share your insights, suggestions, and comments with the Web Servant

Anabaptism for the 21st Century Church

PRESS RELEASE

In this so-called 'Post Modern' age, Christians dig into the past seeking the roots of reality, practice and belief. A study of 16th Century persecuted Anabaptists takes us to the beliefs they were willing to die for.

Theirs was a conviction that being a Christian meant seriously following the teachings of Jesus, to be radically discipled to Him and to one another. The cutting-edge of Jesus' teachings, and particularly of the Sermon on the Mount, were earthed in their lives, relationships and witness. This stark Christian practice lies in contrast to the spiritualising and 'other worldliness' of the Gospel message that marks areas of church practice in their day and ours.

Perhaps the movement is best known for their commitment to peacemaking and reconciliation. At this stage in the life of humanity on our planet, we see the need to come to grips with the message of the Prince of Peace. The wars of our recent past, and the current conflicts raging in our present have seen the resurgence of interest in non-violent means to bring about change.

"The call of the church to live out these values brings it into sharp contrast to politics of injustice and to alignment with the marginalised and the poor." The church must always be free of entanglements that blur or compromise our Gospel stance. This was the stand that brought the early Anabaptists into collision with a church that had become enmeshed with the state.

The Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand is an organisation seeking to network and resource those across the church interested in seeing Anabaptist ideals enrich the church of our day.

A conference is to be held at Whitley College, Parkville, Melbourne 25th to 28th January 2001. Speakers will include Marita Munro, Gordon Preece, Ross Langmead and Mark and Mary Hurst who will cover topics to do with the theme -

"Peacemaking, Reconciliation and Mission"

Open session Saturday 7.30 pm Brunswick Town Hall

Tim Costello

Tickets \$5 including supper

For further details and brochure contact -

Neil and Saralyn Horsburgh 03 9481 0757 E-mail ccsm@bigpond.com

Bessie Pereira 03 9893 2649 E-mail bessiep@jeack.com.au

Anabaptist Conference in Melbourne

Peacemaking, Reconciliation and Mission An Anabaptist Perspective for the 21st Century Church Whitley College Melbourne 25th - 28th January 2001

Key leaders in the Church together will provide historical, biblical and spiritual perspectives of Anabaptism. The conference provides a unique opportunity for Christians across the church to come together to consider how these influences can shape the future of the life and mission of the Australian church.

MAIN PRESENTATIONS

Thursday 25.1.2001 6.30 pm Registration

7 pm - **Historical Basis for Anabaptism** - Marita Munro - Lecturer at Whitley College

Friday 26.1.2001

9.30 am **Biblical Basis for Anabaptism** - Gordon Preece - Lecturer in Ethics & Practical Theology; Director, Centre of Applied Christian Ethics, Ridley College, University of Melbourne.

11 am **Anabaptist Perspectives for Peacemaking** - Mark and Mary Hurst - Pastoral workers with AAANZ

Free afternoon for Australia Day activities or sightseeing

7.30 pm **Anabaptist Perspectives for Mission** - Ross Langmead - Director of the School of World Mission and teaches mission studies at Whitley College.

Saturday 27.1.2001 WORKSHOPS

9.30 am
Anabaptist Spirituality
Peace and Justice at work in Australia
Conflict in the Church setting
What is a Peacemaker?

7.30 pm Tim Costello, Peacemaking, Reconciliation & Mission, Brunswick Town Hall

Sunday 28.1.2001 MORNING CHURCH SERVICES

10 am Collins Street Baptist Church, 174 Collins Street, CBD
10 am Truth and Liberation Concern, 265 Bayswater Road, North Bayswater

Both of these services will highlight Anabaptism

Peacemaking, Reconciliation and Mission 25-28.1.2001

Registration Form

Registration is essential for daytime seminars - Please fill out the following Form -

Full conference (Thursday night, Friday & Saturday + evening)	\$
Thursday night Presentation	\$
Friday 26th January only	\$
Saturday 27th January only	\$
Plus accommodation if applicable.	\$

Grand total \$.....

Do you require a children's program? Yes/No
If so, ages of children.....
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.....
.....P/Code.....
Phone.....

Detach and send with a cheque to:

Bessie Pereira
10 Viviani Crescent
Heathmont Vic 3135

Registration Cost

Full Conference Fee (Thursday night, Friday and Saturday incl evening)	\$100
Thursday night Presentation	\$5
Daily Conference Fee	\$60
Saturday night Presentation (to be paid at the door)	\$5

Lunch and Dinner, morning and afternoon tea provided on your registered days.

The Saturday night Presentation with Tim Costello is open to everyone. Bring friends and folk from your church congregation. Admission (\$5) can paid at the door.

Accommodation Cost

Single live-in - \$25 for night + \$5 breakfast	\$90 total per person for 3 nights
[Single bed with study desk & wardrobe, shared bathroom facilities]	
Couple/family live-in - \$60 per night + \$5 breakfast	\$210 total per family for 3 nights
[Double bed with separate lounge room with TV, ensuite and kitchenette, Mattresses can be put on the floor for children]	

Venues

Venue for conference -Whitley College, 50 The Avenue Parkville 03 9342 3600

Trams from the City (along Elizabeth St) are numbers 19 and 20 called 'North Coburg'. Whitley is stop #15 - about 10 minutes from the CBD. Please note that ticket purchase is by coin only from a vending machine on the tram.

Venue for Saturday night Presentation by Tim Costello

Brunswick Town Hall, 233 Sydney Road, Brunswick

#19 Tram stop outside hall (conferees will catch the tram outside Whitley) 4 Minute walk from Jewel train station. Parking available opposite Brunswick baths.

For further information about conference details -

Neil and Saralyn Horsburgh 03 9481 0757,

Bessie Pereira 03 9893 2649 or Mobile 0412 316 252

The Anabaptist Association of Australian and New Zealand

Background to the Association

The initiative for the establishment of the Association came out of a meeting in Tasmania in May 1995 of Christians from a variety of denominational backgrounds who had been influenced in a variety of ways by the Anabaptist tradition. To provide a means of building on the contacts established at the meeting the Anabaptist Network of Australia and New Zealand was formed which became the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand following its incorporation in 1998.

Purposes of the Association

The purposes of the Association are:

1. to nurture and support the Christian faith of individuals and groups in Australia and New Zealand who identify with the Anabaptist tradition.
2. to network and link individuals, churches and groups of Christians who share a common Anabaptist understanding of the Christian faith.
3. to provide religious services including teaching, training, pastoral care, mediation, and counsel to its members and others interested in the Anabaptist tradition.
4. to provide resources and materials relating to the tradition, perspectives, and teaching of Anabaptists to both the Christian and general public.
5. to convene conferences and gatherings which provide opportunity for worship, teaching, training, consultation, celebration, and prayer in the Anabaptist tradition.
6. to extend the awareness of Anabaptism in Australia and New Zealand assisting individuals, churches and groups discover and express their links with the Anabaptist tradition.
7. to provide an opportunity for affiliation for churches and groups who wish to be known in Australia and New Zealand as Anabaptists.

What is Anabaptism?

Anabaptism is a radical Christian renewal movement that emerged in Europe during the sixteenth-century Reformation. Whilst Anabaptism was a grass roots movement with diverse expressions in its early development, its enduring legacy usually has included the following:

- baptism upon profession of faith
 - a view of the church in which membership is voluntary and members are accountable to the Bible and to each other
 - a commitment to the way of peace and other teachings of Jesus as a rule for life
 - separation of church and state
 - worshipping congregations which create authentic community and reach out through vision and service
-