

THE ESTATE CHURCHES NETWORK

e-Newsletter

Issue no. 1

July 2009



Dear Member

Welcome to the very first e-Newsletter of the Estate Churches Network.

As a member, we will endeavour to keep you up to date of news of the Network, issues relating to Housing Estates ministry, conferences, meetings in your area and much more.....

In this issue:



Welcome from Bishop Laurie Green, Chair of ECN

Our National Conference in Birmingham, 12th November 2009

News from across the regions

Introducing our new North West regional co-ordinator

Stories from “forgotten” estates

Housing Estates in the press

Books, publications and resources

ECN Development Worker’s regional visits

Enjoy!



With best wishes

David Greenfield

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Dear Estate Networkers,

As Chair of the Estate Churches Network, it's really good to be in contact by means of this e-newsletter. I hope you find it helpful to you in your life and work.

Although we do lots of other things, our main purpose as a Network is to support one another in what can sometimes feel like an isolating and marginal ministry – but know that we are all in this together and that above all, this is where the real Gospel Action is to be found! I so often find myself associating the villages and towns where Jesus lived and worked, with the housing estates of our time. Here are where the 'ordinary' (and yet not so ordinary) people live. Here are the marginalised, the poor, the forgotten – precisely the Jesus people! And here we see new life, counter-cultural lives, resilience and commitment, in ways that many more well-heeled or inner city environments lack. And the Network offers us ways to celebrate all that, even amidst the challenges that remain only too real.

I believe our Housing Estate clergy are the front line troops of the Kingdom in the UK and I take my hat off to each and every one – and it's a substantial hat to take off!

This, our first e-newsletter, has much to offer – and we thank our David Greenfield, our Development Officer, for bringing it together.

Oh, and by the way, don't forget to go to www.nationalestatechurches.org for all the latest news and lots of resources for YOUR MINISTRY!

God bless each member of the Network – see you at the conference!

Bishop Laurie Green

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie Green". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

The National Estate Churches Network National Conference 2009

“Who Cares About Estates?”



Discover:

How you can make a positive impact on the Estate you serve....
Effective estate projects – examples and stories...
The Struggles and Challenges (and the solutions we use...)

Speakers:

Lynsey Hanley, writes for the Observer and author of the outstanding book *“Estates: An Intimate History”*.
Sister Margaret Walsh, pioneered groundbreaking programmes in the tough estates of Wolverhampton.

Workshops:

“People, Places and Conversations”

Attend two dynamic workshops in the afternoon choosing from:

- **Listening to** People, Places and Conversations
- **Mapping** People, Places and Conversations
- **Working with** People, Places and Conversations
- **Politics**, People, Places and Conversations
- **Supporting** People, Places and Conversations
- **Imagery of** People, Places and Conversations
- **Creative Writing**, People, Places and Conversations
- **Community Gardening**, People, Places & Conversations
- **Music**, People, Places and Conversations
- **Hospitality**, People, Places and Conversations

Plus:

- Funding, Policy News & Skills Exchange
- New ideas & theological reflection
- Time for networking

Where: Birmingham, Carrs Lane Conference Centre, B4 7SX
When: 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Thursday 12th November 2009
Cost: £15 per person (includes buffet lunch)

Host: **Bishop Laurie Green**, renowned author and Chairman of NECN

For a **booking form** click: http://www.nationalestatechurches.org/conference_2009.html



Organised by National Estate Churches Network



Regional Networks



ECN Regional Networks generally hold quarterly gatherings of those with an interest in Urban Ministry and in particular, those working into housing estates. These gatherings will provide you with excellent opportunities to network with others engaged in housing estates ministry, to get inspired, encouraged and supported. Contact your nearest Regional Co-ordinator for details:

North West:

We are delighted to introduce to you the Estate Churches Network's new regional co-ordinator for the North West.

Judith Wray, based on the Grange Park Estate in Blackpool, has recently joined the NECN team in a voluntary capacity. Being based in the North West, Judith is your point of for NECN. If you make yourself known to her, she will keep you informed by email of meetings and events taking place in your area. Judith has a wealth of experience in this respect and you can read her story on our website: [click here](#)

You can also read the Development Worker's account of his visit to the Grange Park Estate, during which Judith kindly introduced David Greenfield to the excellent work of the Open Door Project and other initiatives on the estate: [click here](#)

Initially, the quarterly gatherings will take place in Blackpool. However, the long term plan is to have sub-regional meetings for the Manchester, Liverpool, Carlisle areas so you don't have as far to travel.

Here are Judith's contact details:

judith.wray@methodist.org.uk

Tel: 01253 763146

Judith will be delighted to hear from you.

Regional co-ordinator for the Yorks & Humberside region:

The Revd Canon Kathryn Fitzsimons

Tel: 0113 248 5011 Email: [Click here](#)

Regional co-ordinator for the East Midlands region:

The Revd Derek Brown

Tel: 0116 278 6288 Email: [Click here](#)

Regional co-ordinator for the Greater London region:

The Revd Jack Maple

Tel: 020 7932 1122 Email: [Click here](#)

Regional co-ordinator for the South West region:

The Revd Joe Hasler

Email: [Click here](#)

Regional co-ordinator for the South East region:

Jane Winter

Email: [Click here](#)

There are currently no ECN groups meeting in the North East, Eastern and West Midlands regions. If you are interested in starting an Estates group in your region, please contact David Greenfield:

M: 07809 877685 E: david.greenfield@nationalestatechurches.org

Three stories from Housing Estates...

1. By Judith Wray, May 2009



In 2004, the Blackpool Methodist Circuit created a new Diaconal appointment. The Diaconal Order sent me! Amongst other things, the remit included developing some form of outreach on Grange Park, where links had been formed with the local Anglican church. About £2000 had been set aside for work on Grange Park following the closure of one of the Methodist churches two years previously. A substantial grant from the Methodist Connexion towards my appointment had been obtained on the basis of 'new work' on the estate, though this condition wasn't spelled out to me at the outset. Everyone seemed very hopeful and excited.

A year later, I was at my wits end. It had taken this time to unravel the background and expectations behind the appointment. Unfortunately, it transpired that I was supposed to do something single-handed, without a management group and without companions on the journey. 'You're paid to do it, so you do it!' and, 'You were sold to us as someone who could do this,' etc. These kinds of comments strike like blows, leaving you reeling. I had got to know the estate as best I could through visiting the various groups and organisations. Living away from the estate seemed to me to be a huge barrier. An original idea that we could maybe work from the Anglican premises proved to be out of the question. Trust me, it's a fact.

One bright spot during this first year was discovering the Estate Churches Network, and attending the annual conference in Birmingham. It was such a relief to meet other people in similar situations. During the year I had become increasingly confused, bemused, despairing and finally decided that it was an impossible situation. I presented a reasoned argument to the Circuit. There was a furore; the Chair of District was called in, and the Warden of the Order came up. I cried a lot. I couldn't help it. Only at this point was it revealed that the grant towards my appointment depended on something – anything – happening on the estate! The Circuit was panic-stricken that if we didn't go forward, then the money might be withdrawn. Such were the motives and machinations under the surface. In the black hole of a complete impasse, one morning soon after the 'furore', I was unexpectedly free from commitments. *One last time*, I thought. *I'll go up to Grange Park just once more, and then that's it, finished.* I sat down with God and prayed a prayer, which I wrote down.

Thursday 13 October 2005.

... confused, disappointed, isolated, bewildered – and all to do with Grange Park... Lord, please help me to listen with an open and willing mind and heart... When I think of Grange Park I think of greyness, blankness, closed doors. Lord. I have no enthusiasm whatsoever for this project. That's the truth. If this is something I/we – whoever 'we' is – are really to pour our energies into, then change me, Lord.

In this frame of mind I drove the two and a half miles to the estate and called in on various people and places. Finally, I thought I would go and look at a community building that had always been locked and the curtains closed, though I knew it was used occasionally. This time, the door was wide open, the curtains drawn back. I walked in. There was one person there, who turned out to be the warden of the local sheltered housing. Ray was setting up an office. He had a desk and an empty cupboard and a few papers. He was as surprised to see me as I was to see him. We introduced ourselves; he showed me the premises - extremely attractive, warm and well maintained. Ray told me that the Council had decided that the centres like this one dotted around Blackpool needed to be opened up and used more fully by the community. They thought that if the wardens based themselves in the buildings rather than working from a central point, there was more likelihood of promoting their use. To my astonishment, use of the premises would be free of charge. 'Do you think we could use the centre for a weekly drop-in?' I asked. 'And could we do carols at Christmas?' 'I don't see why not,' said Ray. And there it was. The Open Door project was born. I call this my 'Narnia moment'. Walking through the door of Horsebridge Community Centre took me into a new world, the wonderful world of Grange Park. I prepared..... **To read the full story [click here](#)**

Three stories from Housing Estates...

2. Haleema's story

What the Open Door project has done for me.

The answer to this is that it has given me the four 'F's. These four 'F's are the most essential things in everyone's life.

F no. 1 – Future

Three years ago, I didn't have much of a future to look forward to. I could only see pain and loneliness. I had no family or friends. I had been living abroad for over fifteen years. I didn't know anyone here.

To be honest, the future looked bleak to say the least. I decided I would make my way round to the community centre to see what activities I could join, in the hope of meeting and making friends.

As I was looking at the adverts in the window, the door of the community centre opened and there stood before me was a lady with a lovely smile. Judith's first words to me were, 'Hello. Would you like to come in for a coffee?' Inside I met two more ladies, also smiling – Susan and Sheila. From that moment on and every day since, I knew I had a future that looked much brighter.

F no. 2 – Friends

I started going to the centre regularly and soon I was making friends – true friends – the sort of friends that, good or bad times, they are by your side. Now that I am part of the Open Door Project team, I am meeting new people and making new friends every day.

F no. 3 – Family

Three years have passed since I first met Judith, Susan and Sheila. In that three years I now have a family that is growing daily. All the Open Door team have become like brothers and sisters to me.

I met a couple two years ago. They came to our Monday morning breakfast. In September 2008, they got married. Judith performed the ceremony. Charlie, the groom, has adopted me as his mum. So now, by proxy, I have a son, a daughter-in-law, twelve grandchildren and three great grandchildren. So the Open Door project has given me a family.

F no. 4 – Faith

Last but not least, Faith. I have always had faith in God. He has always been there for me. During the last three years my faith has grown in strength and I feel this is because of the support I have received from every member of the Open Door project's team. They have opened their arms when I've needed a hug. They have listened when I've needed to talk. They have laughed and cried with me. They have prayed for me and with me. They have been my rock.

Because of these people, I have a reason to look forward to whatever life has in store for me. All these things and more is what the Open Door project has done for me.

Three stories from Housing Estates...

3. Your story.....

If you have a story from a Housing Estate and are happy for it to feature on our website and in the next Newsletter, then email it to david.greenfield@nationalestatechurches.org

Development Worker's Recent Regional Visits

East Midlands, Leicester:



I was invited by Derek Brown to introduce my role and the work of NECN at the meeting of the Diocese of Leicester Estates Group.

My visit started with a brief tour of Leicester with Chris Florance, the Diocesan Community Development worker. I was struck by the inner city development which had taken place since my last visit to Leicester a decade ago! But, as Chris so rightly pointed out, building shiny new shopping complexes isn't the way to truly regenerate a city, especially the overlooked estates outside the city centre. The "tour" ended in the Cathedral where the Diocesan clergy study day conference was taking place, hosted by Bishop Tim. Afterwards, I was delighted to have had the opportunity to meet with Bishop Tim who expressed his appreciation for the work of ECN and +Laurie Green in supporting those who serve on deprived estates.

We moved across to Diocesan House where I met with members of the Estates Group. After introducing my role and the work of ECN, I asked those present to outline the challenges and successes they experience in their housing estates and any ways in which the NEC Network could serve them.

The challenges/successes range from multi-faith/cultural integration (e.g. one estate has 95% Afro-Caribbean residents) to housing shortages, New Deal programmes to an exciting and innovative CofE Academy School (non-selective) based in the church building on a housing estate!

My impression is of a strong estates group who truly care for and support one another in what are very challenging and potentially isolated ministries. For any enquiries regarding the NECN East Midlands regional group, please contact Derek Brown on 0116 278 6288.

North West, Blackpool:



At the invitation of Deaconess Judith Wray, I visited the Open Door project on Grange Park Estate in Blackpool. I joined the team at 9:00 a.m. as they set up to serve breakfasts to local residents. I was impressed by the dedication and commitment to quality in every respect. After all was set up, we gathered for a Bible reading and prayer. Breakfasts were served and conversations struck up between 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Judith later took me on a tour of the Grange Park housing estate. I saw other projects, including one featured on a recent episode of the Secret Millionaire. My impression was of an estate which is benefitting from some excellent joined up working across statutory, voluntary, community agencies and the local council..... **To read full report [click here](#)**

Future visits include, Newcastle, Bristol, Leicester, Birmingham.

If you would like the ECN Development Worker to visit your area/assist with setting up a regional group, contact David for a chat on 07809 877685 or email david.greenfield@nationalestatechurches.org

Housing Estates in the Press



In a recent article in the Guardian, Christian socialist Bob Holman, who lived and worked for many years on deprived housing estates, explains why he has taken up the cause of asylum seekers:

"In more than 25 years living on deprived housing estates in Bath and then Glasgow, Bob Holman never once met an asylum seeker. Yet this week, the Christian socialist and long-time Labour party member is one of the authors of a report on asylum seekers for former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith's thinktank, the Centre for Social Justice. Holman may be 72 and retired from the frontline of neighbourhood work. He may have moved from Easterhouse to a more sedate estate in another part of Glasgow to spend more time with his wife, Annette, and their grandchildren. But he was never going to break the habit of a lifetime by backing away from injustice when he sees it. This is a man, after all, who famously gave up a comfortable life as a university professor to follow his religious convictions to live and work among the poor....."

To read the full article [click here](#) .

Books, publications and resources...

For a list of resources on Housing Estate ministry and how to order [click here](#)



For [click here](#) to websites you may find useful on Estates Ministry [click here](#)

For Estates job vacancies [click here](#)

If you would like to make a donation so the work of ECN can continue,
please contact The Rt Revd Dr. Laurie Green

T: 01375 673806 E: lgreen@chelmsford.anglican.org

Please email your contributions for the next ECN e-Newsletter by 1st September 2009 to
david.greenfield@nationalestatechurches.org



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