



## Bristol Christian Fellowship

Office (Monday to Thursday)

Severn Ridge, 29 Gloucester Road, Almondsbury, Bristol BS32 4HH

Telephone: 01454 613305 Fax 01454 618030

BCF email: [admin@bcfnet.com](mailto:admin@bcfnet.com)

BCF website [www.bcfnet.com](http://www.bcfnet.com)

### BCF Diary April 2010

Sun 4	Youth-led Easter celebration	10.30 am	Resound: Barley Close School
Sun 4	Thornbury 4ALL	4.00 pm	Thornbury Parish Church
Sun 4	Aardvark: Baptisms and feast	5.00 pm	The Ark
Sun 11	Resound	10.30 pm	Barley Close School <i>Mac (Mark 2)</i>
Sun 11	BCF Thornbury	4.00 pm	St Paul's, The Hackett <i>Matt Sanderson</i>
Sun 11	Aardvark	7.00 pm	<i>Linda Wilson (Matthew 6:5-18 – Prayer &amp; Fasting)</i>
Sun 18	BCF Joint Meeting	3.00 pm	Thornbury Baptist Church Centre <i>David Lawrence</i>
Sun 25	Resound	10.30 pm	Barley Close School <i>Tim Groves (Mark 3)</i>
Sun 25	BCF Thornbury	4.00 pm	Venue to be confirmed <i>Daniel Budd</i>
Sun 25	Aardvark	7.00 pm	<i>Stories with Kris Lannen from Tubestation</i>

### May 2010

Sun 2	Resound: all-age meeting	10.30 am	Barley Close School
Sun 2	Thornbury 4ALL	4.00 pm	Thornbury Parish Church
Sun 2	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark <i>Emma Duncan (Treasures on Earth)</i>

### Could you host a Swiss teenager in the summer?

Fiona Macaskill has a Swiss friend whose daughter needs to improve her English, and would like an English family to stay with from about 3 July to 8 August.

*“Alexandra would like to do something about her English this summer. She has her summer vacation from 3 July - 8 August and we would like her to spend this time in England. What I have in mind is a family who would be willing to take her on as a guest student/child in return of cash of course. If the family had kids of Alexandra's age that would probably help to engage her into everyday life. If the family had younger children, she could maybe be a bit of a help. Of course she would like a horse riding farm nearby but that's not the most important aspect. If the family went on holiday during this time and would take her along, I'd gladly pay the extra costs. Do you know somebody who would take her and be her host family for this time? She will be 15 in October. She goes to gymnasium. She likes going to school and has very good grades. Beside that, she likes horse riding and wants to start to learn paragliding as soon as she is allowed to, which would be her 15th birthday!”*

If you are interested, please contact Fiona: [Fiona@Fionam.com](mailto:Fiona@Fionam.com)

**Entries for the May Bulletin by 20 April, please. [bulletin@bcfnet.com](mailto:bulletin@bcfnet.com)**

**BCF News is edited by Ian Wilson.**

**Read it online: [www.bcfnet.com/resources/BCF\\_News](http://www.bcfnet.com/resources/BCF_News)**



**BRISTOL  
CHRISTIAN  
FELLOWSHIP**

EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS  
TO BUILD CHURCHES  
TO CHANGE OUR WORLD

# BCF NEWS

April 2010

## Easter People

### Dave Day



At the Pioneer Leaders' Conference recently, Rev Andrew White spoke. He is the Vicar of Baghdad and has been influential in helping the peace process. He is a remarkable and eccentric man serving in an extremely hostile environment whilst battling with MS. His talk is available on the Pioneer Website. His recurring theme was a quote from St Augustine, 'We are Easter people and Hallelujah is our song!' His stories from a war zone where many of his congregation have been martyred for their faith are powerful. He has seen the suffering of Easter in his everyday life.

As we celebrate Easter, I want us to reflect for a while on that phrase. What does it mean to be Easter people? It means that we are constantly living in the reality of being forgiven through the Cross of Jesus. It means we recognise that the purpose of Calvary was to restore relationship with God and the image of God within us. Easter people are those who can live every day knowing that the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead on the first Easter is living in us (Romans 8:11). Whilst I enjoy the hot cross buns and sneaking bits of grandchildren's Easter eggs, I hope I don't

restrict the vitality of the Easter message to a variable date in March or April. I want to be an Easter person living in the power of the resurrecting Spirit. We are Easter people unrestricted by the confines of the world in which we live and its values.

Have you ever been to one of those parties where the game is, if you were an animal, what would you be? Well, if you were a song, what song would you be? A lament, a blues number, a nostalgic folk song or would your song be Hallelujah? Hallelujah is that song that even if you have had to take up your cross, there is confidence that new life will emerge. Hallelujah is that song which sounds loud in the cold, still times. Hallelujah is the song that is echoed when we meet with church family at Easter and every other occasion. It is the song that says that the best the enemy threw at Jesus was unable to prevent redemption. It is the song that says that the dingiest tomb cannot contain the life of Jesus and the power of his Spirit. It is the song that the family of God will be singing when the kingdoms of this world have finally become the kingdom of our God. What song would people say that I am?

Happy Easter and for all those valiant souls who have given up something for Lent, have fun!

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## Property update from Cathy Knowles

### Resound Building

After receiving the planning approval early, we have now moved onto the next stage of design which is the detailed plans for sending out to a shortlist of builders. This is a rather interesting time as it will put actual figures to the build and we'll see if they match up to the quantity surveyor's calculations!

The schedule is currently looking like this:

Mar-April 6 week process for Architect & Structural drawings

April-June 6 week process for Contractors to tender for the job

July/Aug – Build commences and will take 10-12 months

Thank you again for all the pledges - this has reached a total of £36,800 pledged over the next year.

### Severn Ridge

We are still in discussion with the council on the development potential.

### Café Oasis.

The property is now on the market, and there has already been quite a lot of interest so the property should be sold by 1 August. Please continue to pray for new opportunities to open up for Mike.

financial abuse? We could call ourselves Christian bankers. But we don't intend to make money, only to bring equality and fairness, so let's not call ourselves anything, lets just live the life our Father has called us to live.

If you are in a similar situation, or not even what is described here, call Robin Self on 0117 956 0770 for a chat, or to leave your message. If there are any others being challenged, with a similar heart, or you just feel drawn, we should get together to discuss what could be done, and see what God asks of us.

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## Finding Your Purpose! Summer 2010

Please join us if you are:

- At a point of transition in your life or career
- Thinking of making changes but undecided as to exactly which direction to take
- Addressing conflicts between your own values and those operating in your work environment
- Seeking to live God's purpose in your life

"Finding your purpose!" will give you the opportunity to:

- Step back from daily routine to reflect deeply on the areas of your life that are important to you
- Explore your life or career from different perspectives
- Gain clarity and purpose about your future direction

The programme is designed around 10 evening sessions. We have been achieving profound results for participants as they connect with their calling.

"It's been a really great opportunity to reflect on my career and life goals in a communal context. I would recommend it to anyone unsure of the next step." (SK)

**Course Leader** – Roger Allen.

For details contact [roger.angieallen@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:roger.angieallen@blueyonder.co.uk) or 01454 416 446

**Dates:** 7.30pm to 9.30pm every Tuesday from 27 April to 29 June 2010

**Venue:** Severn Ridge, Almondsbury, BS32 4HH.

**Cost (subsidised) - £150. Concessions negotiable.**

## Financial challenges

**Robin Self** has some thoughts about finance, and wonders whether anyone shares his ideas.



**Is anyone else being challenged** about the uncertainty, hardship, and unfairness of the current financial climate?

People may not be in debt, they have equity in their house, but they have a loan, or credit card to clear, and they cannot borrow against the equity to sort it out. The easy come, easy go, way of living on credit, always able to borrow money, has disappeared. The finance industry is only looking after itself, and forgetting about us, the people who gave it that future in the first place.

**What if the worst happens** and a family, even in our fellowship, has no work, no income, and their house is repossessed by the mortgage company? The house is auctioned off for less than the mortgage, they are left with personal debt, and they are made bankrupt. There is no social housing with affordable rent available, so the family is forced to rent privately. They find a nice place to rent, it's their old house! The rent is fair, but it is much more than the original mortgage that they could not afford to pay!

**Are we in the world**, but not of it? If we knew about this family's problem, could we have helped, by loaning money, or even buying their house using our spare equity, so the family can carry on living there? Then they wouldn't need to pay to move their furniture, so they would have less personal debt. We would set the rent low, just enough to pay the mortgage interest, and the benefit system would also help.

**What would Jesus want us to do?** He talks about the parable of the talents, making our money work, and sharing as there is need. Jesus does not want us to just sit on what we have got. There is one big problem. Sometimes it's not easy for us to admit we are in trouble, so how will we find out? Or it might be a different finance problem. I pray we find out before it is too late. The world was OK when it was making lots of money. Now the banks and mortgage lenders are being unfair. Why should a 'fat' person who already has loads of money, be able to buy another house cheap at auction, and then rent it out to make even more money?

**Do you think it is time** for us Christians to step in, and stop some of this new

## Keep the Faith

**Tim Groves**

While saying our mutual goodbyes a friend of mine spoke these parting words 'keep the faith'. I nodded and we went our separate ways. Yet the phrase has barely left my side since. In the first instance I concluded that this was as good as any social full stop, gently closing down the exchange and allowing for the heart felt parting of the ways. With the phrase sitting like a squatter in my mind, this explanation seems hardly to suffice.

Today was no easy day. One of those days when everything I touched demanded my full attention. I realise as I reflect on today and indeed the whole week, that there are many opportunities for me not to keep the faith, when the demands or pace of life seek to rob me of a position of faith.

This is my encouragement, that God is in the business of 'new mercy' and fresh opportunities to receive grace and peace from him. Scripture is full of invitations, 'to hear and see', 'to enter', and 'to receive'. 'Today' says the book of Hebrews, 'if you hear his voice do not harden your heart but rather enter his rest'. In light of the achievements of Christ, perhaps entering God's rest is a more robust and substantial version of 'keep the faith'.

### Resound weekend away

On behalf of the Resound community I would like to extend an invitation to you all. We have organised a church weekend away in Christchurch on the 2nd-4th July 2010. This will be a wonderful opportunity for fellowship and fun. Residential accommodation is £80 per person for the weekend; camping is £40 per person. All food is included. Can I encourage you to consider attending. With a pub nearby, wonderful forest walks and a lovely beach it promises a moment for relaxation and reflection. Please let Christine at the office know if you wish to come. It won't be the same without you.

## Youth Work in BCF

Ruth McConnell wonders whether you have anything to offer to our young people



The young people in the church are one of the most valuable resources we have. We currently run four youth cells over the whole of BCF, which meet weekly, with other events in between. In the last 6 months we have had a music making day, a video making day, a time to meet and worship together and prophesy over each other, various outward bound events with things like laser quest, night walks and karaoke. It has been really encouraging to see the older young people taking responsibility for running and helping with the children's work in different areas of the church.

All of this though comes through the hard work and commitment of the volunteers who we have helping run all this provision. However, if we want to see our youth work flourish more and more, in particular to see more boys engaging and coming to know God for themselves, then we need more volunteers to step up to the plate and help out.

This could be helping run a cell group for young people (with someone else), doing social/outdoors activities with young people, helping to run music/film/sports workshops, being available to come to residential events such as youth weekends or Soul Survivor. Maybe it could be that you've been sitting on an idea that you thought would be good but you'd have no idea how to go about running it. If that is the case, please come and talk to me, and we can see how we can make it happen!

For all of you who feel that you would never have anything to offer, read Nick Harvey's story below of how 5 years ago he very warily got involved in helping me run a cell group for young people, called FROGs.

*"I came to the realisation, a few years ago now, that I should find out what was being taught to our young people in the church because I had daughters that were of that age. I didn't think I had any particular young people friendly skills in teaching but the more we talked about working with young people there seemed to be not enough people to help. So I thought, well I'm not one of those*

## Crossways pre-school

Debbie Carter tells us how the pre-school is getting on

Crossways Pre-school was started by members of BCF in 1997. Meeting at Blackhorse, it had a vision to touch the local community. Sarah Bennett took over as manager in 1999 and does a wonderful job providing strong leadership to the committed team of staff. She has recently been joined by Karen Mott and it is exciting to have another member of BCF on the team. Crossways has been faithfully building relationships and being a positive presence in the community. In 2007 it was decided that Crossways should become an independent charity. The trustees are all members of BCF – Claire Wilson, Claire Collins, Pauline Berndes and Debbie Carter. Val Harding meets with us as an advisor and she regularly visits Crossways to read stories to the children.

Since vacating the Blackhorse building, Crossways has been meeting at the Mangotsfield Methodist Church. This has brought about new challenges and new opportunities. The Pre-school continues to have a strong Christian ethos, seeking to provide excellent care and education while giving a warm welcome to children and their families. There are 60 children attending this year in either morning, afternoon or all day sessions. Crossways recently had an Ofsted inspection and was judged to be good in every area. Comments included

- The established, consistent staff team work well together, with clear roles and responsibilities helping the flow of each session.
- The staff have a good understanding of child development and the children's interests, which is reflected in their positive interaction with children.
- The setting actively promotes links with parents and other providers to benefit children.

Crossways hold an annual carol service and regular fun days for the children and their families which are very well attended.

We feel that it is really important that Crossways is supported regularly by prayer and so on the last Sunday of each month we will be meeting at Barley Close at 9.45 am to pray. Please come and join us if you would like to support this expression of BCF in the community. We are looking forward to seeing God move and touch people in the way that only he can.

# Challenging integrity

Sarah Orrell



I heard a joke. Some shipwrecked people are stranded on an island, praying for rescue. One morning a spacious, empty, wooden boat drifts onto the shore. The people are delighted. They waste no time. Tearing the planks apart they set about constructing the raft of their dreams...

Building a raft could be a bit like building church. We might start by sketching in the sand what a raft ought to look like. We know from experience what floats and sinks. We have ideas about the right size and shape. Aesthetics won't save us from drowning, so we need to talk practicality and science. And it's just part and parcel of the process that the marine engineers among us will feel thoroughly engaged and energised by the whole experience, whereas if calligraphy is more your thing, you might struggle to feel useful or relevant. (Those calligraphers! There's always one when you're trying to get on and build a raft...)

But of course building church isn't like building a raft. If we try to fathom rationally what church should look like, we'll lose the plot. We'd probably vote in favour of preserving the health and wellbeing of the visible body of Christ on earth for a start. And yet when Peter suggested this, Jesus cast him aside for blasphemy (Matthew 16). In our sensible strategising, we might overlook weird and wild possibilities too – for example, a dad prepared to sacrifice his little boy, or a prostitute lying to the authorities. And yet there's Abraham and Rahab, doing just that and exemplifying faith (James 2).

Fortunately, as we know, Jesus is the church builder – good news for marine engineers and calligraphers alike. I don't think he's that interested in the details of our blueprints, but he welcomes open access to the blue touch-paper he's already built into our hearts and minds, because the new covenant isn't a matter of small print and hand-holding (Hebrews 8). We're called to live by faith. And faith comes when the word is heard, the penny drops, the revelation dawns. When I step up to the plate and dare to live from where I'm really at, I open my whole being to transformation. At the same time, I'm free to do the first job of unity with God and others, which is to find my multi-layered self naturally being pulled together in integrity, rather than feeling torn apart and exhausted in the name of raft building.

Righteousness (integrity), peace and joy are hallmarks of the Kingdom of God. If that's not our current experience of church and community, it might be worth checking our eyes, for stray planks (Matthew 7).



*'fab, up together, pulling ideas out of a hat and lead 4 cells before breakfast' types; but I did think I could offer a venue and to be in the background.*

*Frog cell described how I feel about my contribution now in a recent review we did of what their group was like. "[FROG cell] creates a space that is neither a church meeting or school, or just school friends, but creates a space for them, which is a good thing." It is really good to see how by creating a space for the young people, they have used it to chill a lot, ask difficult questions and work things out. Their enthusiasm and faith in God is a great encouragement to me.*

*So do you have to be a super duper youth leader? No. you just have to want to create a space and a bit of time. In fact often it pays more to learn to keep quiet and let the young people think aloud about things and than to have answers for all of their questions. It's like putting watercress seeds on a carpet, tipping a glass of water over them, shutting the door and letting it just develop. You provide the right environment and then just watch it nurture and grow."*

I would also encourage you to make a point of talking to the young people you see on a Sunday morning/afternoon/evening. Older role models of people who have decided to walk with God for the long haul are such an important part of discipleship and of church itself. So go and strike up a conversation with one of our great young people, you never know where it might lead!!

If you would like to be help keep the youth work in BCF across the three churches going by being involved then please contact me.

# Who's who in BCF

## Chloe Banks profiles Joe and Jenny Hickson

Joe and Jenny Hickson are part of the Aardv:Ark community and have been in BCF for about three years.

Jenny was brought up in Eastleigh, Hampshire, with her younger sister and brother. In her childhood she was a self-confessed “goody-goody”, never in trouble (though we only have her word for it!) and spending her free time playing the piano and clarinet. The church has always been part of her life but she made the personal commitment to it when she was baptised at the age of 14. In Eastleigh she was involved in welcoming, music and video and may be familiar to members of BCF for her involvement in... welcoming, music and video.

It was at school that she developed a love of electronics which led her to Bristol University to do a Masters in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. She does a little of everything but prefers “anything that involves binary and not too many motors”. It was during her A-levels that she first met Joe, although they are adamant that there was no spark between them!

Joe was born in Nottingham but brought up in Winchester with his two younger sisters. He comes from a Catholic family and was an altar boy in church. His passion for outdoor pursuits started from an early age with the scouts and by the time he was half way through his forensic science degree at UWE he was rock-climbing and geocaching. He also tried his hand at kayaking,

but ended up in intensive care with Weil's Disease. Luckily God intervened with a miraculous healing just as his kidneys were about to fail.

Having dabbled with Buddhism in his late teens, he was prodded by God to return to Christianity. Finding that he couldn't just fall back into Catholicism, he



tried the local evangelical church and it was “all downhill from there”. Having discovered BCF he got baptised in November 2007 and is very active in the church: organising music rotas and playing bass on the guitar he made himself. (He also wove the silk for his own waistcoat when he got married. If you have any jobs that need doing...)

Despite meeting at college it wasn't until a couple of years later that they got together. What started as a quick chat, became daily phone calls and the rest was history. On Jenny's 21st birthday Joe proposed, having decided that accidentally budgeting for an extra month's rent was God's way of telling him to buy diamonds! Last July, three years after those first phone calls, they married and spent their honeymoon camping in Scotland.

When Jenny finishes her Masters this summer, she will become a Design Engineer with Imagination Technologies, Chipstow. Joe is currently working part-time as a science and photography teacher at the Access Unit in the Cotswold Centre. In his spare time he teaches himself PHP coding and volunteers with the Bristol Bike Project. Jenny has temporarily forgotten what spare time is so if anyone finds any, let her know!

### Musician in Residence

#### Eastwood Park Women's Prison

Reducing re-offending through music

1.5 days per week up to £22,000 pro rata,

Changing Tunes, a Christian based charity, is looking for a musician to work 1.5 days per week at Eastwood Park Women's Prison in Gloucestershire. The role will be to lead three music sessions per week, teaching & rehearsing groups of prisoners as well as post-release follow-up work. You will need to be a confident and skilled musician on at least two instruments, and to be able to teach, to basic level, the guitar, bass, keyboards, drums and singing. Most of the work involves leading small groups of singers during which keyboard skills are the most useful. Applicants must be confident, flexible and comfortable with many musical styles. The work also involves organising occasional concerts in prison, concerts for ex-prisoners in local churches (supported by existing staff), and occasionally performing with prisoners at prison chaplaincy services. No experience working in the prison system is required, as full training will be given. The successful applicant will be required to complete an enhanced CRB check. (The Changing Tunes policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders will be sent to all applicants.) For an application form please email [myrtlel@changingtunes.org.uk](mailto:myrtlel@changingtunes.org.uk) or call 07769 226027. Deadline for applications is **7 April 2010**.

Charity No. 1079673.

[www.changingtunes.org.uk](http://www.changingtunes.org.uk)