



EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS
TO BUILD CHURCHES
TO CHANGE OUR WORLD

BCF NEWS

April 2011

An encouraging word

One of the many blessings we've found as a result of our family's recent move to Downend is the privilege of hosting the monthly worship and intercession meetings. Filling the house with prayer and worship feels a real treat. I can't tell you how refreshing and reinvigorating it is to be squeezed into a small room with the sole intent on worshipping God.

At yesterday's meeting, while praying specifically for the Resound build, Mike Bennett read a passage which I have been returning to like a dog with a bone. Hearing it read out loud, it seemed right to all present that this was a word from God for us at this time. This was not a general word in a vacuum but a timely response to our petitions. How incredible. Here we were praying that God would bless our efforts to build Resound and just listen to the response:

I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you made before me; I have consecrated this house that you have built, and put my name there forever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time (1 Kings 9:3).



Let's not rush too quickly over the passage, let's instead take great delight in the fact that on this occasion God has heard our prayers. WOW. Let's not get bogged down with the need to change the tense of the verse either. This is nothing if not an endorsement from God regarding our plans for the building. What is equally encouraging is that God has chosen to give the building, as we minister from within and out of it, his personal attention *'my eyes and my heart will be there'*. That is so encouraging. We ought not to forget the Ezekiel passage God gave us at the beginning of this venture (Ez 47) either. The promise being that from the threshold of Resound would flow deep waters of refreshment and transformation. We say "Yes God...Yes God".

Together

We have also just had our second joint meeting of the year. And what a great meeting. Let me be direct, please give this gathering time in your diary. Our renewal as church cannot come apart from determined effort to gather together to worship God. The next joint meeting will be on 15 May. Please don't write these times off as unnecessary – they are so critical. Worship is a key part of our identity as we move forward.

While the three churches each chase plans for the future, we will work hard to resuscitate our collective selves. I have heard that BCF is dead. I, of course, refute that. It may be that the church as we had once known it has changed beyond recognition, but dead, no. It should come as no surprise that some commentators borrowing from the work of Moltmann refer to the modern church as being crucified. I have some sympathy with this view. That the church is frail may be true. Indeed we ought to say when isn't it.

An appeal to Moltmann isn't without its merits. We ought to be clear that resurrection presupposes a death of sorts, be that the death of ideas or of mental models we may have held of church. So let's be clear, BCF may have had a brush with a death of sorts but it remains very much alive, and together we can speak a word that announces the new. We are, after all, Easter people. Spot the new thing, is a good way of rearticulating the words of Isaiah: "What do you see?" So in closing, let's take an opportunity at this Easter time to reflect on the miracle of the resurrection and the hope it offers us as a church.

Tim Groves

Defaulting to what we know

Pete Osborne



Being involved in leadership – or in the church at large – you learn things. You pick up what to say and what not to say. How to lead a meeting; how to speak. What words to use; how to be. Some of it is conscious; other things you do without thinking. And some of this is good – learning to be sensitive to what God might be saying, for example. But much of the other stuff worries me. It worries me because it's so easy to perform; to become good at something and then to live out of that 'skill' or learned behaviour. Sometimes it's laziness – you default to what you know. Other times it's out of a desire to please or to look good.

The danger is that words and behaviour become empty; they no longer carry that heartfelt seeking after God – not knowing what to do; blundering through but longing for God to speak. Eugene Peterson says that we can easily take on 'a religious role, that gradually obliterates the life of the soul'.*

Quoting Karl Barth, he goes on to say, 'What Christians do becomes a contradiction when it takes the form of a trained and mastered routine, of a learned and practised art. They may and can be masters and even virtuosos in many things, but never in what makes them Christians, God's children.'

These words really speak to me. How easy is it to slip into such patterns; to know how things work and to go with what we have learned or 'mastered'? Yet God breaks out! And if I'm not careful I will be so caught up in my way of doing things that I attempt to push him back in the box. 'Not now, I'm speaking...' Am I really prepared to be 'a fool for God'? For me to look stupid so that he might be glorified? What would people think of me?

It's so easy to default to what we know. Without intention and creative thought, I so easily slip into habits and ways of doing things that I'm familiar with. The well worn path is often the easier one. It requires less innovation, less thought and reflection, and allows me to remain comfortable. But it leaves me in a position where through fear and laziness, I can miss out on what God might be doing. I want to act with courage (to step beyond the boundaries of my ability), and creativity (to do old things in new ways), so I don't miss out.

* Practising Resurrection by Eugene Peterson

Who's who in BCF

CJ profiles **Ruth McConnell**

Ruth was born in 1984 in Deal in Kent, the only child of Christian parents. She went to the local Parochial Primary School and then Sir Roger Manwoods Grammar School. She greatly enjoyed drama during her schooldays and belonged to two amateur dramatic societies. After this she wanted to go to Norwich University to study drama, but a Christian friend told her that God had plans for her to go to Bristol. Ruth was a bit bored with Christianity at this point, but when she was turned down by Norwich and accepted by Bristol UWE she thought she should go along with it!



The first people Ruth got to know in Bristol were Lisette Broadfoot and Jesse Edbrooke. She needed a job and Jesse suggested Oasis coffee shop, so she worked there part-time alongside Lisette and the two of them started a Youth Group called Y Cell? It was at this time that Ruth decided she should join BCF! So for three years she studied English at UWE and once she had her degree she worked part-time for BCF, put in more hours at Oasis and also spent some of her time helping Transition.

In 2005 Ruth began helping with One25, at this time living with Steve and Lesley Broadfoot and spent the year saving money, learning to drive and getting ready to embark on a Youth & Community Degree with Applied Theology. Part of this three year course included working with BCF. So with the second degree under her belt, Ruth works now for BCF three days a week which she has been doing for eighteen months. She is responsible for youth, children and students in Resound, particularly focusing on mission. She also works one day a week with One25, driving the van, getting involved in late night outreach and working with the children of some of the women and helping at the Grosvenor Centre. She also works as a temp for the Riverside Unit as a Health Care Assistant, working with teenagers with mental health problems. Here she acts as an extra pair of hands at mealtimes and keeps the children occupied playing games, which Ruth finds very rewarding. The work is quite sporadic, as and when the need arises.

Ruth now lives locally to Resound in a house which she shares with Fran

Kidd and another Christian friend, Lynsey-Ruth. She loves it there and they all enjoy reaching out to the local community.

Ruth's many hobbies include kick-boxing, running, walking and reading, especially Harry Potter, Merlin and C.S. Lewis. She is aiming to do the Bristol Half Marathon again with the proceeds going to Resound – so please sponsor her! Ruth loves to be by the sea, and going to gigs. She used to play the violin and is currently learning to play the guitar. She is part of the Worship Team at Resound and also on the Leadership Team. She also loves cooking, especially curry!

Building project update

Cathy Knowles – project coordinator

Resound Building

The contract should be signed in the last week of March. We need permission from South Gloucestershire council for the design changes we made to reduce the costs, and we've submitted a minor amendments planning application. The target date is 13 April. (PK11/0791/NMA) Work on site will start very soon.

For other updates see <http://buildingresound.blogspot.com/>

Severn Ridge

The planning application for Severn Ridge has had to be withdrawn. Although the planning officer told us he would approve the plans, he changed his mind and requested that we incorporate an element of low cost housing.

So we are back to the drawing board to decide on a solution which can be resubmitted to the council as quickly as possible. Please continue to pray as this is an important element of the Resound build and time is of the essence!

BCF Offices

We will need a temporary new home for the BCF offices soon. The problem is that we do not have the funds to rent office space. Does anyone have any contacts or ideas that we might consider, or maybe you know of someone who has a large space that needs filling.

Easy Fundraising

Don't forget that if you shop online, another good way to raise money is to use easyfundraising.org.uk. They are connected to a huge list of retailers, like Amazon, Sainsbury's, John Lewis, Argos, Boots and loads more.

Baptisms

Ruth McConnell

On 6 March various members of Resound church and beyond gathered with seven members of the church being baptised. Baptisms always excite me and make me rather emotional. It is wonderful to see people making a stand in front of their families and friends to say that they declare Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and that they want to commit to following him in their life.

This baptism had a great collection of stories of God's faithfulness and grace. Those that got baptised were Darren Watts, Neil Condick, Ben Barnes, Nathan Carter, Marianne Collins, Molly Bennett and Hannah Brain. Each of them gave inspiring testimonies to how God had impacted their lives. For some of

them, people had been praying for years for them to know God and to have their lives changed by what he has done for them. Others saw this as a new beginning, a time to say I'm now a new creation in Christ, the old has gone and the new has come.

It was for me really inspiring to see all these people baptised but in particular seeing five young people say in front of their friends, lots of whom they'd invited from school and don't know God yet, "This is my life and who I'm living for." One young person summed it up as "It was like turning over a new leaf and moving on to the next part of my journey with God". This encouraged me to think, "What's the next part of my journey?" As inspiring as it is to see these people start off in their journey with God, surely we all need to keep thinking, "What's my next step? Where is God walking me to now?"

Comic Relief – it's no joke

People in BCF provide the main source of funding for Mutende. As we have now split into three groups there is a danger that the needs at Mutende are forgotten. There are children alive today and thriving because of the financial support you have given. Thank you for this.

Future funding for Mutende is far from secure and will depend on regular giving by people in BCF. Young children who 8 years ago had a bleak future have now grown into young adults and are helping to provide for their families. In a country where 10% of the population have AIDS/HIV, a small regular donation can have a major impact on the lives of young people.

For more details contact Marian or Paul Uttley

marian@schoolsmailing.co.uk

BISC YEAR TEAMERS WANTED!!

Join the fun

and spend a year working with International Students!

Do you:

...enjoy a variety of jobs?

...like meeting new people?

Can you:

...work well in a team?

...talk to anyone?

Would you:

...like to work with international students?

Contact Jacqueline on jacqueline@bisc.org.uk or 915 9826 and find out more!

Ideally it would be helpful if you could offer 2-5 days a week, term time between August 2011 and July 2012. Alternatively you can offer the time you have available.

A wedding invitation

from Paul and Julia Tipler

We're delighted that our daughter, Liz, will be marrying Sam Jones on Saturday 7th May.

We would love it if you could join us for the wedding service at St. Matthews Church, Kingsdown, Bristol at 2 o'clock, and look forward to seeing some of you there.



Bristol Christian Fellowship

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BCF Diary April 2011

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|-------|-----------------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| Sun 3 | Resound meeting | 10.30 am | Barley Close School <i>Tim Groves</i> |
| Sun 3 | BCF South | 11.00 am | The Wilsons' |
| Sun 3 | Aardvark | 7.00 pm | The Ark – Worship evening |

Friday 8 April – Sunday 10 April Resound weekend away

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|--------|-------------------------|----------|---------------------------|
| Sun 10 | Aardvark | 3.30 pm | Worship and family meal |
| Sun 17 | Resound worship meeting | 10.30 pm | Barley Close School |
| Sun 17 | Aardvark | 7.00 pm | The Ark – Worship evening |

Sat 23 - Sun 24 Aardvark Easter Vigil: midnight to 8.00 am followed by breakfast

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|--------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| Sun 24 | Resound Easter Celebration | 10.30 am | Barley Close School |
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May 2011

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|-------|-----------------|----------|---|
| Sun 1 | Resound meeting | 10.30 am | Barley Close School <i>Pete Osborne</i> |
| Sun 1 | BCF South | 11.00 am | The Wilsons' |
| Sun 1 | Aardvark | 7.00 pm | The Ark |

Advance date for your diary

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|--------|-------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Sun 15 | BCF Joint meeting | 3.00 pm | Venue to be announced |
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Entries for the May Bulletin by Friday 22 April, please.

(Note earlier date than usual – editor going to India following week!)

BCF News is edited by Ian Wilson. bulletin@bcfnet.com

Read it online: www.bcfnet.com/resources/BCF_News