



**BRISTOL
CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP**

EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS
TO BUILD CHURCHES
TO CHANGE OUR WORLD

BCF NEWS

December 2009



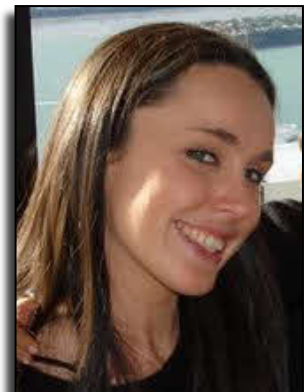
Happy Christmas!

Dave Day

A healing community

Since the last bulletin, we have heard the great news that Mari is now cancer free. It has been a real roller coaster period of time, especially since June when she was 'rediagnosed' with a relapse. Rhi, Mari and I, as indeed all of our family wanted to thank you all for so much love, care, prayer and support over the last years. We look forward to Christmas without further treatment looming over our heads but also very conscious of several others in and connected to BCF who are facing treatment for various serious illnesses over the next weeks and months.

When I spoke at Barley Close in November, I talked about the church being a healing community. We will continue to pray for healing for people with sickness but there is the development of a healing environment that is so



important for us as church. With Mari's illness, the initial chemo was long and difficult. Before she was told that she relapsed in June, she was starting to display worrying symptoms. We do not know how much of her condition now is due to prayer and a significant time in Redding, California, and how much is a misdiagnosis, but we do know that we can thank God and all those who have stood with us. BCF has been a healing community for us as a family. I pray that for all those fighting some difficult situations, we will be a healing community for you.

Our new structure, so far

As we draw to the end of the first 'term' of a new structure, I am very encouraged by many things I see. Whilst realising that there will always be teething problems and disorientation for some, I see a lot of life in the different expressions of BCF with potential for much more to develop. It is good to see that each new expression of BCF is very different whilst maintaining a similar ethos. Tim and Pete with their teams are doing a great job in guiding the churches.

Our working with St Matt's is proving to be constructive. Our joint festival went really well, thanks to all who worked so hard to make that a success. We had far more

people from the locality coming to the exhibition and the events and we could see some clear development in local connections being built

from last year. We are looking to develop a new charitable trust with St Matt's to see the Ark develop as a facility to bring transformation to the Cotham/Kingsdown area. I am sure 2010 will see some significant growth as we may see the Blackhorse building complete, changes happening at the Ark, and Thornbury developing new leadership and a stronger community. As I look back over the last year and see some changes that we didn't anticipate twelve months ago, I wonder what we will see in twelve months' time. For all the changes that have happened and for all those that will happen in the next year, I pray that we will not lose the desire that the main change we want to see is many people having their lives transformed by the grace and the love of God. The purpose of any building change is to result in life transformation.

The main change we want to see is lives transformed by the grace and the love of God

New challenges

We will be challenged next year. One main area will be in finance. On 13 December, the trustees will be giving us an overview of our finances, income and expenditure. Money is a tremendous asset and we are taking steps of faith, not just in building budgets but also to maintain our structure and staff. On the 13th, and also at our Christmas events, we shall be taking offerings for Mutende*. We are being stretched financially to meet the needs there and so the Christmas offering will all go to Zambia. The longer I live, the more I see that it never hurts to be generous. Rhi and I have been blown away by generosity shown to us over the years and it makes us want to respond generously. Please, this Christmas, give generously. Each year I suggest that we don't give cards within the fellowship but use that money for Zambia (this is my way of saying that you are not getting one from me!!). Please, as we enter 2010, may we respond generously in every way to the God who has given his all for us.

Have a happy Christmas.

*You can also give a hen to Mutende - see the enclosed flyer.

Change of address

The church is on the move, and so are some of its members.

Colin & Cara Medus, and **Graham & Isabelle Roberts** have moved.

We don't generally don't publish personal addresses on the internet, but you can contact the BCF office for their new addresses. (Colin & Cara's phone number is unchanged.)

BCF Thornbury

Greetings from the country folk up here in the snowy north of the city, where petrol is still delivered weekly in churns and Apple Macs are commonly worn during cider season.

After an initial period of seeking, aptly entitled 'Seek1st', we've decided to take the plunge, throw caution to the wind, and take the radical option of holding weekly Sunday meetings, starting in January! These hour-long 'togethings' will take place from 4-5pm in Thornbury (venue tbc).

But that's not all.

Thornbury has a really strong 'Churches Together' network and we will be seeking ways that we can work with and learn from the other local churches. Some of us have already been involved with the 4ALL meeting held at St. Mary's Anglican Church. This is something we will continue to explore together.

We will also be dusting down the tent pegs and paddles and resurrecting Above & Beyond for our upper primary children, as well as continuing to support the two secondary groups that exist. We are also looking at how we can link with the other churches in Thornbury in this.

Meanwhile, further exciting opportunities for real life relationship building and life sharing will take place on a daily basis, both physically and virtually, and mostly without the help of a rota! Contact anyone in Thornbury for details.

So, to summarize our plans for the New Year:

BCF Thornbury happens...

Somewhere in Thornbury, Every Sunday, 4pm

(1st and 3rd Sundays – St Mary's Church)

Everywhere in Thornbury, Everyday, All the time.

BCF Thornbury - church that lives in Thornbury

For specifics contact the Sandersons, the Woods, or the Orrells.

Or visit www.bcfthornbury.blogspot.com

Upcoming dates:

1st Dec – Quiz @ Blend 8pm start

8th Dec – Seek1st @ Groves 8pm start

22nd Dec – Carols, wine + mince pies 8pm (Venue tbc)

Aardvark News

Pete Osborne



A recent TV show taking a look back at the past decade, highlighted various different trends that have emerged since the year 2000. One of these was the ‘flash mob’. Organised over the internet, or by text, random strangers gather together in public places to simultaneously dance to the same song, have a mass pillow fight or perform some other unusual action. The commentator on the show remarked that the flash mob was like a ‘modern day act of communion’.

We crave experiences – interactions with people and places that give meaning to our lives, something to jolt us from the normality of the everyday. Yet what value do such experiences hold? The flash mob requires no commitment outside the event itself – it is a shared experience, but only for that moment.

As Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples, he told them, ‘this is my body, given for you... this wine is the token of God’s new covenant to save you – an agreement sealed with the blood I will pour out for you’. (Luke 22:19-20, NLT) This shared experience was grounded in the commitment he had and would show them. In fact, the meaning is only found in his sacrifice – without it, it becomes merely another meal.

The point is this – commitment provides the trust, safety and foundation to enable true, life-giving experience to flourish. In a marriage, it is the choices made to commit to each other that allow the real adventure to begin. The same applies when it comes to church. As we chose to be part of the body – commitment that resembles the same Jesus made to his disciples – life is able to rise up. It’s one of those faith-requiring paradoxes that grates against the messages we hear every day – that to find true life, we must give it away.

You can find more information about Aardvark at
<http://aardvarkers.wordpress.com/>

Community of disciples on the move

Tim Groves

Let me begin with a confession...I have been toying with the idea of joining the 'twitter' revolution, that most recent of viral streams, which at the push of a button would allow me to upload my thoughts to the masses. Such a clever device this, but – and here is the rub – I am not sure I can match this with something clever to say.

With the prospect of hundreds of 'followers' (one can but dream) is the best I can offer an insider's account of my frustrations while waiting for the bus, or my incessant existential blatherings about the insignificant and inconsequential? This is not an attack *per se* on the gloss of modern media, but rather on the mediocrity and poverty of what passes as people's all too frequent contributions, given the delicious possibilities that such a sophisticated medium allows. Neither is this a plea to Christianise cyberspace, which would be disastrous.

Rather, all this leads me to ask myself several questions: am I missing opportunities to live at the edges of my experience and meet the world with curiosity and anticipation? Do I give away my "followership" or indeed, for the Facebook-savvy among us, my friendship, too quickly, thereby diluting the very meaning of such concepts? Have I allowed this form of friendship and "followership" to alter my attachment to Christ, and set limits to my daily experience of God, myself and others? Has the rather casual and me-centred approach to much of modern life disfigured my commitment to the church and the world?

I have been asked 'when will we experience the new church you have been talking about?' My response 'when you are prepared to give again.' Perhaps the following billboard advert would suffice, it read 'the future is not something we travel towards, but something we create.' It is for each one of us to help build the church. Paul's 'faith, hope and love' formula of 1 Corinthians 13 articulates the life that each member is called to live out, without exception.

Remaining alive to the inadequacies of our experience of church, let us not fall foul of hopelessness, which is experienced as timidity, of hoping

for less of ourselves and of God than has been promised. It is in weakness and fatigue that we often refuse to be what God requires us to be. Together we must embody the grand language we use when speaking of the body of Christ, and become once again a community of disciples on the move. So the question remains: can we envision a “followership” of Christ, and a friendship with the world, which is wider and more dangerous than we have thus far witnessed?

Finding your purpose - Spring 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 more details contact

roger.angieallen@blueyonder.co.uk or 01454 416 446

Dates: From 7.30pm to 9.30pm every Thursday from 28th January to 1st April 2010 (except Tuesday 9th, not Thursday 11th February) **Venue:** Severn Ridge.

Who's who in BCF

CJ meets Fran Kidd

Frances, whom we all know as Fran, was born in Chelmsford in Essex and moved to Bristol when she was four. She attended Oakhill School until she was nine and then Charborough Road School, followed by Monks Park Secondary (now Orchard Academy apparently!).

Fran was always a bit of a tomboy as a child and enjoyed playing sports with her two brothers, mainly cricket as that was what they liked! Fran also has two sisters.

After she left school, Fran worked full-time in Asda at Cribbs Causeway (having been working part-time there previously) for two years before going to the University of Gloucestershire to study Sport and Exercise Science. Once finished at University, she worked for a year for an organisation called Primary Soccer during the school holidays. During term-time she worked in Oasis. Then in 2006 at the "Love Bristol" festival, Fran was assigned to a sports team and she met Grant Sheppard who is the director of World Sports Ministries, and this led to her working for them on a self-employed basis. WSM is a Christian based sports charity that has a heart to reach people for the Kingdom of God using the tool of sport. Fran visits schools and takes P.E. lessons and also runs after-school clubs and extra-curricular activities for 5 – 12 year olds. She also runs some holiday clubs and does some admin. for World Sports Ministries, but she could still do with more work.

Fran grew up in BCF but didn't experience God for herself or understand why she needed Him at the time. She became a Christian 'properly' when she was nineteen after attending an Alpha Course run by Linda Wilson, having got to a point in her life where she was in a bit of a



rut and thought “there must be more than this”. She now knows that there is!

In July this year Fran moved into a house in Rodway Road with Ruth McConnell and another friend of Ruth’s. Before this she was sharing a flat with her brother in Filton. Fran’s Mum is Viv Kidd who used to belong to BCF and was heavily involved with the children’s work but now attends a church nearer to where she lives.

Fran and her housemates do a lot of entertaining in their house. Fran enjoys cooking and makes a fantastic pavlova! She will play and watch any sport with the exception of tennis! She also likes reading and running (but not at the same time!) and watching her home town football club, Chelmsford City.

Fran runs the BFG (Big Fantastic God) Youth Group with Jackie Cockwell, and also helps with the junior aged children at Barley Close on a Sunday. She is also a member of the Blackhorse Steering Group.

Blackhorse project

An update from **Cathy Knowles**, the project coordinator

Thank you to everyone who supported the Public Consultation in November – the feedback was very encouraging and will form part of our planning submission to South Gloucestershire council. This should be on its way to the council by the time the bulletin is out!

Please pray this is well received and that we can secure planning approval first time round without any onerous constraints.

Whilst this is progressing, we will give our attention to developing the design and the layout of the interior spaces.

The optimistic timeline looks like this

- Planning application process – 13 weeks
- Planning Approval – March 2010
- Start Building – May 2010
- Complete build – December 2010

This is dependent on a smooth planning process, obtaining all the funding we need, completing the detailed design, finding the best building contractor, to name a few!

Roger and Angie Allen – an update

For those who do not know, since Spring 2007, we have been networking across the Bristol region (expressed to some extent in a website and a facebook group: www.wenetwork.co.uk).

Roger is learning how to be a “hidden catalyst”, to be an encourager and linker across the Christian community. He helps networking, with Angie’s support, in all the spheres of life, to help bring positive change in the West of England (as old Avon is called these days!). For example, about ninety people from across the spheres, gathered at the last face-to-face event.

This is an expression of BCF’s Antioch vision (see Acts 11 to 13). Antioch was a major city in the Roman empire, just like Bristol is an important city in our nation. The church, local and regional, is called to help bring the Kingdom of God to all aspects of the city.

For example, we have helped gather about 15 to 20 prayer networks across the region. Bristol Prayer Networks hosted the first ever cross-church Global Day of Prayer in Bristol last May, and there is exciting, growing grassroots prayer emerging. Angie, in particular, is involved in prayer in Thornbury and regionally.

Roger has been asked to facilitate Forum for Change (see www.eauk.org/forumforchange) which gathers together key Christians

involved in the five Change Drivers of society in the Bristol region (the Arts, Media, Politics, Business and Education). For example, did you know that in the Media world, the editors of BBC Radio Bristol, the Bath Chronicle and the



news editor of the Bristol Evening Post are all Christians? Well, they did not know it either! But now they are encouraging each other to help get good news stories into the secular media. Similarly, in the Political world, increasing numbers of Christians are getting involved with their local councils, and through Faith Action Audits, councils are being made aware of the great amount Christians are doing to serve and benefit their local communities.

Angie is also part of the Chrysalis grants group, which works with a national trust, to pass on small grants of up to £5,000 for projects involving Christians from more than one congregation. In the last eighteen months, about 60 projects have been helped. There is remarkable work happening, for example, on the estates of South Bristol or in inner city St. Paul's or Easton. These small grants also help wider networking, for example, in prayer, social action, media, the arts, schools, councils and across the Black Majority Churches. There are numerous stories to tell.

Roger is increasingly spending about half his time coaching, for example with a course called "Finding Your Purpose!" (See advert for the next course in 2010 on page 7.) He is also starting to speak in some churches across the region encouraging them to impact their communities, as a whole church, and as individuals, wherever they find themselves. Again, this is all part of BCF's values to "equip the saints for works of service" (Ephesians 4).

We are very grateful to everyone in BCF, and particularly Dave and Neil, for supporting us in this adventure in many different ways, including helping us financially. Thanks to everyone who has prayed for us, for example at the Grange in the Spring, when we were released to network regionally. Roger has been part of BCF's leadership team over this season of change, which was fascinating. Now there is a new leadership team, he is no longer part of it, but is happy to be an adviser linking BCF with the region and helping individuals find their purpose! We both say "God bless BCF in this new, exciting season!"



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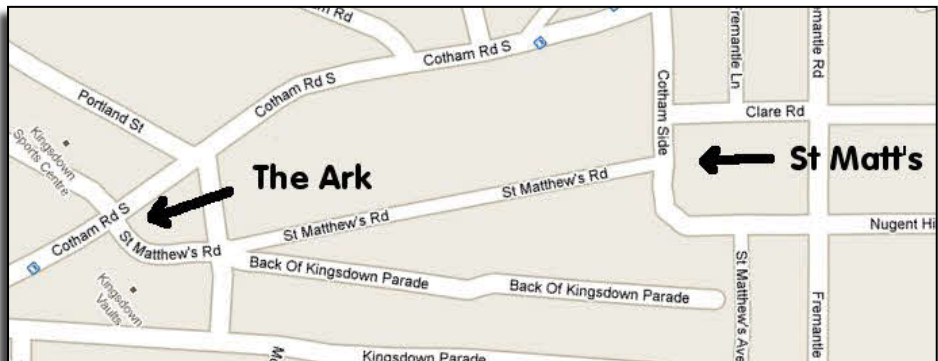
BCF Diary December 2009

Sun 6	Barley Close Meeting	10.00 am	Barley Close School <i>Jayne Groves</i>
Sun 6	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark
Tue 8	Thornbury: Seek1st	8.00 pm	The Groves'
Thu 10	Blackhorse prayer	6.00 pm	Ruth & Fran's
Sun 13	Joint BCF Meeting (followed by tea and cakes)	3.00 pm	St Matthew's Church, Kingsdown (see map below)
Thu 17	Blackhorse prayer	6.00 am	Susan Watts'
Sun 20	Carol service	10.00 am	Barley Close School
Sun 20	Aardvark	7.00 pm	Christmas Thing
Tue 22	Carols, wine & mince pies	8.00 pm	Thornbury (venue tbc)
Thu 24	Christmas Eve at the Ark	11.15 pm	The Ark

Sun 27 – no meetings at Barley Close or at the Ark

January 2010

Sun 3	All-age Meeting	10.00 am	Barley Close School
Sun 3	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark
Wed 6	Spark	7.00 pm	Venue tbc
Thu 7	Blackhorse prayer	6.00 pm	Joyce Lewis's
Sat 9	Ignite	7.00 pm	Severn Ridge - worship, prayer, bonfire, etc.



Entries for the January Bulletin by 18 December, please.

bulletin@bcfnet.com

BCF News is edited by Ian Wilson.

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