



**BRISTOL
CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP**

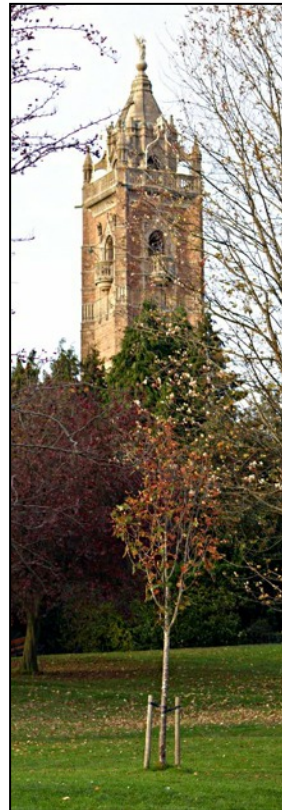
EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS
TO BUILD CHURCHES
TO CHANGE OUR WORLD

BCF NEWS

February 2011

In BCF News this month

Some of those at the recent Stepping Beyond event felt that God was speaking a word to the church to wake up. There is a crafted prayer in response to this on [page 2](#), and Kayte Potter has some more thoughts about it on [page 3](#). Meanwhile, Cara Medus has some thoughts about rest on [page 5](#). (This must reflect the diversity of the church, or the varying rhythms of life!) Finally, Cathy Knowles and Caroline Metz have the latest on the building project on [page 7](#).



Cabot Tower, Brandon Hill

Crafted prayer

At the recent Stepping Beyond event, Ruth McConnell and others crafted this prayer for BCF.

We pray, wake up church.

Wake up because your deeds are not yet complete. For each one of us there is a destiny – let us complete the deeds you have for us.

Help us hear again the word of the Lord for us; there is a fresh calling. Help us listen again to the words God has for us, fresh callings that have not gone away.

Teach us your ways, O Lord, and we will walk in your truth. Give us an undivided heart that we will honour you.

Church, don't forget you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God.

Lord, increase our capacity for you; may we always feel your presence. As your church may we set apart Christ as Lord and seek to be connectors between you and others with gentleness and respect.

May the three churches become a fire for you within the city and in the communities we are in.

We pray, rise up church!

Lord we need you to blow on the embers; let them smoulder, flicker, refine us, purify us as a church, reignite and explode our passion for you!

Help us to move beyond the former things, the past, and embrace the new things that you have for us.

You provide water in the desert. For you are able to do immeasurably more than all we imagine or ask according to your power at work within us.

We pray, stand up church!

God, we ask for you to build this church; give us the keys of your kingdom so we can impact our communities, loving you with all our heart, soul and mind, and our neighbours as ourselves.

May BCF churches be known as a place where God is! For to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations.

AMEN!

Wake up!

Kayte Potter (Kayte and her husband Dan are part of the Aardvark leadership team.)



Welcome to 2011. A new year with unexpectedness, celebration and sorrow just waiting to unfurl itself.

Many of you joined with us at the Ark at the beginning of January for a time of 'Stepping Beyond' in worship. Perhaps you were there with a flag, staff or drum in your hand. It was a special time with God and each other, a beautiful way to stamp our intention to worship God on a new year.

A phrase that kept being spoken was of being 'woken up'.

While it's always incredible when God speaks, and like assembling a jigsaw we piece together the message we believe God has for us, there is something distinctly uncomfortable about being woken up.

As the wife of a man who snores, and mother of a new baby, I can assure you that I am an expert in being woken up. If they were giving out diplomas in it, I'd be up on the stage collecting a certificate before you could say "Pampers Active". Before becoming a mum, I would have doubted that 3.55 am actually existed. But no, let me assure you, it is a



bleak reality. It's the point when you feel you are the only person awake in....the....world.

Crying loudly is, unfortunately, my daughter's communication tool of choice at the current time, and I know when I hear her cry in the night that action is required. Often my head is still in a dream and my eyes are closed, but I get up and into the discomfort of the cold air and pick her out of her Moses basket, take her back to bed with me and feed her.

The point is, when you are woken up, you need to take some action. You can't ignore being woken up. You need to get up and do something. You can't experience the joy that comes in the morning, if you're not awake to see it.

Perhaps God is warning us that we *need* to wake up, otherwise we will miss out. In which case, we can bide our time and plod on as we are, with all the normal frustrations that accompany church attendance or we can grab the proverbial bull by the horns, rise up and stoke the embers that so often lay dormant.

Perhaps that's easier said than done. With the best intentions in the world we can still fill our lives up, leaving only a bit of time each week for God – perhaps stressful employment consumes our days, or child rearing, or the need to watch EastEnders or My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding.

For me personally, what remained from the weekend after the drums were packed away was this question: How undignified is my worship to God? I'm not sure that anyone would look at my spiritual life and think 'abandoned', 'pioneering' or 'unashamed'.

Perhaps for me to wake up is to be revolutionised.

So, I want to stir up my own life, get moving and wake up to a new morning. Anyone with me?



Change of address

Tim, Jayne, Daisy and Amelie Groves

The Groves family's new address is available from the BCF office.

(We don't publish personal addresses online.)

Rest

Cara Medus



“He makes me lie down in green pastures”... Psalm 23:2

The second verse of the 23rd Psalm has often made me chuckle. ‘He makes me to lie down’ conjures up a mental image for me of God forcing me to lie down against my will, because he knows that it is good for me! There have been times when he has seemed to engineer circumstances to force me to rest, not least over Christmas when Colin and I were confined to quarters with a bad back and a broken wrist!

The true sense of this verse is not that the Lord forces us to rest, but that he makes it possible for us to rest. If we examine the metaphor of the sheep with the shepherd, we can understand that sheep are timid, panicky creatures, who can’t keep still and lie down at night without the reassuring presence of the shepherd with them.

Rest in this context means so much more than just the absence of activity or work of course. Rest describes the place and the position where we can enter into intimacy with God. Rest of itself is not intimacy, but rather the perfect conditions for that intimacy to thrive. Rest is synonymous with peace, but I think the term ‘rest’ more specifically addresses our concepts of timing. God’s rest frees us from the time pressures of the world around us and allows us to enter into an understanding of his eternal timing and perspective. Rest requires us to ‘change our clocks’ from those of the world to that of his perfect time keeping.

So how do we enter into this place of rest? Part of the picture is obviously about making sensible lifestyle choices and sometimes having to change our schedule so that we get the physical rest we need. But the irony is that even with all the time in the world it can be difficult to enter a place of rest with God. Rest is a discipline a bit like silence, in that once

you do manage to be in a place where you can stop and listen, you can find yourself staring all your weaknesses in the face, because there is nothing to distract you from them! I like Bill Johnson's phrase "busy-ness is the painkiller of an orphan spirit". I'll leave you to ponder that one, but I think it's quite telling!



The Lord is my shepherd

I'm not pretending that I have all the answers to this, but one of the things that I believe God has been showing me recently is that worship is the key to entering the place of rest. It's one of those truths that now I think about it seems blindingly obvious, and yet I didn't manage to recognise it before. Am I the only one who finds God's truth to be like that sometimes? Worship leads us into a place of rest, rest enables us to be intimate with God, and it is in that place with him that we can hear his voice and act upon what he is saying to us. Moving out from a place of rest is essential if we are to move on in the presence of God. Rest is critical because it allows us to receive the revelation that we need, and to be in a place of peace that means that we can act from a position of faith rather than fear. A sense of God's timing is also required to apply his word, and again the place of rest helps us to be free from the time pressures around us and to be more sensitive to his timing.

This is one of the many reasons why worship and prayer are inextricably linked, and why they are foundational for us in Resound as we move on into the plans that he has for us. One of the questions I am asking myself at the moment is "How would Resound be different if we always operated from a place of rest?" The challenge remains with us individually as we seek rest in our everyday lives, but also corporately as we make worship and prayer part of our 'natural rhythm' with God.

Building project update

Project coordinator **Cathy Knowles** has the latest news, and **Caroline Metz** tells us how the fundraising is going.

Resound Building

The discussions are still progressing well with the shortlisted contractor – we will complete the value engineering exercise by February, and hope to place the contract in March with a view to starting the development before the end of the month.

Thank you to all who have pledged donations for this year. They currently amount to £20,400.

Pledges can still be made using the form on the bcf website.

<http://buildingresound.blogspot.com/>

Severn Ridge

The work to the trees has been carried out and the planning application has been submitted to South Gloucestershire council.

Please pray that the pre-planning conversations that took place last year do pay off, and enable the application to go through smoothly.

Since the last time I wrote, we have successfully raised additional funds for the Resound Building, donations from Mangotsfield Parish Council and the Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust. The situation in the world of fundraising is, as you can probably imagine, not an easy one at the moment, but we are persevering!

Thank you again for all your support so far, and I hope you will come along to the Barn Dance on 11 February which Sarah Harvey has organised to boost our fundraising total.

Another way to raise money is to take part in a sponsored challenge event. This could be something exotic and exciting like a 10 day jungle trek in Borneo, or something a little closer to home like a walk from Winchester to Salisbury Cathedral. Why not get a group of friends or family together to take part? Find out more at www.discoveradventure.com

Caroline Metz



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BCF Diary February 2011

Sun 6	Aardvark 'Away Day'	10.00 am	The Ark (until 4.00 pm)
Sun 6	Resound Meeting	10.30 am	Barley Close School <i>Mac/Tim</i>
Sun 6	BCF South	11.00 am	The Wilsons'
Fri 11	Barn Dance	7.30 pm	Hanham Community Centre
Sun 13	Resound: worship meeting	10.30 am	Barley Close School
Sun 13	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark
Sun 20	Resound meeting	10.30 am	Barley Close School <i>David Lawrence</i>
Sun 20	Aardvark	3.30 pm	The Ark Worship/family meal (to about 6.00 pm)
Sun 27	Resound meeting	10.30 am	Barley Close School <i>Roger Ellis (Pioneer)</i>
Sun 27	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark

March 2011

Sun 6	Resound: Baptisms	3.00 pm	Hanham Baptist Church
Sun 6	BCF South	11.00 am	The Wilsons'
Sun 6	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark Worship evening
Sun 20	BCF Joint Meeting	3.00 pm	St Matt,s Church, Kingsdown

Barn Dance
Friday 11 February
 @Hanham Community Centre
 7.30 pm - 11.30 pm

Tickets £8 (includes food)
 There will be a bar throughout the evening

To purchase tickets please email sarahharvey@bcfnet.com
 or contact the office on 01454 613305

Proceeds to the Resound Community building project

Entries for the March Bulletin by 22 February, please.

bulletin@bcfnet.com

BCF News is edited by Ian Wilson.

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