



**BRISTOL
CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP**

EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS
TO BUILD CHURCHES
TO CHANGE OUR WORLD

BCF NEWS

July/August 2010

Compassion, passion and action

Dave Day



Speaking at Resound recently on Mark 8, I referred to the feeding of the 4,000. The catalyst for this amazing miracle was Jesus having compassion on the people. It is one of many miracles triggered by his compassion. I made the point that compassion produces passion and passion results in action. Positive action never occurs in a vacuum.

I saw this principle very clearly in Zambia where Tim and I have just had two weeks. The first few days were spent with Ruth Wallis in Sachibondu where we were able to spend a bit of time with her and we also took a leaders' conference. We spent the rest of the time in Chingola, visiting Mutende, several meetings to do with the running and future of Mutende and the new school that has been opened and leading another pastors' conference.



Ruth Wallis

Ruth exemplifies the compassion, passion and action principle. Her heart drive and energy are inspirational. With extremely limited support from the Government who will often go months without paying staff or providing funding, Ruth pours herself and everything she has into the clinic. The situation is such that when we were there, the nearest Government hospital came up to take supplies from Ruth's clinic because they had run out! Ruth was up all hours of the day and night, delivering babies, caring for her patients etc. For a woman who would be on a pension here, she is doing a fantastic job. If there are any people who would be willing to help Ruth for a period of time she would be delighted, especially if you have any administrative abilities!



Children at Mutende

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Mutende is thriving. I often fear that returning to projects annually you may find things appear older and a bit more tired. This was not the case here. The units had been painted, the garden cultivated and fruit trees were growing. They had even taken down the Welsh flag planted by a team from Swansea! Many bananas were near ripening (why hadn't the kids already pinched them I asked myself?) and there were paw-paw, guava and avocado trees doing well. The children were also thriving. Frances, the first child to 'graduate' out of Mutende, has completed IT training and now has a very good job in a place where jobs are scarce. It was a privilege to be there.

Mutende shows the same principle. Several years ago, Juliet Chetani and Janet Mwenge approached me. There were moved with compassion due to the alarming effect of AIDS. Their compassion gave them passion and action occurred. Because passion is nearly always infectious, it was easy for me and many others in BCF to respond positively. The result is a thriving children's village, recognised as the best orphan care facility in the Copper Belt region and use as a benchmark for all the others.

Structures may house or accommodate change and action, but they will never produce action. With our changed structure, which is bedding itself in well, we know that structure is not the key to change. Each BCF church will only grow as we allow compassion and passion to shape our action. We will only grow if we have some of the compassion that Jesus showed in Mark 8. If we allow that compassion to develop, it will produce a passion community of people, that will bring action and change.



Being changed

Dan Potter says God is not making us just a little bit better, but changing us thoroughly. Dan is part of the leadership team at Aardvark.



Sometimes I'm pretty harsh on myself. I have some kind of standard for my life that I want to live up to. I think of the person that I want to be and the things I want to do, and I am more than aware of my shortcomings – I am not that person yet! Some may think it's healthy to have an awareness of one's shortfalls. (It saves us from arrogance, at least!) Others may say I'm beating myself up too easily. There's a balance to be found. There's one way of thinking, though, that I know we must not fall into: thinking that as we become 'better' people in our own eyes, that we have somehow improved our standing before God.

The Bible says that our position before God has changed. (Col 1:22) We were enemies with Him - against God. Yet in this place "while we were still sinners" (Rom 5:8) he reached to us. By accepting that we truly weren't good enough and that God has made the much needed sacrifice at the cross, we are reconciled ('changed thoroughly'). Are we made 'a little bit better' by Jesus' death? No. We're changed thoroughly. We're made holy. This is our stance before God, whether we feel it or not. (The Bible says it!)

So here we are: "holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation", made right with God through Jesus' death as a sacrifice – God sees us as perfect!

So do we stop here? No way! He's made a sacrifice, and we make one too: our life – a "living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God". (Rom 12:1) We are 'kept right' by Jesus' life, as he lives in us and we live in him. We

continue to be changed as we give up our lives for him. I'll repeat myself: nothing we do can make us right with God – Jesus did that on the cross, and we are now 'in Jesus'. But Jesus is also 'in us' – and we are kept holy by our continual surrender to him.

At Aardvark we recently got together to pray for half the night. It seems people have an increasing desire to know the presence of God, and how we can "have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus". (Heb 10:19) As we get nearer to knowing God's heart, we find ourselves wanting to get on our knees to submit to Him, and feeling just how much he loves us. It makes us think about how we're going to increasingly see our faith worked out in our lives, individually and as a group.

I find it difficult to say that I can come to God with confidence, knowing that He sees me as holy. It seems arrogant. Yet my confidence is not in myself, it's in what Jesus did for me. And everyone. Consciously accepting this position before God reminds me that there's nothing I can do that makes me earn his grace, but his grace requires me to do everything I can to live for Him. Life with Jesus is transforming. I am changed. You are changed. We are changed to become more like him, representatives for Him in our life here on Earth.

Change of address

Joe and Jenny Hickson

The BCF office has a new address for Joe & Jenny.

(We don't publish personal addresses on line.)



Not in the business of condemnation

Tim Groves says God's conviction is a mark of his love – but it is not to be confused with condemnation.

I admit, I'm like a dog with a bone. Given the necessity (and privilege) of writing for the bulletin (an activity I invariably leave till the eleventh hour), I predictably return, in these days, to the subject of discipleship. Within that context let me underscore two themes that have made an appearance at Resound recently. The first of these is 'conviction', and the second is the 'Father's love' for each of us.

These are not two contradictory ideas, though to look at the way the modern church treats them you could be forgiven for thinking they are. The similarities are remarkable and worth noting. Both are signs of grace, both are evidence of God's presence in the lives of his people, and both are conceptually 'tender', being rooted in God's deep and unequivocal acceptance and affection of each one of us.

It is my view that God is inviting us to invite him to search our hearts today. But there is a world of difference between the gentle conviction of the Spirit, and the destructive forces of condemnation. Listen to John 3:17, that great summary of the good news of Jesus Christ: 'God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but to save it through him'. Paul in Romans 8 pushes the point home: 'Who is it who condemns you, Christ Jesus who justifies you, is your judge; therefore no charge against you will stand'.

I love the fact that for the OT Hebrew writers, 'conviction' marked the possibility of a new beginning.

One striking element of conviction as seen in the context of God's covenant with Israel, was the requirement to come open handed before God. Should we be so surprised to learn that if we are to move forward we must let go of numerous things we hold so tightly, even negative images of ourselves and God. Andrew Price's recent comment

We must let go of negative images of ourselves and of God

about the prodigal son was most telling. He mentioned God's swift and demonstrative love for the wayward son, and contrasted this with our modern parental preoccupation with the 'naughty step'. The point is this: God is not in the business of condemnation. More can and ought to be said, but not here.

God doesn't send us to the 'naughty step'

So in this time let's come baring all, giving to God all that is in our hands, asking him to search our hearts, seeing this as an opportunity to lighten our load, and embrace the new possibilities which await us. Conviction is a journey word, and not dissimilar to repentance, which in the Greek means a change of direction. Without conviction we cannot see all that we need to see of the Father's heart towards us. Eclipsed by guilt, disappointment, pain and disillusionment our journeys are less likely to involve fresh discoveries of who we are in Christ. Conviction makes possible the acceptance of love shown us by our Father in heaven. It is my prayer that we each are freed by the gracious conviction of God, and move into the new which is springing forth.

Buildings update

Cathy Knowles (project coordinator) has the latest news

Resound Building

The old Blackhorse Centre has now been cleared out ready for demolition, and it's been good to find homes for just about all the contents – both pianos were sold, so have a new lease of life, and all the blue chairs have been donated to Barley Close School. There's even a home for two large boxes of flannel graph found in the cupboard which are going out to Albania.

The project package is still almost ready to be sent out to the short listed builders. It is taking longer to pull together than anticipated, but is progressing well – more news next time.

Severn Ridge

No further news yet - more next month.

Café Oasis

We have another buyer! An offer of £160,000 has been accepted and is going through the sale process.

Easy Fundraising

Caroline Metz joined the BCF staff in June as our fund raiser for Resound. She has a great track record and is already making good progress researching funders to approach.

One of Caroline's first suggestions was that we register with **easyfundraising.org** to generate some free donations for the project. BCF is now registered on the website, and whenever we shop on-line, just go via this site, select BCF as the chosen charity and a percentage of any spending will be sent to BCF. (Some retailers even make a donation when you first sign up on their site e.g. Which?, Love Film, eBay.)

Tell your friends & family too and help us raise more!

Log onto www.easyfundraising.org.uk/ and remember to start here before you shop each time. (That's the tricky bit.....remembering)

Cathy Knowles

An update from Taiwan

Jesse and Julianne Edbrooke wrote recently with some news.

I thought that I would write and say hello. I wanted to say thanks for the emails we've received and also thanks for the continuing support financially.

We are doing well here. Julianne has learned Chinese very fast - she's a good student! She has been offered a job teaching English to kindergarten age children here. She's going start trials in June and will do more teaching in July if all goes well. The children are very cute and keep her on her toes. I've been enjoying learning Chinese too, but have been studying less and playing more music!



In January we were praying that God could give us some new opportunities as we didn't have any new Transition opportunities. We really wanted to play a show in the local Arena here. So I prayed that we could do that at the end of April... so it was a massive shock and God's humour and grace that we actually ended up playing in the arena at the end of April, not as Transition but for one of the best known Taiwanese stars, called Rainie. We're now going to be her band when she tours Asia.

Diabetes wise, things are challenging, but I think I'm managing ok. I have about 3 blood sugar readings out of 4 in the right place. All 4 would be much better, but touring means doing different things every day, which makes balancing sugars tricky. I was starting to run out of insulin and praying about how to get more – we haven't been able to join the national health insurance yet and buying stuff over the counter is very expensive. As it turned out a friend of ours has a brother who is a doctor. He prescribed me some insulin and paid for it himself! Amazing! Another great answer to prayer.

We've felt that God has opened lots of new opportunities here and are keen to follow up this year and stay longer. We're aiming to be back for a month in August, so we're looking forward to spending time with everyone and catching up!

Maperio™
“Finding your purpose!”
Autumn 2010

Please join us if you are:

- Seeking to live God's purpose in your life
- 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

“Finding your purpose!” will give you the opportunity to step back from daily routine to :

- Gain clarity and purpose about your future direction
- Reflect deeply on the areas of your life that are important to you
- Explore your life and career from different perspectives

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

“Its 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 Tuesday from 28th September to 9th December 2010, except 26th October (half-term)
Venue: Severn Ridge, Almondsbury, BS32 4HH.
Cost (subsidised) - £150. Concessions negotiable.

Website Facilitator for we:network.co.uk (Bristol)

Summary of Role

Website facilitator (part-time, self-employed) is needed for a Christian social change website: www.wenetwork.co.uk covering the Bristol region, from the end of September 2010.

Responsible for the transition process from a previous website to a new one, using outside help for website design, then for the development and promotion of a the new website, so it becomes a communication hub. Once the website is set up, responsible for editorial management and publishing of content. We are looking for somebody who enjoys some networking and is passionate to see the Christian community working together to help bring positive change to all spheres of life across the region.

Application

For more details contact Angie Allen by email (roger.angieallen@blueyonder.co.uk).

Closing date for applications is August 12th 2010.

Interviews will be on 8th September.



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BCF Diary July 2010

Friday 2 July – Sunday 4 July - Resound weekend away

Sun 4	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark
Sun 11	Resound Walkathon		
Sun 11	Aardvark: World Cup BBQ	6.00 pm	The Edbrookes' – bring food!
Sun 18	Resound meeting	10.30 am	Barley Close School <i>Tim Groves</i>
Sun 18	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark <i>House on the Rock (Mt 7:24-29)</i>
Sun 25	Resound	10.30 am	Barley Close School <i>Praise and worship</i>
Sun 25	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark

BCF Diary August 2010

We are holding no meetings during August at either Resound or Aardvark, to give us more time to be the church. Some events are planned as noted below, and no doubt there will be more. Watch the websites for details.

Sun 1	Seniors' tea	4.00 pm	Vassalls Centre
Sun 8	BCF-wide picnic	12.00 pm	Severn Ridge
Sun 22	Picnic	12.00 pm	Oldbury Court, Fishponds

There will be no August edition of BCF News. Entries for the September Bulletin by 24 August, please. bulletin@bcfnet.com

BCF News is edited by Ian Wilson.

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