



**BRISTOL
CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP**

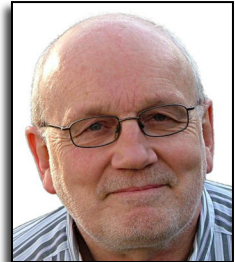
EQUIPPING CHRISTIANS
TO BUILD CHURCHES
TO CHANGE OUR WORLD

BCF NEWS

October 2010

The journey continues

Dave Day



Between now and the end of the year, we want to talk through the next round of changes with the church. We will take time in this bulletin, in the next BCF meeting and in whatever settings are helpful, to look at the next phase of BCF's development. After twelve months of adjusting to the changes, we are now in the place where BCF is three churches and not just one. Each has its own measure of autonomy, leadership and permission to shape its mission, vision and strategy. There is, in this bulletin*, a spelling out of how the changes will affect the structure of BCF which is now a network of churches. As Pete, Matt and Tim develop the churches and Tim leads the network, I hope that we will all afford them the support and backing that has been my privilege to have. I am happy to see them developing their passions and

*See pages 5–8.

callings and endorse them in their endeavours.

As you will read, my role has changed. Just over twelve months ago, I was leading BCF with buck stop responsibility for all that was happening. That is in others' hands now and I pray they will see their dreams develop into reality. Please pray especially for Tim with the new role of helping determine what BCF is becoming. There is no doubting his heart and passion for the task. I want to support and release him into this role as I ask you to do.

As my role has changed, I want to make it clear that I am not retiring but will have the opportunity to develop that for which I am passionate and not responsible. We are still discussing what my role will be in BCF. Already there are some exciting doors opening of working with other churches, mentoring leaders from outside BCF, training leaders both in the UK and abroad and developing the connections with churches with whom I am working apostolically or having some oversight into their leadership teams. I have worked with a network of churches for many years and this will continue. At the same time, Rhi and I are starting to work with some other churches and we are working towards becoming foster parents. I think it is going to be an exciting time for us.

After many years leading BCF, I find that I am still passionate about those things that shaped our vision and ethos, and wherever I am involved in shaping church, I want to bring these ingredients into the mix. Church will always be people. Buildings and projects are important, but church is people; it is family and community. Church needs always to have a focus greater than itself. Our Antioch vision has given us opportunities and partnerships around the world. We have been enriched greatly through them. Church is a worshipping community, using the creativity that the creator God has given us. Church is a family where age, gender and background never disqualify people from developing their gifts and ministries and church is committed to reach those outside of its borders to bring something of heaven here on earth. Church should also be marked by generosity. I hope that we have always been a generous church: I think it is that which has kept us solvent over the years. We are faced with strong financial pressures which may increase. I pray we will never stop being generous. My hope is that these essential ingredients will continue to mark and shape who we are as Tim and team lead us into the next period of our journey.

Aardvark

Pete Osborne



Recently we had a visit from Greg & Linda Burson, from New Zealand. They have visited us before and Greg has a strong prophetic gift. He spoke on a few occasions and gave numerous people words. As I have reflected on their visit, what struck me was the question of expectation. Because many people had heard Greg speak before and seen him operating in his gifting, there was high expectation about what would happen. More people than usual turned up to Aardvark on the Sunday evening; there was an air of anticipation. And God did speak through Greg, which was really encouraging. But it got me thinking – what is our normal level of expectation of what God can and will do?

Greg Boyd (no relation!) writes in his recent book about the presence of God, that we often live our lives as ‘functional atheists’. We believe in God, and know a lot about Him; yet in our day-to-day experiences He is not *real* to us. To put it another way, do we expect God to be acting in our lives? To be speaking to us and through us? It is easy for expectations to be negative – for our experiences to shape how we anticipate the situations we go into. For the normal, ‘everydayness’ to dull our senses, and for us not to expect God to speak or to act. Yet imagine what life would be like if we lived with a constant expectation that God is present and acting! That in the mundane and ‘normal’, he wants to use us to speak to others.

While Greg Burson was here, he told a story about a woman driving to visit a woman who had visited their church for the first time the day before. On her way she saw someone stopped by the side of the road and felt a prompting to help them. The car needed a push, and she helped to get the man and his car on their way. When she arrived at the house she was visiting, she was surprised to discover that the man who answered the door was the same man she had helped! He was the husband of the woman who had visited the church. That simple act of kindness opened a door into their lives, and it was possible because of an openness to God and an expectation that he would speak.

Developing church in South Bristol

Ian and Linda Wilson

We moved to South Bristol about three and a half years ago (how time flies!) and since then we have been wondering whether the time might come to develop an expression of church where we live. There are some exciting things happening in different parts of South Bristol, and we want to make connections and friends across these various groups, but we also have a sense that now might be the moment to do something fresh ourselves. It seems to us that with our BCF heritage, we have something to contribute to the mix of local churches that is informal and based on friendships. The words that came to Linda's mind were of building something 'one brick at a time'. So we are planning to start something small-scale, and low-key.



Our existing cell group, part of Aardvark, will be the basis of this. Although not all the cell members live locally, we will have a local focus, and increasingly aim to make friends and connections locally. We would love to draw in people, whether Christian or not yet Christian, who are looking for an informal style of gathering in our area.

We will meet on the first Sunday of every month (starting 3 October) at our house at 11 am, with a bring and share lunch to follow. Other people are welcome to join us, on the basis that the focus is very much on the Bedminster/Windmill Hill/Totterdown area.

If after a year it is still only our cell group meeting together, it will still have been worthwhile, and I trust we will have had a great year sharing, eating together and encouraging each other. But by giving the Holy Spirit space to move, and being available to God, who knows what might happen? We would value your prayers as we start on this venture. Do email bcsouth@virginmedia.com, Facebook or phone us if you want to know more.

BCF Changes – from one church to a network of churches

Background

“You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance” Deut. 1:6-7

In September 2009, after months of prayer and discussion, we took the first step to becoming three local churches. Resound, Aardvark and BCF Thornbury were established as self-governing churches within the BCF network, setting their own structures, priorities and programmes and deciding how, when and why they meet. As we continue through change we need to remember that the purpose of all of this is for us to become a missional movement of networked churches, with each church developing in its community context. We feel we can do mission more effectively as local churches.

Since then the three churches have made a strong start. And although there are refreshing differences in style, all three reflect their BCF heritage in their emphasis on community and creativity. It has been a joy to see how many people have found new energy and vision and taken up new opportunities to serve in areas like children’s and youth work and leadership.

Churches are like families. Major changes, like when children leave to set up their own home, come with sadness as well as joy. We know that, for many, there is a sadness as what we knew as BCF is left behind. But these changes are part of growth and the joys they bring will outweigh the pain.

A few have found it hard to find their place in this new family of churches. Some have moved on and others are prayerfully considering the way forward. We must acknowledge their struggle, blessing those who want to leave and warmly welcoming those who want to continue their journey with us.

It is now time to take the next step. We have carefully considered what we need to do and have listened to our advisors

(Billy Kennedy, Andy Au, Dave Lawrence and Mac). We'd like your comments on what we intend to do.

Leading a growing network.

The three churches are rapidly finding direction and identity. Their leadership teams, led by Matt Sanderson, Pete Osborne and Tim Groves are finding their feet and working well together. But all three want to remain as part of a wider network or family of churches. We hope that, soon, other new churches will be planted who will want to be part of this family. We need a structure that allows these churches and their leaders to inspire, support and learn from each other without limiting their freedom.

So, we intend to set up a Network Team as a forum where leaders from the churches in the network can be refreshed, envisioned and encouraged. This team would not govern or manage any of the churches but would enable them to come together to develop vision for the whole network and to collaborate. It would also be a place where leaders can support and be accountable to one another. This is a new team with a role very different from the existing BCF leadership team.

The Network Team will be led by Tim Groves. Matt Sanderson, Pete Osborne, Dave Day and Andrew Price will also be part of the team. Others will be invited to join as the new team finds its feet. We believe that Tim has the vision, passion and calling to lead the new network.

So what about Dave and Neil?

Dave Day has led BCF through this journey of change. He has carefully and graciously prepared the way for younger leaders to take on the work of which he dug the foundations. He will remain part of the network, giving guidance and encouragement, but feels that he should not lead it. The current leadership team and the advisory team support his suggestion of Tim Groves as the person who should have this role. Dave's new role is becoming increasingly clear, with the growing number of

churches in the UK and beyond wanting his apostolic input, and leaders looking for wise counsel, all of which suggest that he is still some distance away from retirement!

Neil Edbrooke has also led BCF for many years. He initiated the communities that have become Aardvark and BCF Thornbury. His pastoral role, although often unseen, has been a crucial part of the salvation, healing and growth of many of us. Neil is considering where he should focus his energies in the new network but does not feel he should be part of the Network Team. However his role develops, his gifts and insights will be valuable as the new network establishes itself.

Both Dave and Neil are keen to continue to support the three churches in advice, in preaching and teaching and in prayer.

Looking after staff, buildings and money

Although BCF is now three churches instead of one, we still have just one charitable trust. The trust is overseen by the board of trustees chaired by Graham Roberts. BCF's buildings belong to the trust and our paid staff are employees of the trust. Tithes and gifts given to BCF are received by the trust and the trust ensures they are used appropriately. Rather than set up three new trusts, we think it will be simpler to stay with just one. Tim Groves will lead a management team who, on behalf of the trustees, will oversee the day-to-day management of trust money and buildings and the employment of staff. BCF Thornbury currently has no buildings or paid staff, and will not, at this stage, be part of this arrangement. Instead, they will aim to cover their own costs. But where it makes sense for them to act as part of the trust, for instance to gain the benefit of gift-aiding overseas offerings, they will be able to do so.

So what will all this look like in future?

The individual churches in the network will continue to grow to reflect their vision, their unique combination of gifts and the needs of the community around them. But they will be part of a wider family, with the strength, wisdom and breadth of vision

that this brings.

New churches will be planted and join the network. It is also possible that other existing churches will want to be part of a network which can enhance their work without controlling their activity. Churches in the network will be coming together to plan events, resource projects and support other churches in difficult times. From time to time we will all meet together, as we do now, to pray, to worship and to celebrate the friendships that hold us together.

When will all this happen?

We want to set up the new network team by the end of 2010. Early in the New Year we will gather to pray for Tim as the leader of the new network and for the other leaders involved, including Dave and Neil as they take up new challenges.

What do you think?

None of this is being done lightly. Over a long period we have prayed and talked together and paid attention to prophecies given to us. We have opened up our thinking to respected leaders outside BCF to make sure we consider other perspectives. We are confident that the future for us is in a family network of churches who share vision and values but who are free to shape themselves as they see fit. But if you have questions or comments, we'd like to hear them. Talk to Tim Groves, Pete Osborne, Matt Sanderson, Dave Day, Neil Edbrooke or Andrew Price or write to or e-mail the BCF office

And finally...

We are no longer a single church. Each of the three churches has chosen a name. This is probably a good time to find a new name for the whole network. We'll be letting you know how you can help us do this.

Dave, Tim, Matt, Neil, Pete and Andrew

Life in the North

Mark Orrell tells us what's what in BCFT

Customarily there would be a short article introducing one of BCF's families at this point. Instead I thought I'd write a short piece introducing BCF Thornbury! What on earth are we up to in the wilds beyond the comforting embrace of the M4 and M5?!

Well quite a lot really...in essence we are exploring what it means to BE church as opposed to GO to church. We are trying to be church in every area of our lives – purposefully breaking down the dependence on the 'meeting' and individual 'leaders', whilst getting together as often and in as many different ways as possible!

From the outside it may appear that BCFT has a bit of a quiet existence but scratch the surface and life is bubbling away beneath a wealth of intriguing names. For example, there's 'Above and Beyond' where deep thinking and discussion combines with outdoor adventure. 'Tigers' and 'More?!' are our other weekly youth groups. The adults get together in pubs as 'Black Rat' and 'Golden Hamsters' for men and ladies respectively. We also meet every week to discuss the Bible in 'Monday Night Wrestling'. If you hear us mention 'the Hackett,' that's our more conventional hour-long alternate Sunday worship, held in an area of Thornbury with that name. We have a cell group as well as a number of SWAT groups (SWAT stands for 'So What' where we only discuss real live issues that are affecting us and then pray for each other). And the celebrated 'Blend Quiz' in the local coffee bar usually turns out as a monthly battle between rival BCFT teams. In essence we are learning to Live Loved.

It's been a real pleasure to reconnect with people – many old familiar faces – with different experiences of church, to build lives together as the body of Christ. Like the other BCF churches, it's early days for us but we think it's a really exciting time to be part of BCF Thornbury! Why don't you pop in from time to time – check the BCFT website for our dates (www.bcft.org) – everyone's welcome!



An opportunity to go to Mutende

Jayne Groves

It is really important that we as a Network of churches continue to encourage and develop the links we have with Mutende in Zambia. For this reason a small group of us met together recently to talk about the possibility of taking a team of people to Mutende maybe next summer. This will be an all age team although we are keen to encourage younger people who are over the age of 16. There will be no upper age limit, so if a parent would like to come with their son or daughter, that would be encouraged.

The trip would be focused mainly on getting alongside the children and young people at Mutende and providing some activities for them. We will plan what we do as a team and make the most of the various skills that we can bring together. We will also draw on the help of the Swansea team, who go every Easter and have built strong relationships with the children and staff. If there are practical jobs that need doing we would also offer our help with these as well.

Everyone will need to raise their own funds for the trip, which we are estimating to be about £1000 each. This will include travel, food and accommodation. We will also get together on a regular basis, to pray, plan and prepare for the trip.

As far as dates are concerned we will have an initial get together at the end of October for anyone interested in coming. We will discuss the best times and dates and answer any questions. If there are young people who are interested in coming to Zambia, but your parents have lots of questions, then they would be most welcome to come to this meeting as well.

Please speak to Ruth McConnell or Jayne Groves if you are interested in being part of this team and we will let you know the details of this first meeting. At this stage, it would be great to see you there even if you are not 100% certain about coming. A bit more information might help you to decide.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Building project update

Cathy Knowles (project coordinator)

Resound Building

We have reviewed the design package and by the time the bulletin is out it will be on its way to our shortlist of building Contractors – hooray!!

So the schedule is now looking like this :

Oct-Nov	6 week process for Contractors to quote for the job
Nov-Dec	Choose the Contractor we want to work with
Dec-Jan	Contractor finalises any design issues
Feb	Build commences and will take 10-12 months

You may have noticed that there is some activity on the Blackhorse site - Balfour Beatty are renting the space as they're carrying out some work in the area, so this will help the building fund!

On that note, it's brilliant to see the pledges for Resound coming in – Thank you!

The plan is to demolish the old building very soon, so the site will be prepared ready for starting the new construction – watch this space.

Severn Ridge

We are still exploring the best options before applying for planning permission.

Café Oasis

Thank you for praying - the fifth offer of £160,000 is proceeding, which is great news!



Bristol Christian Fellowship

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BCF Diary October 2010

Sun 3	Resound meeting	10.30 am	Barley Close School <i>Colin Medus Mark 10</i>
Sun 3	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark <i>Fraser Hardy (New Zealand)</i>
Sun 10	Resound meeting	10.30 am	Barley Close School <i>Jayne Groves Mark 11</i>
Sun 10	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark <i>Andrew Price: The Prophetic Pt 2</i>
Sun 17	Resound meeting	10.30 am	Barley Close School <i>Worship meeting</i>
Sun 17	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark <i>Worship evening</i>
Sun 24	BCF Joint Meeting	3.00 pm	Thornbury Baptist Church Centre <i>Dave Day</i>
Sun 31	Resound meeting	10.30 am	Barley Close School <i>Tim Groves Mark 12</i>
Sun 31	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark

November 2010

Sun 7	Resound meeting	10.30 am	Barley Close School <i>Paul Collins Mark 13</i>
Sun 7	Aardvark	7.00 pm	The Ark <i>Tim Groves</i>

BCF WIDE MEETING
THORNBURY BAPTIST
CHURCH CENTRE
24 OCTOBER 3 PM
DAVE DAY SPEAKING
HOSTED BY RESOUND

Entries for the November Bulletin by 26 October, please.

bulletin@bcfnet.com

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