

For Roger's talk on 15 March 2009
STORIES TO CHANGE OUR WORLD
BCF's values and foundations

Biblical story

BCF's distinctives include the idea that "redemption (or mission) is as broad as creation", that we serve a big God. For example, Colossians 1: 15 to 23 says eight times that God's creation and redemption include "everything", "all things". John Stott, in "The Cross of Christ", talks about individual salvation and universal redemption. Tom Wright in "Surprised by Hope" has a broad idea of "mission", which includes justice (putting things right) and beauty. BCF seeks justice in every sphere of society, including global justice.

BCF's story

BCF's strapline is "equipping Christians to build churches to change our world". BCF foundations and values (developing Dave Day's headings and ideas from recent talks on TAKING YOUR VALUABLES ON YOUR JOURNEY) are:

1. Community of disciples

Ephesians 4: 10b to 16 talks about "equipping the saints for works of service", in and outside church (spreading the kingdom of God). 1 Peter 2: 5 suggests that because of the "priesthood of all believers", "each of us is equal in worth and ministry" (Dave), whether we are teachers, church leaders, raising families, "missionaries" in Africa, or whatever we do...

2. Community of worshippers

Romans 12: 1 and 2 call us to be transformers not conformers, to change our world, among other aspects of worship.

3. Missional community

An important BCF foundation is the "Antioch vision" (Acts 11 to 13). This is partly expressed by sending people overseas, especially to Zambia and India.

Also, Antioch was the third city of the Roman empire (after Rome and Alexandria). BCF is called to be involved in a major and strategic city: Bristol. Jeremiah 29: 7 tells us to "seek the welfare of the city". One of BCF's distinctives, mentioned by Dave, is changing our world in every sphere (including the city of Bristol) through the gospel of the Kingdom.

We can affirm our corporate mission as local church to a geographical community (eg Blackhorse, the Ark, or Severnside).

We can affirm the importance of gathering together as local church, in order to be sent out (mission) to be witnesses to Jesus in word and deed for the rest of the week.

We can affirm our mission as individuals into every aspect (or sphere) of society, as artists, in media, in business or politics, in education, in families...in everything! And "addressing areas of injustice" (Dave)

Your story

A value of BCF is for every member to fulfil his or her calling, to be missional (Eph 4: 16) "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do EVERYTHING in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Col 3: 17). To be witnesses to Jesus in word and deed, including justice.

For discussion, prayer and action:

1. Read through and discuss the notes above fairly briefly. Is there anything you are not sure about, or disagree with? Is there anything which you particularly agree with, or which excites you? Why?

2. In pairs, or in whatever way is most appropriate for your small group, give time to share with each other your story, to pray and encourage each other. For example, do some of the following:

From your story... what you are doing everyday... the reality of your struggles... your dream and vision...or hopes for the future... or “hope of new stories” (Pete Osborne). Share perhaps one main thing with your partner: pray for, affirm, encourage each other

3. Challenge and support each other to take one step to be more outward looking and *“missional” in this and discuss what that might involve...*