

BRISTOL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Trustees' Report for the year ended 5 April 2005

Review of activities & achievements

The BCF mission statement is *To Equip Christians to build Churches to Change our world*. The past twelve months have provided many opportunities to put this into practice. Individuals have become Christians, finding new hope and purpose in life; friendship and community have been enjoyed; practical help has been extended in the UK and overseas.

This report only describes some of the more obvious features of the work and ministry of BCF during 2004/5. Everyday life of the church continues unnoticed, 24 hours a day. Authentic Christianity, expressed through a growing community of faith, is truly about a lifestyle of friendship with God and one another – leading us to discover fresh ways to become a more effective learning, worshipping, giving community.

Worship, Prayer and Teaching has taken place in a wide mix of meetings and settings over the course of the year.

- **Grange meetings** continued on Sunday mornings, following a cycle of Celebrations (worship and teaching for the adult church); Creative worship; Seminars; Guest Services (exploring Christian faith); Family meetings. As well as teaching from local leadership, we enjoyed a wide range of national and international ministry. Worship leaders, Tim and Ann O'Hare (Wales); Geraldine Latty (Bristol); Pauline Skeats, Greg Bursen and Fraser Hardy (New Zealand); Joseph Weyusya (Uganda); Daniel and Ruth Lepcha and Joseph and Sarah Jeyaseelan (India); Alex and Patricia Mwale, Greg and Juliette Chetani (Zambia). Professional actor, Eric Petrossian, performed Jesus' life story using the synoptic gospels and other speakers included Steve Webb MP who spoke at a BCF Sunday morning seminar, David Lawrence (Leading Edge) Philip Jinadu (Woodlands) Rob Scott-Cook (Woodlands) Jo Sully (Frome) Sekar and Sugi (India) Joseph Kobo (South Africa) John Duncan (Youth For Christ) Mari Day (New Zealand) Ken McGreavy (Ichthus) Myrtle Lawrence (Yate) John McKeown (Alveston) and John Preston (Crisis Centre).
- **Aardvark**, a special Sunday evening gathering for students continued for a second year, exploring faith issues and new forms of church expression. One evening with overseas guests from India included the opportunity for experiential learning on the theme of trust – abseiling down the stairwell of the Ark.
- **BCF Holiday Weekend**. This year the church visited a new venue in Cornwall, relaxing, recreational and with a Sunday morning gathering on the beach that included four people being baptised in the sea.
- **Prayer – 24/7** As a part of the year of prayer across the Pioneer network of churches, BCF ran a 24 hour week of creative prayer at Severn Ridge.
- **Cells** Experimentation with new forms of small group meetings (cells) was encouraged during the year. Short term and special focus groups are running (e.g. looking at work related issues; support group for Mutende, Zambia) For 3 months the church ran special home-based teaching tracks that tackled three broad themes: spiritual gifts; life skills; Biblical studies on the book of Romans.
- **Alpha** BCF also ran small scale Alpha courses which proved very fruitful.
- **Mentoring** A one-on-one mentoring programme has been developed this year enabling more experienced Christians to team up to help individuals work on specific life issues.
- **M6.8** the BCF Gap year, entered its fourth year. Team members engaged in youth work in BCF and volunteered with community projects in Bristol (One25, Crisis Centre). They then worked with partner churches overseas in India and Zambia.

Worship, Prayer and Teaching

Review of activities & achievements - continued

The church continues to explore ways to communicate the Gospel more effectively.

- **Soul in the City** More than 50 people took part in the remarkable mission to London, involving practical community work in the more deprived parts of the city along with personal evangelism, worship and teaching.
- **Focus on the Family** Some couples in BCF are now involved in marriage mentoring – a scheme set up by the Bristol Community Family Trust. BCF now offers a course for parents in the wider community called Drug Proof Your Kids.
- **Social Justice** BCF members remain committed to issues of justice and responsible living, both at home and throughout the world. Along with general support for national campaigns aimed at government and international policymakers, members of the church are actively involved in local projects in the poorest and most disadvantaged sectors of society, covering prison work, inner city drug rehabilitation, soup runs, housing projects and re-employment schemes. Several members of the church work for development and relief organisations.
- **Music** BCF bands, Portland Street and Transition played in venues across the city, region, and overseas, including Sweden and Taiwan.
- **Financial Support** Over the course of the year, gifts totalling £8,248 were given to individuals and families facing a wide range of difficulties: unemployment, sickness, bereavement etc.

Mission: expression of a holistic gospel

BCF aspires to be an “Antioch” church: A strong local base reaching out to the different nations of the world. The church has been immeasurably enriched by the friendships and partnerships of Christians and churches overseas. During this year, members from BCF have worked in a number of different contexts and countries: education, health, relief and development, church planting and leadership development in *Kenya, Zambia, South Africa, India, Malaysia, Uganda, an island in the Indian ocean and the USA*. Friendship with other churches in the UK has meant that short-term mission teams have sometimes combined.

Generous practical and financial support came from special offerings and private donations throughout the year.

One major commitment continues to be Mutende – a children’s village for HIV/AIDS orphans in Zambia. Two units have now been completed and children are in residence. Over the course of the past financial year, BCF has sent a total of £32,045 to Mutende in support of the Children’s Village.

Other special offerings have also been taken at various times:

Christian Aid Sudan appeal - £3,412

Tsunami appeal - £13,393

Euroevangelism - £3,469

Crisis Centre Ministries - £3,512

We are extremely grateful to a large number of very generous people in the church. Open hearted, giving (whatever the literal amount) is a great grace.

International Work

Review of activities & achievements - continued

Young people are integral to the whole church community so in one sense do not represent a different category. However, while all ages are important and the church values the expression of intergenerational community, BCF recognises that young people (at all stages) are a priority.

There are roughly 100 young people in and around BCF who are involved in tribes/cells and another 100 children engaged at various levels of church life – Hullabaloo, Energise, Junction.

There are good stories from the year and a maturing core of young people committed to the church. They take active, responsible roles across the fellowship, providing support, leadership and lots of energy. Lots of great moments - but most importantly, the overall picture among young people is one of active discipleship. Many different journeys, different stages of relationship with God, but significantly, the current group momentum is positive, drawing those who struggle or come from non-Christian backgrounds, toward faith and reality.

Over the year BCF has had;

- 1 8 youth cells operating – with consistent impact.
- 2 A sell-out BCF youth weekend focussed on discipleship issues (a highlight)
- 3 Outdoor activity programmes, involving caving, canoeing, climbing, were very successful.
- 4 Music and creative contribution has remained a core element, Youth represent a vibrant source of musicianship which has fed into the worship teams of the church over several years, helping us bridge between different generations and model in a visible way our commitment and desire for intergenerational church. A new vocal band has been formed, new rock band (Mutende) and dance groups encouraged.
- 5 30 Young people at Soul in the City; another 20 at Soul Survivor C.
- 6 8 young people were baptised.
- 7 BCF youth workers have coordinated CU's in both Castle and St Mary Redcliffe Schools.
- 8 We have also supported Sunday meetings and provide weekly training input to Ashfield Young Offenders Institute.
- 9 The Drug Proof your Kids Course commenced and was piloted for parents in BCF.
- 10 Above and Beyond provided a variety of outdoor adventure activities for young people and their friends – canoeing, abseiling, wide games, rock climbing and a new feature: outdoor survival skills.

Youth

Pioneer - BCF is a part of the Pioneer Network of churches.

The Fellowship also continues to participate in other church forums and teams. These include the Evangelical Alliance, the Bristol Celebration Churches network and the Bristol School of Christian Studies. In addition, BCF works in partnership with other Pioneer churches across the South West region and beyond - co-ordinated by Dave Day, who heads up the BCF Leadership team.

National Network & City Church

Review of activities & achievements - continued

BCF has a committed team of support staff and trustees who provide the logistical and practical help that the church requires. They cover the whole range of church administration, financial oversight and stewardship, the management of buildings, P.A. etc.

BCF Buildings are seen as resource centres for the vision and purpose of the church. All are being used in a range of ways by church and wherever possible, by the local community. We regularly review whether owning these buildings continues to serve the vision of the church.

- **Grosvenor Centre:** BCF decided to donate this building to One25 Ltd (a Charity working with women trapped by prostitution) They will continue to use it for their offices and as a drop-in centre.
- **The Ark:** houses a recording studio and is also used for regular student meetings (Aardv:ark) on Sunday evenings, Chinese student church mid-week, and other community usage.
- **Severn Ridge** houses the BCF offices, acts as a training/seminar base, and also has a 24-hour prayer room.
- **Café Oasis**, owned by BCF's subsidiary, Soundwell Christian Fellowship Ltd, has continued to serve the local population on the High Street of Staple Hill. The business is continuing to develop well.
- **Soundwell Centre** is used by local community groups. BCF have decided to sell this building as it no longer fulfils a strategic purpose for the church.
- **Blackhorse Centre** is used extensively by Crossways Pre-school.

Administration and Resources

Mission Statement: To equip Christians, to build churches, to change our world.

BCF is committed to being a mission focused cell church, motivated and mobilised through prayer, filled and inspired by the Holy Spirit, guided by Scripture, expressing church life as a community of friends and followers of Jesus