

BCM UPDATE



The great life-giver

// "Good morning, I'm a newbie," said a lady whom I greeted at the front door of our church a few weeks ago. "Welcome, we love to have newbies," I replied, and showed her the way into the church. She has attended numerous services since and has brought along her husband and some of her grandchildren, and has now booked in for our church weekend away in June.

At one of our services in January a young man in his twenties shared how he had recently found Jesus and that all he wanted to do now was to tell people about the gospel. At another service a young mom from our parent and toddler group attended for the first time with her two children; and three other parents from the same group brought their children to our JAM Club for primary-aged children on a Friday evening, again for the first time.

Now I don't know if these people will continue to attend our church or will eventually become followers of Jesus, but I have learned over the years that we give thanks to God for the small 'signs of life' that we observe of God working in people's lives and ask the Lord to do His work and in His time. I also don't want to give the impression that everything is going great, as we have had to say a recent difficult goodbye to a wonderful young man of only thirty-six years old. Over 150 people crowded into our church for his Thanksgiving Service to give thanks to God for Matthew's life and example of faith, even though he lived with great challenges.

We will very soon celebrate Easter and remind ourselves of the great sacrifice that the Lord Jesus undertook for us at Calvary, so that we may have our sins forgiven. It was clearly a confusing time for those early disciples, but they eventually experienced new life. They must have been through a roller-coaster of emotions. They entered Jerusalem with all the people praising God and welcoming Jesus and then a few days later saw Him crucified. Then, on resurrection morning, the women arrived at the door saying, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put Him."

John records that Peter and the 'other disciple', on hearing that news, sprinted to the tomb. The 'other disciple', thought to be John himself, arrived first, but didn't go in. When Peter arrived, he went straight in and saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth which had been around Jesus' head folded up separately. John followed Peter in, and it is said of him that 'he saw and believed.' They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

The New Testament records numerous post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to His disciples, who after His ascension into heaven preached powerfully about Jesus being the Christ and that people could have new life by trusting in Him.

We have the joy and responsibility today of declaring to people, that if they put their faith in the risen Lord Jesus, they will also experience new life. Pray that God will bless us as we share the good news that Jesus is the 'great Life-giver' this month.

 **Wes Erpen, Chief Executive**

APRIL 2024



peacemaker) acts with courage and wisdom to stop the fighting. She takes David a gift of food and wine, and is even willing to take the blame for what has happened. David accepts the gift and disaster is averted. We explain that Abigail points to Jesus, the greatest peacemaker, who came to bring peace between us and God by taking the blame and punishment we deserve for our actions.

What is the wise answer of the peacemaker?

I wonder how we as Christians can be people of peace in our communities. Several children have asked us over recent months whether we support Israel or Palestine. It is a challenging question, not least because it is being asked by Muslim children who feel an affinity to Palestine, and Christians are often seen as offering uncritical support of Israel. What is the wise answer of the peacemaker? Personally, my heart breaks for all those caught up in the conflict. I long and pray for peace, not just a stopping of fighting but a peace agreement where both Israelis and Palestinians can flourish.

Kathryn Hindley, Children's Team Co-ordinator

The Peacemakers

Our world is sadly full of conflict. From the large scale wars in Ukraine and Gaza, to the smaller scale arguments in the playground or fights with your siblings.

Many children see fighting and aggression as normal and even necessary. It is into this context that BCM's Children's Team has been delivering this term's assembly 'The Peacemakers', telling the story from 1 Samuel 25 of Abigail, David and Nabal.



In this story David, God's anointed king, has been driven away by Saul and is living in the desert. He requests gifts of food from Nabal, a rich man living nearby, whose shepherds David's men have helped to protect. But Nabal responds by insulting David's men and refusing to share what he has. David, burning with anger, sets out to destroy Nabal and all his household.

One of Nabal's servants (our first peacemaker) warns Abigail, Nabal's wife, of the impending disaster. Abigail (our second

The Peacemakers assembly will be delivered 112 times by the end of this term. The team will also deliver 10 special Easter assemblies in the two weeks before the holidays when they will look at the road to Emmaus.

February's half-term club, called Solid Rock and pictured below left and on the front page, saw 82 children coming to hear of God's compassion and mercy through the story of Jonah.



**SUPPORT
YOUTH CAMP 2024**

Firstly, we have places to fill and need young people! Do you know of any young people who may benefit from a holiday this summer? The week is packed with outdoor activities and is a time of growing in faith, friendships and skills.

**SNOWDONIA
10-16 AUGUST**

If you know of a young person aged 11-16 in some form of social disadvantage, or who would simply like the opportunity to know more about Jesus, and you feel they would benefit from the week, please get in touch. We also welcome churches sending small groups along to Youth Camp. Find out more at tinyurl.com/4h49d4nb

Secondly, to help with the cost we are asking churches to subsidise their young people's places, as they are able. £50 would cover the deposit of one young person, £190 would cover the cost (that we charge families) for a place, and £399 would cover the whole actual cost of the week for one camper.

If your church is not in a position to send young people to the residential, would you consider sponsoring a young person? Get in touch at youthteam@birminghamcitymission.co.uk for more information. **Thank you.**

On 23rd February almost 50 people spent a night out in a cardboard box to support BCM's work with the homeless community at the Care and Resource Centres. This short movie brings up-to-date news on that work.

It comes with a huge thank you to all who slept out on a very chilly night and their friends and family who sponsored them.



birminghamcitymission.org.uk

[/news/helping-the-homeless](http://birminghamcitymission.org.uk/news/helping-the-homeless)

Thank you too to the Lord Mayor of Birmingham who came to greet and meet on the night, and five Asda Community Champions who spent the evening serving hot drinks, soup and doughnuts as well as providing the sausages, bacon and buns for everyone's cooked breakfast in the morning.



Amongst those sleeping out in cardboard boxes were Simon, Umar and Tim of the Kings Heath BID's street warden team who raised £1,000 and are pictured below presenting the cheque to Care Centre Manager, Phil Ansell. Fantastic!



Our Care Centre Cook, Stan Davis, is retiring having worked with the Mission since 1989. He will be missed. Here he tells his BCM story.

'BCM has had a profound effect on my life from as far back as fifty years.

At about 18 years old

I was working as a butcher in Rackhams food hall. It was my half day off. I was leaving to go home on the number 50 bus to Kings Heath. I walked through the Bull Ring when I heard a man speaking of the evils of drink. I stopped to listen because he was making sense, as well as describing something of my home situation. I wondered how he could know what that situation was.

At the end he invited anyone to come and receive a New Testament book. I took one and began to read it that very night. I believed what I was reading and asked Jesus into my life. The next day I can only describe as feeling like a new creation. While I may not have fully understood what had happened, I knew it was something real and wonderful. Praise be to the Lord! I did not know who that man was speaking in the Bull Ring or whether our paths would ever cross again.

Fast forward eight years. I'm now 25, married with children, just passed my driving test in June 1980 and opening my own butcher's business. In my early months of business a stranger came into the shop and introduced himself as Rupert Abbott, a city missionary working for BCM. He and his family had just moved house around the corner and he was looking for a room to use as an office. We had a lot in common - our faith, BCM, our young families - and I had an empty room upstairs.

What a wonderful surprise as I shared with them my Bull Ring encounter eight years previously.

Rupert would often have meetings in his office upstairs. One afternoon he came through the shop with a man. It was the man from the Bull Ring, Edwin Orton. What a wonderful surprise as I shared with them my Bull Ring encounter eight years previously.

Fast forward another 8 years. BCM was looking for a relief Night Manager in their men's hostel at weekends. That part-time job turned full-time. From the hostel I moved over to the warehouse collecting, selling and delivering furniture all over the city. Next I moved over to ElderLink where I first drove the minibus collecting clients for their lunch clubs, and then worked in the kitchen, cooking 20 to 40 meals four days a week.

Covid hit us all in 2020. Whilst on furlough I was asked to help at the Care Centre with food preparation. The small, faithful team there had managed to keep serving food and drinks to the guests. I have spent my last four Christmases cooking at the Care Centre.

I am so grateful for the different opportunities given to me at BCM and I think I've done OK. I must have as over the past few years I've been known by everyone as 'Stan the man'. What an uplifting compliment. Thank you, everyone. We know believers never really retire. God says, "I know the plans I have for you." So if it is part of God's purpose that our paths should meet again, they will!

APRIL'S PRAYER FOCUS

SUNDAY - CITY MISSION MOVEMENT



BCM's CEO, Wes met last month with other leaders from the City Mission Movement for UK and Ireland in Derby for fellowship, planning and prayer. Please pray for those heading up City Missions across the country, that they would lead wisely and effectively to share the Christian message and help those in need.

MONDAY - BCM SHOP

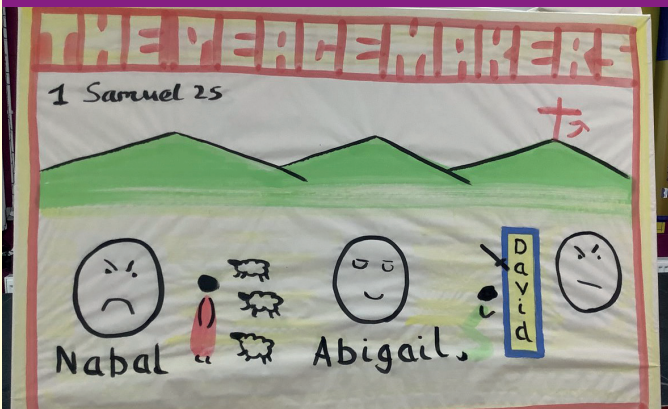
Please pray for staff, volunteers and customers as it is a year since Warwick went to be with the Lord. Pray for more bookshop visitors and that the shop team has opportunities to chat to customers about our loving God.

Pray for eBay team volunteers. We thank God for Keith and Angela who have raised thousands for the Mission on eBay but Keith is turning 75 and would like to take a back seat!

Could you help raise funds on BCM's eBay sales team?

We need help with listing and selling items. If you would like to volunteer just one day a week from home call Keith on 07751 305702 to find out more. Experience is helpful but if not training will be given on the way we work.

TUESDAY - CHILDREN'S TEAM



Please pray for Pete Mallett as he transitions to the Children's Team from the Youth Team. Pray for the whole team, for strength, energy and wisdom to share Bible stories and the good news of Jesus in schools.

Pray that pupils and teachers would be blessed by the message of 'The Peacemakers' this term (see article inside this BCM Update). Pray too for lasting peace in this world of conflict and war.

WEDNESDAY - YOUTH TEAM

Pray for RE lessons and assemblies in secondary schools on the theme of 'Words: Help, Heal or Harm'. Pray that young people would thoughtfully consider the words of Jesus on the cross and how they use words themselves.

Pray for the Lord's provision of new Youth Workers and guidance for John Platt and the team. Give thanks for our faithful volunteers and church partners in schools work.

Please pray that God would send young people to Youth Camp who need it the most.

THURSDAY - ELDERLINK



Give thanks for the warm welcome and great reception received by the team when they deliver services in care homes. Praise God for the baptism of an older gentleman who has participated in ElderLink services for many years. Pray for wisdom for decisions on managing home visiting and care home services moving forward as a team.

FRIDAY - CARE CENTRE

Please pray for the staff and volunteers at the Care Centre, that they would be able to help clients find comfort, friendship and solutions in complex and difficult life situations. Pray for Stan as he retires after so many years with the Mission (see Stan's story inside this BCM Update).

SATURDAY - DAVID CLARK



In February staff joined the family and friends of David Clark to celebrate his life and to give thanks for his faithful service and dedication to his Lord. David was a loving husband to Grace, a caring father of two boys, a Pastor, a leader of the European

Christian Mission and so much more. He became a BCM Board Member in 2013 and was used of God to refurbish the Clock Tower. Wherever we walk in the building we can see the hand and footprints of David and Grace. 'Well done, good and faithful servant'. Please pray for David's family.

Birmingham City Mission
The Clock Tower, 2 Langdon St,
Birmingham B9 4BP

birminghamcitymission.org.uk
Telephone: 0121 766 6603
Email: office@birminghamcitymission.co.uk