



Newsletter

everyone in the world . . . in the word

DECEMBER 2010



Have you heard about... **biblefresh** It could change your world

The instigating factor for this inter-denominational initiative is the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. Whilst many regular readers of the Bible today choose more modern versions, the King James Version remains a masterpiece of literature with its beautiful poetry and stunning prose.

It is hard for us to comprehend the radical effect that the publication of the King James Bible had on ordinary people. For the first time they had the Word of God in their own language. No longer did they need a priest or other educated person to read the Scriptures to them. Of course, many people remained illiterate but, gradually over time, the Bible became more and more accessible to the ordinary man and woman.

One of the most prized possessions in any home was the Family Bible in which important dates were recorded; births, marriages and deaths. This may well have been the only book within the household, and its stories would have been read to the

whole family during daily times of devotion. Bible Fresh is encouraging Christians to look at the Bible in fresh and innovative ways... and what better way into studying the Bible than within a CBSI group?

If your church is promoting the use of Bible Fresh then do encourage as many as you can to get involved! Then, see if there is an opportunity to promote CBSI - it would be an ideal follow-on tool after some of the more basic resources provided by Bible Fresh. The small booklets produced by CBSI UK can be used as an introduction to the standard studies, without a fully trained leadership team, and so are ideal for enabling people to get a taste of what CBSI is all about.

Most people who are involved in a CBSI class know what a difference it makes to spiritual growth and a deepening relationship with the Almighty God - don't keep that to yourself - let's pull together to get 'everyone in the world in the Word'.

Anthea Owen, CBSI Leicester

Update on Malawi

As always we thank you for your support for the work in Malawi! The funding for CBSI Malawi from CBSI has diminished this year so the funds that have been sent from CBSIUK, £2000, as well as the gifts from the classes, are particularly important to the ministry. We can report that new classes are being formed and at the encouragement of the new Regional Director for Africa, we expect to be commissioning the leadership team when we meet them on January 29th in Lilongwe. Please pray for this occasion. Over the next few weeks the visa application for the National Director of CBSI Malawi and his wife, Rutherford and Tsahai Banda, will be submitted. Please pray for a quick and positive outcome, so that they may attend the UK National conference in March. After the conference they will have a few days in the south of England, so please let Veronica know if you would like them to visit your class.

The other projects organised through Madalitso are continuing apace: the primary school has opened in Gwize with nearly 200 pupils, literacy work is strong with trained facilitators in 12 villages, and the maize mill

is now finished. Over 50 secondary school children are being supported with fees, books and clothes. Keep praying!

Gillian and David Mason



CBSI Afloat

Mae Palmer, pictured here with her husband Donovan and their children Lara, Hannah and Jordan, left the Offley Group to serve on the hospital ship 'Africa Mercy'. Her group miss her greatly and were encouraged to hear that she is now leading a CBSI group on board the ship with staff and crew.

Lord, I love you with all my heart.
My life is yours.
Your goodness surrounds me
everyday and night,
and just knowing that makes my
heart sing.

Help me to be more like You,
to shine your glorious light brightly to
all around me.

To show this love to the whole world,
one person at a time!

*Michele Mahon
CBSI Bayswater*

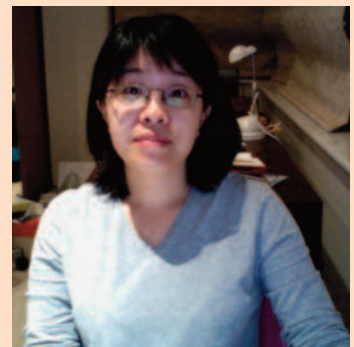
Learning to trust God

I'm part of the large and mobile ex-pat community, always on the move! Since 1986, I have called New York home, but for the last eight or nine years I have been living in Tokyo, Hong Kong and now London. There are always unknowns and possibilities. My family may be moving again in 2011. Arranging schooling, housing, getting children to adjust to a new culture, all the packing and unpacking, are some of the challenges, but there are also other uncertainties and worries.

Every time my husband has come home with different possibilities in the past, this has always brought on a series of 'panic attacks' in me. Sometimes I am almost dragged to a new location.

When we arrived in Hong Kong I was at a low ebb and had decided to stop working. In the past I had always made excuses about not finding a Bible Study, but this time was different. God literally pointed me to a Bible Study that was just around the corner and fitted in with school time for my children. This of course was CBSI. This changed everything for me. I found incredible joy in studying God's Word and in serving Him in so many small ways. I have experienced the power of prayer and spiritual growth through the fellowship there.

Now I understand that it was God's plan to go to Hong Kong so that I could start this journey again. There is no need now for panic attacks, as I know it was all in God's plan that we went to Hong Kong. As soon as we arrived in London this time, one of the first things I did was to find a local class, even before our shipments arrived. I am now a Discussion Group Leader. I know now that I am grounded, my small faith has grown and has allowed me to be less worried and anxious. Facing the next move, I have found a peace in me that wasn't there before and I have learned to trust God.



Song Lee, Tottenham Court Road Class

Wendy's Story

Where do I begin? God has done so much in my life. It started with my mother's neighbour, who, unbeknown to me had prayed for me for fifteen years.

I come from a non-churchgoing family, who sent me to Sunday School, which I loved. None of my brothers and sisters were sent – just me! I loved hearing stories about Jesus. My mother was worried that I was going to become a nun. I did the opposite. At seventeen I married and moved seventy miles away from home. I married a man who soon admitted he was a homosexual. As a result of some page 3 style photographs he had taken of me, I soon met husband number two in very murky circumstances. Having eventually married this man, I quickly became the mother of two small children and lived a life that can only be described as hell. I was afraid for my life constantly and sometimes had police protection, even after he had left me when our second daughter was six weeks old. During the time we were married and afterwards, I was the subject of severe physical, mental and sexual abuse, as was my two year old daughter. I often had to sleep with a knife under my pillow and a wardrobe in front of my bedroom door with the children in my room with me. On one of these particular nights, shaking from head to foot in sheer terror, I prayed to God. Suddenly a bright light flooded the room and a figure I now understand to be Jesus took my hand. Searing heat flooded through my body and a voice told me to be calm and at peace and I soon went to sleep.

The following day when my husband did one of his favourite things to me, picking me up by my chin and dangling me in the air until I thought I would die, I wasn't scared. I moved away from the area to escape.

I tried to integrate with my new community. One day on a bus, a lady invited me to a Bible Study. I swore and said 'not likely'. In the end she persuaded me as she said there was a crèche. The people I met at CBSI Bolsover, just accepted me as I was and loved me and cared about me. During this time I had another failed relationship. One day I sat in the kitchen with 30 sleeping tablets, deciding to end it all. Again the figure of Jesus came into the room and took my hand. After that all I wanted to do was have the lovely people from CBSI in my home, so I kept inviting them all for tea! They kept leaving something behind them that I wanted. It was the fragrance of Jesus.

That Easter I saw a film about the martyrdom of Peter and I invited Jesus into my life. I asked Him to forgive me for all the wrong things I had done and sort me out. He has. I am now married to a man I met at CBSI, the son of the lady on the bus. He is now a Methodist Minister in Devon and we serve together there. We have served there five years and have now been called to serve another five.

For the past three years Jesus has been speaking to me about starting CBSI here on Dartmoor. There are so many people here who need to meet Jesus. Now I know is the right time. At a recent meeting many interested people came to hear about how it could work. When asked who would be interested, they all put their hands up! Although we have chronic illness in our family that we have to cope with on a day to day basis, I know that now is the time and God is going to do wonderful things in this area.

Wendy Henry , CBSI Devon

Baby CBSI in Scotland

It was a true joy to visit the "Little Lambs" Class in September.

The Bible Study for parents from 9-10am went very well. What a blessing to have these parents study God's Word that will be a foundation for their lives. The discussion went very well and it's nice that one father comes along.

The children loved playing together. The whole morning was so well organized and planned. The Children's Leaders, Elyse, Rebecca and Jennie, were well prepared with their role and it flowed very nicely. The children remembered the songs and actions from previous weeks and loved the singing.

What a great idea to wrap up the "gifts" God gives us for the children to find around the room. Each one had a chance to find something and the discussion went well about the "gifts". Using the flannel board for the story helped the children visualize Hannah as she went to the Temple to pray for a baby.

They talked about how God's stories in the Bible are true. What a great idea to put a ribbon around the Bible and have a child open the "Gift" from God. Each week they will learn more truths about God's Word just like their parents do. What a joy!! The craft was a great idea to help the children to remember to pray before going to sleep each night. It was wonderful to see the parents helping and being involved with their child. How nice that the father has agreed to provide the snack each week. The whole morning was outstanding.

We are thrilled with every aspect of the "Little Lambs" Class. Each one of the Children's Leaders is using their gifts from God to make the Bible come alive for these little ones. How rewarding to see the children interact and understand God's message for them.

*Pete & Helen Jane Peters
Calebs to Scotland*





Book Review

The Irresistible Revolution

by Shane Claiborne

This is an easy-to-read book, written with passion, but also with humour and love; which challenges us to be “extremists for love and grace”.



Veronica's Voice

Personality testing has been popular for many years in our culture. Having recently read the book of Ruth again, I wondered how some of the characters there would fare?

I have been particularly interested in the three women: Ruth, Naomi and Orpah. I applied a very simple test to each: was their cup half empty or half full? Life had dealt each of them heavy blows. Naomi had lost her husband and her two sons, but she had gained two loving daughters-in-law and had decided to return to her home country. Orpah had lost her husband and was facing the possibility of remaining childless and forfeiting the chance of remarriage if she continued on her journey with Naomi, so she chose to stay with her own people and said goodbye to Naomi. Ruth, however, having lost her husband, decided to stay with Naomi despite the fact she would be leaving her own people. Having lost her husband, she thought she would forfeit the possibility of a new family of her own and she faced a very uncertain future; yet her attitude was so positive.

From Naomi we hear some very disheartening remarks when she arrives back in Bethlehem. She says: “I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty”, and also: “call me ‘bitter’”. Ruth, however, despite the disappointments and uncertainties she faced being in a new culture, bravely faced these with a positive spirit: “Let your people be my people and your God my God”. Orpah, we could say, was neither a cup half full nor a cup half empty.

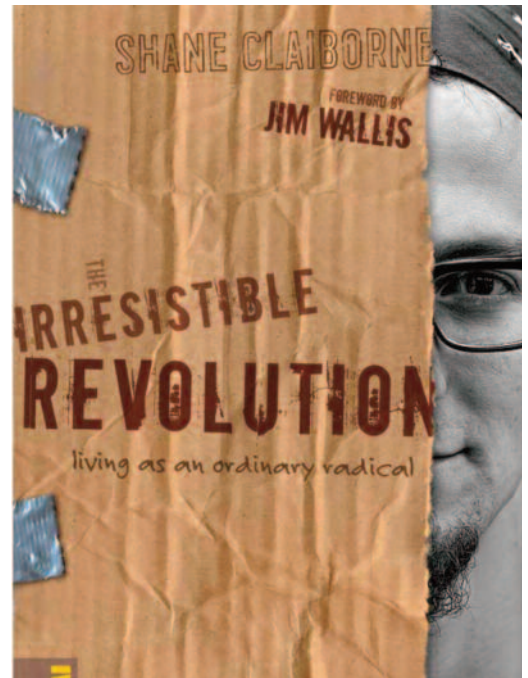
Ruth continued with her positive attitude, eventually resulting in her being named in the genealogy of Jesus. Naomi was affected by Ruth's attitude and also became a ‘cup half full’ personality, having allowed God to guide her and to also use the influence of Ruth in her life.

Which are we? Having applied this simple test, can we change? Yes of course we can! Look at Peter: although his character displayed all the attributes of a ‘cup half empty’, Jesus loved him and recognized in him someone who had tremendous potential. Eventually Jesus was able to work in his life and turn his attitude around. He eventually became one of the most influential characters in the early church.

Many of you have had difficult circumstances occurring in your lives, not just once, but many times. How encouraging it is to others when they know about these things, but also see God's goodness and joy displayed in your life. There is a children's chorus that reads:

‘Running over, running over, my cup's full and running over. Since the Lord saved me, I'm as happy as can be. My cup's full and running over. Naïve and simplistic? No, it can be true for us all!

Veronica Alvarez, CBSI National Director



Shane Claiborne calls himself an “ordinary radical” - someone trying to get to the root of what it means to be a Christian disciple. This book is the story of his growth in experiencing and sharing the love of Jesus among the poor and disadvantaged. He discovers church in community with the homeless of Philadelphia and with the joy, love and compassion of Mother Teresa and the lepers in Calcutta. He finds in the Bible a challenge to our western ways of living as followers of Jesus, and encounters the joy and fun of “radical interdependence”.

The book reminds us that the Jesus we follow is “not safe, but good” and that we are called to be risk-takers; that the Bible is a dangerous book, which for centuries has got people killed, beaten and jailed. The “irresistible revolution” he describes is a gentle revolution: engaging oppression and hatred with love, truth, humour, respect and imagination in the same way that Jesus did, and on the scale of the mustard seed. And, as the author warns us, the revolution is contagious...

Steve Hardman

“The church is a place where we can stand up and say that we are wretched, and everyone will nod and agree and remind us that we are also beautiful”

“I think the world would be willing to listen to a church on its knees, a church that doesn't pretend to be perfect or to have all the answers.”

“According to Mother Teresa, it is among the wealthy we can find the most terrible poverty of all - loneliness”

“We live in an age in which people, when they hear the word Christian, are much more likely to think of people who hate gays than people who love outcasts, and that is a dangerous thing.”

“God is indeed taking over the world, but it is happening through little acts of love”.