

BCM UPDATE



My kingdom is of another place

I am not a twitcher, but I do enjoy hearing and watching birds. We quite often have a blackbird in our garden performing its evening solo for anyone bothered to listen. One day last year I took a video in our garden of twenty-one goldfinches all enjoying their lunch from our garden feeders! No doubt like many who are reading this, I have the Merlin bird detector app on my phone, and a few weeks ago Jackie and I were visiting a National Trust estate in Norfolk and heard oystercatchers, wrens and blackcaps as we walked through their wood.

To encourage the pollinators, butterflies and birds, a few months ago I decided to dig up a narrow strip of grass and sow all sorts of meadow flowers in our garden. I sowed some seeds liberally, sprinkling them over the soil, and other seeds I placed carefully, one by one, into prepared furrows. Yesterday I took pleasure in seeing the great array of colourful flowers basking in the sun, and the butterflies and bees hopping from one to another.

Christian missionary work and church work have many similarities to the cycle of nature. There are periods when we work hard, dig the hard ground and sow liberally, but we don't see much fruit. On other occasions we go through seasons when it feels as though we are being pruned. Thankfully, there are times when we see abundant fruit, for which we give thanks to God. We keep going because it is ultimately God's work, and it is He who gives the increase.

Photo: The ElderLink team and residents in the care homes they visited last month loved creating these beautiful flower arrangements together.

I was recently struck when I read again the conversation between the Lord Jesus and Pilate recorded in the gospel of John. "Are you the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked Jesus. Jesus replied, "My kingdom is not of this world... my kingdom is from another place." I imagine that this answer probably convinced Pilate that the one standing in front of him was just a madman, someone not deserving death.

In the gospels the Lord Jesus regularly preached about the kingdom of God. He said the kingdom of God is near you; the kingdom of God is within you; the kingdom of God is at hand. The phrase 'the kingdom of God' means the rule of God in people's hearts. When someone invites Jesus into their lives to take control they are becoming part of God's kingdom. We have the privilege of engaging in the greatest building project in the world - the building of the kingdom of God!

July and August give wonderful opportunities to share the gospel. Please pray for our Youth Camp and for the thousands who will hear the message in the city centre. May the seeds we sow produce spiritual fruit.

Wes Erpen, Chief Executive

JULY & AUGUST 2025



A place of grace

The Care Centre is predictable and yet completely unpredictable. This sounds like nonsense, but humour me.

Some things at the Care Centre are rigid and always the same. We, the Care Centre team - staff and volunteers - arrive and carry out certain must-do tasks. Alan and Jane, helped by Alex or Phil when needed, do the cooking. I'm amazed at their creativity, and at the generosity of the food donations. The chairs and tables are prepared, the tea and coffee flasks made up. Large jugs of squash are ready for the clients who come through the door any time after 10.30am. YouTube gently serenades us with classic Christian songs. Time is always laid aside for prayer because we desperately need God if we're to share the gospel. Giving the gospel talk after lunch is one of the meatiest aspects of the day.

The unpredictable are the clients. Who will come and in what mood? Who will visit for the first time? What problems will they be facing in their lives? How will God work this time? When they arrive, some are in a real state because of drug or drink sessions. Some are desperate, living on the streets. Some come regularly and are not homeless but looking for certainties and regularity. They come because the Care Centre is a place they can socialise and talk if they want to. Perhaps they want to play Uno or Scrabble or complete a jigsaw. Others come for food and drink.

We gave him a new set of clothes, because those on his back were all he had.

One day a man arrived who we had never seen before at the Care Centre. He was mild-mannered, small and extremely humble. He kept apologising and seemed to think he was causing an inconvenience. He had heard about the Care Centre, that we might be able to help him with accommodation. He arrived soaking wet, having walked through the rain to get to us. First we gave him a new set of clothes, because those on his back were all he had. It was a challenge find clothes that fitted, him being such a small man. We convinced him to stay to eat and he heard the gospel message. He said it was challenging, and that he had always believed in Jesus.

He told us his story, how he was a victim of identity theft. It was clear he was in genuine need. He had originally arrived in the UK from Namibia and worked for Facebook before his sponsorship ended. He lost his job, then his home and found himself on the streets where his belongings and ID were stolen.

That same day a lady had visited to let us know she had Houses in Multiple Occupation, or HODs, available for anyone who was homeless. Our client viewed one, liked it and arranged to move in. I was so pleased we were able to help bring about real, practical change in his life.

Mark 13:10 says, 'And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.' So at the Care Centre that is what we seek to do, by preaching the gospel in word, and by serving the clients who come. The Care Centre provides a kaleidoscopic view of life as it intersects with the gospel. God gives grace, we see it being played out and, even more, we get to participate in what God is doing. Thank you, Jesus.

Kevin Williams, City Missionary (pictured left in the striped apron)



It is a real privilege to work at the Care Centre. Being an ex-addict myself I have known the power of healing in my life, and what the Lord can do is mind-blowing.

This year it has been exciting to set up a carpentry workshop. We are now up and running and fulfilling orders for bird boxes. One client in particular, Andrew (pictured above on the left with Matt), has a real love for the work - I don't know how we would have finished all the boxes without him. His enthusiasm is a joy. It is an honour to share Jesus' love with the lads and ladies while working together and burning Bible verses on the boxes. Questions are raised, ice is broken and bridges are built.

I pray the clients would be giving their own testimony of how Jesus has changed their life.

Sometimes I do a quick introduction with new clients and share what God has done in my life. I talk about Psalm 40, one of the main scriptures we burn on the boxes. It sums up my life, the power and guidance of God in it. We can lose focus in our hectic lives but when I stand back and see God's hand at work I know he is in control. One of my main prayers is that the clients, some with massive baggage and seemingly not much hope, would be giving their own testimony of how Jesus has changed their life, and helping others to do the same.

With some money given to us for the workshop, we have recently bought a CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machine. With it we can venture into more woodworking projects and I am sure it will give a lot of fun. Please pray for this work, that the clients would enjoy their time but most of all receive the healing power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matt Buttery, Care Centre Support Worker



AT THE BEGINNING OF JUNE BCM's Children's Team put on a weekend camp for 7-11s from local church outreach groups. The theme of the camp was being lost and found, looking at the story of the Prodigal Son. The children had so much fun singing songs around the campfire, going swimming, and exploring nature in our scavenger hunt. One child, who was feeling a little homesick on the Saturday, by the end of camp told us, "I am so glad that I stayed". If this is something your church outreach group might be interested in, please get in touch with us at childrensteam@birminghamcitymission.co.uk

Laura MacDonald, Children's Worker



JUNE'S FULFIL was the first at our new venue, Trinity@Birmingham. 200 people from 18 churches enjoyed a night of music and hearing God's word. Some were of no faith and from other faith backgrounds. Reblah, Sarah Teibo and Kirk McAtear shared powerful messages and commented that the focus of the young people was palpable, despite it being a hot night. We thank our new hosts for their partnership and youth leaders for bringing their groups and serving them so faithfully each week. We all share the desire to see our young people live for Jesus, and to influence their peers and nation for good both now and in the future! We look forward to the next Fulfil on 14th November.

John Platt, Youth Co-ordinator



500 CUPCAKES, 400 SCONES, and many clotted cream and jam pots donated by the Cream Tea Society were needed for Jean Harborne's Garden Party Take-Away Box 2025. This was Jean's 9th annual cake sale and raised £2,400 for BCM last month. Thank you to all who played a part - volunteers, donors, partyers and eaters! - but especially to Jean for giving days to organising, baking and icing for this great event.



with speaker **KIRK McATEAR**
Pastor at Trinity@Birmingham

Join us from 12.30pm to chat to staff
and discover more about our projects
worship · meet new staff · project updates
at the Priory Rooms, Bull Street B4 6AF



Rob Warner, our Head of Finance for 27 years, retired completely at the end of June. In recent months he has very kindly been working part-time while his successor has settled into her role.

Rob was clearly sent by God to BCM and has helped navigate the Mission through some very difficult, challenging and exciting times. His calm nature and spiritual maturity made him an invaluable member of the senior management team. He will be greatly missed. We give thanks to God for Rob's faithful service, and pray that he and Rose will enjoy this new phase of their lives.

JOB VACANCY

CITY MISSIONARY

We are looking to appoint a new City Missionary to work in the city centre and as a district missionary alongside a local church.

For a job description, person specification and application form please contact Jean Harborne, our Human Resources Manager:

jeanharborne@birminghamcitymission.co.uk
or call 0121 766 6603 (option 4)

Closing date for applications:
Friday 29th August 2025

JULY & AUGUST'S PRAYER FOCUS

SUNDAY - VOLUNTEERS



37 BCM volunteers and staff spent one bright June morning 'messing about on the canals'. Thank you to the Lapal Canal Trust for sponsoring this wonderful narrowboat trip.

Thank God for all our volunteers, for their invaluable hard work, skills and generosity. Please pray that more would be added to their number. In particular, we need people to:

- **Visit older people in their homes with ElderLink**
- **Help in BCM's Kingstanding Charity Shop & Bookshop**
- **Organise food and clothing at the Resource Centre**
- **List collectable items for sale on eBay**

Experience of selling on eBay or knowledge of IT would be helpful, but training and ongoing support will be given.

If you would like to volunteer, call 0121 766 6603 (ext 4) or email jeanharborne@birminghamcitymission.co.uk

MONDAY - CHILDREN'S TEAM

Please pray for the Children's Team as they serve the wider church through being a part of various camps and holiday clubs this summer, that they are refreshed by time off and are able to prepare effectively for September's new term.

TUESDAY - BCM SHOP



Please pray for the shop team, that they may have wisdom to know what to say and do when supporting our customers in challenging seasons of their lives. Pray too for opportunities to share God's love with those who come in.

Why not pop in to say hello and perhaps even grab a bargain? Children's Christian holiday club books are now on sale, and ladies' tops are all £1 each. They are open Tuesdays to Thursdays from 9.30am to 4.30pm, Fridays from 12pm to 4.30pm and Saturdays from 10am to 4.30pm at 229 Hawthorn Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham B44 8PL.

WEDNESDAY - CARE CENTRE



Last month at the Care Centre a thanksgiving service was held for the life of Boguslaw, a regular there for several years. Many gathered, including friends from the Polish community, to remember him, 'an extraordinary man'. Pray for all those who will miss him in Birmingham and in Poland.

Thank God for the relaxed and friendly atmosphere at the Care Centre and that there have been no difficult incidents. Please pray that it will continue to be a safe, welcoming place for guests, staff and volunteers. Pray too for its carpentry workshop and for Matt as he works alongside the guests (see *A place of grace* inside this BCM Update).

THURSDAY - CITY MISSIONARIES



Pray for BCM's City Missionaries as they share the good news of Jesus in the city centre and in their districts. Pictured above are Jonathan, Eric and Paul taking a day off the streets to promote BCM at the Together Festival in Dudley in June.

FRIDAY - YOUTH TEAM

Please pray for energy and wisdom for the staff and volunteers in Snowdonia on BCM's Youth Camp from 2nd to 8th August. Pray it would be a week of growing in friendships, skills and faith for the young campers going. Visit tinyurl.com/4h49d4nb to find out more about camp, and if you would like to sponsor a camper, get in touch at youthteam@birminghamcitymission.co.uk

SATURDAY - IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Please pray for good applicants for BCM's one-year training programme starting in September. Trainees benefit from a broad scope of teaching and hands-on experience in many aspects of Christian mission, and they are always a great boost to the BCM team of workers. Find out more at birminghamcitymission.org.uk/in-service-training

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