

# BCM UPDATE



## Prince of Peace

A few months ago, I visited a wall in Birmingham that I didn't know existed. One of our German friends asked to see it, and I was amazed that he had even heard of it! It is called 'The Angry Wall.' Local folklore has it that Joseph Chamberlain, the former Mayor of Birmingham, built this wall next to his neighbour's property to annoy him.



He built it from concrete shaped like canon shells to upset Richard Cadbury, of chocolate family fame, who was a pacifist and lived next door. In recent years the 20-foot wall, tucked out of the way in the beautiful Highbury Park in Moseley, has been restored, and if you are local it is well worth a visit.

A wall can serve many purposes. It can provide security and shelter, define ownership of land, give structural support, and even provide decorative touches. Probably the best known wall in Britain is Hadrian's Wall. Built originally by the Romans to keep the marauding Scots of their day from crossing the

border into England and wreaking havoc over our green and pleasant land, it is now a great tourist attraction.

In the book of Ephesians, Paul writes to the young church, where there were no doubt Jewish and Gentile believers, and uses the imagery of a wall to describe the enmity felt between them. He says to them they were not the recipients of the promises of God and were without hope and without God in the world. 'But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.'

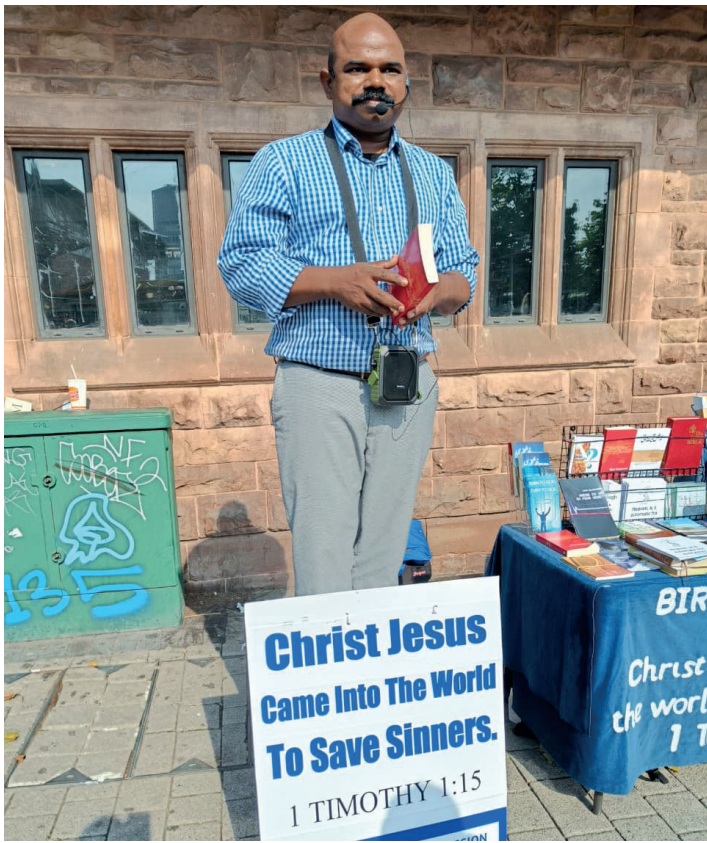
In a world where so many 'walls' have been built between countries and communities and within families, misunderstanding and mistrust appear to be the norm. Every day the media confronts us with the results of this breakdown in relationships, globally through conflicts and war, or more locally where we witness the inhumanity of man toward man.

Thankfully, in our land we don't live the extremes of what is happening elsewhere, but many people experience all kinds of personal trauma and are searching for inner peace. We have the privilege of telling people about the Lord Jesus who is the Prince of Peace, who broke down the 'wall' of separation between us and God, and if people allow Him into their lives, He will bring security, hope, purpose and peace.

Pray the Lord will bless our efforts for Him this month, and that some will embrace Jesus the 'peace giver' as their Saviour.

*Wesley* **Wes Erpen, Chief Executive**

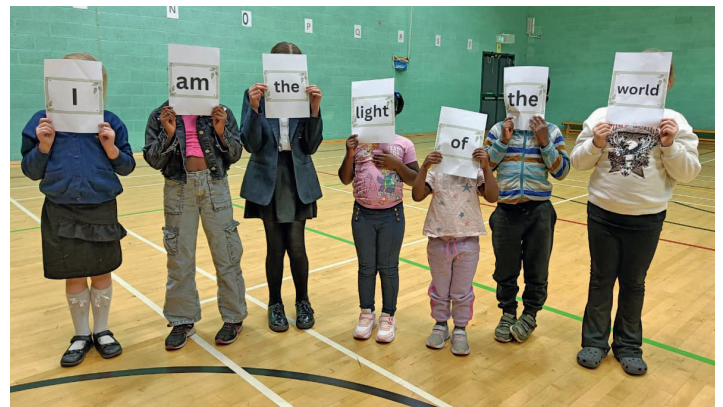




As a missionary of Castle Vale Baptist Church, along with the Pastor, Mark Francis Green, my work involves supporting the church in all its ministries. I lead and preach in Sunday services, conduct prayer meetings, teach Bible classes, participate in community coffee mornings, engage in door-to-door gospel sharing, and serve as a leader in the Brigade.

We are committed to taking the gospel to every person and household in the community.

Castle Vale Baptist is a growing, vibrant church that is both gospel-focused and community-driven, which is our greatest strength and, at the same time, our greatest challenge. God continues to add to our number each month, and more than 20 people of all age groups attend the church every Sunday.



## Dedicated to God's work

**I was born as an answer to my father's prayer. After my parents had six daughters, my father prayed to God for a son and promised to dedicate him to the Lord's work. Then I was born.**

I grew up in a Catholic Christian family in India, though my parents were not strict Catholics, as they were influenced by Protestant Christian groups. In my early teens, my father began taking me to church and, soon after, I joined Sunday School and Bible classes. One Sunday School lesson about Jesus, the Good Shepherd, convicted me of my sin, and I accepted Jesus as my Saviour. A year later, at the age of sixteen, I was baptised and committed myself to the work of the Lord.

After completing my secular education, I joined a seminary to pursue a Bachelor of Theology degree, and later went on to earn a Master of Theology degree, recognising the importance of systematic training. For 14 years I served as a full-time Christian worker in various settings across India. My roles included youth pastor, teacher, and Academic Dean in a Bible college. Before moving to the UK, I was serving as an assistant pastor in a Baptist church. When my wife began her career in the UK in 2022, I joined her and sought opportunities to serve the Lord in this country.

The church runs community-driven programs such as Wednesday coffee mornings, where locals enjoy craft activities, engage in conversations, make new friends, join seeker-sensitive Bible studies, and receive prayer and counselling. The Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association at Castle Vale serve children aged 5 to 18, providing a safe, faith-based environment. The Boys' Brigade engages 15+ young people weekly, fostering growth, learning, and service. I request your sincere prayers for this church and its ministries. I also thank Castle Vale Baptist Church for embracing me as part of the fellowship and allowing me to serve there.

I live in Birmingham with my wife. Some of my cousins are settled in different parts of this country, while the rest of my family, including my mother, live in India. I thank God with all my heart for His unfailing love, grace, and faithfulness in my life. It is only by His calling and sustaining power that I am able to serve Him today. All glory belongs to Him alone.

**Manual P Joseph, City Missionary**

I count it a great privilege to witness for Christ.

A vacancy leaflet from my previous church led me to apply to BCM. After an interview, I was appointed, by God's grace, as a City Missionary working alongside Castle Vale Baptist Church. My ministry involves preaching the gospel in the city centre, engaging in conversations about Christ, and distributing literature and Bibles. I count it a great privilege to witness for Christ and am deeply thankful to BCM for this opportunity.





## God's big family

A team of 14 BCM staff and volunteers took 30 young people away for BCM's Youth Camp to the Christian Mountain Centre in Snowdonia in August (pictured below and on the front page). It was a fun week of growing in friendships, wellbeing, confidence and our understanding of God. The young people loved it and threw themselves into all the activities and games with passion and competitiveness!



They enjoyed the outdoor adventure activities, in spite of Storm Floris which made things a bit damp one morning whilst out learning wilderness skills! Although some campers did not like heights or water, they met the challenge and took part in rock climbing, gorge walking and kayaking.

The Bible teaching theme was 'Firmly Rooted: God's Big Family'. Several leaders spoke about what God has done in their lives and young people related to the issues covered and shared with their group leaders some of the struggles they are facing. Many of the young people really grew personally and faith-wise during the week.

**John Platt, Youth Team Co-ordinator**



## Cleaner and fresher

The last few months have seen a Care Centre refurbishment. The main room and toilets have been decorated, and the stair floors and offices have been laminated.

Our Support Worker, Matt Buttery has been co-ordinating operations, and four corporate workdays with volunteer groups from Wesleyan Group, Allianz and Jaguar LandRover, have got the job done. The Screwfix Foundation met the full cost of the refurbishment. Huge thanks to them all. Those using the Care Centre have commented, 'The main room feels very welcoming now, much cleaner and fresher.'

We are now in the process of establishing a second carpentry workshop as well as, alongside our existing jigsaw wall, an art board to display all the artwork created at the Care Centre. Why not come along and have a see?

**Phil Ansell, Care Centre Manager**

# Fulfil

**FRIDAY  
21 NOV  
7.30 TO 9.30PM**



**KEMI  
NAOMI**



**BIMM BIRMINGHAM  
GOSPEL CHOIR**

**at Trinity@  
Birmingham**

**AN INTER-DENOMINATIONAL  
YOUTH EVENT FOR 11-18s**

## More than a chair

At BCM's Charity Shop and Christian Bookshop in Kingstanding so many different and wonderful people come in off the street. We love to get to know them, support and pray for them.



When this chair was donated to us we prayed that it would go to the right home, not realising that one of our regular customers was looking for a comfortable chair to buy for her grandson. He is always looking after her, going shopping with her, helping her with anything she needs. Even when she does not feel like going out, he encourages her to go out for some fresh air. One day they came into

the shop together and he went straight to the chair, sat in it and said to his grandma, 'I love it!' A few days later she came to buy it to put in his bedroom so he is able to do his work comfortably. Later she told us, 'It is my way of saying thank you to him for all he does for me and my family. He is a very caring and funny child. When he saw the chair his face was a picture with a big smile, and he was saying thank you, thank you.'

Another time a 12-year-old boy came in with his mum looking for a Bible to take to Limitless, a Christian festival for young people. He wanted a Bible to read while he was away from home. He was so happy with the one he chose and excited about his trip. His mum is happy that her son is on fire for God.

**Edith Green, BCM Shop Manager**





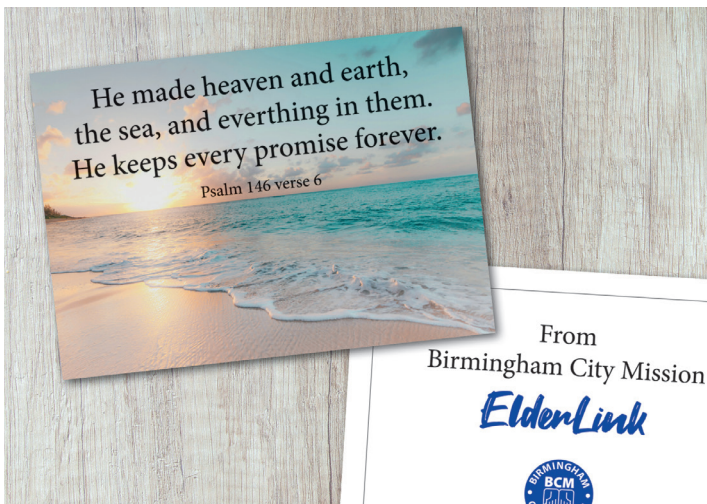
When you are on your own most of the time, a smile with a warm word of blessing is a real encouragement.



### A summer treat

Many of ElderLink's staff and volunteers take holidays during August, so we offered 'summer drops', a change from our usual home visiting format. We dropped in to all our Visiting Scheme members with a package of a postcard, activity pack and cheesecake dessert, a bit of a treat and something to lift their spirits. Their faces and comments showed us these were much appreciated and enjoyed. When you are on your own most of the time and unable to venture outside, somebody bringing a tasty treat, something interesting to look at, and a smile with a warm word of blessing, is a real encouragement. We hope the Bible verse postcard leaves a lasting impression of the love of Christ.

**Andrea Bulteel, ElderLink Support Worker**



### Providing life's essentials

At BCM's food bank we have seen a significant increase in the amount of parcels given out in the last few months, from 187 in March to 288 in July. We are open 3 days a week, so on each day of opening we are giving on average 24 parcels, which is a large quantity of items. There are now 914 names on our list of clients. These are mainly single people, including a growing number of asylum seekers, and around 40 families. Harvest is here again, and we thank you for your prayers and support as we help those struggling to afford life's essentials.

**Chris Fisher, Resource Centre Manager**

## HARVEST APPEAL

### Please donate

Please help up fill up the food bank's shelves this harvest. At the moment we particularly need:

### non-perishable food...

Long life milk · Tea (small boxes) · Coffee (small jars) · Sugar  
Tinned potatoes, carrots, peas and sweetcorn · Tinned fish  
Tinned meat (hot and cold) · Hot puddings · Rice pudding  
Custard · Tinned fruit · Tinned tomatoes · Tinned spaghetti  
Biscuits · Packets of savoury pasta and noodles · Pot noodles  
Cup a soups · Packets of rice · Tinned soup

Please make sure items are not out-of-date and the 'use by' dates are as long as possible.

### and toiletries...

We are low on deodorant, shower gel, shaving foam and razors FOR MEN - we are fully stocked with items for ladies.

We also need toilet paper, but we have plenty of toothpaste and toothbrushes.

Please deliver to the Resource Centre or get in touch if you need us to pick up large collections. It is a very busy time of year for us, collecting, sorting and dating all the food. If you feel that you would like to help with this, give us a call.

### BCM Resource Centre

The Clock Tower, 2 Langdon Street, Birmingham B9 4BP  
0121 766 6603 (ext 1) · office@birminghamcitymission.co.uk

**Opening hours:** Tues to Thurs from 10am to 4pm



If you would like to make a monetary donation:

- send a cheque with a note stating it is for the food bank;
- or call the Finance Office on 0121 766 6603 (ext 3).

**You can give online**

**stewardship.org.uk/pages/  
bcm\_harvest25**

**Thank you.**



BIRMINGHAM CITY MISSION'S

# Annual Celebration

2025

**SAT 18 OCT**

**2 to 3.30pm**

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

## It's not too early to order your BCM CHRISTMAS CARDS!

£5 for a pack of 10 cards

Available at BCM HQ and  
 BCM's shop in Kingstanding

For mail order (+P&P)  
 call 0121 766 6603 or email  
[office@birminghamcitymission.co.uk](mailto:office@birminghamcitymission.co.uk)



View the full range at  
[birminghamcitymission.org.uk](http://birminghamcitymission.org.uk)

## Help make a difference to older adults in Birmingham

Can you offer one day a week or  
 month to provide hope and  
 comfort for older adults  
 in the Acocks Green and  
 Yardley area?

We are looking for  
 Christian volunteers to  
 join our team and visit  
 those who are housebound  
 or socially isolated,  
 to chat and offer  
 encouragement and a  
 kind listening ear.

Please get in touch...



0121 707 9422  
[elderlink@birminghamcitymission.co.uk](mailto:elderlink@birminghamcitymission.co.uk)

Access the online Visiting Scheme  
 volunteer contact form at  
[birminghamcitymission.org.uk/elderlink](http://birminghamcitymission.org.uk/elderlink)  
 or via the QR code ⇨



## Each Christmas BCM gives gifts to thousands of children whose families struggle to make ends meet.



Please help by buying a **NEW (not second hand)**  
 gift for a child or organise a toy collection. We begin  
 wrapping on 10th November and a stock of toys to  
 get us started would be very welcome. Last year we  
 delivered 16,000 toys to 4,000 children, so we have  
 to start early! We particularly need toys and gifts for  
 babies (0 to 18 months) and 9 to 15-year-olds.

**Or do it all online.** Choose a gift from an online store  
 and have it delivered straight to the address below.  
 Our ToyLink 2025 Amazon Wishlist is full of ideas at  
[birminghamcitymission.org.uk/news/toylink-wishlist](http://birminghamcitymission.org.uk/news/toylink-wishlist)

Bring or send toys to Birmingham City Mission at The  
 Clock Tower, 2 Langdon Street, Birmingham B9 4BP  
 (open Mon to Fri from 10am to 4pm). We can pick up  
 large collections - call 0121 766 6603. **Thank you.**



# SEPTEMBER'S PRAYER FOCUS

## SUNDAY - CARE CENTRE



At the Care Centre its brilliant catering team - Jane, Alan and Alec along with volunteers - try their hardest not to waste any food. This load of lovely vegetables pictured above was donated by Gas Street Church and roasted with herbs and garlic, then blitzed up for a delicious pasta sauce. Gary of 'I'm homeless, get me out of here' is another great and faithful Care Centre supporter, regularly providing food and sleeping bags, and pictured below delivering biscuits one day in July.



There is much for which to thank God happening at the Care Centre. Good contacts are being made with housing providers and mental health teams so clients are able to access these services. Two clients referred to Betel UK rehab have come to faith in the Lord and one is now on Betel's house leadership team, the other working in its restaurant. Please pray that those who come to the Care Centre find the friendship, support and services they need to make positive steps forward in their lives. Pray too for Care Centre's next Alpha course starting in September, that it is well attended.

## MONDAY - ELDERLINK

Please pray that the Visiting Scheme team's home visits have an impact on scheme members and their families now and for eternity. Pray too for more volunteer visitors to enable the scheme to grow and take on more members.

Pray that the regular monthly services and activity sessions being delivered in two new care homes in Edgbaston and Moseley are a blessing to residents and staff.

## TUESDAY - BCM SHOP

Thank God for his protection for staff and volunteers at the shop. Pray for their good health and for that of their customers, the many different people they get to know who come in off the street (see 'More than a chair' inside this BCM Update). Pray particularly for customers with children going back to school after the summer. Please pray too for more shop and eBay volunteers to help out.

## WEDNESDAY - RESOURCE CENTRE

Please pray for those who come to BCM's food bank unable to afford life's basics. Pray for them as they tackle obstacles such as homelessness and living as an asylum seeker in a new country. Pray that many would donate food to fill up the food bank's shelves to supply the large increase in the number of people coming in need of help in recent months (see 'Providing life's basics' inside this BCM Update).

## THURSDAY - CITY MISSIONARIES

Please pray for Manual in Castle Vale (see 'Dedicated to God' inside this BCM Update) and all BCM's City Missionaries as they seek to proclaim the love of God in word and deed.

## FRIDAY - CHILDREN'S & YOUTH TEAMS

Please pray for the Children's Team as they visit over 100 schools this term and share the story of Zacchaeus. Pray for the message to be heard clearly and received positively.

Pray too for the Youth Team as they prepare and deliver assemblies, lessons and clubs, that there would be much interest in these from secondary schools, and partnerships in this work with more local churches. Pray that this provision would bring hope, good news and support to young people this academic year, and that they would grow in knowledge and understanding of the gospel as a result.

Pray for teachers and for church leaders in supporting their children and young people as the new school year begins.

## SATURDAY - BIBLE EXHIBITION



BCM's Bible Exhibition, called 'The Man Who Changed the World', visited two Birmingham primary schools in July. Please pray that the children and staff who took part in this interactive and colourful overview of the Bible's story would remember and be blessed by it.

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

**[birminghamcitymission.org.uk](http://birminghamcitymission.org.uk)**  
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