



# Newsletter

everyone in the world . . . in the word

## Three New Groups

### BEDFORD

**February 2009** - Enjoying a weekend away with two very good friends when one of them, Jane from the Dunholme, Lincoln CBS group, informs me that it is hoped that a group will be starting in Bedford. I am very interested in joining this until the conversation develops and I understand that what she is actually saying is a group will be forming in Bedford if someone starts it, looking at me. *My reaction "no, no, no."*

**April 2009** - Meeting with Veronica to discuss how to go about starting a group in Bedford and also mention Northampton as I have contacts there. Speak to a friend, Annette, who is very encouraging. *I'm just investigating, no firm commitment.*

**July/August 2009** - Annette and I do Nehemiah study together. We find that when one of us is discouraged, the other one is able to lift them up and we keep each other going. Annette's friend, May, joins us for some sessions and is greatly encouraging. *We're just investigating, no firm commitment.*

**September 2009** - Annette and I meet with Veronica to discuss next steps. Decide we will attend training. Annette has problem with knee and ends up on crutches. Because of this and other problems unable to attend training until new year. *Never mind, we're only investigating, no firm commitment.*

**January 2010** - Annette speaks to friends at church, May and Lois, who would also like to attend training. Inform Veronica, she gets goose bumps and tells me that she and her friend Karen, who just happens to be Lois' daughter-in-law, have been praying for Lois

to be involved in CBS for some years. We all attend training. *We're now all just investigating, no firm commitment.*

**February 2010** - Lois enters the scene like a dynamo. First meeting of CBS group in Bedford. Eight attend. Annette and I attend conference and meet members of another new group, as well as many others and are greatly encouraged. *We are firmly committed.*

**March 2010** - I have a fall and break my collar bone. Two weeks later a member of our group has a fall and breaks her shoulder. We keep going and are encouraged knowing the group we met at the conference are praying for us. *We are still firmly committed.*

**April 2010** - Annette and I have exactly the same idea while chatting on the phone. Coincidence? We will ask a local church, St. Marks, to display a CBS poster. Annette knows the minister. *We determine to move forward, firmly committed.*

**May 2010** - A member of our group requires an operation and this is scheduled for the end of May. Every other member of our group is having some sort of hospital test. Annette asks St Marks if they will display poster and gives in a leaflet. (My sister suggests advertising for accident prone and ill to join our group.) Next day the minister visits Annette and says he is more than happy to display the poster and informs her that he studied under one of the members of the board of reference, knows Dr R T Kendall and will see if he can expand our group! Waiting to see what happens next. *Excited and firmly committed.*

### CARDIFF

In May 2009 Grace Wort introduced me to CBSI and put me in touch with Janet Phillips, Caleb to Wales, who was visiting Cardiff at the time.

I am not very proactive in setting up anything new, so I invited a few friends from church who I thought might be interested in hearing Janet and possibly doing something about these studies. I remember clearly that

first meeting. It was very encouraging to hear about CBSI classes around the world and how the Lord had been working and changing people's lives, but it was Janet's shepherding heart and the love she poured through her prayers on us, complete strangers, that gave me this overwhelming desire to experience God working among us here in Cardiff. If only someone would start a class...

The more I dreamt about it, the more convicted I felt to do something about it. The more convicted I felt, the more afraid I became! As I was praying about it one evening, the Lord gave me the verse Jer 1:6-8. I guess I could run but I couldn't hide!

It's been wonderful watching God working. As we started the 'If you will pray' study in the book of Nehemiah, none of us felt confident about taking on a leadership role, but we held on to Neh 2:20: 'The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding...' It's been amazing to see the Lord going before us, preparing, equipping, encouraging and leading us every step of the way.

We started our class 'properly' after Easter, opening it to the community.

We were thrilled to see people arrive, eventually 19 forming 2 discussion groups! What an encouragement from our faithful God! Some of the members have never been to a Bible study group before and it's such a blessing to see their joy in sharing their faith and making discoveries in the Word together. The Lord is really ministering to us all through this class.

Unsurprisingly, the enemy is not happy about these changes in our community. He has tried various tactics to distract and discourage us, but, thanks to the faithful prayers of our brothers and sisters from other CBSI classes, we've been carried and supported through. Isn't it wonderful that we are ALL branches of the glorious and beautiful VINE? If we REMAIN in Him and He in us, we WILL bear much fruit to our Father's glory.

## MANCHESTER

I became a Christian at the age of 50, whilst living – literally and spiritually – on the mountaintops of Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was a surprise to experience a different style of church when we returned to Britain, and we moved to York. I was invited to an open evening to learn more about CBSI and found that the study format really suited me. As part of the York class I loved sharing with Christians from different denominations and areas. This, together with regularly reading and studying God's word, cemented and deepened both my relationship with Him and others. I would spend time most days pondering on the challenge of the application!

In 2002 we moved to the Stockport area. I started to search for a local CBSI group and discovered the nearest was in Sheffield - a round trip of 50 miles. I continued looking for any group being started or any other way of doing the CBSI studies. Time went on and in February 2009 - (7 years later)!! I felt God was calling several of us to "get real" with Him, recommit ourselves and go deeper - to return to Him and seek His face.

I shared this over time with a close friend, Pam, who felt the same. Still finding no CBSI class locally we both decided to travel each week to the Sheffield class if we could join their group. I knew that I had to follow this through whatever it took!!

The group in Sheffield gladly agreed that we join them but asked: "Why don't you start your own group? We've been praying for ages for a group in the Manchester area!" It was wonderfully affirming. After

**Stop Press!**

### Children & Youth CBSI

Children and Youth CBSI material now available. For details contact Ardva Boyes-Brewer email: [Ardva@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Ardva@hotmail.co.uk)

0 - teens, something for every age group. Suitable for crèches, After School Clubs, Teen groups and many other situations.



much consideration, prayer and discussions with my Pastor, who gave his support and blessing, in January this year we advertised the new CBSI group. At a local ecumenical service, flyers were distributed and the full advertisement read to the whole congregation.

We had an intro evening where Veronica gave an enjoyable presentation about CBSI and the commitment involved. As a result, 14 people committed to do the first study of Nehemiah, which we have now completed. We will continue with the Friday evening group, and open a new Thursday afternoon group with the same study.

Pam and I have been really encouraged and blessed by this very special group and have felt privileged to be part of the setting up of this first group in the Hazel Grove area of Manchester. We can't wait to see what God has in store for us, both as individuals and as a group and hope we are ready for an exciting, challenging journey, as we start the James study.

A HUGE "Thank you" to all who have encouraged us and prayed continuously; to CBSI and Veronica for all the help and support; to Gill and David Mason for introducing me to CBSI and for their commitment to CBSI. May we continue to hold Jesus' name high in this area for His praise and glory!

**Sue's Story...** I was born and brought up in South London and lived for many years in the Old Kent Road. I was the oldest of 4 and at the age of 10 was sent, like many children were, to Sunday School, probably so my parents could have some peace and quiet. Although I didn't have a Bible we were given memory cards with verses written on. At school I had a wonderful teacher, Miss Hewitt who told us Bible stories. I used to put my head down on the desk and imagine. As I became an adult and started work, depression set in and with it weight gain. One day, walking home from work the thought came to me that it would be so much easier to finish my life and I attempted to walk into the traffic. This being unsuccessful, I tried an overdose, but God had other plans for my life, that I couldn't imagine then. I then underwent a procedure called a Gastric Partition (stomach staples). After this went badly wrong, and having to undergo five more operations including an IJ Bypass, I did eventually lose weight. But I also suffered a heart attack which could have claimed my life. However, God had other plans for me. During one of these procedures, with fourteen days on life support, I realised how close I had been to death on many occasions. Seeing my fellow patient and dear friend die from the same procedure, I promised Jesus that if I lived, I would commit to him. During this time I married Eddie and had two lovely daughters. Having missed out on a proper education, I attended Greenwich College and gained a degree. A couple of years ago I moved to a village just outside London. I was greeted by the Church family there who showed their love to me and I started attending CBSI. It was there that I shared my feelings of doubt and inadequacy. One evening at the class, during the study of Romans 2, a light went on!! Everyone should read it - I understood God's love for me and I understood that judging other people also meant judging myself. It is a vicious circle. I received prayer that evening and I praise God for what He has done in my life. My life is different now and I praise God for the blessing I have received and the blessing I can now be to others.

## Hector & Helen Antelo and family

You may remember Hector from previous Newsletters. Hector is a Bolivian Pastor living in the UK and leading a Spanish speaking CBSI class. We now have three classes with Bolivian Pastors as class leaders. We feel that we are being led to take Hector on to work with Spanish speaking classes, as there is a real need in that community in the UK. Most of the CBSI studies are translated into Spanish. This will also help Hector to eventually do the same work supporting Pastors in rural communities in Bolivia. Please pray for Hector and Helen and their young family. This is a huge step for them and it will mean that Hector will have to give up his work and be dependant on the support he can raise.

If you would like more information please contact me, Veronica Alvarez at: [valvarezcbs@googlemail.com](mailto:valvarezcbs@googlemail.com)



## UPDATE ON MALAWI

*Joanna Makandiwiri CBSI member standing by the door of her new home. The roof was funded by the Carlisle class. She is holding a new health book in Chichewa that David and Gillian had given her.*



*Rutherford Banda, National Director in Malawi, and his wife Tsahai.*

We want to thank everyone who supports the work of CBSI and Project Malawi through their gifts, prayers and encouragement.

We return to Malawi on 23 May and our first meeting will be with the newly appointed African Regional Director, Maury Kapsner, who will be making his first visit to Malawi to visit the National Director Rutherford Banda. Your prayers for this time will be particularly important, as a good relationship between Maury and Rutherford is vital to the effective functioning of the ministry.

We will also be spending time in the villages in the Central region seeing the new work with 40+ farmers and the establishment of a primary school. Later on in the visit we will be looking at commencing a literacy



project in the deep south of the country, the Lower Shire, staying with a new Trustee of CBSI Malawi, Alec Msusa. We are hoping that we can train his wife, Iness, to start a new CBSI class in the area.

During our time in Malawi, Janette Strodder who is in the CBSI York class will overlap our visit. She will be spending four weeks at Maoni Orphanage befriending and organising activities for the children. This is a very challenging task and we would ask for your prayers for her for the month of June.

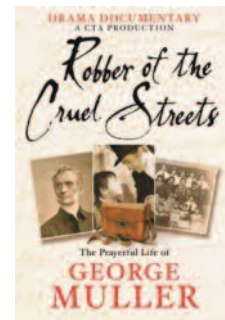
CBSI Malawi is organising its first two regional conferences in the next few months, which will mark a significant step forward in helping leaders to grasp the national vision for the ministry.

Finally, we hope we can progress the visa application for Rutherford and Tshai to visit the UK next March to attend our CBSI Conference.

Thank you in advance for your prayers which not only support us but open doors of opportunity that we never knew existed!

*Gillian and David Mason*

## Book Review



Robber of the Cruel Streets - The Prayerful Life of George Muller

*"He robbed the cruel streets of thousands of victims . . . with the Sword of the Spirit"*

*Daily Telegraph obituary  
11 March 1898*

George Muller was German, born in 1805, rescued by God from a wild living student life, and sent as a missionary to England. From initial work among Jews in London, he was led to the West Country and eventually to Bristol, where compassion for the abandoned children in the city streets compelled him to get involved. This work grew until ultimately there were some 2000 orphans accommodated in five purpose built houses.

No requests for money were ever made, except in prayer, yet George remained committed to the principle that God would provide, and that if He did not then he should not continue. All gifts and expenditures were faithfully recorded and the books opened once a year to demonstrate God's faithfulness and transparent financial integrity.

This book contains powerful lessons of obedience, faith, and God's provision. Our CBSI group has been studying Mark's gospel, including the feeding of the 5000 and the 4000. The compassionate heart of Jesus, His willingness to get involved and His trust in the Father to provide what is necessary have been striking lessons. George Muller is a challenge and encouragement to us to step out and trust God in the communities around us.

*Steve Harman*



## Veronica's Voice

Holiday time!

As some CBSI classes and groups have a well earned rest for the summer, you hear many of the leaders looking forward to re-charging their batteries and many members asking 'what shall we do without our Bible Studies in the summer?'

Many of you have been studying Romans and Acts this year and I have heard the question asked: 'Didn't Paul ever take a holiday?'

The answer is probably not, in the conventional sense of the word, because they didn't exist! However, he did spend time studying and listening to God.

The concept of a holiday is fairly new. The Victorians and Edwardians made the idea popular and we have many relics of a by-gone era on our coasts. Before the 16th century there would be 'Holy days', now Bank holidays, when people would take time off work. There were also Pilgrimages, when people would visit Holy sites and then of course the emergence of the health spa, with centres becoming famous for healing mineral waters, forgotten since Roman times.

So what does a holiday period mean to us? For some it is busier than ever, with school holidays; but for others it is time to take in what we have learnt, spend time with God and apply what we have learnt.

Whichever scenario fits your life, do take some time for yourself and apply the principles of Holy days, pilgrimages and healing, even if it is all in your back garden! Matthew 11 v 28 says: "*Come to me all who are weary and I will give you rest*".

*Veronica Alvarez,  
CBSI National Director*

[www.communitybiblestudy.co.uk](http://www.communitybiblestudy.co.uk)