



Time for renewal

Karen Laister, head of marketing, communications and strategic relationships, welcomes you to our summer issue of BRF News.



I wonder how you spend the late summer. Perhaps you are looking forward to a holiday with family or friends. Or you might be

planning a retreat, quiet day or simply some space to rest.

Summer is a time in the year when there is a gear change. The school year is over, the summer holidays stretch ahead and regular activities are paused. For many of us, daily routines take a different and more relaxed pace.

Our ministry teams will be taking a break from normal activities and enjoying a much-needed rest. But there are still events and festivals to attend, and our hope is that both our staff and participants will be refreshed and renewed at these gatherings.

The **Parenting for Faith** team are looking forward to attending the New Wine United event in Kent, where they will be leading several sessions and will also be available in the resources hub to talk with parents and meet BRF supporters.

Some of our **Messy Churches** will be taking a break, while others will be involved in holiday clubs.

Living Faith will be at the Festival of Prayer on 22 July. Now in its eleventh year, many people come back time after time, saying that it is a precious day of refreshment and renewal.

And our network of **Anna Chaplains** will be out and about, supporting older people whose regular visitors and carers may be on holiday.

The summer enables most of us to slip into a different routine, during which we can rest and draw closer to God. Amid his intense and demanding ministry, Jesus often took time out. In Mark 1, we read that Jesus went to a quiet place to pray and be with his Father. He knew the vital importance of rest, prayer and renewal.

In the quieter pace that summer affords, we have a choice: to drift along mindlessly, letting the days simply slip by, or to intentionally seek God, as Jesus did, and open ourselves to a renewed sense of vocation, ministry and service.

With good wishes, and prayers that this summer will be for you one of rest, renewal and drawing closer to God.



John Swinton

We are delighted to announce that Professor John Swinton has accepted our invitation to become a vice president of BRF. This is an honorary role for an initial period of three years. Professor Swinton is chair of divinity and religious studies at the University of Aberdeen. He is a leading practitioner in the field of spiritual care for older people in the UK and has been

instrumental in the development of the ground-breaking Spiritual Care Series course, which BRF promotes and distributes through its Anna Chaplaincy ministry.

■ To read more on this story go to brf.org.uk/new-vp

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Pray with us

Lord, thank you that you are all we need.

You give us forgiveness for our inner well-being.

You give us sabbath for our work-life balance.

You give us prayer for our need of mindfulness.

You give us the example of Jesus for our fulfilment.

You give us the power of the Spirit for our lifestyle choices.

You give us the love of the Creator for our motivation.

Lord, you are the door that leads to life.

Amen

From *The BRF Book of 100 Prayers* by Martyn Payne



Our prayer resources can be found at brf.org.uk/pray

‘Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.’

Hello from Julie and the fundraising team



'I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.'

PSALM 9:1-2 (NIV)

Our sincere thanks to everyone who has supported

our annual appeal. Every donation is much appreciated and really does make a big difference. I recognise these are financially challenging times for many of us, but if you would like to make a donation towards our appeal, you can do so at brf.org.uk/donate, post a cheque made payable to BRF or call our friendly fundraising team on **01235 462305**.

Thank you also to everyone who has become a Friend of BRF by making a regular donation of £2 a month or more. We are reliant upon fundraising and gifts in wills to deliver our ministries, and we are especially grateful to those who have remembered BRF in their will. A gift of 1% or more in your will helps us continue our work in the future.

Our range of everyday cards and Christmas cards is available to order now at brfonline.org.uk/cards, and watch out for your paper order form in the September issue of BRF News.

In this issue you will find a flyer for The Real Flower Company, which explains how you can order beautiful flowers on their website, resulting in a donation of £5 to BRF at no extra cost to you.

Sending very best wishes from Julie and the Fundraising team.

Julie MacNaughton, MCIOF (Dip)
Head of Fundraising



Lisa Bell

Our much-loved colleague and friend Lisa Bell sadly died of cancer just before Easter. Two of her closest colleagues write:

'Lisa was full of love and appreciation and never afraid to share it openly at work. You could always hear Lisa before you saw her, her laugh was so loud and infectious, her presence always warm and welcomed. She understood those around her and always gave credit where it was due; she was always willing to help another, a great teacher and listener and just the bravest woman. She will be an absolutely fabulous inspiration for years to come.'



Teabags and packets of seeds

We are extremely grateful to our supporters who become Friends of BRF by making a regular gift of £2 per month or more. In June we prepared our annual thank you to Friends of BRF, which included a card, some seeds to plant and a teabag to make a cuppa while reading about how your donation makes a difference. The postage stamps for the mailing, the seeds and the teabags were all donated to us, so the mailing didn't use any of our funds.

If you would like to become a Friend of BRF or if you would like to donate in anyway, please visit our website or give us a call on **01235 462305**.

Rest and restoration

When we asked the Anna Chaplaincy team to suggest members of the network who might share their wisdom on rest, self-care and restoration, they all came up with the same names: Tim and Jean Howlett in Aylesbury. Tim and Jean kindly agreed to talk to us.



Tim and Jean were brought up within Christian families, Tim in Northampton and Jean on the Wirral. They met at a Christian Endeavour holiday home and they celebrate their 54th anniversary this year. 'They say holiday romances don't last,' says Jean. 'Well, we prove they do!'

They became deeply involved in working with older people after Tim took early retirement from his job as a social worker.

A few years later, a seemingly chance encounter with BRF's Karen Laister at a Christian retailers and suppliers retreat led to an introduction to the embryonic Anna Chaplaincy. They had expressed their disappointment in the lack of resources for ministry with older people, when Karen mentioned something was about to happen at BRF. 'And that really was the acorn,' says Jean.

Tim adds, 'We've always felt we wanted to identify with Anna Chaplaincy, almost as a recognition of our sense of calling to work with older people.'

What is mine to do?

The strength of Tim and Jean's commitment to supporting older people could easily lead to an all-consuming workload. How do they balance the endless needs of others with their own need for rest and self-care? 'One of the things we try to do is have a retreat sometime during the year,' says Jean. 'Last year, we attended Martha's Day

Out with Debbie Ducille, and that was amazing. It left us with a key question: what is mine to do? And therefore, what is not mine to do? We need to discern what to let go and what to carry on doing. The other thing which is key is to know your limitations. God has given us gifts, and he doesn't want us to go outside of these gifts. He wants us to know these gifts and to use them.'

Their understanding has evolved as they've got older themselves. 'We are setting time aside,' says Tim, 'whereas we perhaps didn't in the past. But one thing we've always held on to is Sunday. There are certain things we try not to do on a Sunday, mainly more practical things – chores and errands – and so we do try to find that time of rest.'

'Sabbath, rest, balance and self-care: these things are interlinked,' adds Jean. 'They're linked with each other and above all they're linked with Jesus at the centre, like the petals of a flower.'

Find out more about Anna Chaplaincy at annachaplaincy.org.uk



Creative collaboration



Maureen O'Neill, director of Faith in Older People (FiOP), writes about the creative collaboration between her organisation and Anna Chaplaincy for Older People.

FiOP is a small Scottish voluntary organisation which works

with all those of faith or none. Our overall aim is to create awareness and educate people around the importance of the spiritual dimension to the lives of older people.

We do this through research, conferences, seminars and newsletters, and importantly through collaboration with individuals and organisations who have a mutual interest and who bring to FiOP knowledge and expertise. Collaboration underpins FiOP's work, and we have been delighted to work with Anna Chaplaincy over the past

two years. We have learned a great deal from BRF's experience of growing Anna Chaplaincy in England, and to see churches in Scotland engaging with the work and individuals being trained is very encouraging.

Working together

FiOP has been delighted to welcome Debbie Thrower and the team as presenters of several online seminars, which have been very well attended and which we hope will inform and enthuse individuals to consider becoming Anna Chaplains. The Covid pandemic highlighted the value of spiritual support, and the development of Anna Chaplaincy to support care homes in Scotland could make a significant

impact in meeting the spiritual needs of older people. Debbie Thrower, Debbie Ducille and I have had the opportunity to discuss this potential with the primus of the Episcopal Church, the spiritual care advisor in the Scottish Government and others who are influencing the development of the National Care Service development.

Last year I participated in the Spiritual Care Series, which is being promoted by BRF's Anna Chaplaincy. The course is filled with interesting and stimulating resources and discussions which focus on different aspects of ageing, spiritual lives, practical action and supporting people with grief and loss. We still have much to achieve, and I look forward to working with the Anna Chaplaincy team to continue to build awareness of the immense value of this ministry.

For more information and to download their latest report, *The Gift of Age*, go to faithinolderpeople.org.uk

The Spiritual Care Series



If you would like to arrange to talk with one of the team about the Spiritual Care Series, please email spiritualcareseries@brf.org.uk to arrange a telephone call.

To find out more about the groundbreaking Spiritual Care Series go to annachaplaincy.org.uk/spiritual-care-series



Crafty Cutters



Chris Herbert, Anglican safeguarding specialist and priest, was licensed to take home communion to people too ill or frail to get to church, many years before he was ordained. Now, his long involvement in St Mary Magdalene Campsall, in Sheffield diocese, has led to his home communion circle being hugely involved in Messy Church, a delightful win-win situation, as Chris explains.

You build close friendships with the people you visit. The group gets bigger and smaller over time, but they're always pleased to be involved and to keep their connection with the church. When I started to tell them about this great Messy Church we had started, that led to them sharing wonderful stories of when they were in Sunday school 70 years ago.

As I talked to them about Messy Church and their own Sunday school days, I could feel the Spirit moving. Their eyes glinted, their faces lit up: it was a wonderful thing to see and I just felt drawn to think and pray about what I'd witnessed. Then the Spirit came to me, and I went to them and asked if they would be able to help prepare the materials for some of the Messy Church activities. They were really excited. I said most of it will be cutting things out and things like that. 'Cutting! Oh we can do cutting!' they said, and that gave me the idea for a name. Can I call you the 'Crafty Cutters'? And they loved it! They all went, 'That's brilliant!'

So, when I take them home communion I leave what needs to be done for the following month's Messy Church. There's no pressure. Nothing's too complex and it's fine if some people ask not to do it this time, or if they don't think they can manage it, or they're not well, or they've just come out of hospital. Then someone else might say they can do more this month. So it's very flexible.

A wonderful bond

For me, the real joy is at the end of the Messy Church session when we bring all the children together to thank the Crafty Cutters. They sit in a semicircle and they're so quiet and good. I take a video on my phone – with the permission of the parents, of course – and then I show the children some photographs of the Crafty Cutters. I always introduce them by name, so the children know who they're saying thank you to, and there's just that wonderful bond between young and old.

It's a wonderful community engagement in every way. Personally, it's made me far

more aware that this is not just an older person I'm going to see; it's someone with lots of God-given skills, experience and knowledge. And this initiative has become a way of sharing those skills and knowledge that I didn't know they had. As a result, they feel they still have a lot to contribute and still have a role. They've come back into the church community even though they're not there in person, and they're having an impact in church, for now and in the future. When they see the photos and the videos from the children it's a bright light for them once a month and you can see them flourishing as a result.

'They're having an impact in church, for now and in the future.'

Taking home communion to people was the catalyst for the idea. It wasn't me; it was the Holy Spirit working through those I was talking to, and through the twinkle and love in their eyes.

We look at the young and the old as separate, but we're not separate, we're church. Church isn't the building, it's the children and the Crafty Cutters who have become involved with each other in ways that I never thought possible.

For more information about Messy Church go to messychurch.org.uk

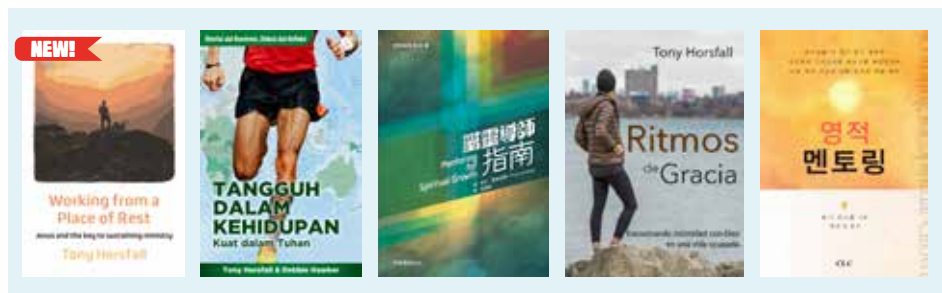


MESSY ADVENTURES ROADSHOWS

The Messy Church team had a fantastic time taking Messy Adventures on the road in April to mark the publication of the large format book. They held Messy Church Goes Wild roadshows in Wellington and Clevedon, and everyone who went had the chance to try out some of the Messy Adventures, including activities such as soil testing, planting seeds and learning about the variety of ways birds eat. Each roadshow ended in a short outdoor celebration round a fire. As Messy Church team member Sally O'Hare said: 'It was wonderful to see different generations learning about and celebrating the beauty of God's creation together.'

To find out more and to order go to messychurch.org.uk/goeswild

Working from a place of rest



A new edition of Tony Horsfall's *Working from a Place of Rest* is published this month. In this article, specially written

for BRF News, Tony draws on his wide experience of supporting missionaries overseas to highlight the dangers of burnout and suggest practices, beliefs and tools to prevent it.

Back from the brink

Graham was at his wit's end. An estate manager for a large international school in Africa, and responsible for 180 staff, his work was getting busier and busier until he felt he could no longer cope. Realising he was on the edge of burnout, he travelled to see a doctor in Nairobi and there saw a flyer for a teaching day I was leading on 'Working from a place of rest'. The timing seemed perfect, so he came along.

The seminar was a turning-point. There he learned about his own formula for overwork – a strong work ethic, a job without limits, a need to please and say 'Yes' to everyone, and a fear of failure. He saw from a biblical perspective the importance of time for rest and reflection, and understood how to be kind towards himself and his own needs. Most importantly, he grasped how crucial it is to maintain boundaries and have margin in our lives. He returned to the school, recalibrated his life and working practices, and finished his term of service well – and avoided complete burnout.

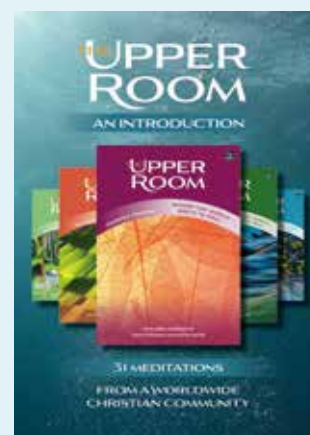
Missionaries are generally people who are highly committed to the task, hugely conscientious, and willing to 'spend and be spent' in God's service. It all sounds very heroic, but there is a danger inherent in this approach that they burn out in the process. It is important that we learn how to sustain ourselves in ministry over the long haul, so we not only start well, but finish well.

'It is important that we learn how to sustain ourselves in ministry over the long haul, so we not only start well, but finish well.'

'Working from a place of rest' gives us understanding of why we may become driven and overstretched and place ourselves in danger of exhaustion. Being aware of our inner workings is crucial in changing unhelpful patterns of thinking and behaving. Equally importantly, it gives us practical strategies to help us live in a better way, like keeping sabbath, learning to depend on God, making time for leisure and nurturing our inner life.

When I spoke to Graham recently he was on a two-day break in the Lake District, taking time out from his current busy job to be recharged and refreshed. The lessons he learned during his crisis twelve years ago are now fully integrated into his life and have made a helpful difference.

To order the new edition of *Working from a Place of Rest* go to brfonline.org.uk/working-rest



Watch out for *The Upper Room* writing competition 2023

Whether you're an experienced writer or just keen to have a go, look out for our popular *Upper Room* writing competition returning later in the year. You'll be invited to write a short Bible reflection, on any subject you like, for *The Upper Room* Bible reading notes. The prize for the winner and two runners-up is publication and a year's subscription to *The Upper Room*. A number of past winners have gone on to write regularly for BRF. Further details will be announced in September.

Email writingcompetition@brf.org.uk to register your interest.

'I could not have been more excited to learn I've become a runner up in *The Upper Room* competition and I have to accept it as a little nudge to go forward and do some more writing (although, as yet, I don't know what).'

Valerie Eker, runner up in 2020 and now regular contributor to *Bible Reflections for Older People*

Parenting as a church leader



Greg Bannister is a vicar in Spalding, near Peterborough. He and his wife Sophie, who is also ordained, have two very young children. Life is busy, as it is for most families, but there are extra pressures on family life for church leaders: managing expectations, conflicting needs, living in a 'goldfish bowl'. He first came across Rachel Turner's *Parenting as a Church Leader* (affectionately known as PACL) on social media and thought, 'Okay, this is something I'm interested in, as both parent and as a church leader.' What, we wondered, did he find particularly helpful?

'Because it's written for such a specific audience, and because the pressures on clergy families are so unique. I know everyone's situation is unique, but it is weird for clergy families and it's wonderful to have something that is written from a place of real understanding. Also, just the fact that it's so well written, that it is easy to read, is really helpful because there's more than enough reading for church leaders anyway, without needing to wade through a book on something that you really care about, like parenting, but is badly written and inaccessible.

'PACL is so practical and so non-judgemental, and that makes it stand

out too, because that's certainly not true of all parenting books. It's just full of wisdom and it's very realistic.'

And if he were to recommend it to other church leader parents, what would Greg highlight?

'It's the toolbox it offers: the five key approaches that are common to all Rachel's Parenting for Faith books. But here they're explored particularly for church leaders and their families. I wouldn't want to pick one tool because that wouldn't do justice to the book. It's a wonderfully clearly written book, but ranges so widely – it's firing at so many different targets. There's going to be

something in it for everyone who reads it. It's a book to absorb rather than analyse, but if you want a blurb, my answer is that it's full of practical wisdom. You don't get given a list of ten things you must do. What you get is fresh ways to look at everything.'



'You don't get given a list of ten things you must do. What you get is fresh ways to look at everything.'

To purchase *Parenting as a Church Leader* visit brfonline.org.uk

Top tips for summer holidays

For those of us wrangling young kids, the words 'summer holidays' don't exactly equate with the word 'rest'. But there are some mindsets which can help us arrive at September feeling a little fresher.

- 1 Don't overfill. By all means, be aware of what is going on in your locality for families, plan playdates and days out – but leave space in between.
- 2 Banish guilt. This is your summer too. You might not get a week's reading on a beach in Malibu, but if your kids are happily engaged in *Bluey* for an hour, then take time to do something which brings you joy.
- 3 Memories over mess. A clean, tidy family home never lasts very long! Do what you need to do to preserve your sanity, but ignore non-urgent jobs and focus on a game, book, movie or other fun with your kids. The memories will last longer than the tidying!



parenting for faith®

New Wine

The Parenting for Faith team is excited to be going to New Wine this summer. Anna Hawken will be leading seminars for anyone wanting to explore the Parenting for Faith approach to raising God-connected kids and teens. And don't forget to stop by our stand in the Resource Hub, too! We'll have lots of information and some freebies too.

To find our more go to new-wine.org/events/united23