

Bristo Baptist

M a g a z i n e

January / February 2007

Saving Grace



Bristo Baptist Church

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Editorial



For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.
(Titus 2: 11-13 NIV).

Are you having a struggle to keep your New Year resolutions? Or to keep on living the Christian life? Maybe you need a fresh experience of God's saving grace. Read Titus's definition. Grace is something that teaches us how to live the Jesus life. Strong's concordance defines it as "the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life".

God's saving grace is like Jesus stooping down to wash the disciples' feet. God Himself will stoop down and wash you clean inside through his saving grace. Let Him do it this year – not just once, but every day, just as you wash yourself every day.

Robert Mill

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Holy Trinity

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Envisioning the Way Forward

Dear Friends,

Another new year! This is the thirteenth that I've celebrated as pastor of Bristo, and I'd like to share with you my thoughts for the way forward. How things have changed since I first arrived here. Now the congregation is far younger and only a handful of the present congregation was here when I first arrived. Over these years, we have seen many new people come and also move on, to other cities and lands. But while people change, the vision does not. I want to tell you that when I came to Bristo it was with a vision for people. A strong, committed core of believers who thirst and long for the presence and purpose of God in their lives, finding expression through their lives into the lives of others.

This vision has not lessened but has intensified for me, increasingly central to my understanding of church. After planting a new church in the late 1980s without a church



building, it was something of a relief to come to Bristo, with its large sanctuary and many ancillary rooms. And it's good now to see the building being used more now than at any point since I came. But the building is not the church. At its best, it is a shell to use for the purposes of God at work in and through the lives of people.

In the coming months, we will have to give attention to future building needs of our congregation. We will address this issue at our congregational meeting on January 17th. The maintenance of our buildings is an ongoing matter, and it is time for us to discuss further plans for development. At previous congregational meetings we looked at and discussed changes to our façade and exterior appearance, but the deacons have come to realise on further investigation that these cosmetic changes would be disproportionately expensive. We have therefore also been looking at other possibilities. I have to tell you that I believe the commitment to vision requires far more radical

possibilities being explored and pursued.

What brings people to Bristo? We are a congregation where the Gospel is proclaimed and celebrated, where the Holy Spirit is looked to and where the challenges of radical discipleship of Jesus Christ are being addressed. It is a gathering of people who seek to be committed to Christ and to one another. In order to maintain this ethos we need to look seriously at either selling and moving site (once again – we have done so many times in the past!), or to redevelop the whole of the present site in a way that will allow us to have a cost-effective and well maintained facility that will facilitate our serving the purposes of the Kingdom of God.

What does this mean? It means that we need to focus on being a relational group of people who seek to allow Christ to shine out of our midst, drawing others to Him through His presence among us. This means:

1. We seek to shape our meeting place to enable us to recognise our need of and dependency

upon God, and by the Spirit's empowering to offer love, healing and hope to the wider community around us.

2. In pursuing this ministry, we want to seek to imitate the pattern of Christ's life. We do not want to invest the resources God has entrusted us with in simply having a building that serves the personal needs of our Fellowship. We want to have a building that serves ministries that God has called us to in Jesus' name.

This is our way. We are entering times of transition. May God use these times of change to speak to us and through us to others, regarding His love and purpose for people today. And may we all, as we continue on our journey, be used by God in drawing others as fellow travellers with Jesus Christ.

In His love,
Jim

TREASURER'S REPORT: JANUARY 2007

On the 17th January there will be a church meeting. At this meeting I'll be presenting an interim account for the financial year to the end of December 2006. In this report I'd like to present a summary of progress against the agreed budget. There are a lot of figures, but the figures are important and will give an indication of the presentation I'm going to make later on this month.

General Income	Budgeted Income	Income to date	Shortfall
Church Offerings	40000	26902	2358.40

(The shortfall assumes a required income of £750 a week or approximately 40000/52)

Special Income	Budget	Giving to date	Shortfall (to 9 months)
Designated offerings	2550	731	1181.5
Thankoffering & Mission	3500	1058	1567
Total	6050	1789	2748.5

The following table summarises our expenditure so far this year. Refurbishment expenditure and Repairs to the church buildings are both significantly above budget. There are also extensive repairs to be made to the manse, the final costs for these repairs are still to be confirmed. Expenditure over budget will probably be met from the Fabric fund.

Expenditure	Estimated	Actual	Expected to date	% to date	Expected total
Employment	32500	21529.12	24375.00	88.32	28705.49
Supply	1000	350	750.00	46.67	466.67
Energy	6200	3160.15	4650.00	67.96	4213.53
Insurance	2880	2955.8	2160.00	136.84	3941.07
Refurbishment	1000	4639.28	750.00	618.57	6185.71
Furniture/Equipment	2300	323.85	1725.00	18.77	431.80
Repairs	3000	6612.44	2250.00	293.89	8816.59
Tuning	150	142	142.00	100.00	142.00
Council Tax	2600	2260	1950.00	115.90	2511.11
Repairs to Manses	2000	0	1500.00	0.00	
Phone	800	691.91	600.00	115.32	922.55
Office	500	113.97	375.00	30.39	151.96
Subscriptions	800	352.63	600.00	58.77	470.17
Children & YP	650	537.15	487.50	110.18	716.20
Outreach/Publicity	1200	354.85	900.00	39.43	473.13
Literature, Copyright	500	137.88	375.00	36.77	183.84
Care Van	100	55	75.00	72.84	72.84
Fellowship	500	300	375.00	80.00	400.00
Sundries	1000	776.16	750.00	103.49	1034.88
Total Expenses	59680	45292	44760.00	101.19	60389.09

Paul Watson

BIRTH

Congratulations to *Mark & Christine Francis* on the birth in early November 2006 of Toby Alexander, a brother for Bradley. We pray God's blessings on them as a family, in their new situation.

NEWS FROM LOM

Just arrived from Pastor Stoicho of the Lom church, whom we are partnered with in ministry and to whom we are sending out a team in July. We have a team of 11 people going.

Jim Purves

Dear brother,

It has been a while since I have not written. At Christmas as you can imagine we were very busy with all the services that were going on. But it was blessed time. So on 22-23 December we had the wonderful opportunity to give out the Christmas Gifts, to share the Gospel in this way with the people and to invite them to church at least for the Christmas Day Services on Sunday and Monday.

We called this event, this gifts activity, "You Are Precious" because in this way we want to show to these people that they are precious before everything in the eyes of God and also for us. It was interesting to go to their places. Firstly they were very surprised to

see so much people in front of their place (I would not call many if their places a house). And they did not know what to expect. Because the times when someone is visiting them is either when from the Electricity company come people to cut their electricity because it is not paid for, or from the local shop people come to ask for their money because they have given them some things from the shop without paying. And now someone who has come to give them something and to greet them. You can imagine. We had with us also some teenagers from the church. They helped with the putting the things into the bags and were involved in the distributing as well. They were very excited to do this. And it was very nice to say to the people: "We are from the church in the downtown, some people with good hearts and we from the church have prepared this little Christmas gift for you and these girls here have put everything by their own hands in the bags. Inside you can find some sweets, fruits, something for the children and something for you as well, there is a Christmas

greeting card especially for you and a New Testament and we would recommend you to open it at least once in a while." The cards are with a greeting verse, a greeting message and we signed them from the church.

We also could give out some food aid to people who are in need. Also, the services at the main church and the villages around were blessed and very well visited. The Vasilovtsi church is growing, for instance now they have about 35 children in their Sunday school, they have a Sunday school teacher

as well. Now they intend to move one of the walls so that the room where they have their services may become bigger. The Mominbrod church had on 23rd Dec its 2 years anniversary since they moved into their own building.

After Christmas we went to have a week of break and to spent some time with Yura's parents in Yambol. And after that, since one week ago we are back to work and ministry.

Hope to hear from you soon!

In Him,

Stoicho, Yura, Rady, Ruslan



THANKS FROM LOM

We received the following letter from Stoicho, pastor of our friends and partners in Lom. It was written in Bulgarian with a translation into English.

*“How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation”*
Isaiah 52:7

To Rev Dr James Purves and Bristo Baptist Church, Edinburgh
To the Deacons’ Council at Bristo Baptist Church, Edinburgh

Dear brothers and sisters,

We offer you our most genuine gratitude for your prayers and financial support for our church’s social ministry and outreach to the people in our town and region. We were moved to tears by your compassion and sympathy. We’ll share with you the joy in the eyes of those whom we are helping. Due to our joint ministry through the partnership between our churches, God’s work in Lom increases to new dimensions.

Thank you very much!
Sincerely Yours
Lom Baptist Church

Special gratitude is offered by our church board: (eleven names listed).

The letter is signed by Stoicho Apostolov.

Christine Lumsden

IMPRESSIONS FROM TIMA

When I was approached by Robert Mill and asked to write something for the magazine, something that we have experienced or learnt, I did not have a clue what it could be. I spent few days thinking, trying to get an idea.

One of the main reasons for this was the fact that there were so many different things that have happened to us during these almost five months, so many people that we have met, so many places we have visited.

Finally, I decided to make it not as an account on behalf of the four of us, who came to Bristo at the end of the summer, but just a personal reflection, or even better to say, a testimony of what Yulia and I have experienced here. Again, it will not be a comprehensive account of everything that we went through, on the contrary, just a wee “thank you” note.

Perhaps, quite a few people have heard it from me, that Voronezh (the city in Russia where we come

from) is much warmer than Edinburgh, though it may be a surprise to many who think that it is always cold and a lot of snow everywhere in Russia. Yet, I need to add – it is warmer during the summer, not all the time. When we landed in Edinburgh, on the 16th of August, we found ourselves in a rather gloomy gray weather, in a gray city, with the temperature only 16°C, while at home we left beautiful sunny days with over 33 degrees of heat. Needless to say, that both Yulia and I felt a bit upset, if not depressed.

However, things started to change very quickly – not the weather, although it was much better than many people were foretelling, not the color of the city, although we started to enjoy its cold, austere beauty. We suddenly felt ourselves very much at home to an extent that when last Sunday we went to the Wester Hailes Baptist Church and really enjoyed the service there, we felt that something was missing. This something was people from Bristo.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank everyone whom we have met at Bristo, who have shared their love and friendship with us. It has helped us not only to start enjoying Edinburgh, but, which is more important, this was a great encouragement for us, because we could see what the church can be to people, of how its warmth can be experienced, how the church can become a family. A real one.

This is not to say that the journey is over, that we, as Bristo Baptist Church has already arrived into a bright future of being an ideal church. No. Yet the church is moving, going, developing in the right direction. And it is great.

Tima Cheprasov

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

2 Corinthians 12 : 9

ON LEAVING BRISTO

Almost twenty-two years ago we arrived at Bristo as parents with two young daughters, now we leave as retired grandparents. But there are deeper differences than those. Through the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the Christian life is a transforming life, both for the individual and for the community of believers forming a 'church', making us more like Himself. This has been my experience whilst in Edinburgh. Change can come quickly or slowly, pleasantly or with difficulty, with laughter or with tears, with ease or with hard work, with focus or with perplexity and through relationships with all sorts of different people. Life at Bristo has led me through situations in each of these ways. But as I look back there are several landmarks, which have given spurts to my spiritual growth in particular areas of my life.

- Being encouraged by a few close friends to open my life to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to work in and through me.
- Becoming President of the Women's Auxiliary in Bristo,

- preparing and leading meetings and working with other women throughout Scotland.
- Spending weeks in a Christian atmosphere at Spring Harvest and S.U. Family holidays with folk from Bristo.
- Being the 'flower lady' giving me the opportunity to visit so many people, especially the elderly.
- Involvement in the Saturday Club for kids, which evolved into the Sunday groups, and holiday clubs. How much I have learnt through lesson preparation and the reactions and comments of the young people. What fun I have had!
- Being part of and hosting cell groups and Alpha courses.
- Meeting in the early morning for prayer and the other opportunities for prayer corporately and with individuals.

I will leave it to those readers who know me quite well to determine how these things have helped to make me a little more Christ-like at times. I want to say thank you to

all of you who have been part of the Bristo fellowship over these years for allowing me to make mistakes and do zany things (like waving flags in services!) as together we have grown in the knowledge of Christ and His saving grace. As I give the Lord praise for what He has done in my life at Bristo, I know I can trust him for the future as we settle into a fellowship in Crewe.

'And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.'

Philippians 1: 6 (NLT).

May the Lord continue to bless you as you share His salvation and love, seeing lives being transformed.

Janice Clarke

From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.

John 1 : 16

MAGAZINE COPY DATES, 2007/8

Below is a list of the proposed copy dates for the Magazine over the next year. The dates follow the current pattern of copy due on the last Sunday of 'even' months, except for July/August when the due date is slightly earlier due to several key people being with the church mission team in Bulgaria in early July.

<i>Copy</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Publication Planned</i>
Mar/Apr	25 February	11 March
May/June	29 April	13 May
Jul/Aug	17 June	1 July
Sep/Oct	26 August	9 September
Nov/Dec	28 October	11 November
Jan/Feb '08	30 December	13 January

Anyone in the fellowship can submit items, at any time (not just before the deadlines!). The Editorial Team (Robert and Andrea Mill and David Polland) welcome your contributions – if you don't send anything in, you won't have a magazine to read! Our email and postal addresses are on the inside front page of every issue.

The Editorial Team



Service Times

Sunday

Morning Celebration (including Junior Church)	11.00 a.m.
Evening Celebration	6.30 p.m.

Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday

Cell Groups (refer to weekly sheet for times / locations)

Monday

Prayer Meeting	10.00 a.m.
International Soup	12 noon
Badminton Club	6pm - 10pm

Tuesday

Home from Home	1.00 p.m.
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Friday

IT Youth Club	7.30 p.m.
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Saturday

Morning of Prayer	9.30 a.m.
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