

Director's Report for BSYW AGM 2025

It is my great joy to give this annual update of thanksgiving on behalf of all of those who labour for the Lord through BSYW. The Lord first called me to join this local mission around 10 years ago, and it was wonderful to be welcomed into the BSYW family. I love being a part of the BSYW team who put their faith into action with such relentless enthusiasm to 'tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord', Psalm 78:4. It is so encouraging to be with people who are alive in the Lord and shine so brightly for Jesus.

Looking back over the last 12 months, there have been some real highs, and some lows, for each one of us, but whenever I think of the team, I'm reminded of the verse from 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain."

Thank you Lord, for this wonderful promise that we do not labour in vain, and thank you to our wonderful volunteers who give their all to serve through BSYW. Most of all, thank you Jesus for being the rock, the cornerstone, the firm foundation of all we do. It is from Him and through Him that we seek to be Kingdom builders. A big part of this involves team work. I am grateful to be part of a team that lives out the command of 1 Thessalonians 5:11: "encourage one another and build each other up."

It is good to pause and reflect on the goodness of God in bringing BSYW to its present position. How wonderful that we were able to celebrate 30 years of ministry through BSYW this last year. We thank the Lord for the many labourers who have been Kingdom builders for the Lord through BSYW over the years. We build today on work that others have done. We especially remember Sue Richards and her faithful service. She has been a great blessing to many and we know she, too, was personally greatly blessed by her time with BSYW. This, of course, is the Lord's work and we all work together for His Kingdom and His glory.

Whilst we pause to reflect, it is healthy for us to audit the status of the charity so we can have a picture of how much this work has been blessed and grown. In 2018, pre-covid, assemblies were the main focus of the charity, with some lunch and after school clubs, some 'Walk Through the Bible' lessons and 'The Christmas Journey' beginning to be established as a highlight in school calendars. We were working with 29 schools and had a wonderful vibrant team. (some of whom are still building and labouring with us in BSYW today).

Fast forward to 2025, and I'm delighted to say that, although we had a lot of post-pandemic re-building to do, we again have contact with 29 schools (although some of these have changed over the years), and we even reach 3 extra through 'The Christmas Journey'. We've regularly visited approximately 5,000 children with our Bible-based assemblies this year. We thank the Lord for the cheers and smiles we receive when we go into schools. It is our prayer that they will see Jesus when they see us, so we know the cheers and smiles are because of His good news!

You will appreciate that working in schools can be a challenge. The world is changing very quickly and, although our Gospel message stays the same, we have to update our delivery style to adapt to the modern world. This doesn't phase our team: they know the Lord is with them. They are resilient, adaptable, joyful team players who approach this mission with a whole heart for the Lord.

We are now in schools throughout the whole school day doing workshops as well as the assemblies. This is a great development as we get a lot more time with the children and can

share much more with them about Jesus and the Christian faith. In fact, BSYW have actually been named in several schools' Christian RE curriculum documents.

Our increasingly popular workshops reached an amazing number of children this last year: 720 Year 1 children, 390 Year 3 children, 780 Year 4 children, 450 Year 5 children and 690 Year 6 children. That's 3030 children who have spent quality lesson time with the team looking at God's word, exploring how awesome Jesus is, and hearing personal testimony from our team of believers.

We build in faith and pray that the Lord will use our labour and that our precious local children will be saved. We cannot truly see what we are building, but we know the Lord is in it. Imagine Noah toiling day after day to build an ark for a flood when both an ark and flood must have been well beyond his comprehension. BUT, our Lord was the architect and so Noah trusted and saw salvation.

Jesus is the ark for our children. Jesus is their salvation. So we share Jesus and His Gospel with the children. Like Noah, we build in faith that the Lord will bring our children safely home. Our gracious Lord encourages us to keep building, as each week we get glimpses that our work is having an impact. Increasingly, children share that they have found, and are reading, Bibles at home. I overheard some children taking a group of parents around a school on Open Day. They thought I was out of earshot and they said, "That's Helen. She comes in with Dave and Linda to teach RE. You might think religion is really boring but it actually isn't, it's fun!" Some children openly admit in front of their peers that they are Christians: one boy even asked for advice on how to witness to his peers in the playground. We can be strong and courageous as the Lord, our God, is surely with us.

Praise God, 'The Christmas Journey' is going from strength to strength. We are now reaching around 900 children with this outreach. We also feel really excited about the possibilities that 'Step into Easter' offers. We reached 180 children again last year, allowing them to visit their local churches. This proved to be a moving and, at times, powerful experience. Both of these outreaches focus on Jesus, the greatest Kingdom builder ever. We praise Him and look to Him to help us build these events for His glory in the coming year.

'Walk Through the Bible' remains a very powerful way to share God's word with the children. This last year, 580 children had 5 hours with us as we explored and memorised God's big rescue plan. The children love the fast-paced and varied lessons. This last year we have invested a lot of time on improving the lessons, Dave and Linda have successfully trained to teach the Old Testament, Amanda and I are up and running with the New Testament, and Dave and Linda are now learning 'Walk Through the Bible New Testament', too. We have had some wonderful experiences and have felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit with us.

We end our 'Old Testament Walk Through the Bible' lessons by looking at three builders who prepare the people for the arrival of the Messiah: Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. BSYW's work in Blackpool and the surrounding towns and villages follows a similar pattern to their building. God willing, we will also show the children the importance of Worship, the necessity of putting God first, and the power of prayer. We are now building for the return of the Messiah. Like Zerubbabel, we build, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty." Zechariah 4:6.

We rejoice that "the builder of all things is God." Hebrews 3:4

So, we thank the Lord for this past year and look forward with hope for what He will do in the coming year. Thank you for all you do for the Lord through BSYW; happy building, and thank you for your continued prayers as we remember Psalm 127: "Unless the Lord builds the house, the

builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.”
Be with us Lord, we pray. Amen.