

Reflections on the message by Mike Kerry, 3rd January 2010

“Looking Back and Pressing On” Philippians 3:12-14

The last several years have been phenomenal for BFC but God is not finished yet.

Here is a sample of some of the things that happened in 2009.

- Jonathan Kent led the “Built to Last” Bible studies.
- We took part in the Continuous Year of Prayer. As part of this we knocked on doors to ask if anyone needed prayer for anything. We will do it again in May.
- In February, Mike and Marion joined Duncan and Vasanti Watkinson in India to help with their ministry. John and Trish picked up the fundraising baton for the work there, which included a sponsored swim, sponsored white water rafting, and sales of a 2010 BFC calendar.
- The Tuesday lunch connect group started. At the Christmas lunch there were 40 people. Going into 2010 each Tuesday there will be a one hour lunch followed by one hour in the Bible.
- In February there was the ICEJ UK conference, including an evening with Chuck King. Although no longer part of ICEJ, Chuck is coming on Saturday 6th February to take an evening.
- There was a special Easter service, entitled, “Jesus loves me this I know”. What about next Easter. Let Mike have any ideas?
- There were three baptismal services in 2009. Fifteen people were saved. There were dedications of babies.
- In June, Mike led a visit by thirty of us to Auschwitz and Krakow.
- On 16th June, a coach took some of us to the “Redeeming Our Community” event in Liverpool.
- Jim Smith took over leadership of the children’s work.
- Joe and Helen got married.
- Clifford Hill spoke to us about the state of the nation.
- Peter Davies led us through some Bible studies in Nehemiah.
- In September we had the Family Fun Day, and Compassion Sunday highlighting the work of sponsoring children in poor countries.
- Julie led a new Expressive Worship development.
- In October Jacob Dankani spoke about what is happening in Israel.
- The 1st Billinge Girls Brigade started, led by Nanette. Four men started working in leadership with the Boys Brigade.
- The Storehouse Project has given much away to needy people, supporting the homeless and asylum seekers.
- A team led by Paul and Julie went to Belarus to see children who had stayed with us in the UK previously.
- The Alpha Course has been run again, this year under the leadership of Steve and Lisa.
- There are many regular activities.

This was 2009, but let us look forward.

Philippians 3:12-14 ¹²*Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.* ¹³*Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,* ¹⁴*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

Last year was exciting but we can't rest on our laurels. We have to take Paul's attitude in this passage. Forgetting what is behind, we must press on. This where our focus should be—our goal should be on the future. Our present may be tough or benign, our past brilliant or terrible. It doesn't matter if you have committed your life to Christ because your future is assured, and your eternity guaranteed.

You don't need to make a New Year resolution, but your goal should be to know Jesus more in 2010 than in 2009. It is like a race in which the athlete puts everything into the last few yards. This is the image Paul is using. How did Olympic athletes achieve their gold medals. They didn't just turn up at the event; they put in a lot of time and effort to train for it. The prize we are pursuing is far greater. It took determination and effort for Mike to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. Our supreme effort should be to get closer to Jesus. What is the motivation for this? The truth of the reality of your faith should motivate you.

When you meet Jesus face to face will it be with regret or with rejoicing?

2 Timothy 4:7-8—⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. (ESV)

Will we say this, or that we could have done more? Can we join in that declaration?

Good works will follow salvation, where salvation is real. We are touching lives. Sometimes we will be rejected, but we have to persevere in the face of rejections.

Hebrews 12:1-2: ¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (ESV)

We have another great year of opportunity. Whatever the mistakes of the past, put them behind you. We have a chance to get where God wants us to be. No one is a hopeless case; all can be used for the kingdom of God. When Mike joined BFC 29 or 30 years ago he had no desire to be in leadership. But after 6 months the elders asked him to be a house group leader. It was a big challenge. But the Lord saw Mike's heart and the group prospered.

If you attend BFC meetings you are challenged to be part of the church if you have not formally joined. The church will not stand still. Only members can be part of the planning day. The church will not stand still. In 2010 we, as a body, will press forward. We will proclaim the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will pray for revival. We will touch the community, plan for future growth. There will be development of the homeless project. There will be two more connect groups and further development of the youth work. But above all commit to pursuing Jesus Christ with all your heart. Do not tread water or sleepwalk to eternity. Get on board. Each of us should be pro-active. Will you stand up for Jesus? Will you follow Him to the best of your ability in 2010?