

Office Buzz



David

The view from 402: Running a national ministry without the oily rag

When I think about donating to charities I imagine all the money I give being swept up in overheads to pay for a plush office and for unmotivated staff who spend their days complaining about how busy they are. Some people may think City Bible Forum is like that but they haven't spent a day in Suite 402 yet.

While I can't say the phones ring non-stop from 7am, they do ring at this hour. Usually it's one of our hard-working, dedicated staff members who has forgotten his access pass or has some other drama. There are people coming and going all day long, both from City Bible Forum and our other ministry friends. It creates a real buzz of excitement and energy.

Some days the office is so full there are no desks spare for visitors to use, other days I think I must have come in on a Saturday..... again. When the office is empty I spend the day searching for the oily rag that this ministry is said to run on, but I haven't found it yet. After spending several years at a very lean and mean corporate organisation, I was surprised to see how efficiently City Bible Forum is run.

Staff don't have time to complain about how busy they are and if they did no-one would listen anyway. Our IT systems work very well but we don't pay much at all for them and our office is adequate but economical. We work hard to make every dollar work so that a lean back office supports 12 full-time and 6 part-time ministry staff.

It is a really amazing office to work in and as much as I dislike clichés, you have to see it to believe it.

Finances

As at 30 September, 2011, our income for the year to date amounted to \$393,697 and our expenses \$527,684. Each year a substantial proportion of our income must be raised in our end of year appeal. 2011 will be no exception. We had provided for raising \$180,000 in our end of year appeal, however, we now estimate that the amount required will be \$270,000. Please consider how you may be able to support our on-going mission.

Calendar

October 17	Young City Workers Evangelistic Talk Speaker: Jay McFarling
October 20	Smith Lecture (Sydney)
November 3	Citywoman <i>If only there were more hours in the day</i> Speaker: Michelle Lim
November 4-7	National City Bible Forum staff conference
November 17	Thanksgiving Dinner
November 28	Street Stall on Martin Place: 8am-3pm

WINDOWS INTO OUR WORLD



Peter

All organisations, from large multi-nationals to small ministry groups, adopt in time a culture or way of doing things. *What culture is the City Bible Forum seeking to cultivate as it engages city workers with the good news of Jesus?* The answer, of course, will be evident in our public activities, from how we conduct lunch time talks through to street stalls and even the content of our (new) website. Three values we hold to be important are respect, humility and patience.

Respect ranks highly on our list. If we are not prepared to listen to other people's views, why should we expect them to listen to ours? On the streets this will mean listening to people's stories and ideas before venturing our own. At our public forums we recognise the intelligence of our audience without assuming any Biblical knowledge. We've been prepared to invite alternative views onto our panels and always encourage comments/questions that are sceptical of the gospel.

Humility is essential in declaring the exclusive lordship of Jesus. There can be no place for cynicism, which often sounds like sour grapes. We endeavour to put the needs of others ahead of our own, avoiding any stumbling blocks to the gospel's progress (hence we never mention our financial needs at a public meeting). Those speaking the good news of Jesus through City Bible Forum can not envy or be in awe of the business people they are addressing. They must be done with their egos and have their confidence in Christ.

Patience with people is vital. When sharing the good news with mature business people who have entrenched lifestyles we must put ourselves in their shoes. This requires both tact and trust in the effectiveness of God's word. We persevere, praying for opportunities to persuade them of God's grace.

"In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

1 Peter 3:15

City Bible Forum Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

Day: 17 November
Time: 6:30 - 8:30pm
Location: New South Wales Leagues Club, 165 Phillip Street (between Martin Place & King Street)
Cost: \$40
RSVP: by Monday 14 November at www.citybibleforum.org/city/sydney/thankyou

Please join us for Dinner and reflection on this year and the work in the city.

Thank You

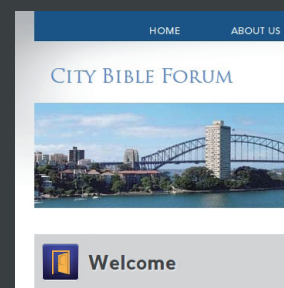
Website



Ken

Our website recently got a new coat of paint. Our goal was not only to improve its appearance, but also to make it easier for people to find out what's happening in their city. Our hope is that the new design will make it easier for people to explore the claims of Jesus.

We've added a blog so we can engage in conversations, and created an area where Christians can connect with other Christians. Why not go and have a look? We'd love to get your feedback.



Under God, we long to present the good news of Jesus Christ to every worker in every major business district of Australia so that they may respond in repentance and faith and be established in the fellowship of believers.



CITY BIBLE FORUM
Newsletter update October 2011

Activities of City Bible Forum



City Bible Forum



THE SMITH LECTURE



In-House Network



CBF LEGAL All rise. ept

Young Workers
Bible Reading Groups
Street Evangelism
Afterwork



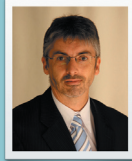
Lydia Group
Citywoman
Career-wise Conference

For information on your city, visit www.citybibleforum.org or contact the national office on (02) 9232 8700 or info@citybibleforum.org

National office address: Suite 402, 5 Elizabeth St, Sydney NSW 2000

Adelaide | Brisbane | Melbourne | Perth | Sydney

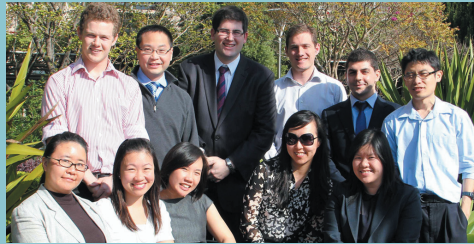
In-house Network



Craig

Julian Wraight writes: Over the last few years at the Commonwealth Bank in the Sydney CBD we've been working hard to develop a Christian network. Whilst we have no formalised setup at CBA, the power of word of mouth has been very effective in building our network. We originally focused on a basic prayer group for new graduates at CBA but this has now grown and we are spending more time on outreach.

We have had two events so far aimed at people who don't know Christ - a Christmas and an Easter talk where we joined forces with our friends at the accounting firm PwC who share the same building. The plan is to organise more of these events. More importantly though is the one to one evangelism taking place at CBA with friends being invited to hear the gospel in a variety of contexts. Additionally, meeting up with work colleagues who share the same worldview is immensely helpful in staying focused on what is really important in the workplace.



Young City Workers



Tho

It was with great excitement (and fear and trepidation!) that we ran an evangelistic Steamboat dinner on the topic of hell and judgement. Our entry point was 'accountability'. Our speaker Russ Matthews did it winsomely with his talk entitled "How was your (performance) review?" 'Cindy', a friend of one of our young workers, came and enjoyed not only a fun hotpot meal but also a challenging talk. We were hoping to do the Investigating Christianity Studies with her but she has now gone overseas. Please pray she'll meet Christians in China and that we will reconnect if and when she comes back to Sydney.

Some other highlights include bringing an informal group of young workers to the Katoomba Engage conference - where S*, a contact from Street Evangelism who we've been reading the Bible with from time to time over the last year, came and heard a weekend of talks followed by a visit to a house church group in Lakemba. Some of us are starting a new Evangelistic Prayer Team as well as beginning some one to one meetings to open the Scriptures and sharpen each other in theology, including our theology of work.

In October we look forward to welcoming Jay McFarling from the USA to address us evangelistically on the topic of idolatry. In preparation, some of us are reading Tim Keller's 'Counterfeit Gods'. Please pray for us to be bold in inviting guests.

Postscript: Twenty young workers cramed into our office board room to hear Jay's talk. One Buddhist guest, Vince, is coming to our lunch time forum this week!



CBF Legal



Polly

95 people (predominantly men) have attended one of our weekly CBF Legal breakfasts over the first three school terms. At least 25 of these attendees would not be regularly sitting under Bible teaching in a home church. Some come only once, others almost every week. One unbelieving barrister comes "in case I'm wrong". Another senior legal professional coming semi-regularly is exploring faith issues. One former law student was challenged by the talk on analysing the resurrection from modern evidence law to consider the historicity of the gospels for the first time. We are looking forward to an exciting programme of talks in term four.

Postscript: With five new attendees (four of whom non-Christian) in the first two weeks of term four, we have now cracked 100 unique guests in 2011. Praise God.

Equipping

David from KPMG writes: City Bible Forum provides valuable resources to help city workers reach out to their friends in the form of various training courses and seminars. I recently participated in a training course in the Sydney CBD called "Helping Doubters Doubt their Doubts", lead by Craig Josling, where I learned a basic framework to help understand why a person has a particular objection to Christianity, challenge it and then share the Christian view on it. This framework certainly makes workplace evangelism less daunting. Next I'm enrolled in a seminar on how to be an effective inviter. I highly recommend these courses for content, as well as for the social interaction with other Christians.

On the Streets



Geoffrey

On a beautiful Spring morning in September, two of us went out to evangelise near Town Hall. We approached a young woman who seemed very apprehensive. With pierced lips and nose, her rough exterior seemed to soften as we spoke. After we inquired about her home life in Samoa she relaxed and opened up more. She said she was a former church goer and even though she did not attend, she still prayed to God everyday. She said that same morning she had asked God to guide her life. For a brief moment there was silence..."I'm freaked out!" she said, "that God would answer my prayers so quickly". Needless to say, our conversation continued...

This is just one story of many of our work on the streets of Sydney. If you would like to come along and see it for yourself, please contact our office.

Citywoman



Caroline

One of the highlights for me personally this year has been the "citywoman" events. By the end of the year we will have run 5 events with professional women speaking on the topics of approval, forgiveness, confidence, success and time management. The events so far have been really well attended - the first 2 events alone matched the attendance of the entire previous year. We anticipate that between 60-80 non-Christian women will have attended at least one of the five events over the year.

One woman I met at the second event is Vida. Vida then joined a Wednesday night group I was running for women interested in exploring Christianity. Vida asks excellent questions and is finding that as the weeks go on, even the questions she doesn't ask are being answered. Last night she said she can tell that there has been a change in her. It has been a real joy getting to know Vida - she has a great sense of humour and much spirit.



Janet

Amy considers herself 'a spiritual person'. We are reading gradually through Luke's gospel over a cuppa. Amy's a keen learner, and recently asked for help to get her younger daughter a children's Bible and devotional material, since she's been hearing stories from Scripture classes and asking her mum questions at home. Sharing the migrant experience and introducing Jesus with many of the women whom I meet with is a real privilege. Recently in our readings, Amy learned the essence of repentance is a turning of mind and heart, which results in changed actions; please pray that Amy will see her need to repent and that her sympathies for Jesus' teaching will turn into genuine reliance on him as her Christ as she reads Luke and attends Thursday City Bible Forum meetings.



Afterwork - Introducing God



Russ



Ian

Dominic Steele led the *Introducing God* course in the third term at Afterwork. We had many new people come along for the series as well as graduates from the first two terms continuing in their search. Please pray for Brian, David, Barbara, Daniel, and Jarrod. Give thanks for Fred who now rejoices in the knowledge of God's grace.

Our weekend away was a great success. Thirty-eight people, including three families with children, enjoyed a cold and wet weekend at Katoomba on 23-25 September. No-one complained about the terrible weather because of warm relationships and invigorating Bible learning - plus the place was well heated. Six people who are exploring Christianity came on the weekend as well as a number of new Christians who aren't yet established in a good church. Highlights of the weekend were: discussing the Bible passages in small groups before the Bible talks from Al Stewart and Ian Powell, getting out for a Saturday afternoon bush walk or chatting in mountain coffee shops, a kid's drama presentation of the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man on Sunday morning.

