

**Welcome** to Issue 29 of LEAF's newsletter and diary. A lot has happened since our last newsletter – LEAF had a very successful **Annual Vision Meeting** on **Fri 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb** at which leaders from LEAF churches each shared what was happening in their churches.

There have also been important changes to the LEAF committee – I have now stepped down as Chairman and **Phil Cole**, pastor of Bransgore Community Church, has taken over this role – see below for further details.

As you will all know, this year we took over responsibility for the New Forest Bible Weekend and relaunched this event under the new name, **Forest Fire**. Our guest speaker was Mark Greene from the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity and a full report is given below.

*Jonathan Wallis, Editor*



## A SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH FOR FOREST FIRE

**Forest Fire**, the re-launch of the New Forest Bible Weekend, took place on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May at Brockenhurst College. The format for the event was changed and all four main worship and teaching sessions were concentrated onto Friday night and Saturday with two sessions Saturday morning and a final session Saturday evening.

A big push was made to encourage whole families to attend on the Saturday and a full children's programme and crèche facility was available on Saturday morning. On Saturday afternoon there was a Family Fun event in the grounds of the College. We were assisted in the children's work and the fun afternoon by a team from Miracle Street in Southampton and a good number of LEAF churches took part in the afternoon providing stalls and stands of various sorts – covering everything from skittles to smashing crockery!

Attendance at the event showed a marked pick up from the previous years and we were pleased that many people attended for the first time. We would have liked to have seen more families and children come on the Saturday, but overall feedback was very positive and we believe that support for the event will build year by year.

A Youth event, "Furnace", was held on the Saturday evening in parallel with the final meeting and this was well attended by around 70 – 80 young people.

The worship formed an important part of the event and was sensitively led by David Levison from Newcastle and his band. A team of dancers, taken from various local churches, also contributed powerfully to the worship.

The main speaker was Mark Greene, Director of the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity, and his theme was "**Whole Life Discipleship**".

His aim, quite simply, was to encourage and to equip Christians to live out their Christian faith in **ALL** areas of life, and his talks were lively, well illustrated and practically Biblical.

Mark started his talks in Colossians chapter 1 where Paul introduces the concept of the God of **all things** (v15-20). All things were created by him and for him, he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

God created everything and is interested in everything we do in every part of our lives. So often we Christians have created an artificial secular/spiritual divide, but God is just as interested and concerned with what we do on a Monday morning in our work-place as he is in what we do on a Sunday morning in church. As a result of this divide we have fallen into a "leisure time" Christianity rather than a "whole life" Christianity.

When we pray "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" this is not a vague, airy fairy prayer, but a specific request to involve God and to bring the Lordship of Jesus Christ into every area of our lives on this earth.

Full time Christian Workers are not just those who are paid by the church, but we are each full time Christian workers, whatever our occupation and whoever pays our salary. Mark was giving away FTCW badges to ram this point home!

LEAF is committed to the transformation of society and culture in the New Forest through evangelical Christians uniting together in prayer, worship, evangelistic activity, social action and speaking with a common voice to local government and media.

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## ***A Successful Launch for Forest Fire (contd)***

In Matthew 13:33 Jesus told the parable of the yeast and the dough to illustrate the way the kingdom of God infuses the world and makes a difference to society as we all live it out wherever God has placed us.

Jesus looked on the crowds and had great compassion on their desperate need – and we need to catch hold of his heart of compassion for people in our world today. More people than ever are depressed and suffering from stress. Something fundamental has broken in our culture but we in the church **DO** have something fantastic to offer - **Quadruple “A” Christianity** – authenticity, adventure, awe and agape!

*“Evangelism is an invitation to join a movement to change the world.” (Tony Campolo)*

The major issue we have in the church is not learning how to share the gospel to our culture, but learning how to **live it...** how to **become** salt, light and leaven – “whole loaf Christians”.

Mark looked at what it means to be a whole life disciple in the world and how a “whole life” church needs to be committed to making such disciples. Jesus commissioned the church to “make disciples” (Matt 28:19) but sadly many churches seem content to simply make and retain converts, rather than to train and release disciples. Church leaders need to make a major paradigm shift here.

Truly Biblical teaching is not based on a “Secondary School” model of someone standing out the front giving us a lecture, but about getting involved in the nitty gritty areas of everyday life to see people genuinely transformed. Sadly disciple-making skills are not widely taught in our churches. Disciple-making is not about burdening people to feel guilty about their weaknesses, but setting them free to fulfil their potential.

Having said all that, God has not given up on the church – it was his idea in the first place – and it remains the best hope for lasting transformation in this world.

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A sub-committee of LEAF, led by Dave Gooderidge, worked very hard to put Forest Fire together, and they did a fantastic job, so well done to everybody. Next year will be even better! So get the dates in your diary now – **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2008.**

*Jonathan Wallis*

## **LEAF Annual Celebration**

Advanced notice - get the date in your diary!  
**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2007 at 6.30 pm**  
**At Ashley Baptist Church**  
**with guest speaker Jane Holloway**  
The particular focus this year will be on prayer

## **New LEAF Chairman and additions to Committee**

**Jonathan Wallis** has stepped down as LEAF Chairman after serving for 4 years, and **Phil Cole**, Pastor of Bransgore Community Church has taken on this role. Jonathan will remain on the committee, and maintain his role as editor of the LEAF newsletter. **Please pray for Phil as he takes on this role and seeks to bring fresh vision and impetus to take LEAF forward.**

As new Chairman, Phil will be getting us to review all that LEAF is doing and to ask God to show us if our vision needs to be adjusted in any way as we move forward into the future. Please pray for this process, and as always if you have comments or suggestions we would love to hear from you.

**Helen Burch** and **Tim Lockwood** joined the committee towards the end of last year, and we are delighted to report two further additions to the committee: **John Currin**, Vicar of St Andrews, Dibden Purlieu, and **Sharon Prior** who has joined LEAF as our new **Youth Liaison Officer**.

Our Prayer Co-ordinator, **Helen Burch**, is establishing a network of contacts across the area and **would love to hear from anyone with an interest in and heart for prayer**. Contact Helen on 01425 472687 or [burchnet@freeuk.com](mailto:burchnet@freeuk.com)

## **LEAF Youth Project.**

**Sharon Prior** has now been on board for a few months as our new **Youth Liaison Officer** and she has been busy building on the work that was started by Carol Hannaford, visiting the LEAF churches and getting to know the Youth Leaders in each church.

Sharon has a wealth of experience in Youth and Children’s work and is ideally suited to this role. She is working part time for LEAF – one day a week – and is a free lance training consultant specialising in childrens and youth work during the rest of her working week. The goals for her work within LEAF over the next few years are as follows:

- (1) To build up, serve and encourage Youth leaders working in the LEAF churches;
- (2) To resource and empower young people;
- (3) To help young people to evangelise more effectively.

We will be writing to you over the next few months with more detailed information on Sharon’s work and inviting you to support her in various ways.