

Chairman's Report

The threat to our existence

In the last Newsletter, I warned that in this edition I would be dwelling on an 'existential threat' to the BRAVE Trust.

We enter 2014 in the knowledge that our financial situation is inconsistent with our aspirations for the future.

In 2013, by invitation the BRAVE Trust School Workers' had contact with 899 pupils at Freman College alone at a special RE day.

The hard fact is that our regular income is insufficient to support our activities on the present scale of two part-time Schools Workers beyond the end of this year. Unless this situation changes radically, by the middle of this year we shall have to decide to reduce our activities thereafter.

Because our recurring income from churches and individuals has not been enough to keep us going, we have had to rely on grants from various bodies to fill the gap. These grants have now been used up. We are applying for further grants, but success cannot be assured. Our aim has always been to become self-sustaining. Unless we can achieve this through local support, we shall not be able to carry out our work as we would all wish. Let me put that stark statement into context.

The background

The BRAVE Trust was set up in 2006, commissioned by local churches to perform that part of their mission to young people which they could not easily do themselves. We started **our** work in schools early in 2007. With

some initial start-up grants, the original expectation was that this would be a three-

year project, with no guarantee of continuation thereafter. However, by 2010 it had become clear that our work was so much needed and so successful, that we resolved to extend **the** BRAVE Trust's life until the end of the current decade. From this was born 'Project 2020'.

With your support, our efforts have been partly successful. We have extended our operating horizon from 2012 to the end of 2014. However, most of this was made possible by a further round of grants from other bodies. Regular donations from congregations and individuals account for only 46% of our income (including Gift Aid). Some congregations have been very generous in these straitened times, but total income from churches is only about 25% of total operating costs of £27,000.

Whilst we have been given a few handsome individual donations, the real weakness lies in the level of regular monthly or quarterly giving from individuals. There are still only 19 individual standing orders in place. Everyone faces many demands on their money, but nevertheless it is a disappointingly small number.

It costs the BRAVE Trust £13,500 per annum to support a schools worker.

Greater than 98% of our income supports your schools' workers.

Our challenge

To maintain the goal of 'Project 2020', and to retain our vital work amongst the young at its present level, we need to have confirmation from local congregations and individuals that they want the BRAVE Trust to continue. If so, we need to:

- ✂ Increase our local recurring income drastically and quickly, so that it covers almost all our costs.
- ✂ Increase the number of individuals who support us through standing orders, from 19 to 50 by the middle of this year.
- ✂ Increase from 15 the number of churches & chapels which help to support our work.
- ✂ Continue to seek personal donations and additional sources of grants from foundations – but not become too dependent on them.

If YOU support our goals, and do not want to see our work stop or be cut back, PLEASE offer us your support in both prayer and finance.

Richard Genochio

Margaret and Martha reflect on the past school term

Autumn term is always a very busy term and 2013 proved no different, meeting new children in Year 5 and in some of the schools new members of staff for us to get to know as well. We have introduced a loyalty card to the pupils that attend our groups as an incentive to be more consistent in their attendance. The cards are business card size and include a scripture, a thought for the week, and a design. After they have collected so many, the children can redeem them for a prize. One of the cards has a value equal to five cards - on the condition that they learn The Lord's Prayer!

We have been enjoying larger groups across all Schools. We're not sure if this is due to the

bad weather, excellent teaching, the introduction of loyalty cards, treats, or the Lord's calling. Increased numbers have brought different challenges but we are very grateful for the opportunities these interactions with young people provide.

The impact that TWELVE 24 band had in the summer is indeed still rippling. References are made and the students often make their own comments and observations of the reality of the faith of the band. The students are discovering from the Prophets who wrote about Jesus hundreds of years before his coming, how God always fulfils His promises.

It is also amazing to see the students' faces as they perceive the truth of the Christmas story of God coming to earth as a baby to live amongst us. So often children and adults have a rather fairy story idea about the Nativity which is enhanced by the cosy glow from the Nativity Christmas cards with Mary, Joseph and the Manger in a shed with no walls. It was probably a cave, not very warm, except for the breath and warmth of the animals' bodies and unhygienic compared to today's maternity unit standards. God's revelation was here, how stunning is that! God's love and protection perfect in a small stable in Bethlehem! Angels' meet with a few shepherds on the hillside and their lives are never the same again.



Heaven came down to earth. What an awesome moment in time. This is the impact we want the students to experience and we

long for them to ask questions and enable them to grow in their understanding that Christianity is an amazing truth and that the Nativity is more than a children's play, but a historical event.

We are always thinking of different ways to encourage the students to look at God's word and see for themselves what God says. We like to use different translations and we have a Boy's Bible and a Kids Bible. They are so easy to read. We also use The Message which is particularly good at helping them understand the Psalms.

"We are working with all the schools and enabling them to understand how the Bible fits together as well as any jigsaw puzzle."

We are very aware that children never forget what you tell them and will often refer back to a story or testimony that we have talked about with them. True stories are very important to tell them so we use a book called Factory Shop that has many thought provoking articles that demand a response.



Picture: Roysia pupils enjoy Christingle

Our Christmas activities included two Christingle lessons in each school and a thought-provoking Christmas assembly in two of the schools. The Christingles' are always fun, where we look forward to the children's questions, answers and the last session where we light the Candles of their Christingle and sing carols.

We are not always able to get along to the St. Albans diocese youth worker gatherings as they often clash with our lessons in the schools. However, we made an exception for the Christmas lunch with other members of the youth ministry team. This offered us a chance to relax, reflect on our past year and chat with others doing similar work.

We are conscious of your prayers and support. Thank you.

Margaret & Martha

Summer Competition Results

Clearly the Summer Competition set alight bright sparks from all around the BRAVE Trust catchment area. The first correct answer was received two days after the Newsletter was circulated! The winner, John Iles, kindly donated his prize of a wind up torch to the second correct answer, which was Richard Saunders from Buntingford.

In case you're wondering. The order of the numbers in a clockwise direction:

1, 6, 14, 4, 3, 13, 5, 7, 9, 10, 2, 11, 8, 12

Thank you for all those who entered the competition. Another competition in the summer of 2014.

Simon
Newsletter Editor

Supporting the BRAVE Trust's work

Legacy:

Could you leave a legacy for the BRAVE Trust in your will?

Please contact our Treasurer Mike Maze for further details.

Donations

Planned giving helps us know what money we have to spend in advance and so offers us the greatest benefit. However we are equally happy to receive a one-off payment.

How about organising a coffee morning or other local event in aid of the BRAVE Trust?

Online shopping:

If you shop online you can raise funds **without any additional cost to yourself**. If you or your family shop at Amazon, Marks and Spencer, John Lewis, Curry's, iTunes or countless other shops online we are missing out on extra cash for the BRAVE Trust.

Not sure how to set it up? Contact Simon (simonqrice@gmail.com), our webmaster, who will help you directly to set it up on your PC.

Corporate Charitable Giving:

Many corporate organisations will match a payment from its employees or donate to causes employees are involved.

Does your employer operate a scheme that could help the BRAVE Trust?

My Response

✂.....✂.....

*I would like to make a one-off donation of £.....

*I would like to make a regular monthly donation of £.....(*delete as appropriate)

I am a UK tax payer and all donations I make from this date until I notify you otherwise should be treated as Gift Aid donations

Signed.....Name.....

Dated:.....Address.....

Please send your donation to Mr. Mike Maze, BRAVE Trust Treasurer, 16, Shrubbery Grove, Royston, SG8 9LJ (Mikefmaze@aol.com)