

AUTUMN 2021

IGNITE

SPARKING PASSION FOR THE GOSPEL
ACROSS THE UK



BAPTISED AND FREE

FORMER DRUG ADDICT TELLS HOW
JESUS CHANGED HIS LIFE



ALSO NEIGHBOURHOOD CHAPLAINS – COULD YOU GET INVOLVED?
130 PEOPLE ATTEND OPEN-AIR BAPTISM SERVICE IN
BURY ST EDMUNDS

WELCOME TO IGNITE



One of the great joys of Counties work is the diversity of activities, models and methods employed by our evangelists to reach people with the Gospel of Jesus.

In this issue you will read of the launch of Soul Café in Oldham where Tim and Charissa Cooke are connecting with young people to make Jesus known! Covid-19 forced many churches and evangelists to 'do differently' and for some it has been a case of 'Back to the Future.' Victor Jack shares the joy of open-air church services, baptisms and people coming to faith in Christ. The story of Stevie (page 10) reminds us that the Gospel is still the power of God to save everyone who believes.

No doubt the future for some local fellowships will be difficult, but why not consider the possibility of engaging with Counties Planting Network to replant? Tim Cracknell shares more on page 16.

I trust that you will be encouraged to share the Christian hope where you are, inspired by the stories of God at work in these days.

Thank you for your faithful support of the work of Counties.

Martin
CEO Counties

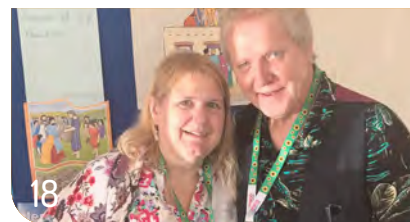
Counties exists to make Jesus known across the UK through our evangelists, exhibitions and resources, in biblically faithful and culturally relevant ways.

Counties (Formerly Counties Evangelistic Work) is a Registered Charity No. 264278 and a Company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales No. 1041761
Address: Counties 30 Haynes Road, Westbury, Wiltshire BA13 3HD
Telephone: 01373 823 013 Email: office@countiesuk.org www.countiesuk.org
Thank you for your valued partnership. We are glad to make Ignite available free of charge. It costs approximately £5 per year to produce and distribute this newsletter to you. Every additional contribution will help us continue in our mission.
Editor: Rachel Rounds - communications@countiesuk.org
Design: Hullocreative - www.hullocreative.com

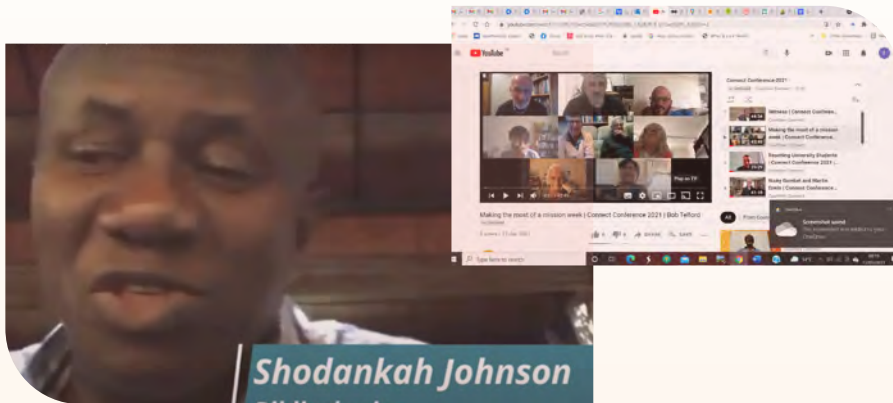


INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 6 Neighbourhood Chaplains – could you get involved?
- 8 130 people attend open-air baptism service in Bury St Edmunds
- 10 Baptised and free – former drug addict tells how Jesus changed his life
- 14 Soul Café in Oldham to help young people
- 16 Could you be a church planter?
- 18 New Counties Trainees
- 20 Preaching Jesus from the Old Testament
- 24 Why I started supporting Counties
- 26 Just a Minute with Lionel Clargo



COUNTIES CONNECT CONFERENCE



Over one hundred people joined the Counties Connect conference held on 25 June.

Organiser, Tim Cracknell, said:

"We were delighted with the entire day. The two headline sessions with Pastor Shodankeh Johnson, from Sierra Leone and Alpha's Nicky Gumbel were superb".

Nicky Gumbel talked to Counties CEO, Martin Erwin, about the opportunities and challenges of online church services.

Talking specifically about his experience of Alpha online during the pandemic, Nicky said:

"I have been proved wrong so many times in my ministry...I said: 'Alpha won't work online.' But I could not have been more wrong...We have nearly completed the fourth one and each course we do online I get more confident in saying this: 'Alpha online works better than Alpha in person!'"

Shodankeh's powerful message centred on encouraging Western Christians to "press in and press on" and use the power of prayer.

"Prayer is critical. Jesus prayed and fasted for forty days before He started His ministry. So, if we are going to see 'movements' happen – they are born out of prayer. It's essential that we create a culture of prayer."

Tim shares some of the feedback:

"I found the conference really encouraging, inspiring and challenging. The focus on multiplication in the afternoon session was excellent, as was Nicky Gumbel's refreshing humility in the evening".

"Shodankah's talk really challenged me that we talk about multiplication and want it, but are we actually doing it? The challenge of 'creating a culture of multiplication!'"

"This was my first Counties conference and I look forward to attending many more".

VIRTUAL LIFE EXHIBITION GREAT SUCCESS

Whilst it was not possible to take the Life exhibition round primary schools during the pandemic, Kevin Baldwin, Life exhibition Coordinator, designed the Virtual Life exhibition which meant classrooms could still learn about Jesus using video technology as they 'virtually' visited each the tents and clicked on links to learn more.

Saima Saleh, from Ravenscote Primary School, in Surrey, who is also the National Executive and Local Groups Officer for the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education said:

"I thought the exhibition and virtual workshop were absolutely brilliant! The pupils really enjoyed this engaging and fun

way to learn. I thought that the coverage of content was great - it was amazing what could fit into an hour-long session!

I would love my year 6 pupils to experience this as it goes perfectly well with the Jesus as the Messiah topic that we study in the upper school. Having said that, there was something for all ages- my year 4s loved it."



AND KEY TO LIFE BACK TO LIFE!

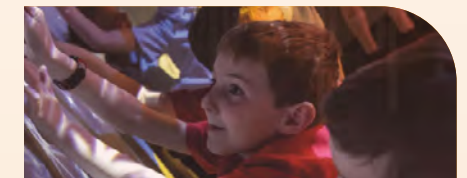
As with so many events that rely on human interaction, Key to Life was put on hold during the pandemic, but now primary school children are back in the classroom the mobile unit is ready to roll.

Key to Life lets children hear the story of Jesus in a mobile unit full of cutting-edge technology.

The lessons are both unique and immersive. Using floor-to-ceiling touch sensitive walls, children can watch films, interact with games and quizzes and take part in small group discussions.

Places are going fast, so grab an experience for schools in your area - for September to December this year - email Kevin Baldwin at info@lifeexpo.co.uk

Kevin will also be happy to share more with you more about this great experience for children.





NEIGHBOURHOOD CHAPLAINS - COULD YOUR CHURCH GET INVOLVED?

Counties Training Officer, Beverley Bedford, talks about Neighbourhood Chaplains.

Beverley, firstly, just explain to those who don't know, what is Neighbourhood Chaplains?

Neighbourhood Chaplains is a connecting, befriending, and serving initiative for churches to use within their local communities. A principle throughout God's word is that His children are 'blessed to be a blessing as we have freely received so we are called to freely give'.

We live in an individualistic society that is more connected by technology than ever before and yet research tells us we have never been more isolated, we have never felt so lonely. To a large extent the church has lost sight of 'Who is our neighbour'. Jesus taught us to 'love our neighbour' to serve others and share the gospel. So, Neighbourhood Chaplains is a tool for the church to use to make

relational connections that go beyond the church buildings.

How does that work on a practical level?

Neighbourhood Chaplains has a broad spectrum of activities. The impact and interface of the church to its community must always be the good news of Jesus Christ. At the heart of this incarnational missional approach is being with people in their situation which can take us into every area of society with wonderful opportunities to talk about Jesus. It can involve visiting people, picking up shopping, making a ten-minute phone call, walking a dog, writing a letter, accompanying someone to an appointment or setting up a loneliness table to have a coffee and share an encouraging thought or offering prayer for a particular situation.

Why do people need training for this?

Volunteers need training to adopt good biblical principles, to work safely,

develop the skills needed for active listening, learn how to share their faith in a non-confrontational way, to set good boundaries, signpost people to supportive agencies, and be equipped to answer difficult questions that non-Christians are asking in these uncertain times.

What does the training involve and how much time does it take up?

The Neighbourhood Chaplains training is a 3-module style programme of 2-hour sessions over a 3-week period. Each church will be sent a starter pack with all the resources needed to underpin their learning. The training programme takes the church participants through a process to develop the skills needed to launch a Neighbourhood Chaplains team. The trainers are also practitioners with knowledge and experience of how to run a Neighbourhood Chaplains scheme and are invaluable in sharing God's transformational stories.

How many Neighbourhood Chaplains does Counties now have and how many churches are involved?

We have trained 33 churches (12 churches since January 2021 and within these churches there has been over 100 volunteers recruited and trained online). There are currently 20 scheme member churches in operation (including Northern Ireland) with another 5 churches pending.

What impact do you think Neighbourhood Chaplains has?

Neighbourhood Chaplains is taking the good news back on the streets and the volunteers are a visible presence of church in the community. Chaplains follow their calling and mission to be the person that will stop, help, and be the hands and feet of Jesus in a broken, hurting world. There is nothing more transformative, nothing more redemptive, nothing more able to turn a life around than the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What kind of feedback are you getting?

We are getting wonderful feedback such as thank you letters for the 'bags of blessing' we delivered to people who'd been rushed into hospital with Covid 19 and who had no toiletries like soap, face cloths. We have encouraging Facebook messages from businesses that we have given 'Blessings in a box with chocs'.

To find out more it is as simple as ABC:

- A** is **access** an 'Inform and Inspire' event online for an hour to find out more.
- B** is to **book** training for your church offered online.
- C** is for **committing** to scheme membership

Links to 'Inform and Inspire' and Training for September:
www.countiesuk.org/neighbourhood-chaplains

130 PEOPLE ATTEND OPEN-AIR BAPTISM SERVICE IN BURY ST. EDMUNDS



Counties evangelist, **Victor Jack**, praises God for the amazing work He is doing in the town.

Having been involved in his own home church for over forty years, Victor Jack, had no idea that God was about to take him on a journey that would see many new people come to faith and some of them to be recently baptised at open-air services.

Back in 2012, Victor's son, Graham, returned home after working for Operation Mobilisation for 14 years.

"He felt he needed a break as it was a very full-on ministry," Victor says. "He has a real heart of compassion and so wandered round our local Priors Estate and talked to people. He never said he was a Christian but asked people: 'How are things going? Is there anything you are struggling with?' And people just opened up to him and told him their history."

People also told Graham their fridge had broken down or their cooker wasn't working, and Graham offered to help – doing so many things on that estate that people really took to him. He started Alpha courses, and some came to faith. So, he along with Victor and a further 18 people from their home church, decided to start a new church on the estate.

This small group started Westley Community Church in the local community centre, but they out-grew it very quickly as so many people started coming to faith. They then

moved into the local school and saw about 40 people become Christians in the first four to five years.

Like everyone, the pandemic affected the work they were doing as they could no longer hold church services in the school. So, Graham and his fellow leaders decided to start some open-air meetings.

At one of these open-air services in April 2021, a teenage girl asked to be baptised.

"We borrowed an open-air baptismal pool, and this girl gave a wonderful testimony and was baptised. That sparked some others. Two weeks later we had 130 people come to our outdoor service. This meant we could sing without masks and just enjoy the experience."

"Then a fortnight after that, three more people were baptised. Two were converted drug addicts. After that, on 2 May, three more were baptised. A further baptism took place on 28 June."

"One of the former drug addicts is Stevie. After a terrible time with his addiction, his family and friends paid for him to go to a special rehab centre in South Africa where he first encountered Jesus. The weekend after he flew back from rehab, he came to our church, Westley Community Centre, where he and his wife were overwhelmed with the welcome they received and the love of God and the people they encountered. During the

Alpha course his faith became real and he reinforced his earlier commitment and asked to be prayed for to be filled with the Holy Spirit."

(Read Stevie's testimony on pages 10-11.)

Victor was asked to speak at all four services and felt led to "renew my evangelistic fervour" and so he preached the Gospel with enthusiasm and gave an appeal; people came forward at the end to give their lives to Christ.

"One lady, Sandra, was the mother of a former drug addict who been baptised earlier. She couldn't believe his transformation was real but when she realised it was, she came to faith."

Another lady who committed her life to God, has an important role at the local hospice. She had never read any of the Bible but is now "really hungry and growing and it's lovely to see it" adds Victor.

There are videos of people's testimonies on West Road Church YouTube page.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/WestRoadChurch/videos>



BAPTISED AND FREE FORMER DRUG ADDICT TELLS IGNITE HOW JESUS CHANGED HIS LIFE

"I can't believe that I am clean! That I am free from drugs. Getting baptised was an amazing experience - to be cleansed of my old self and show everyone that I want Jesus in my life."

"I know I couldn't have done it without Him. I tried everything. No amount of therapy and anti-depressants or doctors were ever going to be able to do anything that remarkable."

From heroin addiction to drug dealing, to sexual and physical abuse – there is very little that Stevie Ainsworth, 37, hasn't seen since he was first introduced to cannabis as a teenager.

He grew up on the tough Priors Estate in Bury St Edmunds and from an early age found that he never really fitted in with other children.



"I was just a naughty child. I was always rebelling. My mum couldn't take me shopping as I caused havoc in the shops. I never understood why I was like I was. I never felt like I fitted in even though I was loved by my mum and dad."

Two years ago, Stevie was diagnosed with severe ADHD but as a child this was not picked up and so he was bullied by other children.

"I got into alcohol at the age of 14, I started smoking and nicking cigarettes off my mum when I was 12. Then I started smoking cannabis."

Stevie then got in with a gang of serious drug addicts who made him feel like he had a place: *"I felt like they loved me, and they liked me"*.

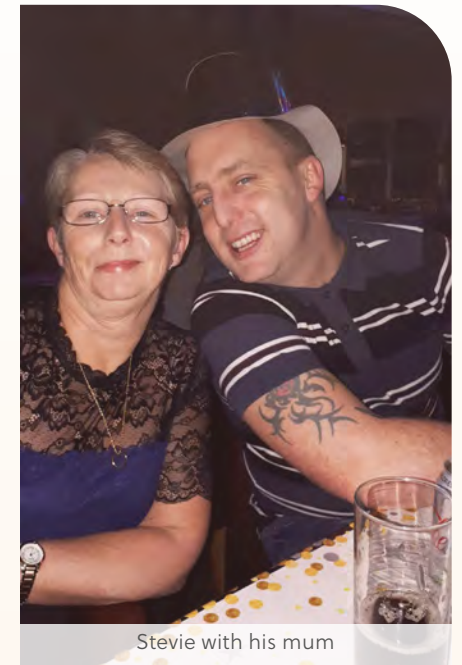
What Stevie didn't realise, was that he was intentionally being drawn into world of addiction, from which he would find it almost impossible to escape.

Aged 14, he was told to go to the house of a family who sold cannabis which Stevie describes as *"probably the worst mistake of my life"*.

This family initially treated him with great kindness: *"They let me in the house, fed me, gave me free drugs, they gave me a false confidence. I kept it all from my family. I learned to lie at a young age"*.

Stevie got hooked on heroin at 15. He robbed his own family including his grandparents.

Despite the steadying influence of his girlfriend, Lisa, whom he met when he was 14, Stevie says: *"I was a psycho, an absolute mess. I got kicked out of school. I couldn't do 'normal people'. It was always drugs, and bad people"*.



Stevie with his mum

At 16, Stevie was sexually and physically abused by a man high on drugs. He'd also had a gun put to his head to keep him 'quiet' which badly affected him mentally.

Shortly after, he tried to commit suicide but *"thank God to this day, my mum found me"*.

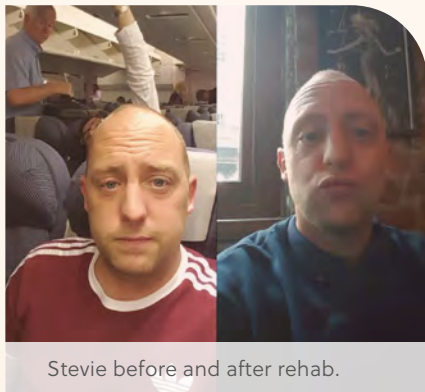
The family moved to get Stevie away from the gang with whom he'd become involved, but he found drugs again and started gambling. He was only 17.

He was sent to a psychiatric hospital in Cambridge for seven months, but he says it made him worse: *"They were putting me on sleeping tablets and anti-depressants, but the damage had been done. I wasn't honest about what had happened to me, I held all the pain inside."*

After he left rehab, he started dealing cocaine and drinking. He was still with his girlfriend Lisa, whom he admits he verbally and mentally abused. He also constantly cheated on her.

The couple went on to have two children and Stevie admits he found it impossible to be a good dad because he didn't know how to love a child: *"I thought I was a bad dad, and the guilt and shame were too raw."*

In 2019, once again, Stevie attempted suicide. His family decided he needed intense therapy and raised £12,500 to send him to a rehab centre in South Africa for three months.



Stevie before and after rehab.

"I was so broken and desperate. I was up for it. I was ready. I believe you have to really, really want it. I gave it my all and was totally honest."

He phoned Lisa and told her the whole truth. She said *"I'd rather you told me the truth than come back here the monster you left"*.

Her words gave Stevie the boost he needed, and he began to see he could change. He embraced the Narcotics Anonymous programme, where addicts are encouraged to pray to a 'higher power'.

Stevie says he has always struggled with the term 'God' and never believed in Jesus. But one day, one of the people at the rehab asked him to go outside in the garden and pray: *"I felt so silly and stupid. I remember thinking, 'I come from a gang related background and here I am sitting in this garden on my knees praying to Jesus to help me'"*.

That night alone Stevie prayed a simple prayer to God and his life changed utterly.

"I can't explain it. I felt no shame, no guilt. I stopped crying. I felt light and I had a tingling feeling come all over my body. I have never felt that before."

When he arrived home, Stevie told Lisa he had found Jesus and told her he wanted to find the nearest church which was Westley Community Church.



"We walked in, and it was like we'd been there years. I was so blessed. I was so welcomed. The children loved it. Lisa got a strange 'goosebumpy' feeling. We both did".

And the couple kept going back and both accepted Jesus into their lives. They were married in December 2019 after being together for 21 years.

"I just can't believe the change in me - from who I was from just two years ago and the people I was hanging about

with; to who I am now and spending time with Christians who love and care. For me that is just one piece of proof that that Jesus does work. He's worked for me".

"Now I just want to give back to people what was given to me and to give hope to people that are struggling and that can't see any light at the end of the tunnel, just like I did when I was struggling."



THERE ARE A QUARTER OF A MILLION PEOPLE LIVING IN OLDHAM AND "THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THIS AROUND HERE"

Welcome to the Soul Café - run by Counties evangelists Tim and Charissa Cooke – which is set to change all that.

The Soul Café in Oldham opened on 22 June, yet since then lots of young people, including non-Christians and those of other faiths have been for a milkshake and waffle which is helping build relationships which may eventually bear fruit.

"It's about relationships," says Tim (41) who runs the café with his wife Charissa (38). They have three children aged 9-13 and a dog named Coco.

Tim and Charissa have been married for 19 years and met in Sheffield when Tim was

running a music ministry in high schools.

They then moved over to Manchester and worked at the Message Trust and Eden Project – inner-city work.

They started the charity **'Make Jesus Known'** together in 2006 and linked up with Counties then.

"It's grown from there to having a big team. We do a lot of outreach through our music (with our band Crossfya) and our iTruth videos online.

"Setting up the café came out of that - wanting to share the good news with young people locally.

"Even before the pandemic, we were getting more and more people responding online. And we felt God saying: 'Come on, we need to focus on this'.

"So, we got a grant to build a video studio and we started looking around and because Oldham is a very deprived area, it was cheaper to take on an old retail shop than a warehouse.

"We found a great place just off the high street. At the same time the only Christian youth project in the town closed, even though there are a quarter of a million people in Oldham.

"And even though we were doing lots of stuff online, we really felt God say: 'If you guys can make me known here in your work with young people then I am going to do something with young people here'.

"And we felt that nudge and did what God told us and took this building on during a pandemic, to completely renovate it, and with many more overheads. We thought we would open the café in the future, but God has provided the funds quickly, which meant we could open the café in July, as a safe space and to share the Gospel and reach out".

Tim and Charissa haven't done much publicity yet, but the Oldham Chronicle featured them, and they've also put publicity on social media.

They have also reached out to the local high school and done a 'buy one waffle get one free'. They've now got twenty teenagers a day coming in and saying:

"It is amazing and there is nothing like this around here. So glad you made it and we come and chill out."

Tim says the café isn't 'in your face' Christian but neither do they hide it. It says: 'Make Jesus known' outside and there are posters saying: 'Live like Jesus' or 'Share Love' so it gets people thinking and they share conversations as friends without shouting John 3:16 at people as they put down a coffee.

Tim says that we're not designed to be safe Christians. We are meant to be living on the edge if we are taking God at His word. If He wants to reach the lost, and He's given you a vision – 'go for it and what's the worst that can happen?

"We have found that the more you take God at His word, and the more you take those bigger steps, the more you see God's amazing provision".

Tim's favourite verse is Mark 16:15
"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to everyone."

Finally, Tim asks Ignite readers to pray for him and the team, as they are stretched to their limit and need support – in whatever form that takes – particularly prayer.



“WE HAVE A HUGE NEED FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE A HEART FOR PLANTING OR REPLANTING CHURCHES.”



Tim Cracknell, Counties Church Planting Officer, tells Ignite what is involved.

Tim, firstly, what is Counties Church Planting Network?

“It’s a network where we nurture church planters and their teams so they can plant new churches or ‘replant’ churches to give them a new chapter and a fresh start. Counties does this using the M4 programme, which is a two and a half year, Europe-wide, online training course.”

“We also link up ‘resource churches’ who support church plants through prayer and finance.”

How does that work on a practical level?

“If a church is looking to plant a new church or congregation, they can come to us, and we will make the M4 process available to them. We then assess them to make sure they are suitable for the role which might mean they take on special training depending on their skill sets.”

CHURCH PLANTING

“We help individuals who are looking to plant but recognise they need good support around them; and help to link them up with resource/support churches so they’re not isolated.”

“Churches sometimes come to us with a building and money in the bank, but no younger people to run it. We will work with them to find the right people who are willing to ‘re-plant’ their church.”

“There is a great need for people who have heart for planting or replanting churches across the country. ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few.’ ”

So, how would you encourage someone, if they feel called by God to plant a church, but worry they lack the skills?

“We will help people to test that calling in our assessment process which is rigorous but designed to set people up for success.”

“Prospective church planters are encouraged as we provide ‘role models’ who have been used by God and succeeded which gives them the confidence to say: ‘Do you know what? If God has used them to do that, then maybe He can use me in the same way.’ ”

How much biblical knowledge does a person need to be a church planter and does it matter what denomination you are?

“You don’t need a theology degree, but you definitely need to know your Bible really well. Counties works with people from lots of different denominations.”

What’s the hardest aspect of being a church planter in your experience?

“I think it is the emotional wrench of people joining and moving forward with you but then, for a whole variety of reasons, stepping away from your church. I deal with it by believing that we are all scaffolding in God’s great kingdom and at some point, we won’t be here anymore.”

“We are all just here for a period to accomplish what He wants us to. And that helps me see that people may just be with us for a season and if you get that in your mind it’s not as painful if they leave.”

What are your ‘top-tips’ for church planters in terms of attracting people into church in a post-Christian world?

“It’s about genuine relationships. There are no short cuts. You must get to know people in the community and genuinely care for them. And you need to spend time with non-Christians wherever they are.”

“It takes time. We encourage church planters to build up relationships in the area and get known before they launch a church, then people know you are there because you care about them not just because you want to preach at them.”

If you are interested in becoming a church planter or know someone who might be, contact Tim at:

tim.cracknell@countiesuk.org

IT IS GREAT NEWS TO HAVE THREE NEW COUNTIES EVANGELISTIC TRAINEES ON BOARD. IGNITE HEARS ABOUT THEM.



Keith Baker lives in Ironville, Derbyshire with his wife Sarah and they attend Kirby Community Church (Assemblies of God).

Keith has recently been Sarah's carer due to her ill-health.

Keith says: "I had never heard about Counties but the name just came to me! And I thought, 'I am going to find out who they are.' So, I Googled it and found out about their evangelism

and spent a few nights going over the website and contacted them and it went on from there.

"When I went on the website, I thought 'Wow, that's where I want to be.' As I do street evangelism already."

Steve wants to learn to train how to be an evangelist because he and Sarah have a larger vision working with single mothers. He says: "We can't just 'jump into it'.



Gabriel Bennet, lives in Ramsey Mereside, near Huntington and goes to Pidley Baptist Church.

Gabriel was a teacher for thirty years and took early retirement. However, the Lord started to open lots of different avenues. He is also associated with the Open-Air

Mission and is still is a schools co-ordinator with the Good News for Everyone, formerly Gideons UK.

"There's usually two or three of us. We set up a board with visuals on it to help explain the Gospel. I find people's responses very different – from those who are very 'anti', to those who are just not interested, and those who are really keen to know more."

Gabriel had heard about Counties through Ignite magazine and was keen to be trained by a bigger organisation that had skills he lacks.

"I am really expecting to continue with what I am doing but with greater insight and understanding. I am very conscious that as I meet people, I don't talk to a homeless man in the same way as I would talk to an older lady who has just lost her husband."

"They require different approaches. The message is the same as the Gospel never changes but they require different approaches."

Stevie Walker, lives in Paignton, and goes to Great Parks Church in Devon.



He is married to Natalie, and they have seven children – aged between 5 and 16.

In between being a full-time lorry driver and father, Steve does part-time street evangelism.

"Once a month I go into town and do open air preaching. We give out lots of tracts and talk to people."

"People are surprisingly friendly and want to have lengthy talks about faith. We have some great conversations."

He's really keen to work with Counties because: "I feel the Lord is calling me to more evangelism and I need to be trained more. If it is His will, I would like to come into a full-time role as an evangelist."



"I want to work with Counties as they seem like a friendly, family orientated bunch."

If you would like to train with Counties contact: beverley.bedford@countiesuk.org



COUNTIES EVANGELIST, PHIL DAVIES, LOOKS AT HOW WE PREACH JESUS, FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

One of the men who really influenced me as a student in the early 1980's and then for many years after that in Operation Mobilisation was Nigel Lee.

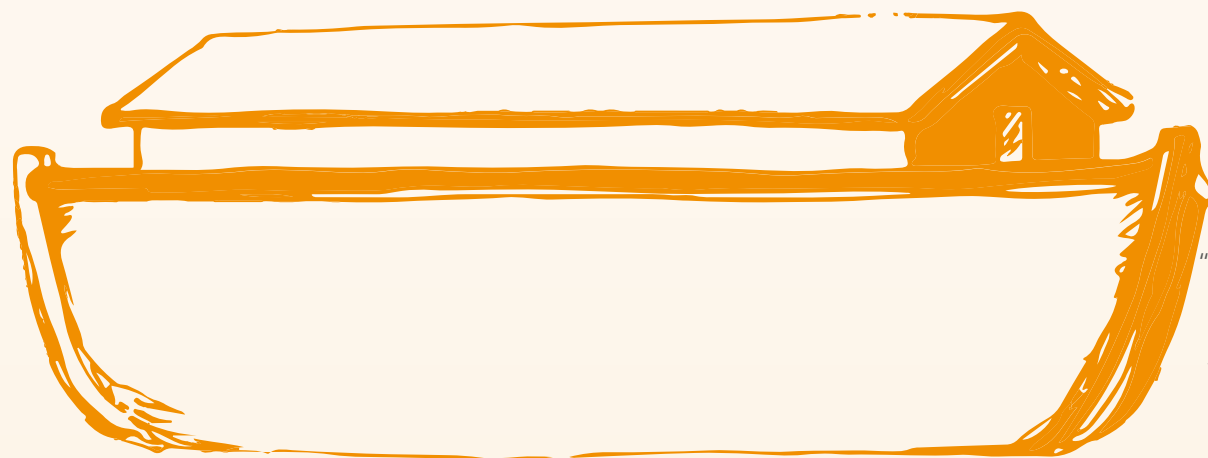
Nigel was a man, who as a Bible teacher and evangelist, radiated Jesus through his winsome smile and his gift in sharing of God's word.

Sadly, at the age 58, he contracted cancer and within a year he had passed away.

"When John Lennox asked Nigel 'What do you want me to tell them at your funeral?' "

Nigel replied: *"Tell them what we have always told them ... soak your minds and hearts in the Word of God until you see and hear the Living Word of God, until you see Jesus"*.

That has been my delight and joy for nearly fifty years, as I have sought to walk with Jesus and discover Him



in the pages of Scripture. My heart has thrilled me, just like the two on the road to Emmaus, as the Lord has opened up the Old Testament scriptures:

"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. (Luke 23:25-28 – emphasis mine). Wouldn't you have wanted to have been there as Jesus scrolls through prophecies and stories, pictures, patterns, types and shadows of God's awesome plan of rescue?"

So how can we both study and seek to preach Jesus in and through the OT.

Preaching overall redemptive History

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son (Hebrews 1:1-2a).

It is always of great value to keep firmly in mind the overall flow of the OT narrative and purpose – God's big story.

Creation – Fall – Redemption in History – New Creation.

"Preachers who ignore the history of redemption in their preaching are ignoring the witness of the Holy Spirit to Jesus in all the Scriptures." (Edmund Clowney – see below)

1. Preaching the clear prophetic passages

Although enumerated in various ways it is safe to say that the OT has over 350 specific prophecies of the birth, life, character, mission, death resurrection and return of Christ.

These start chronologically in the prophesying of God in the cursing of Satan in Genesis 3 (commented on Paul in Galatians 4:4-5) and ends in Malachi 4 with prophecy about John the Baptist as the forerunner of the Christ.

The Psalms alone hold around 100 prophecies to this coming King while Isaiah has over 120 predictions of his birth, upbringing, life, ministry, death resurrection and future glory.

2. Preaching Jesus in the types, pictures, appearances and shadows?

In the New Testament, the Greek word *týpos*, meaning 'example', describes a model or pattern in the Old Testament that is fulfilled in the life and mission of Jesus Christ.

The truth is that one cannot understand Leviticus without Hebrews, or Daniel without Revelation, or the Passover, or Isaiah 53 without the Gospel account of the Crucifixion.

a.) Those explained in their original context and story.

There are stories or illustrations in the OT that are explained within their context and so point to their final fulfilment in redemptive History and in particular Christ.

An example of this would be the story of Hosea's redemption of his unfaithful wife Gomer in which we see a picture of the grace of God is seen ultimately in full colour in the purchase of God's people, the church by Christ on the cross.

b.) Those clearly understood considering the New Testament Scripture

As we have said there are many incidents and stories in the Old Testament that it is only when we get to the New Testament, we see them in clarity e.g.

- Moses striking the Rock of Horeb - Exodus 17:6 - see Paul speaking of Christ as the Rock in 1 Corinthians 10:4
- Isaiah's vision of "the Lord" in Isaiah 6 finding its fulfilled Christ - John 12:41

Sometimes you can see the writer inspired by the Spirit using the two words "as" and "so", for example.

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up (John 3:14).

c.) Christ "present" in the OT

There are times in the OT where God / Christ seems to be physically present. Theologians through the years have referred to such times as "theophanies" or "Christophanies" e.g.

- Jacob wrestles with a "man" (Genesis 32:24-25, 28-30) and declares "I have seen God face to face".
- The fourth "man" in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3 - King Nebuchadnezzar declares "the fourth looks like a son of the gods" (Daniel 3:25).

If we are to take seriously this challenge to share Christ in opening up all the scriptures, here are two practical things we can be doing:

Read the Big Story

Get the Big Picture regularly. Read through the Bible either every year or certainly every 3 years.

A couple of useful tools

- Use a reading plan such as that put together by Robert Murray McCheyne which helps you read through the OT in one year and the NT twice in that year or OT in two years and NT each year.
- The You Version Bible app will help you find such plans as these.



Study and read around the Big Story

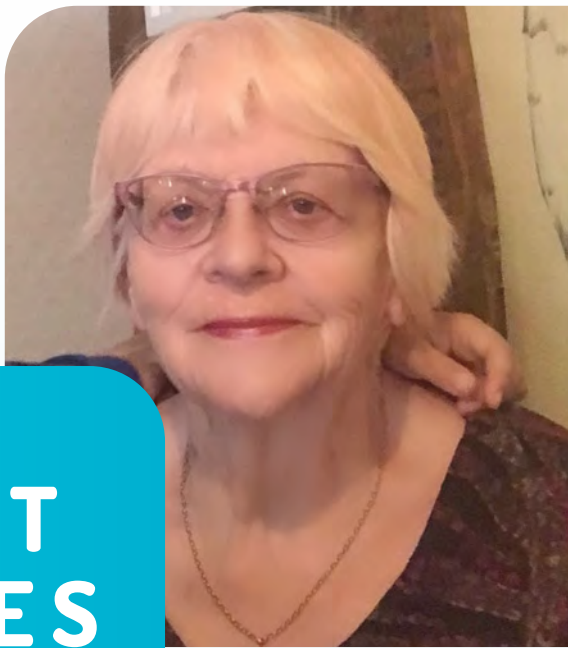
Challenge and enlarge your study and thinking on this. Here are some books that you may find helpful

- God's big picture, by Vaughan Roberts IVP. Nottingham. 2002
- The Bible – a story that makes sense, by Andrew Ollerton. Hodder & Stoughton. London. 2020
- How to read the Bible for all it worth, by Gordan Fee & Douglas Stuart. SU. 1994

- Preaching Christ in all the Scriptures, by Edmund Clowney. Cross way. Wheaton. 2003
- Jesus on Every Page, by David Murray. Thomas Nelson. Nashville. 2013

Here also is a great taster clip to encourage to read the OT more: <https://youtu.be/-XgtRaldyA8> - David Murray: Jesus on Every Page

WHY I SUPPORT COUNTIES



Jean Ward from Lancashire shares about why she has started to support Counties.

"Jokingly, I said to my daughter when she introduced me to the work of Counties: 'Is it a secret organization'?"

It's doing amazing work for the Lord but in over fifty years as a Christian, I've never heard of it.

I am totally impressed by the people working with Counties, many of whom live by faith. You don't often hear of that these days when some Christians expect to get the sort of large salaries that many in the commercial world receive. I'm reminded of George Muller (1805 to 1898) who cared for hundreds of orphaned children, in

Bristol, and never asked people for money but God supplied all he needed and never failed him.

"I think it's a great organisation, which deserves to be known much more widely"

I think of Steve Loader, who lives, largely, by faith and goes on merchant ships in Avonmouth, taking warm gloves and hats, etc. for the poorly paid crewmen. These men, usually from Muslim countries, are often away from their families for over a year.

How glad these men must be to see the British chaplain, who befriends them, advising where he can, and just caring about their welfare.



In this edition, you can read about Lionel Clargo, an evangelist with Counties, who has lived by faith and recommends it as a way of life.

I was amazed that when asked how he found living by faith, the word he used wasn't 'tough', 'anxious' or 'hard' but 'tremendous'! How many of us could say this? I think you must know God is calling you to this!

Evangelism is really the passion behind Counties. This is seen in such outreaches as Neighbourhood Chaplains, Counties Evangelism Network and GSUS Live and the Life exhibition.

Having worked with drug addicts who are often ex-offenders, I am impressed by Counties evangelists who reach out.

This month and last month's Ignite have really blessed me as they feature an alcoholic and a drug addict, who both suffered horrific childhoods.

Through my own ministry, I have found that childhood trauma often sows the seeds that affect adults in later life. I know so many addicts who have tried psychotherapy, doctors and hypnotherapy etc. and none of them have succeeded. Only Jesus can bring deep-down healing and peace that addicts need.

I also love the way their GSUS Live buses work with local volunteers, to bring Jesus to schools, using modern technology in a way that students love. Suddenly 'Religion' is not a boring irrelevant lesson but a way of helping them discover about the meaning of life and of a God who loves them passionately.

The training days and conferences which Counties arrange are ways of encouraging evangelism and a time of strengthening and deepening the knowledge of the love of Jesus in participants.

I think it's a great organisation, which deserves to be known much more widely and I hope I can do my bit in bringing that about. How about you?"

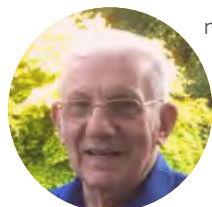
See page 27 to see how you can support our work.

JUST A MINUTE

WITH COUNTIES EVANGELIST

LIONEL CLARGO

Lionel Clargo became a Counties evangelist in Surrey, in 1972. He is now retired but still lives in the county. He has two grown up children. His wife, Mavis, went to be with the Lord in 2016.



me during this time. Many of the Counties family like John Wilkes, Martin Erwin and Brian Adams, all call me and keep in touch regularly.

What's your favourite Bible verse or passage and why?

Hebrews 12:1-3 is one of my favourites particularly verse 3: "Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." I love the words "consider him" and it is so amazing to think about all He did, and I am so grateful.

What effect has Mavis's death had on your life?

Recently, I spent time with a friend, who I have known for forty years. His wife has advanced motor neurone disease, and I was able to share about Mavis's illness. I did not doubt that God could heal her, but we always prayed 'Your will be done, not mine'. I was able to talk with him, because having gone through six years with Mavis just deteriorating all the time, I could explain about the deep valleys I had gone through.

Like many Counties evangelists, you have lived by faith over the years. How has that been?

It has been tremendous. The Lord said: "Seek ye first his righteousness and all these things will be added to you". So, we just trusted Him and slowly over the years God provided. We have never asked for money, and I have never charged for any of the missions we did or literature we gave out. We have never been without.

When did you become a Christian?

In my early twenties I was approached by a Church Army Student after a Sunday night service. He asked me if I was a Christian and I said: "I am not really good enough". He explained that none of us would ever really be good enough and that's why Jesus died on the cross. It wasn't long after that, that I gave my heart to the Lord and it's the best decision I ever made.

Have you got a highlight of time with Counties that you would like to share with readers?

We were taking a tent mission near Aldershot and Graham Stokes (who worked with Counties) came in. And I was terribly nervous because he was a well-known evangelist. But after the meeting, a new group of about eight army squaddies came in and we gave them tea and cake – we always had lots of cake! I shared the gospel and had a wonderful opportunity even though I had felt so nervous with this distinguished gentleman during the service.

What does being part of the Counties family mean to you?

You said the word 'family' and it's being part of a family which is lovely. My wife, Mavis, died on Boxing Day 2016. She had been ill for six years and she had incurable cancer, and, in the end, I was her full-time carer. But the Counties family cared and supported

YOUR LOCAL EVANGELISTS

NORTH OF ENGLAND

Tim & Charissa Cooke
Julian & Ella Gutteridge
Martin & Angie Korchinsky
Lee & Lesley Marsland
Matt & Nicola Rich
Aaron & Rachel Shah (AE)
Rob & Sarah Watson
Phyllis Jenkins (Senior)

MIDLANDS

David & Lindsey Brown
Ivor & Angela Cooper
Tim & Katrina Cracknell
Craig & Georgie Dowling
Andy & Isobel Hodson
Paul & Vanessa Willmott
Roger & Hazel Chilvers (Seniors)
Bob & Rita Telford (Seniors)

SOUTH EAST

Charles & Elizabeth Addoco
Shaun & Livi Almond (AE)
Will & Lynne Andrews
Tim & Joy Ayrton
Mark & Amanda Bingham
John Hardwick
Kim & Jo Hobbs
Tony & Ruth Hood
Colin & Linda Johnson
Caleb & Adanesh Mathewos
Andrew & Rachel Mugford
Madelene Bathgate (Senior)
Lionel Clargo (Senior)
Ray & Carol Dadswell (Seniors)
Wendy Iliffe (Senior)
Victor Jack (Senior)

AE – Associate Evangelist
ETP – Evangelists' Training Programme

Andy & Miriam Jelfs (Seniors)
John & Jane Martin (Seniors)
Betty Saunders (Senior)
Gladys Whittern (Senior)

SOUTH WEST

Jacquie & Tim Bodman
Steve Ellacott (AE)
Mike & Su Stange
David & Katie Symons
Jean Campbell (Senior)

SOUTH CENTRAL

Jonathan & Heather Brain
Jamie Broadey (AE)
Ian & Sally Carr
Gordon & Penny Curley
Steve & Dawn Loader
Stephen & Jean Gillham (Seniors)
Hettie Hall (Senior)

WALES

Clive & Fiona Cornish
Paul & Laura Davies
Phil & Sheila Davies
Janet Hawking (AE)
Mike & Jan Thomas (AE)
Steve & Gwyn Treseder (AE)
Grace Anderson (Senior)

EVANGELIST TRAINING PROGRAMME

Keith & Sarah Baker
Gabriel Bennett
Stevie & Natalie Walker

PARTNER WITH US AND THOSE WHO LIVE BY FAITH

SUBSCRIBE

Please send me:

- Ignite Magazine and Praise & Prayer diary by post (please fill in address)
 Monthly newsletter by email

MY DETAILS

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other
Name
Address
Postcode
Telephone
Email

Your details will be kept on our database and may be shared with a local Counties Evangelist, but with no other persons or organisations.

- Please remove me from your mailing list

MY GIFT

I would like to partner with Counties. Please find enclosed my/our gift of

£

(please make cheques payable to Counties)

To give online by debit or credit card visit countiesuk.org

Gift Aid

- This is a Gift-Aid donation (We will send you a gift-aid declaration, if you have not already completed one).
 I would like to set up a regular standing order.

Your feedback is always appreciated.

THANK YOU



M4 Learning Community for church planting teams & potential planters



Birmingham 24-25 September

- Join with 12 teams of church planters, from England and Wales, to be inspired, equipped, and refreshed for the next stage of the journey.
- Learn new and innovative ways to reach out to your community.
- Learn from experienced church planters.
- Network with like-minded people from across the country.
- Get access to an online toolkit packed full of resources.
- Receive coaching from established church planters and church leaders.
- Potential planters who want to come along to observe are welcome.

To book apply online at
www.counties-training.org/m4

More information from Tim Cracknell
(07975 994224)
tim.cracknell@countiesuk.org