

SUMMER 2019

IGNITE

SPARKING PASSION FOR THE GOSPEL ACROSS THE UK



The journey of a new
Church Planter

WELCOME

Welcome to Ignite

The opportunities that we have to go into schools are quite unique in the United Kingdom. Many Counties evangelists regularly take school assemblies, RE lessons, and host visits of school groups to churches, and, of course, Counties schools resources – GSUS Live, Key to Life and the Life Exhibition. It is great to read the stories of five Counties Evangelists who work in schools, on page 10.

Much of the work is seed sowing, but the creative use of the Life Exhibition by one church in Wolverhampton led to a family coming to Christ. You can read their story on page 24.

Many of our young people are sitting exams at this time of year, and then waiting for results. When I left school, I really wanted to bin all my books (maybe you did!) In a key article on page 20, guest contributor, Mark Davies from GLO, reminds us why being a disciple is a life long commitment to learn, grow and remain fruitful!

May the Lord bless you. Thank you for partnering in the Gospel with us.

Martin Erwin,
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

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It costs approximately £5 per year to produce and distribute this newsletter to you.

Every additional contribution will help us continue in our mission.

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4

News in brief

8

New family fun day from Counties

10

A look into schools ministry

14

A new training programme for young people launches

16

Photos from Counties Planting Network event

18

The highs and lows of Church Planting

20

Bible teaching from Mark Davies, from GLO

24

Young girl and family find Jesus

26

Just a minute with Matt Rich

SUMMER MISSION SCHOOL

Learn to follow Jesus in a broken world at Radical:Mission on Monday 5 to Friday 9 August at Tilsley College, Motherwell.

If you're 16 to 30 years old, take a week out of your summer to:

- Explore the Bible's teaching on mission
- Hear from mission workers' own experiences
- Be part of outreach to local communities

Seminars are led by Peter Maiden, Matty Blakeman, Stephen McQuoid, Mark Davies, John Dick and many others, and you'll also have opportunities to get involved in local mission.

£70 for week-long course, food and accommodation (organised by Echoes International and GLO).

www.echoesinternational.org.uk/radicalmission

SAVE THE DATE!



29 JUNE

A new-style Counties Day Conference is set to take place on Saturday 29 June at the Tom Roberts Adventure Centre in Malswick, Gloucestershire, GL18 1HE. A family fun day with children's and youth marquees, seminars, food and an evening celebration. See feature on page 8.

LIFE EXHIBITION CONTINUES TO WOW CHURCHES

Stronger relationships with schools and many seeds sown - are just some of the comments from churches who have recently hosted the popular Life Exhibition.

Rev Matt Hird, from St Philips Church in Wolverhampton, said:

"I can attest to renewed positive relationships with local primary schools, who are now keener than ever to invite us in. I can also say that, when I do go into the schools, the children are still asking me about Jesus based on what they saw at Life."

Brian Miller from Woodhill Evangelical Church, Glasgow, was also encouraged by a recent visit of the Life exhibition. He said:

"We had four baptisms on Easter Sunday when the Life Expo was in place and one the week before Life expo. While it would be impossible to say that the Life Exhibition

had a direct impact on people deciding to be baptised, I am certain that the publicity and general buzz generated as we introduced Life Expo to the church contributed to a heightened awareness of Christian values.

"We always saw Life Expo as primarily an educational exercise and a form of seed sowing – we'll probably never know the full impact of the seeds that took root and multiplied this side of heaven! Since Life Expo, we have had a number of thank you letters from children who attended, many of which show that their knowledge of Jesus – who He is and why He died particularly – had increased. To me, that's a great starting point for future fruit!"

For more details on the exhibition contact Kevin Baldwin:

info@lifeexpo.co.uk

EPIC WALK ACROSS WALES PLANNED FOR JUNE

Cardiff evangelist Clive Cornish is planning to walk for Jesus across Wales again this summer.

He said: *"All being well, I hope to walk with a 12-foot wooden cross and bring the Gospel message to people all over Wales.*

"Last year proved to be a hard walk as the weather was so hot. There were amazing opportunities to talk with people about Jesus every day and it was humbling at how many brought drinks, ice lollies and food to me.

"This year I can't resist walking Wales again even though I have gone through doubts about doing it. It's the comments by other people on the difference it has made to opening up opportunities to witness and how

the cross impacts without saying anything. God will be there and as we know, He is in control and never lets us down."



Clive Cornish



Charles Adocco

DISCIPLING THE YOUTH IN ESSEX

Working with young people is at the heart of Charles Adocco's ministry in Essex. He has been encouraged lately by the number of teens and young adults gathering together. Charles said: *"Recently, I had 15 young adults from about seven different fellowships meeting to share fun, food and fellowship."*

"One of the boys who had not been in church for a while said he did not know what to expect as he knew he was coming to meet 'church' people. However afterwards, he spoke about how the meeting helped him to break out of his silence. He was able to say he had formed friendships with all of the people who participated."

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT LOCAL MISSION ON THE MUMBLES

Counties associate evangelists Steve and Gwyneth Tresader have hosted a team of international students to share in their ministry activities on the Mumbles in South Wales.

Students on a course at Tilsley College in Scotland joined the couple for a week of action-packed local mission. Steve explained:

"The six students came from different countries but they worked with a oneness that was wonderful!"

"During the week they shared in all the normal activities of the fellowship – children, youth, toddlers, as well as helping in school assemblies, distributing leaflets around the doors, helping in GSUS Live lessons and holding an international evening."

It was tiring but a very rewarding week, as we remember every one of the team with very happy memories."



NEIGHBOURHOOD CHAPLAINS

BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS IN NORTH DEVON

"We are sharing God's truth to needy hearts," – says North Devon evangelist Beverley Bedford as she shares an update on her local Neighbourhood Chaplains team's recent work in the area.

The team in Grosvenor Barnstaple and Great Torrington, which is made up of 20 chaplains, have been serving around 30 individuals in the community through Counties unique scheme.

Beverley commented: *"The feedback on the service has been tremendously encouraging and the friendships being built through the weekly visits have given unique opportunities to share God's precious truth to needy hearts."*

"I thank God for the team of volunteers serving in chaplaincy. It's wonderful to meet for 'chaplaincy hour' each month to pray, plan and to hear the stories of divine encounters in our community. The team is growing numerically and seven new volunteers have expressed an interest in training in the months ahead."

"It's a privilege to be part of a team formed, called, led by God to worship and pray and then to boldly step out together on local mission to make Jesus known." Around 15 churches in the UK have been trained to take Neighbourhood Chaplaincy into their communities.

For more details visit: www.countiesuk.org

HOMELESS PEOPLE BEING SET FREE

Trainee evangelists Lee and Lesley Marsland from Oldham have been helping to run a homeless night shelter in the town with six other churches.

Lee said: *"We aim to give the homeless community a safe warm place to come eat, sleep and shower. It's been better than we could ever have hoped for."*

"We are seeing people saved and set free almost on a daily basis. God is so good!"

JOIN THE FUN AT COUNTIES BIG DAY OUT! 29 JUNE 2019



Families and supporters of Counties are being invited to an action-packed weekend this summer as part of the charity's annual event.

The Counties Family Day will be held at the Tom Roberts Adventure Centre, Newent, Gloucestershire, on Saturday 29 June, and there will be the option of camping from 3pm Friday 28 to Sunday 30 June for those who wish to extend their weekend.

The family fun starts at 11am with a whole host of activities planned such as:

- **Archery**
- **Dog display**
- **Tug of war**
- **Go Karts**
- **Bouncy Castle**
- **Live music**



A free hog roast will be on offer in the afternoon, followed by an evening celebration at 6.30pm, with workshops, a talk, worship and children's and youth programmes.

Martin Erwin, CEO at Counties, said: *"We're excited about the new format of Counties Day which promises to be an action-packed event.*

"The day will be an opportunity for people to bring along non-churched friends to experience a fun-packed day whilst having the opportunity to hear the Gospel clearly presented."

For more details contact the office at Counties on 01373 823013 or visit www.countiesuk.org



SOWING SEEDS IN SCHOOLS

Hundreds of school children learn about Christianity every day – thanks to the faithful work of school's workers across the country. Here Ignite talks to five Counties evangelists, who have worked in schools for many years, to find out what challenges they face and what makes talking to children a real joy in their ministry.

West Midlands evangelist **Paul Willmott** has worked in schools across the Black Country area for over 25 years taking school assemblies, RE lessons and running holiday clubs.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU VISIT SCHOOLS?

I work along side 12 different churches, visiting their local primary schools. In total I visit 30 different primary schools each month, (that's around 10,000 children and staff). If I'm leading an assembly I will start off with a puppet routine to introduce the theme, this could be about making good choices, friendship or forgiveness etc. I will then share a Bible story in a fun way aiming to engage kids and staff with the message. Ending with prayer.

CAN YOU SHARE THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IN SCHOOLS?

What you can say in school often comes out of relationship and trust you might have with the school. For me the Good news of Jesus

is the focus, I will say things like 'Christians believe' and 'The Bible says.' Occasionally though I won't finish the Bible story, encouraging children to talk about what they think with their friends. Then they can begin to explore the message for themselves.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT VISITING SCHOOLS?

Presenting Jesus to so many children and staff who have no idea about church or the message of Jesus. Hearing their response can be amazing, 'Wow did that really happen?' Or 'Did Jesus really do that?' I also meet teenagers or young adults who remember me and the puppets from their primary school assemblies. They remember the puppet stories and more importantly the Bible message.

HOW CAN PEOPLE PRAY BETTER FOR YOUR WORK?

I usually plan to arrive early and leave late, making myself available to chat with staff. I have been able pray with teachers about various life issues, and also discuss various Christian topics in the staff room. I would ask people to pray for more opportunities of prayer and conversation. I want to be about building relationships with between the school and the local church, while drawing people closer to God.

Paul Willmott



Tony and Ruth Hood



Tony and Ruth Hood, evangelists in Suffolk, have been leading holiday clubs and after school clubs for over 14 years.

HOW DO YOU SHARE WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE TO CHILDREN?

The schools in our area are mainly Church of England schools and are very happy for me to visit, either to run assemblies, lessons, and after school clubs. In school assemblies we are a little bit limited in what we can say although the after-school clubs are voluntary so there is a little bit more freedom there to share the Gospel. The holiday clubs and church weekends provide us with plenty of opportunities to share and ask children to respond to God.

WHAT CAN PEOPLE PRAY FOR IN YOUR MINISTRY?

We are very conscious that we want to be following what God wants us to be doing and that these opportunities in schools and clubs would lead to the children and their families wanting to know more about God.

WHAT HAS ENCOURAGED YOU RECENTLY IN YOUR WORK?

After a recent SPLAT afterschool club in a local village, one of the mums asked me about the kids club I run. This mother knew about the church because she used to attend the mothers and toddlers group Ruth used to run.

She is more than happy to bring her daughter along, commenting how she appreciated the time she spent there. This reminds me again that the work we do often has lasting impact on those we meet and all forms part of a bigger picture we don't always see.



Tim Cooke

Tim and Charissa Cooke, from Oldham, have been working in schools with MJK (Make Jesus Known) since 2007, often visiting with a contemporary Christian band.

WHAT'S YOUR STYLE OF ASSEMBLY?

We do whole days or weeks in schools - so when we do an assembly it's our chance to showcase the band to a large number of pupils (and invite them to our end of week concert). We do very loud and high energy music, getting everyone involved and dancing. We share a brief thought and challenge based on the school we are in and the opportunity that's available to them.

ARE THERE STILL GOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU TO SPEAK THE GOSPEL?

When we do a school's week and concert we share the Gospel at the concert, which is held outside of school time, often to hundreds of teenagers and see many of them respond to Christ. We were in a high school in Essex and 50 young people responded to the Gospel at the concert and a Faith Gang follow up group has since been launched.

HOW CAN WE PRAY BETTER FOR YOUR WORK?

For more open doors into schools and the right partners to work with.



David Brown

Former Business Studies and Economics teacher **David Brown** left the profession 11 years ago and now he and his wife Lindsey visit schools across the The Black Country as part of their ministry.

YOUR DIARY IS PACKED FULL OF SCHOOL VISITS, WHAT DO YOU DO?

For the last 11 years, I have been going in as a visitor to primary and secondary schools for collective worship, lessons, and chaplaincy work. I'll take a Bible story or verse and bring it to life through drama and visual aids and usually finish with a prayer and song. When Lindsey takes assemblies on her own, she uses a sketch board to great effect.

ARE SCHOOLS STILL OPEN TO CHRISTIAN VISITS?

I have been going into some schools for 'Walk Through the Bible' lessons for several years. Whilst some schools no longer invite me in, this academic year I have been invited into three new schools.

Most primary schools in Dudley Borough and many secondary schools are open to Christian visitors for different things. I have managed to get GSUS Live into at least one new school each year when I have had it for a half-term. Virtually all the ten or so primary schools Lindsey has been going into for several years still have her for a termly assembly with the sketch board.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR?

Pray for more people to train to teach 'Walk Through the Bible' and for those I train to actually do it! Pray for schools in Dudley and Wolverhampton that have not had GSUS Live to book it up in the future and for the local churches to support and follow it up in their local secondary school.

Pray for wisdom to know what other opportunities to seek and take up in schools. Pray especially for pupils to be impacted by our input in schools.



Mike Strange

Somerset evangelist **Mike Strange** has been visiting schools in the county for over 30 years and says the opportunity to visit schools was the reason he joined Counties.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU TALK TO CHILDREN?

The format always stays the same. I introduce the theme with my puppet Dunk the Dog.

Then we sing a Christian children's song and next read a Bible story, sing the song again, talk about how it relates to their lives and have a closing prayer.

WHAT'S THE RESPONSE OF SCHOOLS?

They can't get enough! They all want visits and would preferably like it every week, but I go to each once a term.

ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU TO SPEAK ABOUT THE GOSPEL?

Our RE syllabus is based on beliefs and focusses on one belief for each faith as the key to understanding the whole. In the case of Christianity, the most important belief is salvation - the atonement.

I frequently explain what the Bible says about this and why it matters to Christians in RE lessons and Collective Worship. I also explain the atonement each time that I train teachers, so they can teach about it properly to the children.

ANY EXCITING PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

The new Somerset RE syllabus is being launched this term and I will be training hundreds of primary school teachers. Also a year ago we started the BigH website (bigh.org.uk) with purpose built videos and resources to overhaul the teaching of history in our primary schools.

My local school where I am governor introduced this radical new approach – it includes proper coverage of the impact of the Christian faith in our UK story.

This was, when we started, the right thing to do but going against the grain. Now Ofsted has changed its inspection regime and, come September, this will be exactly what they will be looking for and suddenly schools are taking a fresh look at their history teaching, at the very time the resources on the website are tested and complete. This is a God thing!

STUDENT TOM INVITES YOUNG PEOPLE TO JOIN TEAM!

Young people who feel they have a calling into Christian ministry are being encouraged to consider a new training programme from Counties and First Serve.

19 year old Tom Binding, who is currently serving as an intern with Counties, believes the training will help other young people who want to serve in their local church.

TEAM (which stands for Training in Evangelism and Mission) is an integrated training programme aimed at 18-30 year olds. With a mix of college training and practical hands-on experiences, this one-year opportunity aims to help students explore and develop their gifts, encouraging them towards ministry in the local church.

Tom, from Swansea, has been taking part in a pilot TEAM programme since February this year. So far, he has served on board Counties popular schools resource GSUS Live; helped out at toddler groups and youth groups at a local church; ran a guitar workshop at the Forest of Dean Community Church in Cinderford and led the worship at a church planting conference.

He said: *"This has really led me to step out of my comfort zone and give new things my best*

shot. I've learnt to trust God and feel more confident in my own abilities now.

"I hope this training programme will ultimately help me get a job serving in the local church. It's been a great experience so far and I've definitely learnt a lot!"

After Tom left school, he went to university to study early childhood but felt God was saying it was the wrong path and that he should go home. Tom explained: *"I had been praying about this and one morning I opened my Bible and saw a verse that really struck me about being called to serve. I knew then I had to explore other options and the Counties TEAM training seemed ideal.*

"If other young people are thinking about going into Christian ministry I would say - go for it! Rely on God, pray and strengthen your relationship with Him and with others. It helps you to step out of your comfort zone and teaches you to do things that you would never be able to do on your own."

Ash George, Counties Training Officer, said: *"We're excited to launch TEAM this year in partnership with First Serve at GLO's Tilsey College. The programme can help to shape the future of students, where making Jesus known becomes a central ingredient.*

"TEAM has a real emphasis on practical engagement, mission training and discipleship. We hope the training will be a spring-board for students to then go on to ministry - whether that's as an evangelist, youth worker, overseas mission worker or further theological training."



Tom Binding second right



TEAM (TRAINING IN EVANGELISM AND MISSION)

WHO'S IT FOR?

18-30 year olds with a heart for Christian ministry.

WHAT WILL STUDENTS LEARN?

Core subjects will include: schools ministry; children's ministry; evangelistic preaching; open air ministry; Christ and culture; introduction to apologetics; methods of evangelism; the mission of God and your Church.

HOW WILL THIS TRAINING BE DELIVERED?

Through three key elements:

1. Practical hands-on training experiences
2. Structured study and training days
3. Discipleship

WHY TAKE PART?

TEAM will equip students for ministry in the local church. It will also build confidence and help people gain valuable experience.

To find out more: Call Ash George on 07398 280328

Or email ash.george@countiesuk.org



TO BOLDLY GO...

More than 60 people from 30 different churches across the UK gathered recently to celebrate the launch of Counties Planting Network.

Held at the Forest Community Church in Cinderford, the event brought together church leaders, those interested in church planting and people from Counties and GLO to discuss and develop church planting in the UK.

Martin Erwin, CEO of Counties, said: *"It was great to celebrate 20 years of the Church Planting Initiative, and launch Counties Planting Network at this special event.*

"Our focus was on rediscovering God's call for us to be bold in stepping out, in church planting, replanting and in committing to training through the exciting M4 initiative."



THINKING OF PLANTING OR RE-PLANTING A CHURCH?

People thinking of planting a church or re-planting a struggling one are being invited to a training event this autumn.

To be held **September 27 – 28**, the event is open to those who want to join the M4 training programme – a successful European initiative brought to the UK by Counties.

The M4 weekend is open to those who are interested in:

- Planting a new church
- Replanting a struggling church
- Using a proven training tool which has helped hundreds of churches get off the ground across 14 countries in Europe
- Wanting to join the M4 UK training programme and meet the team who have written the material and used it to start growing churches in Norway, Finland, and Estonia.

M4 Lead Coach James Hyde said:

"We believe that everyone can be a part of a team planting a new church, but it takes something special to lead a plant or replant. Church planting is a difficult endeavour and very time-consuming. This training is aimed at helping church leaders to assess, train and coach new planting teams."

The M4 process runs from September 2019 to Spring 2021. It consists of four 'Learning Community Gatherings', as well as access to an e-learning platform specifically designed to build church planters and their team through the first two years of their church planting process. Each team will also have a coach who follows them up between the gatherings.

Those interested can talk to Lead Assessor, Tim Cracknell, on: 07975 994224
Or email: tim.cracknell@countiesuk.org

If you are interested in being trained as an M4 Church Planting Coach you can speak to our Lead Coach, James Hyde on: 07899 670924
or email: james.hyde@countiesuk.org



THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF CHURCH PLANTING

A young church planter with a vision to reach the student population in his home town says the journey so far has not always been easy.

21-year-old Jordan Armstrong, who is being mentored by Counties evangelist Andy Hodson, started a meeting in a coffee shop in the centre of Stourbridge two years ago but has since had to relocate after the café closed its doors.

His vision is to reach the large student population of Stourbridge, which has three colleges, and also the people of an area in the town called the Old Quarter and Beauty Bank with the Gospel message.

Here, Jordan shares his church planting experience so far with Ignite:

I came to Christ on 25 July 2009 at the age of 11, following a powerful message that really challenged me at a youth camp called Oasis. I went to Soul Survivor in July 2015 and I felt a strong calling to something new and ended up at Church in the Community and have been there ever since.

In October 2016, Andy and I met together and we both shared our visions that we felt called to for the church plant, which were extremely similar, coming together to form a strong vision for how the church plant could look.

Following this, we were blessed with an opening to begin the church in a coffee shop where we held our first service. It was a

starting point to have a presence on the high street as people passed. The primary aim of the church plant was to connect with the students from the colleges in the area.

We held weekly services for a while and saw a steady increase in numbers but last year we felt God closed the door on the café for us and we decided to use the café for outreach events rather than a weekly service.

“We really felt like it was the right thing to meet in a café but God closed that door in the end. Church planting is a big lesson in trusting God.”

After the café sadly closed down we began to meet in what we call ‘Life Groups’ in homes in the area and we’re excited to see where God will lead us now. There’s around 20 of us who get together – we often share a meal together, enjoy fellowship, Bible study, prayer and share communion.

A range of people come along, some are students, some have fallen away from church and others are still exploring. In order to still have a presence on the high street, we now do outreach in the town centre – this could be setting up a table in the high street and opening up discussions with people.



Jordan Armstrong

It's definitely not an easy road when you decide to plant a church. There have been many ups and downs over the last few years. But for me the highlights are always when you see young people growing in themselves and in their service to church and knowing what it means to trust God, whatever situation you are in.

Andy has been great in guiding me and encouraging me through this journey. He holds me accountable regularly and gives a lot of encouragement which helps me to continue to grow.

I love what I'm doing – to be able to connect with people and share what being a believer is and what it means is such a privilege. It's not about giving up but trusting in God all the way.

Jordan's church plant is part of Church in the Community, more details here:

churchinthecommunity.org

KEEPING SHARP AND ON THE BALL



Guest writer Mark Davies (pictured left) from GLO on why all Christians should be lifelong learners in effectively reaching the lost.

Peter may not appeal to you as the classic evangelist, but he can be credited with bringing a fair few into the Kingdom of God. Insightful to reflect on his learning pathway that took the raw material of a passionate man into a dogged key holder that opened the door for many – us Gentiles included!

It also created in Peter the capacity to teach others and write letters that still nourish and protect the faith of the Lord's scattered people.

If you are going to make an impact on others, to the end of your days and beyond, then life-long learning is a given. If you are not still growing in Christ then how can you expect to pass on Christ's life-growth to others.

Its embedded in the calling: for Peter, *"Follow me ... I will make you fishers of men."* Jesus was to be his model, always. Note also that it was Jesus who was intent on the changing and making of Peter, and the Lord knew he had his work cut out. Not just the three and half years of consistent input, including times of intensive teaching and training.

There was also the longer period, thirty years at least, of Holy Spirit shaping and inputting into Peter's understanding so that he would maintain his effectiveness in outreach.

At times it needed Jesus to personally step back in¹, when cultural changes were needed, so that barriers to the Gospel, like what food you eat and whose house you can go into, can be effectively broken down.

It also included learning from Paul (a younger guy – what a challenge²) and struggling with Paul's writings, which Peter came to appreciate³.

Should those with a passion to reach the lost take time out to learn, prepare and get equipped? Obvious isn't it! So what are you currently doing to ensure you are not just repeating what you've always done, or randomly picking up a few new ideas now and then, rather than intentionally improving on your knowledge and skills, as well as who you are as a person.

WHAT TO FOCUS ON ...

Here are some key areas to work on. You could also get directly in touch and discuss with us – either the ministry training team I am part of at GLO-Tilsley College who have considerable experience training for effective evangelism and mission, or Counties own Training Officer Ash George.

PERSONAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND CHARACTER IMPROVEMENT

Who you are (authenticity) matters in evangelism. This is less about courses, though inspirational books and the use of spiritual retreats can be excellent stimulus.

However, the in-depth stuff is done when we allow ourselves to get close enough to someone we trust who can speak directly, the hard stuff, into our lives.

For those married this ought to include our spouses, but having another mentor or peer is invaluable in ongoing personal development, identifying the weak points, and holding us gently accountable to see them managed or overcome.

DEVELOPMENT OF GIFTING

This includes learning to understand evangelism better, as well as being coached. Have you got a specific person in whom you have seen your gifting at work more powerfully and effectively than through yourself? Ask them if you can come alongside and learn from them.

GRAPPLING WITH THE WORD

Communicating the Gospel well matters – explaining, persuading, answering the right questions with penetrating words not clichés. *“Rightly handling the word of truth”* is about *“teaching the message of truth accurately.”* We will have noted, long ago I trust, that it is about *“studying to be”* (KJV) or doing your best. If that’s not a life-long effort I don’t know what is.

What system of regular study do you have? What courses and training have you undergone in Biblical hermeneutics? What book are you scheduling to read next

that will stimulate and develop in you an excellence in handling the Scriptures? I am biased, but an example is the church-based training courses 'Joshua⁵' as an accessible starting point via the online route.

KEEP ABREAST OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

In the terms of John Stott’s “urgent plea for double listening⁶,” how proficient and regular are you in the art of reading the world around you, locally, national as well as globally. I have found it invaluable to get 'The Week' magazine – a British-based weekly survey of the press, which includes extracts from newspapers worldwide. The internet gives access to a myriad perspectives, somewhat overwhelming though in practice hence my use of pre-sifted media. Whatever your preference, what is your regular learning activities in understanding the thinking, trends and evolving traditions of the generations growing up around you, so that you can tune your communication of Christ to reach specific people groups rather than just hoping they get it.

WORKING WITH THE GRAIN

We often bite off more than we can chew, and I can hear some of you groaning already, *“Not another thing*

to do, pleasee!” The key here is building learning into what is already going on, deepening and broadening what you are already doing, building on foundations already laid.

So, examine the ways in which you are currently learning. The first two items above can be strengthened through good self-reflection and talking with your mentor about evangelism experiences or regular seminars or conference that you are attending anyway. Then make judicious use of existing study courses (local, online or regional/national) that you can access or organise as a group locally, so the burden is shared.

Developing good evangelists takes time, and remaining effective ones takes ongoing learning. Your current struggles may well be rooted in accumulated gaps in understanding, time not invested in study and too little input from trusted friends.

Allowing someone to get up close and personal that could have pointed out your flaws and cracks through which the power of God has leaked away, rather than being the well cleaned finely honed channel that allows the message of Jesus to be effectively heard through you.

¹ Acts 10:9-16

² Galatians 2:11

³ 2 Peter 3:15-16

⁴ 2 Timothy 2:15 ESV and NET

⁵ Joshua is a part-time Biblical studies, Theology and Christian Ministry designed by leaders in conjunction with Tilsley College (GLO) for busy leaders who can't take time off career to engage with in-depth studies.

⁶ The Contemporary Christian” John Stott 1992– an urgent plea for double listening to God’s Word and God’s World.



“GOD USED THE LIFE EXHIBITION IN AN AMAZING WAY!”

A visit to the evening session of one of Counties popular resources led one young girl and her family to Jesus.

Leaders from a Messy Club at a church in Wolverhampton invited its junior members and their families to visit the Life exhibition in an evening session and were delighted when several families came along.

Children’s worker Jo from the church explained: *“There was a particular girl who had been coming to our junior club for four years and often asked lots of questions about the Christian faith.*

“This girl came with her whole family to the Life exhibition and she was really moved with the whole experience. She said to me ‘my friends say Jesus came back as a ghost but the film I have just watched, doesn’t say that.’

“We sat together with her family and discussed what Christians believe and showed her the Bible. She was moved to tears and said everything just clicked into place.

“I think going through the Life exhibition made sense to her seeing the Christian story in one go, pod by pod. It brought the whole story together. I asked if she would like to pray – with her Mum there - and she was filled with the Holy Spirit.”

The 11-year-old girl, with her family watching on, was later baptised on Easter Sunday. Following the moving service, her Mum and Gran asked for prayers and committed their lives to Jesus.

Jo added: *“We were blown away with this! We had a few things not go to plan the week of the Life visit. Some schools cancelled and the weather didn’t help. But it was all worth it for this one soul. It’s wonderful to see this whole family being transformed by this young girl who clearly knows Jesus. God is amazing and can do wonderful things!”*

The Life exhibition was hosted by a group of churches in south west Wolverhampton. It was the sixth time they had hosted the exhibition.



Children enjoy the Life exhibition

Jo added: "We love the exhibition and it's a great way to team up with other local churches and show a united approach to the community. A lot of the teachers we spoke to were blown away by the fact that we were all different churches working together.

"The exhibition is amazing. Children aren't made to learn in a classroom style, they are allowed to be expressive and choose for themselves which bits they want to learn and see. It speaks for itself and allows people to make up their minds for themselves. It particularly worked well with children with special needs – they loved all the interaction."

Kevin Baldwin, Life exhibition coordinator, said: "It's always great

to hear stories like this. The Life exhibition shares the story of Jesus through a multi-media experience and allows children and adults to make up their own minds about the Christian faith.

"Since we launched in 2006, over 100,000 children and adults have visited the exhibition. It's mainly run in the daytime, where local schools are invited in but hosting an evening session - like they did in Wolverhampton – is a great opportunity to connect with the wider community."

To find out more about booking the Life exhibition in your area, contact Kevin Baldwin info@lifexpo.co.uk or visit www.lifexpo.co.uk

JUST A MINUTE WITH MATT RICH



Cumbria evangelist Matt Rich runs the Christian website Chatnow.

Ignite catches up with Matt to find out more about his ministry.

Tell us more about your main area of ministry

I run [Chatnow.org](https://www.chatnow.org) a website offering live one-to-one online chat with a Christian at any time of day or night.

How does being part of Counties help with this ministry?

Paul used to have to spend some of his time making tents but because Counties is able to give a gift to the work every month I can focus my time on introducing people to Jesus which is great because I have never been good at sewing!

What has encouraged you the most recently in your ChatNow website?

Introducing a businessman who was dependent on drugs to get through each day, to the hope and peace and blessing of knowing Jesus!

What are the challenges?

My personal time management as I also lead a church that is undergoing revitalisation. I always want to do more of everything as it all seems so important! Knowing when to do less is always a challenge.

Any exciting plans for the future?

We are making plans to do a lot more with Chatnow's social media interaction - we want to continue to remind the thousands who visit our website each month, that God is good and we are always there to help them find the hope that only He can bring.

Favourite worship song and why.

I'm really not at all musical so for me it's mainly all about the words. So pretty much anything by Sovereign Grace Music. My current favourite is - Here is our God.

How do you relax?

Relax? What's that all about?! Playing football once a week is still my favourite thing to do, but I ache more afterwards these days - so does that still count as relaxing?

YOUR LOCAL EVANGELISTS

ESSEX

Charles & Elizabeth Addoco
Shaun & Livi Almond (ETP)
Andrew & Rachel Mugford

HERTFORDSHIRE

Will & Lynne Andrews
Kim & Jo Hobbs

SUFFOLK

Tim & Joy Ayrton
Tony & Ruth Hood

NORTH DEVON

Beverley & Bryan Bedford
Steve Ellacott (AE)
David & Katie Symons

CORNWALL

Jacque & Tim Bodman (ETP)

WILTSHIRE

Jonathan & Heather Brain

WEST MIDLANDS

David & Lindsey Brown
Andy & Isobel Hodson
Paul & Vanessa Willmott

DORSET

Ian & Sally Carr

DERBYSHIRE

James & Christine Coates (AE)

GREATER MANCHESTER

Tim & Charissa Cooke
Martin & Angie Korchinsky
Lee & Lesley Marsland (ETP)

WARWICKSHIRE

Ivor & Angela Cooper

CARDIFF

Clive & Fiona Cornish
Mike & Janet Thomas (AE)

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Tim & Katrina Cracknell

HAMPSHIRE

Gordon & Penny Curley

SWANSEA

Phil & Sheila Davies
Steve & Gwyneth Treseder (AE)
Paul & Laura Davies (ETP)

BATH

Craig & Georgie Dowling

EAST YORKSHIRE

Julian & Elizabeth Gutteridge

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

John Hardwick

PEMBROKESHIRE

Janet Hawking (AE)

BEDFORDSHIRE

Colin & Linda Johnson

BRISTOL & AVON

Steve & Dawn Loader

LONDON

Caleb & Adanesh Mathewos
(ETP)

CUMBRIA

Matt & Nicola Rich

SOMERSET

Mike & Su Strange

WIRRAL

Robert & Sarah Watson

SENIORS & WIDOWS

Grace Anderson, Tom & Madelene Bathgate, Jean Campbell, Roger & Hazel Chilvers, Lionel CARGO, Ray & Carol Dadswell, Stephen & Jean Gillham, Hettie Hall, Wendy Iliffe, Victor Jack, Andy & Miriam Jelfs, Phyllis Jenkins, John & Jane Martin, Ruby Powell, Betty Saunders, Bob & Rita Telford, Gladys Whittern.



AE – Associate Evangelist
ETP – Evangelist Training Programme

PARTNER WITH US

27

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Email

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- I would like to set up a regular standing order.

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THANK YOU

COUNTIES FAMILY DAY

SATURDAY 29 JUNE 11AM

TOM ROBERT'S ADVENTURE CENTRE, MALSWICK, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, GL18 1HE

FREE HOG ROAST LATE AFTERNOON | CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMME
WORKSHOPS | ARCHERY | LIVE MUSIC | DOG DISPLAY | TUG OF WAR
EVENING CELEBRATION 6.30PM WITH SPEAKER MARTIN ERWIN



Make a weekend of it by camping from 3pm Friday to 2pm Sunday
£20 per pitch for weekend To book call Tim Cracknell: 07975 994224

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