

WINTER 2022

# IGNITE

SPARKING PASSION FOR THE GOSPEL  
ACROSS THE UK



**“LORD, WHAT DO I DO  
WITH MY TIME LEFT?”**

COUNTIES EVANGELIST SHARES HOW CANCER  
DIAGNOSIS HAS ENABLED GOD TO CHANGE HIM

**ALSO** CEO, MARTIN ERWIN, CONCLUDES HIS SERIES ON  
THE NEW SHARED VISION FOR COUNTIES.

US MISSIONARY SHARES HER EXPERIENCES OF  
CHURCH PLANTING IN BRITAIN



# WELCOME TO IGNITE



**I don't take it for granted that you have picked this magazine up and are reading it now. Thank you!**

As always, I have been so blessed in reading this copy of Ignite and pray that you will be too! Two key pieces have touched me.

Ivor Cooper shares, on page 18, his personal journey with cancer and what it has taught him in his walk with God, particularly in discovering that his identity is not based on what he can do for God.

I am also delighted that Ian Coffey, a long-time friend of Counties and currently Acting Principal at Moorlands College, has written for us.

He unpacks something we know intuitively, but perhaps don't practise as we should – the value of a name.

Thank you for partnering with Counties in prayer and in many practical ways.

May God bless you as you serve Him where you are

**Martin**

### Making Jesus known: inspiring and equipping local churches

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## STUDENTS ATTENDING ONE2LEAD CONTINUE TO GROW IN THEIR FAITH AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

One2Lead is a Personal Development and Leadership Training Programme for young people. Recently the South Wales and Borders gathering, in Chepstow, was attended by 21 young people. Amongst them were nine new students; and seven graduates who looked at *'Finding God in our Failure'*. On Saturday afternoon they enjoyed an interactive session with puppets, led by Phil Davies.

When students were asked what God had been teaching them, they said: "Jesus is who we always have to come back to," "Don't waste your life!" and "Actions have consequences!"

One2Lead South West, in Tintagel, Cornwall, welcomed five new students and six returned. Beverley Bedford and Steve Ellacott talked on: *'Knowing Myself'* and *'God the Father'*.

Students braved the weather with a game of volleyball, as well indoor bowling.



**'THE LORD IS CLOSE TO THE BROKEN-HEARTED AND SAVES THOSE WHO ARE CRUSHED IN SPIRIT.'**  
PSALM 34:18

# NEWS IN BRIEF



Dave Thomas, Counties Resource Coordinator, said: "We are really excited to continue to see One2Lead South West grow and establish great connections with young people, helping them grow in their faith as well as connect with others their own age across the area.

*"We are thankful for growth of the course and ability to launch new courses across the country, built on the foundations of the teaching created by Peter Brind. Peter and Sandra worked alongside Martin Erwin and Andy Goode to launch One2Lead in 2006 and set up this opportunity for young people to develop leadership skills.*

*"Young people are already talking about coming back and which of their friends they want to bring with them.*

*"Our prayer is that the programme continues to grow and more join on the 18-20 November and 3-5 March. Our hope is that, in years to come, we will see these young people rise up and build (Nehemiah 2:18) to become the next generation of church leaders and evangelists."*

## PRAISE FOR LIFE EXHIBITION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Life exhibition was at Newtownards, in Northern Ireland, in early October. Kevin Baldwin, the Life exhibition coordinator, attended a Sunday service at Scrabo Hall – who were hosting the Life exhibition. Glenn Johnston, a church Elder, told the packed congregation:

*"It is a phenomenal exhibition, brilliant, kids love it. It's really pitched at their level and it's very clear in terms of its message."*

Kevin says: "It was great to hear such positive feedback as often we've moved on to the next location and we don't hear what churches say to their congregations. So, this was a real blessing".

Watch the clip at 21':12"  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4xh2PAZpA4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4xh2PAZpA4)

## NEIGHBOURHOOD CHAPLAINS OPEN 'WARM SPACES'

Neighbourhood Chaplains teams in South Glasgow, Stockport, Leighton Buzzard, Kendall, Colchester and Chelmsford, have begun offering 'Warm Spaces' in churches and community buildings to combat fuel poverty.

Martin Korchinsky, from Brinnington Community Church, in Stockport, said their church was offering a 'Warm Space' a couple of days a week from November, for people struggling with their heating bills.

He added: "It looks increasingly likely that people will need to make choices this winter between 'heating or eating'. Hopefully, the offer of hot food and various activities such as board games, books and exercise classes, along with warmth, means they won't face that Hobson's choice".

## CAROL DADSWELL

Please remember Ray Dadswell and family. Carol Dadswell passed away in her sleep into the presence of her Lord on Tuesday 2 August.

## BETTY SAUNDERS

Many will remember Dick and Betty Saunders and the 'Way to Life' crusades. Betty passed away into the Lord's presence on Sunday 2 October. We thank God for the faith of a past generation of Counties Evangelists.

**WINTER WARM BANK**  
PROVIDING A PLACE OF WARMTH, BEFRIENDING, AND ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES




**EVERY WEDNESDAY, 10AM - 1PM,  
KENDAL TOWN HALL, STARTS 5TH OCTOBER**

**FREE ACTIVITIES & REFRESHMENTS**

Come along and meet others, grab a hot drink, activities are there for those who want to take part.  
Drop in between 10am - 1pm...hope to see you there!

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GATEWAYCHURCHKENDAL.ORG

# COUNTIES EVANGELISTS ARE BLESSED AT THE BRISTOL EVANGELISTS' CONFERENCE – TIM CRACKNELL SHARES THE STORY.

Every September, a group of Bristolian church leaders hold a conference where evangelists share their reports and challenges with local Christians.

## Tim, what is the ethos of the conference?

It's been running for over 100 years. It was first held in 1921 and it's for evangelists and Christian workers who are individually doing work, similar to Counties, across the South West and South Wales.

The conference is a way of supporting people who are engaged in full-time mission in the same way missionaries sent from the area are supported from the UK.

About a hundred people attended and a lot of the Counties evangelists & staff: We all find it extremely useful because the attendees are great people of prayer.

We used to have an old lady, who was about 90, who used to attend, and she

**"I delivered a training report at the Bristol Conference, and I loved the pictures of my granddad Harry Bedford who was an evangelist many years before at the same conference."**

Beverley Bedford

would phone us up from a care home every month to ask what she could pray for. She was gold to us, and we really missed her when she passed away. That's the kind of culture they have.

## What is the purpose of the conference?

It's to 'feed' the evangelists through Bible teaching and give an opportunity for prayer partners to hear about their work. This year, Dr Derek Stringer was the speaker. He talked us through the whole book of Habakkuk and spoke on the topic of 'flourishing Christianity'. He encouraged us to 'finish well,' by teaching that some Christians start out the journey of faith well with passion and enthusiasm but, as time goes on, become jaded or struggle from the pressures and demands of life.

Derek highlighted that 35 percent of biblical characters didn't 'finish well' and used the acrostic NEW: Never give up, Encourage others and Worship the Lord.

Delegates were also encouraged not to 'take their eyes off the Lord' in their own

**"Having been a participant for many years I find that though discussion over God's Word is stimulating and helpful the most enriching element for me is the fellowship with other evangelists."**

Roger Chilvers

personal walk and quiet time with God so we remain committed and consistent in our Christian journey.

Tim adds that to 'finish well' is a challenge for us all. As Hebrews 11:1-2 says: "Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith".

## What ways were Counties Evangelists involved?

In the afternoon and evening evangelists are invited to give little reports on what they've been up to in the last 12 months. Because of the numbers of evangelists reporting, you only get a certain amount of time: nine, seven or four minutes which is quite a challenge. And they keep you to time too! So, 10 evangelists & staff from Counties gave reports.

**"Hearing the challenges and time to see break through with others has encouraged me. I needed just to be around those taking a similar walk. I am always amazed and blessed by the time freely given by those preparing food and the running of conference."**

Clive Cornish

## What does the conference mean for Counties Evangelists attending?

The organisers are so supportive, and we really appreciate it. They are very, very faithful. They are a very caring group of people who want the evangelists to know that they are loved. But they want us to be open and honest – so we get to share about all the good things but also, we can talk about our struggles too.

Bristol Evangelists' Conference 100 years ago



Bristol Evangelists' Conference 50 years ago



Can you spot the Counties evangelists in this pic?

Bristol Evangelists' Conference this year



# IN THE SECOND OF OUR SERIES OF COUNTIES SCHOOLS' RESOURCES, IGNITE'S EDITOR, RACHEL ROUNDS VISITS GSUS LIVE.

After my fantastic time at the Life exhibition, I thought I would spend a few hours with GSUS Live at Archbishop McGrath School in Bridgend, Wales. As you may recall, the trailers had to be decommissioned as they had become too costly to repair. But rather than get rid of an amazing resource, GSUS Live is now even more mobile – going into secondary schools in tablet form.



I joined Year 8 – who are mainly aged 13 - and not an easy crowd to impress, especially as this generation are so technically savvy. I was worried Counties had its work cut out as some young people admit they can find some Christian resources boring or 'cheesy'.

I couldn't have been more wrong. The class of around 25 pupils were really engaged from the start. Glyn Davies and his wife, Pam, were running the sessions. They've been bringing GSUS Live into schools for 15 years, but this is their first time using the classroom version rather than the trailer.

Glyn admits it doesn't have the "same feel" as the trailers but he's clear that the responses have been equally as good.

*"I wouldn't say there is any difference in the way they engage with the programme or the responses. We've had some really thoughtful questions and responses from the pupils. GSUS Live is very helpful in explaining Christian teaching and how it relates to problems that might arise in everyday life. At Key Stage 3 the RE curriculum expects that kind of linkage to be made."*



The tablets were shared between two pupils, each of whom had their own set of headphones. Each tablet runs the same programme, but there are different stories for the pupils to choose. I decided to join in the lesson to fully immerse myself to see what the children were experiencing.

***"A lot of our pupils don't realize that they are living Christian values. So, some of them wouldn't think: 'Oh, that's living a Christian life'. And GSUS Live gives them an opportunity to make that link."***

**Cath Crossman, RE Teacher, Archbishop McGrath School, Bridgend**

The programme introduces three characters called Ben, Sophie and Jack. Each of them is struggling with a problem: fear, rejection or forgiveness.

Before embarking on the tablet lesson, Glyn talked brilliantly to the class about the themes coming up and asked the pupils if they had experienced any of these. One girl said about rejection: *"When someone breaks your heart,"* which nearly broke mine! As it reminded me of how fragile our teenagers are despite their bravado at times.

Once the tablet lesson begins the characters talk and ask questions through 'text speak' which the pupils could respond to with their own messages.

Noah, 13, said: *"I like the text messages because it felt really real as well. The voice acting was quite helpful because you didn't really have to read it and they just told you, which I found quite nice. It kind of helped you when you put in your own comment or your own text, it read it out and that kind of helped you think about it more than just reading it"*.

***"I remember GSUS Live coming to my own school 20 years ago and I have really fond memories of it. And we've got pupils now in sixth form who now when I said: 'GSUS Live is coming' they were so excited because they remember going. Everybody who has experienced it – it stays with them for life, and they remember it and they talk about it really positively."***

Gabriella Luca-Williams, Deputy Head of RE, Archbishop McGrath School, Bridgend

The students engage with each of the characters alongside animated Bible stories such as Jairus's daughter or the story of Jephthah, songs, and real-life stories of people like Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, and Corrie Ten Boom.

Along with the majority of the class I chose the theme of rejection and the story of Jack – a boy who is bullied for being overweight.

Glyn said it had been a really popular theme that week which showed me how much forethought had gone into the subject choices, as all three issues are at the front of teenagers' minds – none more so than rejection.

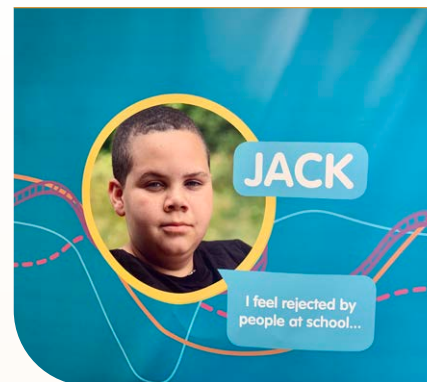
Cath Crossman, RE teacher, says: *"What's come across this week is that the pupils have learned about Christian values, but they've been able to relate them to situations that they're faced with every single day."*

Jessica, aged 13, said: *"There's a lot of people who do get bullied in schools. And it's just really nice to think that you could help people, especially because it happens a lot. And I know someone who used to get bullied. It's nice to think that I could use what I've learnt, use it in real life and help someone."*

*"Just because someone's different in some way, you shouldn't discriminate against them or be mean to them because we're all human after all. And I just think you want to treat everyone as you wish to be treated."*

The programme zipped along, and I found myself almost beginning to see Jack as a real boy. The 'text speak' is a really clever way of engaging teenagers who spend most of their time communicating this way.

The music was also not what the class had expected. I caught a lot of the girls dancing, swinging and clicking their fingers.



Cath Crossman adds: *"It's something different for the pupils. They are used to their usual format for a lesson. So, to come in and have the iPads, listening to music on your headphones straight away is engaging them and they love that."*

*"They respond to tech so positively in this day and age. It surrounds them. All of the pupils I have spoken to have commented on the music, how they've loved it, and how the message has come through in it."*

Her thoughts were echoed by snatched conversations I overheard: *"Love this song!"* and *"This music is really awesome"*.

The use of the stories of real people gave the programmes a real gravitas and added information that many of children, later said, they hadn't known about. I was astounded to learn, for example, that before becoming one of the most renowned American Presidents, Abraham Lincoln had a nervous breakdown in his mid-twenties.

As Jessica, 13, echoed: *"I like the videos, as they were very into the inspirational and they relate to you like they give you motivation to carry on"*.

At the end of the lesson Glyn chatted some more about the links with Jesus, with which, again, the class engaged enthusiastically. I asked Glyn if he thought their enthusiasm was, in part, because the children were already being educated in a Catholic school. He disagreed and affirmed that pupils in secular schools, who weren't necessarily as knowledgeable about Christianity, still engaged in much the same way.

*"Our experience is that pupils are enthused by it because it creates opportunities to explore various issues of faith and life."*

Nathaniel and Toby, 13, summed up the lesson, perfectly, saying: *"I think I learned how to empathize more with others, really. And I learned more of my decision making and what I should really choose."*

*"I learned I just had to help people a bit better"*.

Contact Dave at [gsuslive@countiesuk.org](mailto:gsuslive@countiesuk.org) to book GSUS Live or find out more information.

# PUTTING OUR NEW MISSIONAL VALUES INTO PRACTICE THROUGH CREATIVE FUSION WITH PARTNERSHIP



CEO, Martin Erwin, concludes the new shared vision for Counties

**This is the final of three articles written by Counties CEO, Martin Erwin, spread across consecutive editions of Ignite. In the first, in Summer 2022, Martin challenged us on the need for collaboration. In the Autumn 2022 edition, Martin focused on the new mission strapline for Counties, 'Making Jesus known; inspiring and equipping local churches.'**

Martin now reflects on a major strategic development that will help us to pursue these goals together.

For the last few years some of us have been dreaming about how we might be more effective in making disciples through our local churches. We have longed for conversion growth and revitalisation of struggling churches. We have a heart for communities with no Gospel witness, and we are passionate about planting new churches with teams that are sent, trained, and committed to their task.

Some churches have stepped out on their own to do this, with some success. A few Counties evangelists have stepped into church planting, and led church revitalisation, with some success.

However, the task is bigger than any one local church, or any single organisation or agency. Jesus calls us to collaboration, partnership, and genuine fellowship in the Gospel.

In the past Partnership ([www.partnershipuk.org](http://www.partnershipuk.org)) has sought to network together local churches for this purpose, many sharing a common heritage but all sharing a common desire and values. However, I believe that a new opportunity now lies before us. There is a need for genuine networking, within regions, and across our nation.

Together with others, Counties has been pursuing this dream, in discussion with other organisations and church leaders. The development of regional networks of local churches, committed together for the

task. Each network connected to a greater whole, with access to resources, training, equipping, conferencing and more.

As a Counties Evangelist, my wife and I planted Challenge Community Church in Hereford, together with a team. Challenge was the daughter church of Barton Christian Fellowship, the 'Brethren assembly' in the city. It had been their vision for a new outreach in the south of the city. The DNA of Barton, shared by thousands of churches across the UK and the globe, was passed on to the new church. What is that DNA?



The DNA of Barton includes, though is not restricted to:

- A passionate commitment to sharing the Gospel of Jesus with everyone
- A belief in the autonomy of the local church, with regard to leadership
- A commitment to plural leadership, with the church led by a team
- Believers' baptism taught and regularly practised for those coming to faith in Christ
- A high value placed on communion, with the Lord's Supper a regular part of worship
- Priesthood of all believers, demonstrated by a desire for all members to discover and use their gifts, and no distinction made between 'lay' and paid roles in regard to leadership and authority
- A desire to fellowship and work with all Christians for the sake of Christ and the Gospel.

Whilst these things may be shared by many Christians and churches, they reflected our heritage and in particular, our understanding of the New Testament in regard to values and practise. From early on, we committed to join two organisations as members. The Evangelical Alliance, defining our broad commitment to core Gospel values, and Partnership ([www.partnershipuk.org](http://www.partnershipuk.org)) who represented a wider Network of local churches with values just like ours.

The work of Counties also reflects that 'two-handed' approach. On the one hand, Counties is an Evangelistic organisation, committed to making Jesus known, and inspiring and equipping others to do the same. Our schools' resources, such as GSUS Live, and programmes like Neighbourhood Chaplains partner with a broad spectrum of the Christian Church.

We are not restricted by our heritage, but rather freed and inspired by it to extend the Kingdom of God and to work with all those who seek to honour Jesus. Counties



Evangelists work freely where the Lord leads them, working in schools, prisons, ships, pubs, on streets and in camps and churches. We also recognise that we are shaped by our rich and deep heritage. Counties is one of a family of organisations and agencies grown from the same root, from the same stable.

It has been our pleasure to work ever more closely with our friends in Partnership UK in recent years. In January 2022 a working party known as 'The Delivery Group,' which was established to propose steps towards more fruitful networking for churches and organisations like ours, recommended a 'Creative Fusion' between Partnership and Counties. This proposal led to discussions between the two boards. That in turn has led to this significant step.

From 1 January 2023 Counties will take responsibility for the work of the Partnership Regional Coordinators, bringing their work within our structure. There are currently five Regional Coordinators who work to develop and strengthen church growth, revitalisation, and mission through networking. Their role is field focused and fits well with our understanding of Counties as both an evangelistic organisation, supporting evangelists directly, and also as a resource to local churches inspiring and equipping them to make disciples.

Counties will also take on from Partnership the work of the Revitalisation programme. This will continue as a collaborative project, partnering with GLO and Church Growth Trust, but now administered by Counties.

I believe that this is the beginning of something significant. Please pray for the ongoing networking conversations and meetings that will be taking place around the UK in the coming months.

If you would like to be part of the conversation and would like to explore being part of a Network of growing churches committed to making disciples and planting churches, please get in touch with me at [ceo@countiesuk.org](mailto:ceo@countiesuk.org)





## “THE M4 PROGRAMME HAS CREATED A COMMUNITY, TRUSTED ADVICE AND STRUCTURE.”

M4 is a programme that helps to assess, train and coach church planting teams in the UK. Kendall Morris, (31) from Texas, is a missionary in the UK. She attended the M4 learning community in Ross-on-Wye, in September, with the team from Church in the Community Wollaston (CitC Wollaston), near Birmingham.

**Kendall, could you share with Ignite readers how you came to be in the UK?**

*I work with an organisation called Greater Europe Mission (GEM), which sends missionaries to Europe. I was seeking an opportunity to work with a church plant, so GEM partnered me with the team that would plant CitC Wollaston. My heart for England has been cultivated by the Lord for years and was amplified over a six-month internship with a church in Lincoln, just after university.*

*It broke my heart to see the state of the “collective church.” So many people want to see the church grow but were just so short staffed. And this meant there were so many people who weren’t getting the chance to hear the Gospel.*

*Now I am part of a church plant, it’s so exciting - it’s not just about ‘planting’ a church but discipleship too. It’s establishing a spiritual foundation that encourages growth and multiplication. It has a great sense of hope and you become really excited about how it might change and develop in the future.*

**CitC Wollaston has been doing the M4 programme from the start – how has the team found it?**

*In September 2020, our team of four people started the programme with the first ‘M’ M1 (Master – Thinking about your team – core objectives, foundational vision) and M2 (Mission – Who are you reaching?), before we had actually started the physical Sunday service in May 2021.*

*We did M3 (Multiplication / discipleship – growing your church) a year ago, just a few months after church had opened.*

*This M4 (Movement/leadership) learning community was really exciting for us because we have had year in between to discuss, pray over, and begin practicing discipleship. It also gave us time to look at where we have come from. This conference was very much about: “What’s next? You’ve planted a church so how do you create a sustainable movement? And how do you build up new leaders?”*

*Each section provides essential baby steps, and they give you time to work on*

*what you’ve learned. It’s a great format. Throughout the course, it’s been great to have conversations about a focused vision and setting reasonable objectives for us.*

*We’ve been able to talk with other church plants and hear how they’ve been blessed in the phases of planting beyond ours. We can even look at how our church could prepare for those phases.*

**What were the benefits of doing the M4 programme?**

*Through the M4 process, Counties and the Free Methodist Church have created a learning community for church planters. They have taken the time to compile their experience and expertise in an educational format that offers new planters trusted relationships to look to as they prepare to plant their own church.*

*Because the M4 programme is European, it sparks a real joy in my spirit, as an American, to see God calling for collaboration and education across multiple cultures, in multiple countries.*

*It has been so beneficial to be a part of a community, to hear trusted advice*



*and to be given structure in problem solving. Planting a church is complicated and the nuances of the community you’re reaching need to be considered. The whole programme helps you lay a foundation.*

**How is Wollaston church now involved in the local community?**

*We were blessed to be able to plant in an actual building to serve the community. In the last year and a half, we’ve opened a coffee shop that a lot of secondary school pupils use regularly, and we’ve been able to build some great relationships.*

*It’s led to us starting a youth programme to teach young people about the Bible. We have a parent and toddler group that’s been very relationship focused. We also have two life groups in the week as well as a Sunday service. God’s brought rapid fruit. People now know us in the community and recognize us as a part of the community – praise God!*



To find out more about church planting: [www.counties-training.org/counties-church-planting](http://www.counties-training.org/counties-church-planting)

## A CANCER DIAGNOSIS HAS LED COUNTIES EVANGELIST, IVOR COOPER, TO SEE HE'S A 'WORK IN PROGRESS' AS HE ASKS: "LORD, WHAT DO YOU WANT ME DO WITH THE TIME I HAVE LEFT?"

**Ivor was first diagnosed with cancer in 2015. He had an operation to remove a tumour and a kidney. Although he recovered well and carried on working.**

He says: "I was warned at the time that this particular cancer can return in various ways. One of the ways is the brain and about two years later I noticed things with my face and head weren't right."

Ivor received the news that he had tumours on the brain and since then, he has had two operations on his brain and four cyberknife non-invasive surgeries which involve high precision radio surgical treatment.

"Sometimes I can carry on pretty well afterwards, but over the last two years the consequences have been more significant. Particularly the one at the beginning of this year, as it took quite a bit of my brain away and I do know that has happened. My speed of recollection and my memory is not what it used to be."

"Also, the operation last February removed some of my sight which has been particularly frustrating. I am now unable



to read or see things clearly. I can't read my Bible any longer which has been very frustrating. So, I am having to learn a new way to live with limited eyesight which is my biggest frustration."

In the midst of it all, though, Ivor still retains his infectious sense of humour. "I often speak rubbish – people often say I've been doing that for years," he laughs. And he still holds fast to his faith and shows an enormous sense of humility when he explains what the illness has meant for his relationship with God and how he understands suffering.

"I haven't got any answers here yet. I still find this whole thing a work in progress – not just with me but with people in general. And why God allows certain things. But I have never said: 'Oh God, why has this happened to me?' Because why shouldn't it happen to me? It could happen to anyone."

Ivor goes on to say that he has always had, what he calls, a 'pretty static' personality

**"I have never said: 'Oh God, why has this happened to me?' Because why shouldn't it happen to me? It could happen to anyone"**

which is emotionally consistent and not filled with either elation or depression. "I am just consistent," he adds and throughout his illness he has remained this way.

However, Ivor does admit that having cancer has made him reflect much more on the way he views himself and where his validation comes from.

He says he thought he would get to his mid-sixties and still have lots of work to do but now that this has radically changed, he finds himself saying: "Lord, what do you want me do with what I have left?"

**“There is a Psalm for every human condition.”**

He admits he hasn't worked it out. *"I am not sure what the Lord has for me. I could now just sit back and do nothing and stay in bed with cancer. But I don't want to waste whatever time I have left. So that phrase 'work in progress' is very much what I am."*

Ivor is reminded of a good friend who has Parkinson's disease who said to him:

*"You have to realise that because I might think: 'I have finished with me,' the Lord hasn't."*

Ivor is unflinchingly honest when he admits that so much of his validation as a Christian came from what he did:

*"I know it shouldn't have been, but it was my ministry that kept my Christianity*

*vibrant and alive. Busyness was the important thing – what I did. The fuller the prayer letter I wrote, detailing the things I was doing, the more validated I felt. I realise now that even though I can't do that anymore, the Lord loves me just the same. God's consistency to me and care for me is exactly the same and it's not dependent on what I do for Him."*

He admits it is a difficult lesson for many Christians to learn. He adds:

*"Many of us in the evangelical world, tend to put so much emphasis on what they are 'doing' for the Lord and how busy we are for God. But that's not the criteria God wants. To get over that is hard. So, that's why I say I am still learning with this, and it probably won't be, till I die".*

Anger with God is not something Ivor says he thinks he has ever felt; although he says he totally understands those in his situation who do. Instead, he has taken



**“There's a hurting world that I like talking with people about and trying to make sense of it. But in the end, God still loves us even though He allows bad things to happen. Fundamentally, God is good, and I still believe that despite everything that's happening in the world.”**

great comfort from the Psalms. He recalls Victor Jack telling him that, *"there is a Psalm for every human condition"*. He believes there is a great deal of truth in that because often, Ivor says, he has read a Psalm and it has spoken into his particular situation, at that time.

Encouragement has also come from being reminded of people, and situations that may have happened decades ago. They may have seemed insignificant at the time, yet Ivor has discovered they really made an impact.

*"That's encouraging, because in this situation you can think, 'my life's been wasted' but when you hear about people's lives being turned around you thank God for hearing that news because sometimes it can be decades before you know about the benefit something you were part of had upon someone else's life".*

Ivor also says that having cancer has enabled him to speak from a position of experience that he wouldn't otherwise have had. It's allowed him to have some

deep conversations with people around the issues of suffering: *"Why has the Lord allowed this?" "Why do bad things happen to good, ordinary people?"*

Cancer has also changed Ivor's relationship with God because he says frankly: *"It's just you and Him. Not the work you have been involved in and Him. If I need to talk to the Lord, it's for today not what I am 'doing' for today".*

*"Perhaps these are some of the lessons I have to learn. Deepening my relationship with Him is what I can do with whatever years I have left. This is part of the work in progress – that He just wants me to concentrate on Him a little bit more than I ever used to. Maybe that's the answer."*

He ends: *"There's a hurting world that I like talking with people about and trying to make sense of it. But in the end, God still loves us even though He allows bad things to happen. Fundamentally, God is good, and I still believe that despite everything that's happening in the world."*



## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

### Ian Coffey, Acting Principal of Moorlands College, explains why the personal touch can change lives for Jesus.

***“What first made you interested in the Gospel?” was the question I posed to a lecture room of students and then stood back listening to their answers.***

We were having a lively discussion when Nick (characteristically impatient) cut across his classmates.

They had cited books, sermons, conversations with friends as the key God used to unlock their hearts. *“None of that worked for me” he said. “It was because the Pastor of the church remembered my name”.*

Sensing we were on to something important, I asked Nick to explain some more. He told us a friend had invited him to a Men’s Breakfast some weeks before and he thought the speaker was Okay – and the breakfast even better.

The friend had introduced him to his pastor, and they shared a two-minute chat. Several weeks later the persistent friend invited Nick to a guest service and the pastor was greeting people on the door. *“Hi Nick!” he said offering a firm handshake. “It’s really good to see you – welcome!”*

That was it. Nick felt special. Honoured. He stood out from the crowd. The Pastor knew his name.

Zacchaeus probably felt the same way when Jesus called him down from the tree and invited himself home for a meal. As a senior tax-collector working for the Roman government he was used to being called lots of names, none of them very polite.

As far as he was concerned, he was just a spectator looking on from the safety of a tree, trying to get a glimpse of the man from Galilee who causing such a stir. He was curious – nothing more than that.

And then Jesus stopped beneath his leafy hiding place and used his name; *“Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”* We read, he didn’t wait to be asked twice but hurried down, welcoming Jesus gladly.

This familiar story (which remains a winner with children!) runs the risk of being too well known. We can get caught up with turning the spotlight on the critics in the crowd or focusing on Jesus great declaration about his mission to save lost people. But look at how it started.

***“The sweetest sound to anyone’s ears is the sound of their own name”***

Think about it. Jesus used his name. *“The sweetest sound to anyone’s ears is the sound of their own name”.* The quote is attributed to the author Robert C. Lee, but I have seen it crop up in many different places and contexts.

A couple of days ago I met the Pastor’s wife and recounted Nick’s story. She smiled and told me how hard her husband worked to remember people’s names and become very cross with himself when occasionally he got it wrong.

She said he had developed a technique over the years to help names stick and find them again with instant recall. She described it as a special gift. But as with most gifts you need to put the work in to make them special.

I have been reflecting on Nick’s story and the account of Jesus and Zacchaeus have come to some important conclusions that help me be salt and light on a daily basis. Here’s what I have discovered.

## 1. "What's your name?" is a great starting point in any relationship.

My wife and I volunteer in a feeding programme for rough sleepers in our community. We spotted none of the workers had badges and suggested this may be a good idea. Name badges were produced, and the results have been amazing. The people who come for food know us by name, which makes it easier to ask for theirs in return. A bridge has been built from a simple idea.

## 2. Remembering someone's name sends a signal.

It tells people they matter. The Gospel says that, and we can demonstrate it. Jesus knew who Zacchaeus was by the power of the Spirit. That has never happened to me, but I have known the Holy Spirit tell me something about a person that has been a key to a conversation. It sends a signal that they are known to God and loved by him.

## 3. Their name is a person's identity.

Many times, we come against the impersonal approach. Letters addressed to "The Occupier", or "Dear Customer" are good examples of bad communication.

I have a new Bank app on my phone that says "Good morning, Ian" when I open it, and it makes a difference. A few days ago, I took part in a fun run with my name emblazoned next to my number. Hearing complete strangers call my name lifted my spirits and gave me energy to keep going.

I wonder what would have happened if Jesus had shouted, "Hey you in the tree!", would Zacchaeus have been so quick to respond?

Read on in the story (find it in Luke 19:1-9) and discover what flowed from that simple act of using Zacchaeus' name. Whatever went on in his house as he entertained Jesus was literally life changing. Zacchaeus publicly gives away half of what he owns to the poor in his community. He then agrees to pay back four times the amount of what he has cheated from anyone.

This gives a whole new meaning to the phrase "levelling up", so loved by politicians, and must have created social shock waves in Jericho. Chief tax collectors became wealthy by creaming off commission from the people and Zacchaeus would have many debts to settle.

Notice how Luke concludes the story. Jesus declares Zacchaeus as a saved man and a son of Abraham, reminding the stunned crowd that his mission was to find lost people and make a lasting change in their lives.



A few weeks ago, a friend prayed for me as I leave Moorlands College and step into a new season in my life. He knew my ministry began nearly fifty years ago as an evangelist so he prayed this final phase in extra time may see me returning to that calling.

He prayed a bold prayer that this latter season would be more fruitful than the first. I added my "Amen" not quite sure of what that would mean. But my student Nick, and the story of Zacchaeus remind me where I should start. By remembering people's names.



JUST A MINUTE WITH...

COUNTIES EVANGELIST DAVID BROWN



David has been a Counties Evangelist since 2008. He is married to Lindsey. They live in Dudley and have two grown-up children. Their other son, Benjamin, died 24 years ago.

How did you become a Christian?

I came from a Christian home and went to church for as long as I can remember. But I do remember somebody preaching the Gospel one Sunday evening and thinking: "Oh dear, I need to trust Christ because I am going through a lost eternity".

I talked to my mum, and I remember asking Christ into my life, as I knelt by my bed, at the age of 10.

What does your work as a Counties Evangelist involve and what have been the highlights?

Mainly schools work, these days, doing assemblies and RE lessons using 'Walk Through the Bible'. And itinerant preaching and teaching. The highlight was the trip to Moldova in 2021 because of the positive response to the gospel, and a call to follow Christ. To think: "Yes, the gospel is powerful," even though we may not see too much evidence of it in this country. It's given me greater confidence about challenging people to respond and

not worrying about what I have said as, ultimately, it is about the Holy Spirit being at work in their lives.

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

It's having a network, albeit diverse, who all have the common goal of seeking to make disciples. There's a sense of mutual support. For want of a better phrase, Counties is a 'trusted brand,' so there are people who will be praying for you because they are Counties supporters.

What's your favourite Bible passage and why?

It depends on what day you ask me! Today it is Isaiah 40:11

*He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.*

That picture of His care and compassion and love for his flock is so comforting and encouraging. It also reminds us that this is the attitude we should have for his flock.

YOUR LOCAL EVANGELISTS

NORTH OF ENGLAND

- Julian & Ella Gutteridge
- Martin & Angie Korchinsky
- Lee & Lesley Marsland
- Matt & Nicola Rich
- Rob & Sarah Watson
- Phyllis Jenkins (Senior)

MIDLANDS

- Jordan & Lacy Armstrong (CP)
- David & Lindsey Brown
- Tim & Katrina Cracknell
- Andy & Isobel Hodson
- Paul & Vanessa Willmott
- Roger & Hazel Chilvers (Seniors)
- Ivor & Angela Cooper (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 Cargio (Senior)
- Victor Jack (Senior)
- Andy & Miriam Jelfs (Seniors)
- John & Jane Martin (Seniors)
- Gladys Whittern (Senior)

AE – Associate Evangelist  
ETP – Evangelists' Training Programme  
CP – Church Planter

SOUTH WEST

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

SOUTH CENTRAL

- Jonathan & Heather Brain
- Ian & Sally Carr
- Gordon & Penny Curley
- Steve & Dawn Loader
- Ray Dadswell (Senior)
- Wendy Illiffe (Senior)
- Stephen & Jean Gillham (Seniors)

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

- Peter & Victoria Barker
- Steve & Debra Cowles
- Alex & Beth Symons
- Stevie & Natalie Walker

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