



IGNiTE

SPARKING PASSION FOR THE GOSPEL ACROSS THE UK | WINTER 2025



TESTIMONY SPECIAL

WE SHARE HOW JESUS IS MOVING
IN LIVES AND CHURCHES THROUGH
THE WORK OF COUNTIES

- A celebration of the life of Counties evangelist, Will Andrews.
- Connect Conference keynote speaker, John McGinley, shares highlights.



WELCOME TO IGNITE

As I read this edition of Ignite, I confess I cried. I was sad as we said goodbye to Counties evangelist Will Andrews. But there were tears of joy too, as again and again I read of lives changed and transformed by Jesus and the power of the Gospel.

God is using Counties for His glory, and this humbles us. In this issue alone we discover:

- How UK based internet evangelism leads a Muslim man to Jesus.
- A church growing in Swansea through new Christians and prodigals returning to the Father.
- Young people set on fire for God through One2Lead.

God is on the move. At our conference in October, over 200 people stood to be commissioned to return to the Harvest field.

Will you join us? Why not train with us at Counties?

Finally, I am sad to say goodbye (for now, at least) to Rachel Rounds. Rachel has been our Ignite editor for these last 5 years, and she has done a wonderful job. Thank you, Rachel.

Thank you for your prayers and ongoing support of the work of Counties.

Martin Erwin, CEO

Making Jesus known: inspiring and equipping local churches

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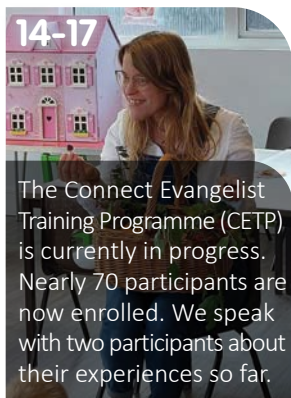
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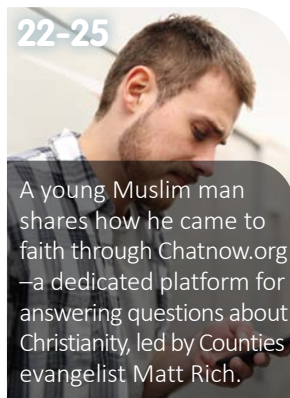
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Martin Erwin reports on Counties Connect Conference 2025, 'Building on Jesus', held in Northamptonshire.



What a joy it was to be together with 250 others at the Connect Conference in Daventry at the end of October. There we were fed and challenged by John McGinley (SEND UK & Ireland and Myriad) to refocus lives and churches on Jesus.

Other highlights included seminars and workshops led by Counties Evangelists, as well as Graham Poland speaking about a heart for revitalising churches, and Rachel Jordan-Wolf challenging us in a workshop entitled 'Research and revival.' Her 'Narnia' analogy that we are in summer, and harvest is here, but too many churches are still living in 'winter' mode was challenging and encouraging.

What a great weekend. Join us next year **23-25 October 2026.** Book the date.



In 2026, Life exhibition celebrates its 20th anniversary, after its inception at St Mark's Church in Kennington, London.



The Life exhibition coordinator, Kevin Baldwin, says:

"After GSUS Live was up and running, Counties began to look at a replacement for the Bible

experience, which was the precursor to the Life exhibition. Using some of the technological developments from GSUS Live, Counties developed Life exhibition, which began in 2006."

Reader's Letters

Dear Ignite,



I wish to express my appreciation of the articles in the Autumn edition, particularly the testimonies of Sue and Katie.

I always find it very encouraging to hear real-life stories of people being saved by God and the enormous impact this has on their lives.

Taking the first step into church is often the most intimidating part, though once established,

it's amazing how soon these "strangers" become "family", but to a newcomer, with no Christian background, it's hard at first.

I could totally relate to Sue and Katie's mental health issues, too, having suffered terribly myself over the years, and when these women say that becoming a Christian has helped them to cope, that is an understatement. Hand on heart, I believe I would no longer be walking on God's beautiful earth, so low had I become, had I not, like Sue, found my very own "Martin" at my church! I hope Martin understands just how much of a blessing he is, doing God's work, amazingly well. I was

very impressed by how Martin

managed to put Sue at ease and was able to understand and empathise with "ordinary people and their troubles".

In closing, I'd like to mention Dan, taking goody bags to the neighbours, what a lovely way to bring awareness of Christianity to people like Katie!!!

Once again, thank you for your excellent work, bringing these articles. Always a pleasure.

Tracey, Lancashire



Over the last 20 years, more than 170,000 children have visited it, and it has been hosted in 312 venues.

Kevin recently visited Northern Ireland and Stevie Walls, an Elder at Castlereagh Community Church, utilised the resources for Messy



Church and local schools throughout the week.

For more details,

Contact Kevin at
lifexpo@countiesuk.org

Visit:
countiesuk.org/lifexpo



COUNTIES EVANGELIST WILL ANDREWS

WENT TO BE WITH THE LORD ON 15
AUGUST. HE LEAVES BEHIND
HIS WIFE, LYNNE, WHOM HE
MARRIED IN APRIL 1980



In 1991, Will and Lynne felt that God was calling them to leave secure employment and become self-employed, living by faith as evangelists. Their desire, then, and throughout their ministry, was to share the Good News about Jesus.

While Will had been preaching at their church in Southampton, Bitterne Gospel Chapel, they were involved in inter-church outreach and felt God's calling was for them to work with local churches and the broader community.

Despite the connections and familiarity of their home patch in Hampshire, they accepted the invitation of the group of churches that made up the Regional Fellowship in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, and took over the reins from Counties evangelists, Reg and Gladys Whittern, when they moved there in 1992.

They worked part-time with Langdale Evangelical Church, reaching out into the community, which they both enjoyed as they saw much fruit after moving to their new home.

In those early days, their ministry included school assemblies and lessons, as well as children's Holiday Bible Clubs, where they engaged children with day-to-day themes to which they could relate.

An excerpt from Will and Lynne's July 1994 prayer letter gives a feel for their very relational approach:

"We look forward to returning to Fuller Hall again, following our last mission there in October 1992, and building on the contacts made."

"We have good links with the local middle school, helped by the fact that the head teacher is a keen Christian and therefore gives us total liberty, and we have a good relationship with the children, which we look forward to building on."

Alongside these regular commitments to younger people, both Will and Lynne spoke in churches on Sundays and midweek, and their prayer diaries reveal the range of churches with which they had strong connections.

Will was also involved with others in Counties in a working group examining ways to strengthen and revitalise churches that were facing smaller congregation numbers or seeking to refresh their vision for community outreach.

He developed materials that are widely used today to help church leaders assess their current situation and identify areas for growth. His snakes and ladders worksheet is legendary: it was a simple, yet very effective worksheet based on the game of the same name that examined “opportunities” and “challenges” churches faced.

Will has also been involved in training new evangelists. He began on the Evangelist training program at the same time as Counties CEO, Martin Erwin. He remembers:

“When I met Will, he loved 10-pin bowling. He was the first person I’d ever met who had his own bowling ball and a bag for it.”

Will’s training day for new evangelists included hot tips on how to make money out of not a lot. He recommended Martin Lewis-esque ways to stretch what could often be challenging levels of support for Christian workers – always in a legitimate manner.

Counties Evangelists’ officer, Andy Mugford, adds:

“In our eastern Cluster of Counties, evangelists and church planters, we have always appreciated Will and Lynne’s wise counsel, friendship, and support.

“Their faith-filled trust has inspired us in the Lord Jesus as they journeyed with Will’s cancer. He was always honest with us – acknowledging the struggles and yet also sharing the opportunities to connect with other cancer patients and their loved ones during times in the journey.

“Will has been welcomed into his eternal home, most certainly with the words of Jesus, including:

“Well done, good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful and good in many things.” —Matthew 25:23

May we remember Will’s life, ministry, and impact on us personally, knowing that he would not want the focus to remain on him and what he’s done.

Instead, he would urge us to understand the Lord Jesus ourselves as he did, as the One who is alongside us wanting to share His life with us.”



BREAK TIME PRAYERS

GSUS LIVE LESSONS, HOSTED IN A WEST WALES SECONDARY SCHOOL, LED TO ELEVEN PUPILS APPROACHING COUNTIES EVANGELIST, JANET HAWKING, FOR PRAYER DURING THEIR BREAK TIME.

I spent a week leading GSUS Live lessons at Ysgol Bro Gwaun, Fishguard. The pupils were very receptive to learning about Christianity.

In Year 7, students are usually offered a New Testament, but some miss out. After the GSUS Live lessons, I was able to give them out to 35 pupils who'd asked for one.

Before the first lesson on Wednesday, the team prayed, and after the session, the class had profound questions. We shared our stories

of answered prayer and explained how God offers comfort during hard and sad times.

By lunchtime on Wednesday, some of the boys had additional deep questions, of which we were able to answer from our Christian viewpoint. They also asked for prayer. Two of them had major family health issues.

I suggested they write down their concerns and mentioned the team would pray later. But four boys returned and said:

"We would like to pray now."

As we stood in a circle, in the busy corridor at lunchtime, one boy added: "Let's pray in a circle." He prayed loudly

and fervently for all the concerns that had been shared, and he did so with such compassion and empathy that there was no need for me to add to it. I was amazed, as none of these boys go to church.

By Friday, two of the boys asked if they could pray again at lunchtime, as they had been moved by our earlier meeting. Other pupils joined in, and so we pulled chairs around to form a little group. Soon, eleven pupils joined me. We left the door open, and some of the young people wanted to shut the door as they were worried that other children would laugh as they walked past. However, others thought that it should remain open so that others could join in. We agreed and left the door open.

One girl told us she went to Evensong at the Cathedral and could feel the presence of God in the classroom. One boy asked if he could kneel and pray.

Another asked if we could pray for his Gran, who is in hospital with cancer. He started to pray aloud, and he began to cry. He

wondered if that was okay, as he said he was not usually emotional.

I reminded him that the shortest verse in the Bible is: *"Jesus wept."* And I told him it was okay to cry if he wanted to. Then a girl shared: *"I need forgiveness."* So, we prayed that the Lord would answer her prayer.

Two 16-year-old boys stayed behind after we had finished praying, and one of them asked about being baptised as an adult. As they didn't attend church, I told them about a small Baptist Church up the road where they could be disciplined before committing to baptism.

These eleven teens blew me away. Expect the unexpected. The boys were eager to pray aloud, and they were also unashamed to be vulnerable and share their needs.

What a privilege to support and share with these teenagers following the GSUS Live lessons. I do thank the Lord for a Pioneering Spirit to serve and support our schools in West Wales.

Janet Hawking (left)



To find out more about GSUS Live, visit the website:

countiesuk.org/gsuslive

Or contact Dave Thomas:
gsuslive@countiesuk.org



ONE2LEAD STUDENTS SHARE

HOW THE PROGRAMME FURTHERED THEIR FIRE FOR JESUS.

One2Lead is a training programme for young people from age 16 into their 20s. Over the course of two years, spanning six weekends, participants engage in practical and interactive theology and personal growth seminars. Encouragement sessions and time for reflection on how faith relates to contemporary issues are also included. Group activities and times for fellowship are a big part of the programme.

For the past two decades, One2Lead South Wales & Borders has been equipping and inspiring young people to serve and take on leadership roles in their schools, churches, sports clubs, and workplaces. Since joining the course, students have participated in mission trips, church planting, preaching, and evangelism in their local communities.

Since 2020, new locations in the East (Faith Mission, Earl Stonham) and Southwest (Heatree, Newton Abbot) have been launched, which has increased the number of young people Counties have been training. 125 students attended the training course across 3 locations in 2023-2024.

In exciting times, this Autumn, Counties launched two new venues in the

Midlands (Blackwell Court, Bromsgrove) and the Scottish borders (Greenhead Hostel, Brampton).

Dave Thomas, coordinator of One2Lead, expresses hope that across the five venues, Counties will train and equip 100 students annually:

"Every weekend, we welcome new students starting the programme, which is exciting. Additionally, we hear from current students about how God has been at work in their lives, which is always encouraging. Highlights for me of the weekend are always the stories of students sharing their faith with friends, starting new initiatives, and growing in their leadership skills."

Angharad West,

a 21-year-old living in Cardiff, attends the South Wales & Borders One2Lead program. She's currently on the front line of student mission volunteering with UCCF: The Christian Unions.



I started One2Lead in September 2022. At the start, I really enjoyed meeting people my own age who were equally passionate about God and doing

something for Him. I loved the activities. I am terrified of heights, but on the first weekend, we did high ropes, and I did it and enjoyed it.

In terms of the seminars, there was a theological component, which provides students with an overview of the Christian faith, the Bible, and the foundations of Christianity.

There were also seminars about personal development. I was familiar





with the Christian foundations of faith, but I struggled to understand how to apply them in practice and what to do with that knowledge. The course really helped me with that.

I am now on track two, which lasts for two years and examines the practical implications of what we learned in track one. So, we're learning how to read the Bible to get the most out of it, how to do apologetics, and how to write a sermon.

On a personal level, One2Lead taught me that I am not too young to do the things I want to do. It's pushed me out of my comfort zone. I always thought short-term mission was for later in life, but seeing other people around my age made me realise that I can do the same at this age. So, I went on my first short-term mission to Hungary when I was just 19. I really wanted to see if a cross-cultural mission is where God is calling me, and I would never have gotten to this place if it hadn't been for One2Lead.

It also made me realise that there is so much to do in a church. I don't just want to listen to the sermon anymore. I want to be actively involved – not necessarily in the limelight but just helping in the background.

I would say to other young people, if you feel the urge to get involved in something like the Sunday school, then do it. You don't have to have the experience straight away; you need the passion.

One2Lead helped shape me and my entire university experience. Every time I came away from a weekend, I felt challenged to put into practice what I had learned in terms of personal development. I got involved in the Christian Union, and I felt more confident talking to other people, even if they didn't believe what I believed.

As I became more active in the CU at my university, it opened my eyes to how much more open students are to the Gospel and how many more opportunities there are to evangelise within a university setting, which is why I ultimately decided to become a Relay Worker for UCCF.

The course makes you think about yourself in a context you wouldn't otherwise think about. You see other young people doing things, and it makes you realise you can do it. It pushes you outside your comfort zone. And you are doing this from a place of really loving God so much that I want to do something for Him. I wouldn't have had that prompting if I hadn't attended One2Lead.



Jacob Newman (20),

joined One2Lead in September 2022. Following a year on First Serve UK with Counties, he has completed an internship leading the Hereford Street Presence Team, with Vennture.



I decided to join One2Lead because I wanted to learn more about my faith and have an excellent opportunity to network with Christians my age in the surrounding areas, as I didn't have many Christian friends. That's carried on, and I still play football on a Monday night with guys I met on the course.

I really enjoyed the personal side of the theology we were taught. It really challenged me to grow deeper in my faith. This now means spending time with God because I want to, not because I have to. Making time to do this every day is something essential in my life now.

One2Lead has also helped me want to share my faith and what Jesus means to me more often. It's also given me a good grounding; I now feel more confident in how to answer questions about my faith that other people think of, but also ones I ask myself. This is because I have a deeper understanding of the Bible and how it's connected.

The leaders on the course were there to support me in understanding the questions I have about my faith.

Practically, for me, all these things I have learnt have been taken not only into my personal life but also into my work life. This past year, I worked at Vennture, a Christian charity based in Hereford, where I co-ordinated all the Street Presence Teams.

Everything I had learned at One2Lead was put into practice as I had to not only physically and psychologically look after all the street teams, but also spiritually. From preparing a biblical encouragement before a team would go out on the street to organising a prayer meeting.

Meeting other Christians of a similar age at One2Lead has been a massive blessing in my life. The leaders on the course were there to support me in understanding the questions I have about my faith, to encourage me, and to grow in my faith positively.

For more details, email:
one2lead@countiesuk.org

To book a place visit:
countiesuk.org/one2lead



CONNECT EVANGELIST TRAINING PROGRAMME (CETP) IS NOW UNDERWAY.

OVER 66 PEOPLE ARE TAKING PART IN
THE SIX-MODULE ONLINE COURSE. IGNITE
SPEAKS TO TWO PARTICIPANTS ABOUT
THEIR EXPERIENCES SO FAR.



Naomi Watts is a Children and Families Support worker based at Cannon Court Evangelical Church in Fetcham, Surrey. She started CETP in February this year and has now completed the course and is a Connect Evangelism Champion.



Counties evangelist, Gordon Curley, encouraged me to go on the course. I decided to do CETP because I felt Jesus has given me the desire to help people in my village to encounter Jesus. It would just be awesome if the whole village came to know Him. I see how broken people are through the job I do as a family support worker.

So many families need so much. I live in a fairly affluent area. On the surface, residents have beautiful homes, great jobs, and children in good schools, and yet they are really struggling. People don't often want to talk about what's going wrong, and it affects the children because things fester.

So, I hope that I can come into their lives and offer practical help but also provide Jesus. I want to present Him as somebody real, who cares, and who is relevant to their situation.

This is something that has really come out to me doing CETP – it's making Jesus relevant to people. I love the way they have broken down each aspect of evangelism and helped me to apply it in my own context. It's been really encouraging to hear trainers' stories. It allows you to see things from a totally new perspective.

The course has shown me how straightforward it can be to tell people about Jesus if you're saying: "Jesus is my friend and He's done this for me." People are much more receptive to talking about something they have been through themselves. CETP teaches students that we can all talk about Jesus as if He's real, and not somebody you learn about on a Sunday. In one seminar, Mark Greenwood talks about the power of your testimony, and it's so easily slipped into a conversation because it's your story.

I felt Jesus has given me the desire to help people in my village to encounter Jesus. It would just be awesome if the whole village came to know Him.

The course has given me so much more passion. It's given me the skills to see people as Jesus sees them. I think it's about seeing the town we live in as our mission field.

Project 125 Lead, Beverly Bedford says:

"It is good to welcome Naomi Watts as a Connect Evangelism Champion. Counties' vision is to help local churches recognise and raise champions like Naomi, who will serve and keep evangelism and discipleship right at the heart of church life."

Dave Jordan became a Christian in June 2024 after studying the Bible and admitting: "I can't deny this anymore." He featured in Winter 2024's Ignite after he had repeatedly said Christianity was "not for me," even though his wife Nancy had been praying for him for over 35 years. He began CETP in February 2025.



Simon Ladd, the Counties Connector, was my pastor, and soon after I got saved, I asked how I could make up for lost time and what I could do to help in the church. So, he suggested I sign up for CETP. I watched the taster video and did just that.

It's an easy-paced, online learning course for all church members.

I have now completed the course, and I really enjoyed learning and growing my faith. Importantly, I have learned to share my faith and tell people I meet about the Good News of the Gospel.

When you sign up, you are asked to find a mentor. I asked my good friend, Victor Jack. He has now taken me to

several outreach events, and I have spoken at some. I delivered my first sermon in October.

In July, I held my first evangelistic mission, a two-day golf event, with Victor and four other Christians and nine non-believer friends. We had a fantastic time, but more importantly, four of the non-believers are now exploring faith. The event was a great success, with more planned for the future.

I have come a long way in a very short time and learned a tremendous amount. My faith has grown stronger. I now feel that my Lord is guiding me and has a definite plan for me.

I think the Lord has given me the ability to talk about my faith, which is why I wanted to do the course. Even if you don't want to



become a ‘professional’ evangelist, I recommend it to anybody who wants to learn more about their faith, how to share their faith, and how to talk to people. It’s brilliant.

In terms of the details, there are six modules, and within each, there are six units. You are given a project to complete after watching the videos. One of the projects asks you: “If you were to do an evangelistic mission, how would you go about it?”

I went one better than that and held a mission, as it was an excellent opportunity for me. Many of the steps prompt you to reflect on your own life and your church life. Being a new Christian meant it was all new to me.

Another project asks you to take a passage from the Old and New Testaments and blend them. So, I took the story of Issac and put that with the crucifixion. I used this as a basis for a sermon.

The course has really got me thinking, and I often put a project together and show my wife, Nancy. She will never give me the answers, but she



offers advice. One of the projects focused on the different generations and how we can effectively appeal to them with the Gospel. So, I put together a presentation about how we can focus on the generation gap. Nancy loved it, and she could also see how much I had enjoyed this course.

She said:

“The way they approach it is like a Bible course because Counties is telling you about being an evangelist, the church, the Bible, and faith.”

I have now put together a presentation and offered to visit other churches to encourage others to take the course. I have done it in my church as my pastor and I would love to get different ‘would-be’ evangelists onto the course.

To find out how you can join the course:
countiesuk.org/training



SIZEWELL HALL

COUNTIES SENIOR
EVANGELIST VICTOR JACK
SHARES THE STORY OF
SIZEWELL HALL CHRISTIAN
CENTRE AND ITS 50-YEAR CELEBRATION.



Sizewell Hall is a Christian conference and camping centre, and part of our trust deed states: "For the purpose of advancing the Christian faith." Sizewell Hall is next to the nuclear power station, but I like to think that our place is the real power station where lives are changed for the better by the power of God.

The strapline for our ministry is Psalm 115:1

“Not unto us, not unto us, but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.”

In September, we celebrated our 50th anniversary, and the current trustees have been offered the opportunity to purchase the property; now, they need to raise £2 million within the following year. This is quite a challenge and very similar to the one I faced when I launched the project with only £40 in the bank. Our God is able.

God has blessed Sizewell Hall over the last half-century. Many adults have become Christians here and have been baptised in the sea. Many young people have also become committed Christians and are now serving as youth leaders in churches and secular organisations. Others have become Christian ministers in the UK, while some have gone on to become missionaries overseas.

Marriages have also been healed in the relaxed atmosphere of this place, and many young people have met their marriage partner here, and I have had the privilege of conducting three weddings in the Hall.

A book could be written about the lives that have been changed in this place. One man came a few weeks after he had been released from prison. He committed his life to God and was so grateful to God for the change in his life that he came back to the Hall for a week and, to help, he rebuilt part of the sea wall.



Another woman, whom we knew well, was very cynical about her husband's decision to become a Christian. So, we invited her to Sizewell for the weekend. Early on, she went down to the beach and shook her fist at God and said: ***“Send in an extra big wave and I will believe in you.”***

God didn't send a big wave, but during a later talk, God so clearly challenged her that she broke down in tears and committed her life to God. He transformed it.

We have been wonderfully protected over the years with no serious accidents in the grounds, except for one tragic event that took place when my younger brother Ian drowned in the sea on 16 August 1981. While the memory of that is still painful, God has created within me reservoirs of compassion and empathy for others who are going through tragic experiences.

My involvement at Sizewell Hall began in 1964, when, with my wife, Meg, I returned to Suffolk to be involved in Christian ministry through Counties.

On one of my prayer trails, I believe God put the desire in my heart to establish a conference and camping centre in Suffolk. Later, an artist, who had asked permission to paint Sizewell Hall, discovered it was empty and contacted us.

I got in touch with Stuart Ogilvie, the owner, who immediately let us view the hall. He agreed we could rent the property. He didn't even ask for references from responsible people or even the bank. However, he died from a heart attack, but this started our long association with his son, Glen Ogilvie, who was so supportive. The Hall was ideal, as there were 32 bedrooms in the Hall, 30 acres of grounds, and four cottages available to use.

We set up a group of trustees to support us, and when they visited the Hall, they fell in love with it and its situation by the sea. Also, a businessman I knew, Earnest Childs, who was one of Counties Trustees for many years, was involved with property. He looked over the building to advise us. While we were talking in the library, he took a jump and declared it was sound. He immediately offered to contribute £1,000, which was a considerable amount of money in 1974 (£9564 today).

After 13 years of neglect, we knew we were facing a huge task and would need the support of others to refurbish the building and sort out the overgrown grounds.

We had a lot of volunteers, many from local churches, who worked enthusiastically on the project. There was a job for everyone. Farming friends



brought tractors and trailers and chainsaws to help clear the debris that was lying everywhere. I won't ever forget the sight of one woman on her hands and knees using a knife to remove the accumulated calcium in one of the toilets.

They were wonderful days of hard work, great camaraderie, and where we formed friendships that have continued to this day.

The financial challenge was immense, as the entire building needed to be rewired. Also, much of the plumbing had to be replaced, and a new industrial boiler was installed. In addition, the whole interior also needed to be decorated from top to bottom.

We managed it, and the first house party took place as scheduled in May 1975. Within weeks, the venue was nearly fully booked. And within a year, we had reservations covering the next two. In the early years, groups travelled from London, Liverpool, and Birmingham.

The financial cost was huge, but every month, by God's providence, sufficient funds came in to pay every bill. Some came from trusts, but over fifty per cent came from individuals who wanted the project to succeed.

I thank God for His excellent provision and the fantastic team of people who made the work possible. Although I had the privilege of setting up the centre here, it only developed through the efforts of many volunteers, dedicated managers, a committed Council of Management, a wonderful secretary, and the considerable support and encouragement of my dear wife, Meg.



It's a place of rest and renewal. We all tend to live busy lives, and most of us do not take enough time off to recharge our batteries. We need to follow the example of Jesus.

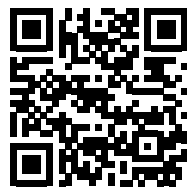
There was a moment in the life of Jesus and of His disciples when they were so busy that they didn't even have time to stop and eat. Jesus turned to his men and said: *"Come with me, by yourselves, to a quiet place and get some rest."* Jesus would say to us and to our church groups: *"Come with me, to Sizewell Hall, a quiet place, and get some rest."*

The great blessing of coming is that, for a while, we can leave behind all those things that disturb and distress us and be renewed in our love for God, returning home refreshed and encouraged.

To find out more
about bookings:

Contact:
01728 830715

Email:
office@sizewellhall.org.uk



CHATNOW.ORG

A young Muslim man, Ahmed*, tells Ignite how he came to faith with the help of Chatnow.org – a website dedicated to answering questions about Christianity – led by Counties evangelist Matt Rich.

**Name changed to protect his identity.*

Chatnow.org is a Christian website that enables people to talk and find answers about Christianity, where people can choose to chat with a Christian online. Over the last 12 months, people from almost every country in the world have visited the website. They have clicked on the link:

- Chat Now with a Christian
- Chat Now – find how Jesus can help

Chatnow recently heard from Ahmed, who had been brought up to follow Islam and worship Allah. But over the years, he became disillusioned with the Muslim faith and turned his back on belief in God altogether – but Jesus was at work in his life. Although Ahmed called himself an atheist and was living the life of someone who was convinced that God was just a made-up idea, he still found himself intrigued to read the Bible. He told Chatnow:

“While reading about Jesus in the Bible, one question came to my mind: ‘Why would someone willingly

suffer so much with no personal gain? At first, I thought Jesus must have either been insane or He was truly God.

But then I thought more deeply – why would so many apostles devote their entire lives to a simply delusional man? That didn’t make sense.”

Counties evangelist, Matt Rich, from Chatnow, says:

“Ahmed visited the Chatnow website and had a live chat with a Christian who cared about Ahmed and wanted to listen and understand, someone who pointed him towards Jesus. Last month, we received this email from Ahmed:

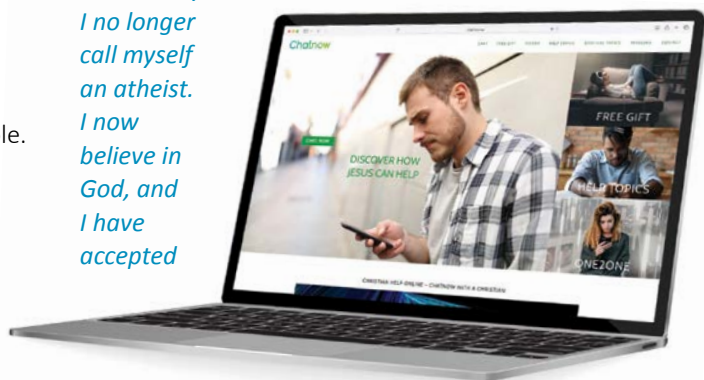
“The main reason I’m writing is to thank the volunteer who prayed for me during our live chat. Today, I no longer call myself an atheist. I now believe in God, and I have accepted

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as my Lord and Saviour. God bless you, my friend. Thank you. I hope we’ll meet again one day in Heaven.”

Ahmed discussed his faith journey with Ignite in more detail.

Can you explain a bit more about what made you disillusioned with following Islam?

The first thing that made me turn away was that my whole life was spent around Muslim sects and communities. I was always with them, sometimes willingly and sometimes against my will. When I got to know them more closely, I realised that they were not as they appeared from the outside. Once, a friend of



mine asked our religion teacher if he should read the Qur'an in Turkish. (My friend was Muslim, and like most Muslims in Turkey, he had never read the Qur'an in Turkish or wondered about its meaning – he only read it in Arabic without understanding.) The teacher said: "Don't read the Qur'an in Turkish, it will confuse you." At that time, I had just started reading the Bible, and those words made me very angry. In Islam, I saw less love, but in the Bible, the Lord Jesus Christ came, lived among us, and died for us.

What made you want to read the Bible?

When I left Islam and became non-believing, I felt restless and began searching for peace. One day on TikTok, I came across a message against Islam, and I really liked it. From that moment, I started researching Christianity.

As you read the Bible, what were your thoughts about Jesus?

Because of my Muslim background, when I first read the Bible, I kept thinking: "Why is Jesus

humiliating Himself? Why would God live with humans? Why would God lower Himself so much?" But now I understand – it was because God loved us so much.

Can you explain a bit more about what happened next and how you went from reading the Bible to accepting Jesus Christ as your Saviour? Did you talk to others, read things online? What helped you to make that step?

After reading much of the Bible, I took a break from studying religions. A few months later, I came across a video about Christianity. At that time, I was feeling very restless mentally. So, I started researching again. Initially, I studied the denominations and their fundamental beliefs, including the doctrine of the Trinity. Then my interest grew even more, and I began seeking answers to personal questions (Did Jesus Christ really exist? Was the Bible altered? If God loves us,



**Come to me, all you who are
weary and burdened
and I will give
you rest**

love from JESUS

CHATNOW

why does He allow evil? If God is good, why is there evil? Why doesn't God reveal Himself? Why does God appear loving in the New Testament but not in the Old Testament?)

Eventually, I found answers to these questions. But I still couldn't feel Jesus Christ. Yes, I accepted Him intellectually, but not spiritually. During this time, I looked for help on Chatnow's live chat. They talked to me about Jesus Christ and told me to pray and wait. That night, I prayed:

"Father, I know that You exist. I know Your love.

If you are not real, then no god is real. Please, if you truly exist, give me a sign. I beg You, Father, I can't do this without You. I am in a hard situation, please help me. If you are there, if You are real, know that I love You very much. Amen."

I kept praying every night and tried to avoid sin; slowly, I began to feel Him. For the first time, I resisted a particular temptation for five months. But one day I failed and gave in. That night, I cried and asked Christ for forgiveness. For the first time in my life, I felt Him so close to me. Usually,

GREAT is God's LOVE

for those who
fear him

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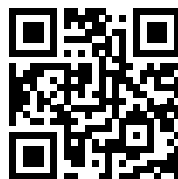


I pray sitting in the dark with my eyes closed. That night, I felt as if Christ was sitting in front of me with His hand on my head. I began to cry, saying, *"Don't love me this much, Father. I don't deserve you. Why do you love me this much? I don't deserve your love."* That night was when I truly began to see myself as a Christian.

How are you feeling
about your faith now?

I feel peaceful. Yes, my problems haven't disappeared, and I still face hardships in life. But now I know that Christ is with me, and I can overcome difficulties more easily. I am a more peaceful and calmer person.

For more information,
visit: chatnow.org



CHURCH GROWTH IS SOMETHING EVERY CHRISTIAN WANTS TO SEE.



Phil Davies, Counties evangelist and the Pastor of Duvant Christian Fellowship in Swansea, shares seven areas that have contributed to their growth, which began with one couple and now comprises a congregation of over 200.



Dunvant Christian Fellowship has just had its 110th anniversary. It began in 1915 when a married couple left their established church, seeking a place where people could gather to worship, study God's Word, and break bread together in someone's home. Phil describes it as *"an original house fellowship."*

In 1928, as now part of the Brethren movement, Dunvant Gospel Hall was built. Phil says:

"For the first fifty years, the church was relatively small and solid, concentrating on scripture, prayer, and breaking bread together. They did some outreach, especially with children, but it wasn't much."

"Today, we are a congregation of over 200, with about a third under the age of 25. There are many young couples and children. In the year of our 110th anniversary, as we look back at the church's growth, this verse is close to my heart:

"Those who are wise will take all this to heart; they will see in our history the faithful love of the Lord." Psalm 107:43 (NLT)

Dunvant Christian Fellowship Principles for Growth

- 1 From the 1960s onwards, we **focused on youth and children's work**. Someone had a vision to buy a bus to bring young people to church. This work really took off in the 1980s, 65 years after our existence began.
- 2 We outgrew the Gospel Hall when we reached around 60 people, as we only had two rooms. So, **we moved into the local school** in 2005. It is a neutral territory, and it began to draw people in who would not usually 'darken the doors' of a regular church building.
- 3 We had a **strong and committed core** who gave themselves to prayer, giving, and serving.
- 4 I had been a Counties evangelist, supported financially by the church, but we didn't have a full-time worker or pastor. In 2015, we took on a full-time staff member to serve the church. We also realised we couldn't run things with just volunteers. So today we have a staff team of three (and one part-time worker).
- 5 We use **regular evangelistic courses**, and Alpha is a key part of our outreach. Our vision as a church is expressed in three words: Deeper – in our faith and love for Christ; Closer – in our sense of fellowship and growing together; Wider – encompassing evangelism. We have also just run the Mark Drama (see box), which we ran over two nights, and we had 280 people in the audience.
- 6 The Lord has brought back **'Prodigals'** to the Fellowship – people who had wandered in their faith, some for a significant amount of time, almost twenty years in the case of one person (read testimony overleaf).

Our **Sunday gatherings** are regular, consecutive, worshipful, and include the teaching of God's Word. Our 'serving together' rosters include over 75 names of people who are serving regularly in the church. They all have a role, whether that's serving tea and coffee or helping in the car park. It's using the church regularly in service together.



The Mark Drama uses theatre-in-the-round to perform the Gospel.

During the Mark Drama, the audience watches every incident and hears nearly every word spoken by Jesus as recorded in Mark's Gospel in ninety minutes. It's described as: "joyful yet hard-hitting." There are no props. No costumes. No professionals. Just Gospel.

Jon Parker is a lecturer at Gower College in Swansea. He took what he calls a 'sabbatical' from Dunvant Christian Fellowship (DCF) for nine years. But like the Prodigal son, a life filled with parties didn't work, and finally he came 'home'.



I started going to DCF when I was in primary school. I don't come from a Christian home, but I got invited to the Junior Youth Group. I attended Sunday school and went to all the camps. I called myself a Christian and got baptised. However, I then attended university, marking the beginning of what I call my 'sabbatical'. I was living in Cardiff and didn't find a church where I could root myself. And then, I stopped attending church altogether.

During my university years, I didn't drink. I was terrified of it, but after I left, I broke up with my long-term girlfriend, and I ended up living a very secular life where I was drinking, smoking, and partying,

not living the best way. I spent the next five years 'making up' for the years I hadn't partied at university.

Ironically, I had a heart problem, but that didn't stop me. I lived for the weekend and went to work on a Monday. I genuinely thought I was happy. But there were periods where I would leave drunk, tearful messages on my parents' phone apologising for who I had become. They even staged 'interventions' where we had some hard conversations, but I still didn't see that there was anything wrong with what I was doing.

I had wanted to go back to Dunvant, though, and I knew they would be thrilled to see me, but I couldn't face them whilst I stank of cigarettes and booze. The thought of it was too overwhelming. I think this will be familiar to lots of young people who've done the same thing.

When Covid hit, I had just bought my first place. So, it was a new start. Then the bars shut, and I was always a social drinker, so I didn't drink at home. DCF started offering services online, and I began watching them. When Dunvant



met occasionally at the beach, two metres apart, I would go along.

After I had been coming back to Dunvant for about two years, I persuaded my mum to join Hope Explored by Rico Tice. She had a fall a few years ago, due to a seizure, and she lost a lot of her memory and suffers from mental health issues.

So, I said to her: *"Look, you are searching for some hope. You're struggling with your mental health. Why don't you just come along and see what you think?"*

She didn't expect to do more than one week, but she kept on, and she started coming to church. Within a year and three months, we had read through the entire Bible. She is now a Christian. She has her own friendship group, and I baptised her in May. Praise God.



Gospel Hall,
Dunvant Rd.

For more info:
info@dunvant.com
visit: dunvant.com



CONNECT CONFERENCE

JOHN MCGINLEY, MYRIAD & THE SEND UK & IRELAND LEAD, WAS THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT THE CONNECT CONFERENCE. HE SHARES HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT RE-FOUNDING THE CHURCH ON JESUS CHRIST WITH IGNITE.

At the Counties Conference in October, I shared my conviction that the renewing and reforming work God is taking us through is a re-founding of the church on Jesus Christ. Decades of secularism in our nation, with its relentless assault on the Christian faith, have weakened our confidence in Jesus. Yet as we recognise this, I sense our Heavenly Father thanking us for remaining faithful in a difficult and confusing time.

When Jesus speaks to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, He both commends and challenges them. Our faithfulness has meant standing firm amid a spiritual battle. But now, as the dominance of secularism wanes, I sense the Lord calling us to repent and return to Him.



I see this “return to Jesus” in two aspects — our discipleship and our mission. Jesus always calls us first to Himself and then sends us to the world, as He said to his first disciples: *“Come and follow me, and I will teach you how to fish for people.”* Mark 1:17

It is easy to continue following Jesus’ teachings, basing our lives on the cross and practising rhythms of church life, yet lose the simple joy of knowing Him. The story of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42) captures this so vividly.

My interpretation of this passage is that Martha represents a church preoccupied with doing things the right way — meeting others’ expectations and making sure everything is presented perfectly — yet losing our awareness of Jesus’ presence. Mary, meanwhile, models the response to which Jesus is calling us: choosing what is better, sitting at His feet in devotion and surrender to Him.

For the church to be re-founded on Jesus, He



must become the deepest affection of our hearts, displacing all other idols, even good ones, and I am seeing this happen. Across the church, people are sensing the call to pray. Churches hosting 24/7 prayer rooms for the first time are discovering a deep hunger in God’s people. Groups gather online every morning to pray; young adults worship and intercede all night. We are living in a time when Jesus is calling us back to devotion and surrender.

Simplicity in Discipleship

Alongside this, patterns of discipleship are changing. There is a desire for the church to return to the simplicity of authentic

community, sharing our lives with Jesus at the centre. He must be Lord of His Church, yet we have often referenced ourselves and created our own metrics of what a good church looks like. A. W. Tozer captured this powerfully:

“Jesus Christ has today almost no authority among the groups that call themselves by his name. In these times, we have measured ourselves by ourselves until the figure of Jesus no longer presides over the church as its Lord and Master.”¹

In practice, this new simplicity looks like people gathering to eat, worship, pray, read Scripture, and obey Jesus together.



When we strip away the layers of organisation – whether formal liturgy or high-production worship — following Jesus becomes about loving and obeying him and loving one another.

A story from one church illustrates this beautifully. A non-Christian friend joined their evening of food and worship. Afterwards, she said she had felt something she couldn't explain. Beyond the welcome, inclusion, and deep care she had seen as people prayed and supported one another, she explained that she felt *"an atmosphere of love,"* something greater than herself was loving her. She had encountered the presence of Jesus being poured out by the Holy Spirit in that place.

Restoring Jesus to the Centre of Mission

This leads us to the restoration of the person of Jesus to the centre of mission. The *Finding Jesus²* and *Quiet Revival³* reports reveal a growing spiritual openness in our nation, especially among

younger generations. More people are speaking of encounters with Jesus through dreams, Scripture, and worship. Stephen Foster, Rector of St Aldates Church in Oxford, recently shared about a group of young people, with no Christian background, who came into church after having a dream from God.

One young woman dreamed of an open Bible and a voice saying, *"You must read Luke's Gospel about Jesus."* She woke up distressed because she didn't own a Bible, then turned on her bedside lamp — and on the table, a Bible was open at the book of Luke.

Stories like this show that Jesus is pursuing people, awakening spiritual hunger, and revealing himself. As we listen, Jesus calls us to recover our confidence in speaking about him. All we have ever had to offer the world is Jesus Christ. Too often, we have substituted other things because we lost confidence in the Good News. But today, our culture is ready to receive an invitation to meet Him.

When we reread the New Testament through this lens, we see that the apostles simply spoke about Jesus. Peter – on the day of Pentecost, and John – in his Gospel and letters. Both testified to what they had seen and touched: *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes... this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.”* 1 John 1:1

It is all about Jesus. The church must recover the joy of speaking His name, sharing testimonies, and offering prayer to others.

Working with young adults through The Send UK & Ireland, I have observed a new boldness in Christian witness. At one event, 200 young people took to Oxford Street to share the Gospel. An hour later, we gathered at McDonald’s, filled with stories of people healed and responding to Jesus. Then a young man stood up and delivered a simple Gospel message to the whole restaurant. Two people came to faith in Jesus. There is a joy and courage in this younger

generation that I believe will reignite a confidence to share Jesus throughout the entire church.

A Slow Awakening

In my recent book with Anne Calver, *Awaken: The Lord is Doing a New Thing*⁴, we explore how to engage with what God is doing in His Church. We begin with the words:

“My beloved spoke and said to me, ‘Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me. See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the

earth; the season of singing has come.” Song of Songs 2:10–12

We are entering a new season where God is moving in fresh ways. As our friend Rish Wilson says, “We are in the grip of a slow awakening.” God is calling us to return to Him with the promise of His empowering presence. We don’t need new techniques, products, or goals. Instead, we need to align our hearts in repentance and surrender—to let Jesus renew and transform us from the inside out.



1. A.W. Tozer “The Dangers of a Shallow Faith” in The Best of A W Tozer comp. Warren. Wiersbe Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1995, p.93)
2. Finding Jesus. <https://www.eauk.org/resources/our-resources/reports/finding-jesus>
3. The Quiet Revival. <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/research>
4. A Calver & J McGinley, *Awaken: the Lord is Doing a New Thing*, Influence Resources, United Kingdom, 2025

JUST A MINUTE

Beverley Bedford has rejoined Counties and is now the new Project 125 Lead, which is part of the Connect Evangelist Training Programme.



How did you become a Christian?

Life for me up to my 20s was very much preparing for school, career, holidays, family, and a retirement pension, everything except meeting God (Amos 4:12). I walked a pathway that led to little purpose or fulfilment with dead ends, false hope – everything except meeting God.

As I reflected on my life on my 20th birthday, I realised I had overlooked God, eternity, and the uncertainty of life in my so-called plans. However, an encounter with the Gospel message and the living Lord Jesus shattered my pride (I didn't need God) and my shame (God didn't want me). I discovered that I was more sinful than I had ever imagined, yet also more loved than I could have ever realised.

God humbled my pride and lifted me from my brokenness and gave me a new song in my heart, ransomed, healed, restored, and forgiven. I gave Jesus a blank piece of paper, signed it at the bottom, and invited Him to write a story for His glory. What an adventure it is, and it has been. I have never regretted the decision to follow Jesus.

What drew you to take on the role of Project 125 lead?

Much of my ministry's work over the last thirty-five years has been involved

in calling the church to respond to the challenges of evangelism by progressively exploring identity, community, and mission. Project 125 will work with the trainees and mentors on the Connect Evangelist Training Programme to help identify those who may be gifted and called to serve in the local church as Connect evangelism Champions.

The role of Project 125 drew me as it fits my calling to release transformational leaders through relational mentorship and teaching.

How are you finding Project 125?

It has been said: "Find work you love, and you'll never find it hard to get up in the morning." That is how I am finding the role of Project 125 lead.

Favourite Bible verse/passage and why?

God's calling for me in this season is Colossians 1:28-29, which is Paul's mission statement that clarified his purpose. God desires that every believer is fully mature, fully initiated, or, as Ephesians 4:12 states, the saints are fully equipped for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. This is the clarion call to the church to pursue ongoing transformation for themselves and for the sake of those they lead. I am intentional in working hard as God works in me to fulfil this calling.

EVANGELISTS

NORTH OF ENGLAND

- Steve & Debra Cowles
- Julian & Ella Gutteridge
- Phyllis Jenkins (Senior)
- Martin & Angie Korchinsky (CP)
- Lee & Lesley Marsland
- Matt & Nicola Rich
- Rob & Sarah Watson
- Caleb & Adanesh Mathewos (CP)
- Andrew & Rachel Mugford

SOUTH WEST

- Jean Campbell (Senior)
- Steve Ellacott
- Mike & Su Strange (Seniors)
- Alex & Beth Symons
- David & Katie Symons
- Stevie & Natalie Walker

MIDLANDS

- Jordan & Lacy Armstrong (CP)
- David & Lindsey Brown
- Roger & Hazel Chilvers (Seniors)
- Angela Cooper (Senior)
- Tim & Katrina Cracknell (CP)
- Andy & Bella Goode
- Andy & Isobel Hodson (CP)
- Bob & Rita Telford (Seniors)
- Simon & Yvonne Terry
- Paul & Vanessa Willmott

SOUTH CENTRAL

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

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- Charles & Elizabeth Addoco
- Lynne Andrews (Senior)
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- Madelene Bathgate (Senior)
- Mark & Amanda Bingham
- Lionel & Katy Clargo (Seniors)
- John Hardwick
- Kim & Jo Hobbs
- Tony & Ruth Hood
- Victor Jack (Senior)
- Andy & Miriam Jelfs (Seniors)
- Colin & Linda Johnson

WALES

- Grace Anderson (Senior)
- Clive & Fiona Cornish (CP)
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- Phil & Sheila Davies
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CP – Church Planter

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