



A life transformed, even until death
Over the last year, David Stevens has shared how God transformed his life in a series of videos, right up to the point of his death this month.



The series of short films combines to give a moving, inspiring and deeply personal account of how one man discovered what it means to follow Christ.

A cocaine dealer and addict in London, David recalls how he prayed a desperate prayer and, in his weakness, began to receive a longing for God.

When he read the Bible for the first time, he “felt somehow a little different: changed, transformed.”

“What was going on for me was what [I read] in the Bible about change, transformation and love and there being this benevolent force who loved me – Jesus Christ.”

Over the last months, following a diagnosis with rectal cancer, his faith enabled him to face death without fear.

The videos are just a glimpse of one Christian disciple. In churches across the Diocese, there are ordinary people like David for whom God has made an extraordinary difference.

Watch the videos:
<http://bit.ly/wp8NP2>

N.B. One video contains explicit language

Church extends its influence

Growth in influence is one of the components of the Diocesan Growth Programme, but how are churches responding to Christ’s example and having an influence on our communities by challenging injustice, alleviating poverty and serving others?

Survey reveals six-figure impact of Swindon churches

Churches in Swindon contribute over £6m worth of voluntary effort to the local economy every year, according to a new survey of church activity there.

Swindon Churches Together (SCT) commissioned the Swindon Churches Audit which was undertaken by ISR.

The audit reviewed 49 churches and church organisations of all denominations. It found that 4,800 of their members were involved in church based voluntary work, and a further 3,000 outside their churches.

This equates to approximately 610,000 hours of voluntary activity offered each year. Valued at £10 per hour, that is a £6.1m contribution to the economic and social wellbeing of the area.

“In the direct provision of activities and services, in sharing their resources and buildings and in working in partnership with other agencies, Christians in Swindon are making a real difference to people across the town and a significant contribution to our economy and the strength of our communities,” said Bishop Lee, Chair of SCT.

More on Swindon Churches Audit:
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7172

Church challenged to take action against injustice

Various conferences aiming to inspire churches to take action against injustice are taking place in the greater Bristol area in the coming months.

Becoming a follower of Christ involves a reshaping of our priorities. These events and other opportunities seek to help Christians and church leaders have a biblical approach to social, economic and environmental injustice.

The **Global Aware Conference** on 21st January aims to empower God’s people to take action against global poverty and climate change.

Jonathon Porritt will be speaking at **Christian Ecology Link’s conference**, “Treasure in the field: spiritual capital and sustainable living” on 10th March.

And the Church of England from across the south west is gathering on 24th March for “**Eye of the Needle: Biblical clues for a new economy**”, a conference that asks how we create a global economy in ways shaped by biblical ideas and concepts.

Find out more about these events and other ways to think about a Christian approach to injustice:
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7170



2011: a year of Bible refreshment

In 2011, the Diocese of Bristol participated in celebrating the 400th Anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible as part of the Biblefresh initiative.

Here are some examples of what took place:

- Church members in St Andrew's Chippenham committed themselves to bible reading challenges.
- Bristol and Swindon played host to the People's Bible.
- An Ecumenical Festival of the Word took place at Bristol Cathedral and College Green.
- Trinity College and Bristol Baptist College put on a series of lectures engaging with the Word.
- The KJV was read aloud from cover to cover in Christ Church in Bristol's city centre.
- Malmesbury Abbey hosted the "Good Book Tour".
- Swindon Churches Together took the Bible into the heart of the town with their Stations of the Cross project.
- Hundreds responded to the Lent challenge and signed up for daily bible readings in Lent.
- Video interviews on the Diocesan website allowed different people to explore what the Bible means to them.
- Across the Diocese, people have engaged with the Bible in new ways while others have recommitted themselves to a regular pattern of prayer and study.

New CofE service enables parishes to buy together and save together

A new service is launched this month that aims to support parishes and dioceses in their stewardship, releasing resource for your mission and ministry!

Early last summer, there was a very enthusiastic response to a spending survey asking parishes if they would be interested in a service that could combine the purchasing power of churches throughout the Church of England.

The Church, as a whole, spends over £200 million each year on operating costs ranging from electricity and gas to printing paper. Parishes usually make these purchases independently without being able to take advantage of the wider spend of the Church.

The Parish Buying service is changing that by bringing these spends together and negotiating favourable deals from approved suppliers. The free service also offers tips and advice on how to buy better - taking the stress out of parish purchasing.

The national deals cover a range of key spends including: energy (green options available), office products, photocopying, IT software, and fire safety.

The prices are competitive and the service is monitored. Where contracts are required (e.g. photocopiers) these have been vetted, allowing parishes to buy with confidence and save time and money.

By saving money on operating costs, parishes can free up money to support ministry and mission directly. The aim is to save parishes £10m across the Church of England.

The service has been developed by two national procurement officers, Robert Kissick and Russell Stables, working with a National Procurement Group of diocesan and other representatives.

A pilot of the service has been run in a number of dioceses and energy contracts have been particularly popular and the feedback has been encouraging.

"Our electricity renewal had a huge increase, we were delighted when the Parish Buying service was able to save us 17%," reported a rural parish in Shropshire.

The Parish Buying service also offers a range of training resources.

To find out more please register at www.parishbuying.org.uk; email the procurement team at procurement@churchofengland.org; or telephone: 0800 368 0887.

News & Events

Cycle of Prayer, Jan-Mar 2012
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7082

An Evening with Stuart Townend, 24 Feb
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7187

Churches urged to apply to new £10m government green fund
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7060

Home Office Newsletter for Clergy
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7189

CRB check appointments – Jan-Jun 2012
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7217

Vacancies

Priest-in-Charge, Parks & Walcot, Swindon
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7101

East Bristol Partnership Team Leader
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7087

Deanery Mission Enabler, South Glos & Priest-in-Charge, Mangotsfield
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7097

Adviser for Lay Ministry Development (0.5 fte)
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7123

Strategy & Mission Officer
www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=7064