



ISLE OF WIGHT STREET PASTORS

bringing peace to the community



“when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me” Matt 25 v40. NIV



COMMISSIONING SERVICE MAY 22nd 2009

After 8 Saturdays of fairly intense training, 22 intrepid Street Pastor and 12 Prayer Pastor volunteers were commissioned by the Arch Deacon Caroline Baston at Ryde Methodist church. We were so honoured to have the presence of Chief Superintendent Dave Thomas, High Sheriff Gay Edwards, Council Leader David Pugh, Ryde Mayor David Woodward, plus many other Island dignitaries'. Many thanks also to our guest speaker Roger Reid from The Ascension Trust. It was a very special evening.



Out on the streets

Straight after the our commissioning service we were out on the streets for the first time. The streets of Ryde were flooded with four teams of Street Pastors offering chocolates, water, flip flops, kind words and a listening ear. For the next four weeks a team went out every Friday night until midnight. This was an opportunity for the teams to “find their feet” and for the general public to find out who we are and what we do. We were asked the same questions many times: “what’s a Street Pastor?”, “what do you do?”, “do you get paid?” and “why do you do it?”



Every time, after explaining what we do, people would look at us and say “that’s really nice”, “good luck, all the best” or “thank you for caring”. People seemed genuinely grateful for our presence on the streets.

In July we started going out until 2-3 am. People were really getting used to us being out every Friday night. The more we managed to help in

practical ways, the more we gained peoples’ trust and the more people would start opening up to us. Men especially seemed keen to take a break from their pint to tell us their whole life story! Door staff and business owners have been very receptive to us and we are often offered free chips or a cup of coffee!



Town Councils invited us to be at the Ryde Regatta and also at Cowes Week. We spent three nights at Cowes and gave away large numbers of bottles of water, flip flops and chocolates. We engaged with a huge number of people and helped many drunk, vulnerable people, especially on the Friday night. Cowes police were really grateful for all our help especially on Wednesday and Thursday at 2 am when a large number of people were waiting outside the Co-op for delayed buses. We were a calming, helpful presence to all. Next year we are hoping to have a greater presence during Cowes Week.



Week after week the Pastors’ confidence grew as they dealt with more demanding situations. Aggressive situations, unconscious drunk people, vomiting, lost and lonely people, conversations with angry young people were all dealt with with love and sensitivity. Deeply personal conversations were happening on a weekly basis with many people seeking us out to be able to chat. One young man, having spoken to us about a deep seated emotional wound, said we were the only people he could talk to. Its very humbling for us all.

“love the lord your God love your neighbour as yourself” Mark 12 v.30 NIV



Vital Support from the Prayer Pastor team

We are very blessed to have a prayer team of over 15 people, managed excellently by prayer pastor Co-ordinator Roger Moseley. Each week a team of people come to Ryde Baptist Church to pray for the Street Pastors as they are out on the streets. We also have a number of dedicated people who pray for us from home. This prayer coverage is vital for us to be able to deal with difficult situations with love and grace. We are in contact with the prayer team all night long via mobile phone. Many people have asked us to pray for specific needs they have, and are stunned when we say 'yes, we will ring our prayer team right now to pray for you'.

I do believe that so much of the success of this scheme is down to the immense prayer coverage that we have every night.

Publicity & Promotion

As a way to increase awareness of the Street Pastor scheme, we have had articles in "The Gazette", "The County Press", "The Pompey Chimes", "The One Island Magazine" and in October we had a three page article in "Island Life magazine". The Island Life magazine's lead line was "with a lollipop and a smile the Street Pastors are turning things round in Ryde". I have been interviewed by Isle of Wight radio and have had stalls at "The big day out" and "Question Crime". I have done presentations in 22 churches plus given presentations to The Isle of Wight Council, Ryde Town Council and Shanklin Town Council. I was invited to the Cowes Mayor's reception during Cowes Week and the reception for the new High Sheriff Gay Edwards. I encourage you all to contribute to this work by sharing your newsletter with colleagues and friends.



Wightmark Quality

In November we were awarded the Wightmark. This is a quality assurance

framework for organisations working with children, young people and families, endorsed by the Children's Trust. This endorsement confirms our commitment to be as professional as we can be.



What's it like to be a Street Pastor?

Quotes from the team:

"I knew there was a call to take the holy spirit out to the people. Church walls were soaked with prayers but the streets lacked the compassion and were crying out for change" - Alistair

"Being a Street Pastor has certainly changed my life. The love and support that I feel when out on the streets gives a real sense of well being which I am hopefully able to pass on to people that I meet" - Georgie

"It feels humbling to be a Street Pastor. It has been a privilege to meet lots of different people both young and old and listen to their stories. It has also been a privilege to work together with other Christians from diverse traditions" - Barbara

"I rejoice that the Street Pastor scheme draws on people across the christian traditions to respond to those in need and in doing so serve Christ himself. The response of those on the streets to the love of Christ in action has been so positive" - Caroline

"Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. We have had several confirmations of this in the past six months." - Roger

"Being a Street Pastor means to me great fellowship and team work with my fellow Street Pastors but most of all to be Jesus out there on the Streets and be able to let his love shine through to those we meet" - Marian

"Street Pastors, living and breathing with Jesus" - Mick

"I knew that God wanted me to do it and I don't think any of us have looked back and regretted the experience" - Alan

"The opportunity to meet so many different people on the streets has been a God given blessing for me" - Edward

"I do come away with this wonderful sense of us being together in prayer and really making a difference" - Gill

"What a privilege it is to be a helping bridge to those in need"- Alastair

"Being a Street Pastor I have enjoyed the unity and love established in the team" - Bobby



Less crime in Ryde

Since May 22nd 2009 until 31st December 2009 we have done 38 nights out on the streets of Ryde, Cowes and Newport. This equates to 970 man/woman hours. We have had 134 meaningful conversations and been involved in 33 tense or challenging situations. We have given away hundreds of pairs of flip flops and bottles of water. We have got through almost 100 boxes of chocolates, and given out over 100 foil blankets. We have also picked up around 100 glass bottles. Between June 1st and December 31st the number of violent incidents in Ryde, on a Friday night decreased by 43%. Chief Superintendent Dave Thomas says that he regards this reduction in offenses as truly outstanding and would like to thank the team of Street Pastors for their hard work and contribution to these results.

Plans for 2010

Beginning of 2010 has seen most of the country covered in snow including the Isle of Wight!

Later this year we will be expanding operations to have a team in Newport as well as Ryde, every Friday.



Newport already has excellent christian projects happening through Revive. It will be great to work closely with the revive team.



Visit www.revivenewport.org for more info

Finally it remains for me to say a big thank you and wish God's continued blessing on all the marvelous volunteers involved in this unique venture. Also a huge thank you to Ryde Baptist Church for being our "base", and grateful thanks also for the generous support from all the interested parties concerned. Please continue to support I.W. Street Pastors in every way you possibly can - for the good of our community.

In humble thanks,

David Ouston - I.W.S.P Co-ordinator.