

Living in a Christ-soaked world

Headlines of a conversation with Mark Hadfield,

Coordinator of Inverness Street Pastors.



Mark has been spearheading the local Street Pastors for well over a decade. He has a wealth of experience of trying to live a meaningful life as a Christian in a non-Christian world, trying to love God and love others, wherever they might find themselves.

He ponders why the church spends so much time about internal issues of trying to turn decline into growth and seeking blessing. If that is our main agenda, should we be surprised that people are fearful to join in? They might be looking for good news, hope and joy. They may not find it if it is not clearly recognisable in our lives.

He takes this deeper and points out that the Christian logo, the call to arms, is a cross; an image not of worldly themes of growth and blessing, but of God suffering with the world. Suffering with people is the heart of the Christian message and where we will find God. Are we prepared to look for God in our own suffering and in the suffering of those around us? Can we move from questions about doing things 'better' to questions around going deeper with people in their pain and issues?

Mark is deeply convinced that if God loves people so much, then, as on the cross, so it is always, that God is in total solidarity with the human condition and whatever anyone goes through. He puts it in other words; we live in a Christ-soaked world that is hurting and broken.

Or he gives a third angle: in John 1 we learn that nothing exists without Christ, so what if everything exists with Christ? He wonders if we really believe in Jesus, why we are not better at sharing Him? Is it not true that God exists? That God is love? And that God is not somewhere else, that He is here and now? If that is the deepest truth that we must share, we need to see that anyone we come in touch with is an image bearer of God, however broken. Drawing on Jesus' own words starting in Matthew 25:40 –whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me- : in a prisoner, do we see Christ imprisoned; in someone who is hungry, do we see Christ in hunger; if someone is hurting, do we see Christ in pain?

God is hovering over the void in people's lives, itching to get involved when He is invited.



Mark shares many encounters with people on the street, who are waking up to the question that God might just be around and he might be interested in them, ready to pour His Light into many lives.

A local church member had asked their neighbour frequently if she would come to church. After five years of negative response, she stopped asking. Soon after, her neighbour came over early one Sunday and said 'I want to come to church with you this morning.' She then explained why: 'I have seen the commitment and love of Street Pastors for others. If church is anything like that, it might not be as bad as I thought it was.'

Street Pastors are learning that living a Christian life is a huge honour, to see Christ in every human being, in every broken story and to find ways to engage to help, and in doing so help us all see that our broken world is indeed Christ-soaked.

If you are interested in Street Pastors, get in touch with Mark Hadfield, email inverness@streetpastors.org.uk or phone 07761 293 108.

If you're more interested in praying for Street Pastors then get in touch with Marilyn Archer, email prayer.inverness@streetpastors.org.uk.

A Street Pastors Commissioning service will happen on Sunday, January 23 at 6pm at Culduthel Christian Centre. Anyone would be very welcome to support them.

(Paul Haringay, Here to Serve #47, Nov. 21)