A Tribute
to
David Ollerton
David Ollerton was our friend, our partner in the Gospel, our leader, and the founder of Waleswide.

All of us involved in Waleswide will miss David’s friendship, his vision to see revival in Wales, and his dedication to see Gospel churches planted and struggling churches revitalized. Yet we will also give thanks for his faith, for his dedication to the God-given vision of ministry that is Waleswide, and for the extraordinary energy and passion he was able to display serving that vision the length and breadth of Wales.

Whenever David and I shared a car journey to or from a Waleswide working group meeting, he would point out homes, chapels, even gravestones, of many of the men of faith from Welsh history, and would then tell me and anyone else in the car a little of their story of dedication to the Gospel and service for the Lord Jesus. David Ollerton now stands shoulder to shoulder with those men of faith, and joins the list of Wales’ great men of God.

Nigel James

On behalf of Waleswide

Many tributes have been given to the life of David Ollerton since he went to be with the Lord on 18 March 2017. The following are those that have been received by Waleswide Cymrugyfan.
DAWN's tribute to David Ollerton

‘A chapter a day, is a book a fortnight, is 26 books a year, is 260 books a decade, over a lifetime is...’

As DAWN students we have all heard David share this sentence with us, repeatedly! This along with the question ‘how was your Bible this morning?’, quickly followed by an update of where he was at in his Search the Scriptures, were the sentences we heard most often.

David cared deeply about our Spiritual health. His first concern, above all other training or activity, was our souls, our daily walk with Christ.

First and foremost, he encouraged us to read the Bible, and then good Christian literature. He encouraged us to be men and women of prayer, to live godly lives, to be church leaders with character, not just charisma.

A chapter a day of a breadth of good gospel-centred literature has been a great assistance to us all as we strive to follow Christ and serve him as church leaders in the ‘Cymru Gymraeg’. We can also testify that his own life, witness and example was as much of an influence as any book he recommended. David was a pattern of godliness; a great help to us to see the nature of the task ahead; he reminded us of the complete armour given to us in Christ; he reminded us that it was our joy to live daily in His presence.

Getting to know David was a scary prospect for all of us at first. David had the unique gift of making someone feel very uncomfortable. The first question most of us heard when we first met him as we considered the DAWN training for church planting and transitioning was ‘Can you do anything else?, if so do that’. It was important that we were called by God to the work. If we weren't, then we would be wasting our time, and we would never finish the race. While leading sessions, he would regularly call out our names, followed by a very unappealing-sounding village or town name in Wales where we were challenged to move to and plant a church! His intention was never to make someone feel uncomfortable for the sake of it, and we quickly learned that what he wanted most was for us to grow in our love towards the Lord, and to be the means through which lost people become found people in Christ (even if those towns and villages sounded very unappealing!).

Through David we learned that it was important to make each other, as DAWN students, feel uncomfortable at times. We learned to ask each other the difficult questions, to address empty talk and gossip, to advise, pray for and encourage one another.
David was always there for us, as students and afterwards. We have all benefited and been blessed by David and Liz’s hospitality in their home. He was always willing to give of his time, energy and wisdom, in person or over the phone. We will all be the poorer for not having access to his wealth of Spiritual and ministry experience. We will even miss those difficult questions and challenges from the inquisitions in the conservatory. The time that David spent with us, in prayer for us, and on call to help us out, was a wonderful gift from God. Our thankfulness is even greater knowing that his encouragement and support over the past ten years came even when it was difficult for him because of ill health.

One of the ways that God used David to bless us in DAWN, and Wales in general, was David’s clear and persistent call to look beyond what is in front of us now. He brought a clear vision and a challenge to us as a generation. He put church planting on the forefront of our minds, and if we were called to a traditional pastorate, we weren’t to go there to keep the status quo - we were to be strong leaders and agents of change. God was calling us to be living sacrifices — to give ourselves wholeheartedly to his work and his mission for the kingdom’s sake, to see thriving churches in difficult places all around Wales. He never let us assume that we were adequate for the task in front of us, but he taught clearly that God, through his Spirit at work in us, was able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.

We are also challenged by another of David’s great Mottos – ‘there is no success without succession’ and so it seems that in the ‘Cymru Gymraeg’ we must pick up and run where David finished.

It’s a difficult time for us as DAWN students. It feels a little as though the stabilizers have been taken off our bikes. But we do not lose heart. David testified often over the years, ‘I have known from the beginning that it is a good deal for me’, and it is a comfort to know that he is now with the Lord he loved and served so faithfully.

We thank God for calling David to Wales, we thank God for using him so powerfully in our lives and in this country. We thank Him for giving us a great friend who reflected our greatest friend in so many ways.

We would also like to thank you as a family for supporting David and allowing him to teach and serve us.
From America, his loss will be felt.

My prayer is that he will serve to be the Seth Joshua of this generation; the forerunner to revival in Wales the last time around.

He passed just before it came, but he stood on the mountain and saw the promised land before anyone else.

Peyton Jones

---

I was very aware of David’s ministry both here in Cardiff and especially for Wales as a whole. The light of his life and love for the LORD still shines, and I join with others in saying that our loss is heaven’s gain, and by grace he does see Jesus face to face. Our prayers are for the continuation of his vision for Wales.

Phylip Henry Rees, Tredegarville Baptist church

---

David’s work to encourage the people of God to fulfil their commission in Wales, and his courage in continuing that work in the face of his final illness have encouraged many – including myself. Though we have lost a great thinker, and his family have lost a dear friend, I am sure David has now heard his Master say – Well done my good and faithful servant.

May God’s Spirit encourage us all to continue David’s work.

Peter Baines, Minister Llanwenarth Baptist Church
A tribute to David Ollerton, Man of God.

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news
David walked the mountains and filled the hearts of everyone in the church pews
God gave him great understanding of His Holy Word
And David unfolded it for those whose understanding was blurred.

His faith was like a tall mountain, unmoveable and steadfast
And remained that way until he breathed his last.
A man from Lancashire who came with a heart for Wales
Who loved to climb the peaks and breathe the air of Welsh dales

So dedicated was he, he even learned the Welsh lingo
And wasn’t shy of telling everyone he had, not at all by jingo!
He preached in Welsh and English too
It was something God had called him to do.

He preached salvation in chapels, churches and big events
Showing Jesus and explaining the bible’s contents
A life lived to the wonder and glory of the one true God
God crafted this man, he was no ordinary bod

Loving son, husband, father and grandfather, loved by all
His desire was for them to know Jesus and in His Kingdom walk tall.
He worked tirelessly to tell of His heavenly father’s grace
And travelled near and far to any given place.

An apostle with vision for salvation and unity among the Welsh people
He built Waleswide a wide ranging church without a steeple.
Bringing churches together and supporting pastors was his mission
And he preached the cross as heaven’s only admission.

He was a friend to those who got to know him and faithfulness was his creed
And sent whatever help was required to those who had a need
He would not veer from his perceived calling and truth
And shared the gospel with the old, adults and the youth

He’s now with Jesus our saviour and Lord
They are now living in one accord
He can now rest and lay down the sword of the spirit
The task is given over for others to steer it.

Pete and Gaynor Nicholls
Today there are a host of preachers ministering across Wales who are indebted to the encouragement, motivation and challenges of the late Rev. David Ollerton. Many of us have been touched with his passion for spreading the gospel of Christ throughout Wales. David was one of the few Ministers who travelled hundreds of times from the South Wales to the North to ensure that the flax is not stifled, and foster the growth of future leaders. He learned and ministered in Welsh. Let me say that again – He learned and ministered in Welsh. David investigated the Welsh psychic and asked uncomfortable questions with a smile, leaving you unbeknown to yourself thinking differently about ministry progressive in this new century.

Hywel Meredydd Davies
I was pointed towards David while I was still living in Surrey by 4 completely different people who all said the same thing, ‘if you want to do something for Wales, you need to speak to David Ollerton.’

My wife and I were feeling called to come back home to Wales after ministering in England for 16 years. I remember that first meeting with David. We met at Starbucks in North Cardiff. The first thing he said to me was, "Why on earth would you want to come to Wales?" That was his dry sense of humour! He was testing me of course, but his words still echo in my heart - why? It’s so hard here. But the call to see revival again in Wales is still as strong in my heart now 5 years later as it was then.

While everyone else I spoke to at that time was saying, there's so much to do..., when are you moving, etc, it was he who made me stop and question my calling. I thank him so much for his drive, his passion and his discernment I am eternally grateful I met him.

Steve Lock

Dysgais i Gymraeg gyda Dafydd yn ystod y nawdegau hwyr. Ro’n ni’n arfer cwrdd gyda’ch gilydd yn aml i ymarfer’r iaith a chael clonc ar ol hynny. Mae atgofion hyfryd da fi ohono fe fel Christion, ffrind a cherddwr.

I learned Welsh with David during the late nineties. We used to meet together often to practice the language and to chat after that. I have lovely memories of him as a Christian, a friend and a walker.

Martin Rees

Remembering the night David surrendered his life to Christ at a Methodist chapel in a small village called Dolphinholme near Lancaster, we stopped outside the Old Post Office and as David turned to go home, ‘Typical David,’ he asked about some of the legalistic things we Methodists had. God gave me wisdom to reply, "David
“do not worry about these things, just let the Holy Spirit direct your life.” He did. The Bible became his book for life, soaked himself in church history etc. He called me his spiritual father but if ever a son went way beyond his father it was David. I went to pastor a church in Helston Cornwall, the first week there a packet arrived through the post, pamphlets and notes about Billy Bray the Cornish evangelist, Methodism in Cornwall, with a note saying, ‘just so that you know where you are and what you are following, yours in Christ, David.’ So much to tell over the years that followed, David was an inspiration, a constant thorn in my flesh, those that knew him will know what I am saying. ‘Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.’

David Gardner

David has encouraged me many times as he worked as an elder in Thornhill church. He preached with the authority which comes from the Holy Spirit. He was always interested in Tanzania and the various church and outreach activities I am involved in. To know that David prayed for me daily has been so special.

I thank God for his life and ministry and for the blessing of his care and fellowship.

Margaret Beckett

We met David about 5 years ago when he dropped in to Callander Kirk during a hill-walking holiday. He and Archie quickly formed a friendship and arranged to climb our local Corbett, Ben Ledi, together. They set off a couple of days later and reached the summit in good time. From there, instead of starting the descent, David looked at the map and said, ‘There’s another Corbett just alongside, let’s take that one too.’ Off they went, but there was a distance of two miles or so to cover before they began climbing again, and this time there was no clear track. They made the top, but in the descent they had to cope with deer fences and marshy ground, so that by the time Dorothy picked them up near Strathyre they
were a sorry pair!! In spite of the weariness and a sore knee, David had a gleam in his eye - he made it!

During that week we had two evenings in his company. The first evening was so inspiring that we invited friends to join us for a second time of fellowship and lively discussion. One memorable saying that impressed me greatly was: “I don’t care whether it’s hands in the air charismatic worship, or incense and bells, as long as the lost are being found.”

Ours was a brief encounter but one that we will never forget. It was a privilege to know such a gracious contender for the faith.

Archie and Dorothy Mitchell

Stella & I are grateful for the dedication & vision expressed by the life & witness of David.

Although we only had a brief time to know him, we met many in our area who had been blessed by his ‘servant heart.’

His passion to witness Revival in Wales has been a catalyst for many to pursue the same goals.

His intellect & planning abilities will be greatly missed.

Stella & Steve Price

I thank the Lord for the ministry of David and his devotion to going around visiting individuals as well as fellowships to give the vital message of re-churching the whole of Wales!

David visited me right up here in the north east corner, in Flint, RiverDee Church and over a cup of coffee he encouraged me that we were a strategic part of the vision.
I recognised and admired his candour within the forum groups and gatherings, not shying away from the hard questions and truth of the situation, but then having the grace not to be prescriptive and allowing the groups to discover the answers for themselves!

He was a gifted facilitator in the Kingdom! May the Lord fill the gap now left by one of Wales' great network leaders.

Pastor Steve Harmes, RiverDee Community Church Flint

---

I have been greatly blessed and encouraged by David's ministry. David Ollerton was an inspiring, invigorating and energizing visionary with an Apostolic anointing to see churches planted and re-revitalized in Wales. He will be sorely missed but may God give Waleswide the grace to continue to go from strength to strength in honour of his legacy. We thank God for David's life and ministry.

Joseph George, Ministry Associate at Kimmel Bay Church

---

Yn y nawdegau daeth criw ynghyd yn y Bala dan enw Menter Eglwysi, ymhliith y criw oedd yno roedd y diweddar R. Tudur Jones a’r Sais di-gymraeg ar y pryd o Swydd Gaerhirfryn, David Ollerton. Roedd hiraeth i weld rhywbeth newydd ar waith yng Nghymru. Eglwysi newydd yn cael eu planu ac eglwysi traddodiadol yn cael eu trawsffurfio er Iles Teyrnas Dduw.

Dros y blynyddoedd fe ddysgododd David, neu Dafydd y Sais fel y cyfeiriodd ato’i hun a’i dafod yn ei foch, Gymraeg a theimlo baich neilltuol dros waith Duw ymhliith y Cymry Cymraeg. Clywais i’n gyntaf amdano yn y Brifysgol pan laniodd John Derek Rees yn y Brifysgol yn Aberystwyth yn sôn bod ei Weinidog, sef David, wedi dweud wrtho nid yn unig i fynd i Aber ond i Bantycelyn!

Wedyn ar ôl i mi symud i’r Gogledd roedd David yn bryfociwr yn gymaint ag oedd yn anogwr (dyma oedd ei athrylith!), erbyn hyn wedi ei ryddhau o fod yn Fugail Eglwys i fod yn apostol i Gymru trwy waith Cymrugyfan Waleswide. Roedd
ganddo’r ddawn unigryw i wneud i chi deimlo’n ddigon anghyfforddus i gael eich anesmytho, ond yn ddigon gwerthfawr i deimlo y gallech gyfrannu. Pan dderbynies i alwad i’r ofalaeth yma yng Nghaernarfon dwi’n meddwl i David gael ei siomi i ddechrau mod i heb gamu mewn i weinidogaeth fwy newydd ac arloesol. Ond yn dilyn ei ysbyrdoliaeth ef ac eraill aethom ni ati yng Nghaersalem i drawsnewid yr eglwys er iles Teyrnas Dduw.

Ein teyrnged orau i David fydd ystyried nawr sut allwn ni yng Nghaersalem gefnogi gwaith newydd a trawsffurfiol mewn rhannau eraill o Gymru. A sut gallwn ni yma yng Nghaernarfon barhau i drawsnewid yr eglwys er mwyn rhannu a dangos cariad Iesu i fwyfwy o bobl.

In the nineties a group came together in Bala under the name of Menter Eglwysi, it included the late R. Tudur Jones and a certain Englishman from Lancashire, David Ollerton. The group shared a longing to see something new at work in Wales. New churches planted and traditional churches transformed for the sake of God's Kingdom.

Over the years David (or ‘Dafydd y Sais’ as he referred to himself, tongue in cheek) learnt Welsh and felt a particular burden for God's work among Welsh speakers. I first heard about David when John Derek Rees arrived in the Welsh Christian Union at Aberystwyth and he told us that his Minister, David, had told him not only to go to Aber but specifically to live in the Welsh hall, Pantycelyn!

After I moved to North Wales David was a constant agitator as much as he was an encourager (this was his genius!). By this time I think he had been released from local Pastoral Ministry to be a sort of apostle for Wales (that’s how we saw his role) through Waleswide Cymru gyfan.

He had the unique gift of making you feel uncomfortable enough to be disturbed, but valuable enough to feel you could make a contribution. This perhaps is why some Welsh Pastors never came round to have that second coffee with him! But from my perspective David was exactly what Wales needed.

When I accepted the call to the pastorate here in the Caernarfon area I think David was disappointed at first that I had not stepped in to a newer or more innovative ministry. But following his inspiration we went ahead to transform Caersalem from the already Gospel centred Church it was, although traditional, to be a missional focused church for the benefit of the Kingdom of God in Wales. And it has been a blessings seeing people believe in Jesus over the past few years and seeing the Church grow.
Our best tribute to David will be to give serious consideration now to how we can support new and transformative work in other parts of Wales. And how we can continue here in Caernarfon to transform the church to be one that shares and shows the love of Jesus to more and more people.

Rhys Llwyd

We are grateful to God for a life well lived and spent for Jesus.

David played a significant role in the County of Bridgend, pastoring Bethlehem in Cefn Cribwr, which saw many great things happen in conversion and discipleship, and alongside Brackla Tabernacle, help and lead the planting of Grace Church, Porthcawl.

He will be sorely missed by many, but he won't miss anyone. He is with the Lord, which, as David would often say 'is better by far.'

We here at Brackla Tabernacle honour God for David Ollerton.

Craig Hopkins

David was a great guy. I heard him speak a few times. He had a cheeky sense of humour. But what stands out and what I remember about him most was his clarity of thought and his passion for the gospel of Jesus and for the church in Wales.

He was a sharp sword as a speaker, but knew how to wield that sharpness without causing damage in the wrong places, as can sometimes be the case.

Just thinking about him brings a smile to the face. We give thanks for his life lived to the full, and for his encouragement to Christians in Wales.

John Mainwaring
David was such a diligent learner of Welsh because His lord had told him to learn it, and I always felt privileged to help him every week.

He was also the person I turned to with difficult questions about the Bible. Now I have no-one to argue with. Diolch Dafydd.

Gaynor Pidcock

On a lighter note (which he would appreciate), many years ago David went to buy a new bell for our front door and put it on because he was tired of the old one not working.

Dennis and Gaynor Pidcock

Bendith fawr i mi oedd cael cwmni David ar ein haelwyd a phrofi o’i ofal amdanaf wrth i mi rannu ag ef am waith yr eglwys yn Seion, Baker Street, Aberystwyth. Fel Barnabas gynt yn Llyfr yr Actau fe wnaeth David fy nghalonogi ond uwchlaw pob dim diolchaf am gael cyd- weddio gydag ef ar ein haelwyd. Diolch i Dduw a Thad ein Harglwydd Iesu Grist am ei weinidogaeth yn y Gymru hon ac am ei neges broffwydol.

“Gwerthfawr yng ngolwg yr ARGLWYDD yw marwolaeth ei ffyddloniaid” (Salm 116:15).

It was a great blessing for me to have David’s company in our home and to prove his care of me as I shared with him about the work of the church in Zion, Baker Street, Aberystwyth. Like Barnabas of old in the Book of Acts David encouraged me but above all I am thankful to have prayed with him in our home. Thanks be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for His ministry in Wales and for his prophetic message.

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants” (Psalm 116.15).

Andrew Lenny
We thank God for the vision, energy, commitment that David demonstrated so ably. His passion for new life in Wales reverberated with our own.

At the same time we rejoice that he does indeed now stand shoulder to shoulder with the mighty men who went before, gazing clearly at a radiant Saviour; no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face. Home at last.

Roy and Daphne and the Ffald y Brenin Team

There are not many people who will be sorely missed outside of their own family and close circle of friends, but David Ollerton is one, and Wales is the poorer for his passing. But his vision for church strengthening throughout the nation will not be lost because he has impacted a generation of believers like few others in his day.

I am reminded of the words of Jesus, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified... Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.' This was supremely true of Jesus. May it be true also of David. He gave his life to the cause of the gospel, that 'lost people should become found people.' May the seeds of faith grow in this nation like never before and may the Son of Man be glorified.

David Dry

We thank God for David's obedience in coming to Wales and particularly for identifying with the people of Wales by learning Welsh, no easy task for a preacher!

He unlocked the wells in the Welsh chapels by restoring relationships and bringing hope, Hosea 2:15. The dam has burst and the river of God is flowing as in Isaiah 33:21.

Mavis on behalf of Cardiff Watch
David introduced me to Mij Thomas who is now one of my closest friends. Secondly, I knew David prayed every day for the ministry work I did with the Presbyterian Church of Wales and that meant a lot to me. He liked the fact I had seven prayer points so he could separate them into each day of the week.

Ffion Williams

About two years before David came to Wales, I had a dream. My daughter and I were in an empty church hall. We were standing on the stage facing the entrance to the hall. As we looked through the window on the left side, we commented on the view we could see. There was a very big dam holding back much water.

Suddenly, the back door opened and a man walked in followed by many people. My daughter said, ‘That man who has just walked in will release that water.’

I then woke up, but I knew I would recognise this man when I saw him. Without understanding it I knew it was a significant dream.

About two years later we went on a church weekend and on the Friday evening, much to my surprise, I saw David come in and I knew he was the one in my dream! I was not even thinking of the dream I had had.

LET THE LIVING WATER KEEP FLOWING WHERE IT WILL!

Anonymous

David and Liz came to Rhiwbina Baptist Church during the time Clive was studying his Theology Degree at Cardiff Baptist College and Jeanette and our two girls became a part of the fellowship for two years. We were all very blessed by their ministry, warmth and encouragement to us as a family during that time.

Clive and Jeanette Taylor (now ministering at St Julians Baptist Church, Newport)
I first heard David speak last year at an event hosted in Brackla Tabernacle. I was struck by his strength and gentleness, two things that don't often go together. They were together in our Lord and they were both evident in how David spoke. His love for the Lord and for the lost of our nation were also clearly on display.

I then read his book A New Mission to Wales and was struck by his excellent analysis of my homeland. He knew it far better than I. He has helped me to re-evaluate and refocus on reaching those around me with the wonderful Gospel of Jesus. I thank God for him.

Andrew Hadley

It has been my privilege to know David as my friend and fellow minister of the Gospel for over seventeen years. His passion for seeing churches strengthened and planted across our nation has been inspirational to two generations of leaders leaving a powerful legacy which will be realised over many years to come.

I thank God for David’s example of biblical preaching, forthright manner, love for Wales and its people and strategic leadership of Waleswide. I thank God too for his dear family whom he loved so much and whom we stand with in prayer.

Elfed Godding

I met David while he was in Esher when I was exploring a ministry move. He introduced me to Bethlehem Pentecost Church as it was known then, a church he pastored back in the 1980s in Cefn Cribwr. I moved from Reading to Wales in 1995 to pastor this church, now known as BCLC, for 17 years. We had a common bond in BCLC and I always found David an encouraging friend. David wrote a book called Children of Revival recording the history of BCLC from its beginnings in the 1904 Revival to 2000 - a fascinating insight into God's activity in a small but significant village.

Mike Holmes
Mr. David Ollerton was a great leader who has always been enthusiastic about the work of God and a great encourager. I first met David in 2011, when he was entrusted the responsibility to do a review about our ministry by the PCW. It was a privilege to meet him and learn about his vision for churches in Wales – Revival in Wales. He devoted himself to the work of God, always ready to listen to our story, willing to provide sound advice and support when needed. David will be sadly missed.

Rev. Z. J. Colney

We got to know David when he was up climbing mountains in Scotland after a 'chance meeting.' This was about 5 years ago. He introduced himself as a church planter and after hearing our situation came to spend some time with us in Callander.

Realising we were travelling 18 miles to church on a weekly basis he had encourage us to meet with like minded believers and consider doing something locally ourselves. Initially some of us ran a million miles from this consideration because of previous issues. However, things have eventually gone in the direction of a church plant from Stirling Baptist to Callander and what is developing is very exciting. David never really got to hear about it sadly, but he certainly had a part to play in it.

He also was just such an encourager and enthusiast for the faith. My sons loved him because of his interest in the outdoors and his pioneering and adventurous spirit. He really inspired them to start climbing mountains as well as take their faith seriously. They are definitely on that journey.

Isobel and John Gibson

David will be so desperately missed by so many people who have come to know him, love him and appreciate his genuine and sincere dedication to see God’s Kingdom come, His will be done, in Wales as it is in heaven. I have known David
since the early 2000’s when serving the Lord in the Apostolic Church. I appreciated his sincerity then, and knew that when he asked you, “how you were doing?” he really cared, and really listened to what you said in response! For that alone, I will always hold David with the highest regard. But that is only a small part of a very big picture. David was a man who heard from God, and made sure that he did whatever he could to fulfil what was being asked of him – and if that meant moving to a new part of the country, and learning a new language, and understanding a rather strange culture – then he was up for it, and did it wholeheartedly. David, I loved your vision, I felt your passion, and I deeply appreciated your support and encouragement. I know you will have heard the Lord say, “Well done David, you are a good and faithful servant – enter into your rest!” Enjoy!

David Hatch

I remember David coming to our little prayer meeting in Meidrim and to Towy Community Church. A man filled with the Holy Spirit, with spiritual insight and a passion for the lost. He thoroughly investigated the spiritual state of the many different types of Churches in Wales. May we carry the baton of Faith to the lost in this nation of Wales, so that many may come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

Christine Gale

Through his own preaching and his mentorship David reignited my passion for God’s word and set me on the road to developing and using my own preaching gift. It's a journey which I continue to travel. Thank you David.

John Barton, Capel Ed Church, Goytre
I have had the privilege of knowing David since 2008 when he came to Capel Ed to see his old friend Alex Buchanan who was visiting and preaching there. On that day Alex prophesied that the Lord would use David to 'bring things' to Capel Ed. That prophecy turned out to be very accurate as for a number of years David provided oversight for our fellowship and training for its leaders. His tireless dedication to this task, even when suffering bouts of poor health, is an example to us all of a true servant of Jesus. I found his constructive comments on the preaching of the preaching team particularly beneficial and I learned more than I can say from him in that regard.

David led our fellowship through a turbulent period and showed just the right mix of compassion and determination when dealing with problematical issues. He leaves an indelible mark on us and we thank God for him. I am privileged to be able to say I regard him as a friend and a true brother in Christ. I grieve his passing but thank the Lord that he is now in glory with his Saviour.

Paul Robins - Capel Ed Church Goytre

We met David quite a few years ago when he came to visit us in Cardigan. We were very impressed with him, he had a vision and a determination to see it through. He was also very encouraging to both of us in the things that the Lord has called us to. He would pretend to get upset with us when we mentioned our work as missionaries in other nations and he would tell us, ‘Don't tell me that, tell me what you are doing in Wales.' It became a standing joke between us whenever we met but we knew his heart for this nation and wanted people to put the same energy into Wales that was being put into other nations.

Even when David was going through difficult times healthwise, he never wavered in his determination to see this nation touched by God. We greatly admire and thank the Lord for Him and all that he accomplished and we pray the seeds that he has sown faithfully over the years will bear much fruit.

Doug and Janice Bell - New Life Church Cardigan
I have known Dave, and the family for many years and over that time Dave and I became best friends. I have walked many mountains where we have grappled with various areas of theology together - he usually won. He was a man of God who had a great love for Him and His word. As an evangelist I was always encouraged when he constantly said; “The Gospel must be our first step and never the second one.” I thank God for allowing that friendship and that I was able to walk with him through to the end of his life here on earth.

When leaving him a couple of days before his death. Liz said to him; “Pete will see you in the morning.” And I will...

Pete Hodge

My first meeting with David was when he came to meet me at Ararat Baptist Church when I was their Senior Minister. He wanted my views on setting up a meeting for ministers under the banner of Cardiff North Leaders. That proved to be a great blessing to me and to my ministry. In that conversation his concern for the state of the churches and chapels in Wales became very obvious. I have so much admiration for the work he has done; in learning the Welsh language to communicate with all the people of Wales and more importantly the setting up Waleswide.

Gareth & Rosa Evans

We only met David a couple of times but we will never forget his infectious passion for Wales! We thank God for the legacy David has left behind.

Johnny and Arlette Frampton, City Church Cardiff
Our memories of David go back many years and to his shepherding of the church Bethlehem in Cefn Cribwr. His efforts to unite Christians were fruitful indeed and I remember well his organizing inter-denominational meetings Saturday mornings in the Heronston Hotel, Bridgend. As elders in the Apostolic Church Cornelly we joined with David and his elders early in the mornings to pray over the villages of Kenfig Hill and Cornelly from a high rise called The Ton with a view to Port Talbot and the sea. We also organized a campaign together in the Welfare Hall Kenfig Hill and had Ray Bevan as the speaker and school visitor by day. When someone asked, ‘To which church shall we direct any converts?’ his reply, ‘You don’t put live chicks under dead hens!’?? When his congregation increased under his shepherding he said, ‘We don’t steal sheep, we grow grass.’

I’m 93 years now and Sunday spoke to the two younger elders involved at that time and our unanimous tribute is that he was indeed a good and godly man who enhanced our life, expanded our vision and was worthy of our love and respect. There is not one negative memory of our recollections of him. His physical battle has been long, it seems years since I sent him a CD of ‘Christian Male Voices’ and have been kept in touch by the Waleswide newsletter regularly. Also my son and family are in the Grace Church Porthcawl that David was instrumental in establishing and often was the speaker there.

Haydn Roach

My memories of David go back over 40 years. He was a Big Character of a man. He was always ready with a quick word of encouragement, rooted in God's word and delivered with grace, humility, compassion and a good dose of humour! Had it not been for David's encouragement all those years ago I would not have continued in ministry to today. Some of his influence has been obvious, but there has also been a 'hidden' influence that will only be revealed when Jesus returns but will certainly have resulted in him being greeted in heaven with "well done good and faithful servant."

Philip (Pip) Bamber
David’s friendship and unique style of encouragement will be missed. I’ll miss having him around because knowing he was there and that you could confide in him was often a help to me. When you met up with David you knew you’d get a straight answer, whether it was what you wanted to hear or otherwise. But that was the appeal. We sometimes joked that he had the spiritual gift of ‘provocation’ but it was more to do with his ability to speak the truth in love. At heart David was a pastor and he genuinely cared about you, numerous people will testify to that.

His capacity to network and build relationships across the traditional divides was a mark of his apostolic gifting measured by wise and often persuasive words. As an Englishman, he was an advocate for all things Wales including the language. He could get away with saying things to audiences that needed to be heard. His passion and vision for mission in Wales found a natural expression in ‘Waleswide’ which he served with all his heart, soul and strength. In many of my conversations with David, I think he could see clear signs of new life and hope – he was never one to wallow in stories of decline – and I hope and pray that his legacy will go on as we continue to pursue ‘A New Mission to Wales’.

Simeon Baker

David was a dynamic promoter of the work of the gospel in Wales. It's a pity he wasn't Welsh, but our citizenship is in heaven & I pray his Welsh brothers & sisters-in-Christ will take inspiration from his dynamism. He couldn't possibly rejoice as much as a Welsh Christian from Wales being set on fire for God by the Holy Spirit, but I'm sure tears of joy would run down his face if were able to see it. Jesus, David's Jewish Saviour, tells us that sheep from many folds will be gathered together at the marriage-supper of the Lamb & what a glorious day that will be when we're all gathered there together, recognising only Jesus as our Lord. Thank you Lord for David & for the inspiration of his commitment.

John Mellor
David’s enthusiasm and focus for the kingdom of God here in Wales has helped shape our church’s evangelism, outreach and giving. As a congregation we have become very much focused on reaching our nation, partnering and supporting those who are working to evangelise Wales and looking at how we can work within rural communities in West and Mid-Wales. David helped shape my own thinking on mission to become much more Wales centred. I believe that much of what we see God doing in Wales in the years ahead will have his fingerprints on because God used him to mobilize and motivate the church to reach out. HE will be very much missed.

Alex Ashton, Pastor of the Vine Christian Centre, Bridgend, Wales

David made a long trek down to Llandovery South Wales in 2009 along with his brothers Meirion and David Dry to meet me and offer a place on the Welsh DAWN programme in Llansannan. Jesus always looked and noticed the small places … the common person. David understood this very well and saw that it is these little places; these simple people that comprise a nation.

David’s love for God and the church in all its outward forms will be an enduring encouragement to me, helping me to see beyond what God has done and reach out for what he wants to do.

Aled Lewis

We are both so thankful for the impact that David has had on our lives first as Elora’s Pastor, helping to develop her gifts and passion for Jesus and then helping to develop her sense of call to the Valleys.

Then being a mentor to us both over the last ten years as we left Moorlands and began to serve God in Wales. David has had a major part in developing my personal vision to work in Wales to see the Church built up across the nation. The constant encouragement and healthy challenge that David gave us has made me and Elora into the people and ministers we are today.
He has been a true inspiration to us both and His life and the message that He shared with us to keep true to the Gospel and the Call of Jesus on our lives no matter what life throws our way will continue to speak to us and inspire us for the rest of our lives. And prayerfully to keep on seeing Wales reached for Christ.

Jon and Elora Forman

David Ollerton led from the front. He was a combination of intelligence, diligence, gracious determination, clear focus, committed faith and charisma. God used him in profound and important ways to many people. The people of Wales are thankful for his life and for his ministry. David, you will be missed!

Rob Burns, Missional Links Wales

The Rev. Dr David Ollerton touched the hearts of many because he not only learnt the Welsh language but also realised the need to read extensively in order to understand how Welsh-speaking Christians here in Wales think and feel.

David chaired the committee of the Welsh Schools Initiative (Menter Ysgolion Cymraeg) back in 2002, when I was appointed to the work of taking the good news to the Welsh-medium schools in this area. This led eventually to several meetings with others in other parts of north Wales who wanted to emulate the kind of work that we were encouraged, with God’s help, to fulfil here in the South East.

On a personal level, when my father was unwell in hospital in Carmarthen, in a particular moment of crisis it was David Ollerton who came to our aid although he had so many commitments and a church of his own to lead. He was a tower of strength and wisdom in our hour of need.

Gwen Emyr
The abiding memory I have of David was his great warmth and enthusiasm as soon as I first met him, it was as if we had known each other for years. His passion, knowledge and dedication to serve The Lord was infectious and I pray that the foundation that he has helped establish will carry on and grow for our Saviour’s glory.

Thinking of David's testimony, I am reminded of the poem The Preacher:

He held a lamp of truth that day,
So low that none could miss the way
And yet so high to bring in sight
The picture fair, the world's great light.

Bleddyn Lewis

I first met David in the 1980's, not long after I had moved to Porthcawl and started a career at the Steel Company in Port Talbot. At the time he was pastor of Bethlehem Church in Cefn Cribwr. This was in the early days of the so-called 'Renewal movement' and after a number of us from Gilgal Baptist Church in Porthcawl had attended Renewal Days in Brecon Cathedral, we felt led to arrange one in Porthcawl, and David very graciously agreed to be our guest speaker.

He led services in Gilgal a number of times in the succeeding decades, and I used to love to listen to his easy, humorous, yet challenging style of preaching.

Since the setting up of Waleswide I have attended two or three conferences at which David spoke. Despite his illness, he was clearly still passionate to see churches planted and strengthened throughout Wales. I admired greatly how fluently he could communicate in Welsh, and could see that this gave him great credibility among Welsh-speaking churches.

As a leadership team at Gilgal, we have made extensive use of the Waleswide Futures Worksheet, and are currently working our way through David's book "A New Mission to Wales", trying to discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to us in terms of how we approach evangelism and where we should be putting our efforts.

I am honoured to have known David, albeit not well, and wish to pay tribute to him as a humble, devoted servant of the Lord Jesus. Many will miss him greatly here on earth, but for him it is far better that he is now present with the Lord.

John Hornsby
David has left a lasting legacy for Wales and his passion for missions will not be forgotten. We take comfort in the knowledge that he is safe home in the arms of our Lord Jesus, and we shall see him again.

Phil and Linda Banda, Calvary Harvest Ministries

During our many years of church planting it has to be said that David was one of the most encouraging, and personally endorsing, men of God that we knew in this field of service. His passion to see Wales impacted by the gospel was without question (What other Englishman would learn the Welsh language???). The many times that we shared fellowship we always came away with a sense of purpose and renewed strength. He was direct and forthright, and that is what attracted us to this man of mission.

We are determined to make our remaining years on earth a reflection of his infectious zeal and apostolic life culminating in the praise and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Peter Yeoman

I will remember David for his great passion for God and his desire for us as DAWN students to strengthen our personal relationship with Him. David’s devotion was incredible: a wonderful witness and teacher who did not hold anything back in his service to his Lord. I am extremely grateful to have known him.

Elinor Owen
David was a pioneer, passionate in his love for the Lord Jesus and for souls to be saved. He was a very courageous man, very faithful. A GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT. A MIGHTY OAK OF RIGHTEOUS!!

I remember him WITH FOND MEMORIES, when we used to meet in the early morning prayer meetings in Rhiwbina Baptist Church. He inspired and encouraged us with his love for God and His Word and also to be little evangelists. He's sadly missed.

Ruth Price

---

I first met David through the Waleswide meetings but subsequently, as David did research for his book, he came to and we met together in Haverfordwest. David was always so encouraging and wanted to genuinely know 'how's it going?' He was interested in you first before moving on to chatting about his research. A patient and humble man whose heart was 'sold out' for the Kingdom of God. When meeting David at further Waleswide meetings it was always a joy to chat to him, something that I, and many others, are truly going to miss. David's deep faith in his Lord Jesus has now become sight and we praise God for that eternal assurance and hope but, at the same time, grieving the loss of a wonderfully inspiring man of God.

Rev Terry Broadhurst

---

Like the Apostle Paul, who talked more about Christ than his chains, David in the time I knew him talked more about Christ than his cancer. Paul writes in Philippians 1:12 'I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel'. David was more concerned in his last days that the gospel would advance in Wales than his good health.

He was a model and an inspiration to me and many others in Wales to be bold and fearless to preach Christ to the unreached people of this great nation. Again like the Apostle Paul I can say that David inspired most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by his suffering, they are much more bold to speak the word
without fear (Philippians 1:14). So I am confident that David’s life and example, have and will, bear fruit in many lives. He has set a fire and placed a vision in many that will not go out or waver.

So I give thanks to the Lord for David. By the grace of God he was a man whom the world is not worthy of (Hebrews 11:38).

Steve Dyer

Although I have not known David all that long (about 5 years or so) I am grateful to God for who he was and the wonderful contribution he made to my nation. His insight into the Welsh people and situation shown in his book ‘A New Mission to Wales’ is amazing – I often smiled as I read, seeing in it friends, work colleagues, family members, myself.

His commitment to the Church and to finding the best ways to reach the nation for Christ were inspirational. On a spiritual level, his preaching (I first heard him preach at an OAC conference) was also inspirational and challenging.

But I think what stands out for me most was the way he showed me acceptance. As a female minister from a mixed denominational background I have often felt looked down on and my opinions disregarded, but from early on and despite all the people David must have met on his travels, he showed that he knew who I was, cared about what I was doing and how things were going, and valued my contribution. He showed no prejudice – what mattered was not my gender, age, or denominational background but our work for God’s kingdom. Even when he was ill, he still took the time to email encouragement and advice. His values he passed on to the Waleswide team he founded, so that in my ministry situation down in Laugharne I have felt supported when I could so easily have been quite isolated.

David not only made a significant contribution from the public platform and in material resources, but left a legacy among the individual lives he touched. He will be sorely missed, but I am sure his work will continue for a long time to come and have its effects even into eternity.

Rev Carys Butler
It is hard to imagine Christian ministry in Wales without David's energetic and passionate presence. His legacy is immense, having touched so many people over the years. He challenged me deeply and practically and I continue to hear his words of challenge particularly in regard to reading the Bible daily in Welsh as well as my own mother tongue. David's eyes were always on the goal that Christ should be seen and followed and loved as Lord by people throughout Wales and beyond. What a gift he had for pointing the eyes of others in that same direction. I am thankful for the - albeit brief- opportunity that I had to work alongside him.

Christine Daniel, Head of Bible Society Wales

While pastoring churches in mid-Wales my wife and I had the pleasure and privilege of David regularly popping in for coffee as he passed the Manse door on his many trips North. Our lives were enriched by David's insight and knowledge of Welsh culture, heritage and church history in a way that he gave us a framework of ministering in a rural community. His Biblical perspective and personal pastoral experiences, combined with his compassionate heart for Wales was such a great encouragement that he truly ministered to us whenever we met.

Rev David Meanwell

It was my privilege to know David for over 10 years. Despite his own considerable personal suffering over much of that time he maintained his gospel focus, his strategic vision, his love of our Lord Jesus Christ and his church and, his remarkable care for God’s people across Wales. I am sure I join with many across Wales who give thanks to the Lord for David’s life. David was a man with the most comprehensive and encyclopaedic knowledge of the Lord’s people in Wales. Yet he managed to maintain genuine, selfless, prayerful, loving care and concern in amazingly personal ways for so many who were facing challenges and suffering. We know about some aspects of David’s service for the Lord. Much of this is in the public realm. However I think we can be sure most of the major, significant impact
of David’s life and service is only known to the many his life touched and, most important of all, to David’s glorious Saviour and Lord.

David Norbury

I will never forget David’s words at our meeting in Rhayader at the end of last year: “If the Lord is calling me home, I don’t want to be late!” What a wonderful testimony of faith, and one I have quoted several times to people who are facing life issues. David was a wonderful and self-effacing gift to so many of us in little Welsh outposts ‘on the edge’ and he will be missed.

Simon Morgan

We first met David about 10 years ago when he and David Dry visited us in our home in Beulah. We were in the second year of our mission to pray for the coming Welsh Revival. Although our assignment was to pray for all of Wales, as yet most of our relationships were with people in northern Pembrokeshire and the area near Cardigan. So when we heard the story of Waleswide and David’s vision to see revival in Wales, it was a tremendous encouragement to us.

From then on, hearing news from David and Waleswide over the years provided us with current information that enabled us to pray with more clarity for other areas in the land. And then in 2011, after two years of leading a monthly prayer meeting for revival in "not just around the corner" Blaenau Ffestiniog, what a wonderful surprise we received when Waleswide identified Blaenau as one of the 10 neediest areas in Wales and organised a special meeting right there.

I got to know some of David’s love for Jesus and his heart for Wales through our too few conversations, his newsletters and a handful of messages I was privileged to hear him share. Although we never worked directly together, it was a blessing and strength to know that we were on the same Team! His years of sacrificial giving and service to Wales and the Body of Christ were and are an ongoing inspiration to many. And surely others who God brought alongside David to work
in similar fashion with Waleswide will carry on his example of dedication and service for many years to come.

We will see revival come, and we will see the church brought to a place of lively hope and fulfil its Great Commission to the lost, both across this land and abroad. And even now, although amidst the pain of temporary loss, from his new celestial vantage point among the host of witnesses, David is watching the good fruit of his labours and cheering us on!

Dick & Gladys Funnell, WalesAwakening

I can but say what an incredible privilege it has been to know David. When I first came back to Wales and bumped into him at the Waleswide conference in Newtown, in his own inimitable way he challenged me as to 'how God would make a difference through my being back in Wales'? And that's the challenge he laid before me - time and again! Many words will be spoken of David but in some ways it's those kinds of moments that I will miss most - moments where he'd look into the whites of my eyes and challenge me. But there are also those 'off the record' moments - the chats over a 'paned' in the conservatory or when he popped in en route somewhere! The time and energy he invested into myself and other ministers and ministries - the fruit of which I've often been privileged to witness. He has run this race well, has fought the good fight and is now ever present with His Lord. I thank God for the times we shared.

Marc Owen

David has been a particular encouragement to me for 20 years now and I would particularly want to thank him for one visit to Chwilog. At the time I was in a slough of despond and David was the Help who gave me the push I needed to break free. He has always had the gift of spotting an excuse and shooting it down.

As our dear nation seems to be made up of ‘excuse-makers’ he has been just the one to shake us out of it. The younger generation leaders that he has developed
seem far less tainted with it than those who have gone before. Now that I’m aware of the ‘excuse-log’ in my own eye I hope to see more clearly (once removed obviously!) the excuses that surround me.

I suppose I’m using the word excuse to describe David’s ability to see beyond all obstacles in his way, and those that others aren’t dealing with with the same passion and determination. I can imagine that this gift can have its downside, but for the church in Cymru he has brought it on with the gift of confidence through humility at a time of great need.

Hywel Rhys Edwards

Cyril and I first met Pastor David Ollerton when he was ministering at Cefn Cribwr near Bridgend. It was his first pastorate and there was much blessing. Later we met at Esher, Surrey where David and Liz and family lived and ministered before the Lord sent them back to Wales. At Cwmtwrch and through the years with Waleswide we were in touch as he fulfilled the special calling and ministry the Lord gave him in Wales.

I shall ever be grateful for David’s support and help he gave me during the time of Cyril’s home call. Pastor David’s ministry at the graveside and at the funeral thanksgiving service here in Neath were especially precious to myself and many.

I shall always rejoice at every remembrance of him and thank the Lord.

Barbara Davies

I Thank the Lord for the life of David and the inspiration and encouragement he always was.

I loved his vision for Wales and people and was very touched by his courage to keep going in spite of ill health. A tremendous example to us all.

Marilyn Harry
'Sut mae?' Around here you are asked it every day. But when David asked it, whether on the end of the phone or on the doorstep, we knew he was asking it because he really was interested and he really did care.

As a family we found ourselves in a context of 'transitioning'. At the time there were precious few who understood what it was all about and why we were doing it. For us, David was one of those 'precious few'. His Christlike encouragement, prayerful concern and his remarkable ability to preach and teach lovingly and relevantly in a church community journeying from traditional to missional was a lifeline. Pastorally he understood the challenges of ministry in this context... particularly for our children. He not only knew both our girls’ names but knew what they were doing. Both of them remember particularly the meals that we shared with David and the great encouragement (and fun!) he brought to them.

'How are you doing?' are almost the last words I recall hearing David speak. Because of David's life and vision, we, along with many others, were able to answer 'Da iawn!'

Paul Smethurst

---

We give thanks for David’s life. He was a friend from a distance. I always will love, admire and miss his passion and commitment to the Lord and Wales.

Phil Davies

---

I appreciated David's taking the time to come and chat to me, at that time a minister in the Welsh work of the Methodist Church. We had a pleasant lunch in a local café and I came away feeling encouraged and blessed.

John Barnett
When David Ollerton came to Rhiwbina Baptist Church, he became my pastor.

I was very much a passenger in Church life, happy to sit back and let everybody else get on with it. But David didn’t want spectators, he wanted participators. While on a discipleship course run by David I incurred his wrath. I wasn’t impressed at the time, but I look back now and see it was just the kind of “shaking up” I needed. He saw something in me and Church life, others did not see. He gave me a ministry, with children. And I loved it. I had a responsibility and this nurtured a relationship with Jesus that could not belong to the passive person that I was content to be. I never knew I could have this personal relationship with the Lord, and I have carried it to this day, and I shall be forever grateful.

As if that wasn’t enough, he saw something in my daughter. I knew she loved the Lord with a greater heart than almost anyone I know. He suggested she go to Bible College to study for a theology degree. I thought this may be a struggle for her, but not one bit. She smashed it. He told me “It’s very simple Mr. Jimbo – the school system has totally let her down”. He was so right.

Through Waleswide I have discovered a love for Wales that I never knew. What makes Wales so special is its people. There is so much character, and this would have passed me by if I hadn’t got involved with David in Waleswide. David’s legacy of Waleswide must not be allowed to diminish.

If someone does something for you, that changes your life, you can try to show words or ways of gratitude. If someone does something that changes your life, and your child’s life – you know the words or ways will never be enough. You can only thank God for His grace in putting that person your way, and know that the perfect thanks will become available to you when you meet again in Heaven.

Jim Passey

To spend time with David was to experience what Stanley experienced when he met with David Livingstone in ‘darkest’ Africa. On taking leave of Livingstone to return to Europe, he said, "If I had stayed with him any longer I would have been compelled to become a Christian". David’s generosity with his time, energy, wisdom and God-given gifting resulted in both our children returning to Christ. Our hearts are full with thanks for his life and faithful ministry.

Wayne and Vicki Miles
My time with David was brief but poignant and of great mutual encouragement as we shared stories and dared to imagine what could be. I have no doubt that David's legacy will be seen in the fruits of others many years from now; I shall remember a man of 'tranquil submission' to do the will of God, committed to fruitfulness in his service.

Sean Stillman

---

**Twitter Tributes**

Aron Treharne @arontreharne

Today, my friend and mentor entered into paradise #faithfulservant

Owen Cottom @owencottom

I am just one of dozens of young leaders in Wales who's future ministry will benefit immeasurably from his encouragement. PTL for D.O.

Peter Hodge @PeteHodge

Missing my best friend - Dave Ollerton man of God I am so thankful for sharing his life

Kevin Ellis @holyislandvicar

Saddened to learn of the death of David Ollerton of @Waleswide. When first moving to Holyhead, his kindness and wisdom were incredible.

Roy Hutchinson @rhutch

We will miss Him....
Marc Verlander @meverlander

He was a great man. So sorry to hear this news. Praying for his family and all involved with @Waleswide

Gavin Owen @gowenmedia

Sad to hear about the passing of David Ollerton we had him speak at hope church just before Christmas - a gentleman and gospel pioneer

David Oliver @davidtoliver

Wonderful words on the website. Heartfelt and meaningful!!

Other tributes

From: http://daibach-welldigger.blogspot.co.uk/2017/03/henllan-amgoed-two-contrasting-revivals.html

**Henllan: Contrasting Revivals**

This Welldigger blog is dedicated to David Ollerton, who died of cancer while it was being written. He was a Lancastrian who took Wales to his heart, and learned to speak the Welsh language. In the line of the great men in the history of the church in Wales, he indefatigably worked towards the goal of regenerating existing churches of the nation and the planting of new ones where they are needed, inspiring others to get on board with this vision through the establishing of Waleswide Cymrygyfan. The longing in his heart was to see revival come to Wales again. The vision of Welldigger is very much in that same mould. Now 'with Christ, which is far better,' he will be sorely missed down here by family, friends, and all who knew him. It seems appropriate that his name should appear at the head of this blog, mentioned along with some of the other great men who have served the Kingdom in Wales.
What do we do when spiritual giants leave us?

In the last week, we've said goodbye to two modern day heroes of the faith. On Saturday, we heard the news of the death of David Ollerton, the founding director of Waleswide, an inter-denominational initiative supporting & raising the profile of gospel needs in Wales, as well as a church planter and a beloved elder at Thornhill Church, Cardiff. David had been battling cancer for several years. And last Monday I attended the memorial service of Mike Ovey, the Principal of Oak Hill Theological College who died suddenly on 7 January this year. His tragic death stunned not only the close-knit Oak Hill community, but also the wider evangelical constituency, and especially our friends contending for the gospel within the Church of England.

When the work of the gospel in our land is as hard enough as it is, how are we to respond when the Lord takes away our best? First and foremost, our hearts go out to Liz Ollerton and Heather Ovey and their respective families. We've lost a leader and a friend, they've lost so much more: a dearly loved husband, father & son. But more than that, I suggest two important responses:

1. We praise God for their lives.

The Bible tells us to 'Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life ... Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account' (Hebrews 13:7, 17).
It is right to remember David and Mike with immense gratitude to God. The most painful times I've gone through spiritually have been hearing about fellow pastors who have fallen. My heart breaks every time I have to share the news with Sally. But David and Mike finished well. They kept pressing on (Philippians 3:12). We may be surprised that God chose to take them when He did, but they both got to the end of their respective races. And they've now both received the crown of life that can never fade away.

2. We press on with the work.

We don't merely honour Jesus by looking back at what he’s done. In fact if we only look back, we actually dishonour him, for He's given us much work to do!

The same applies to Jesus's servants. In God's goodness, David had the foresight to write up his years of expertise, passion and research in 'A New Mission to Wales: Seeing churches prosper across Wales in the twenty-first century'. It's a very important book, which provides something of a roadmap for those inspired by David to take the gospel to the nation. He certainly lifted my eyes to the spiritual poverty throughout our land, especially north of the M4. What part might you play in furthering the cause of Christ here?

And so two giants have left us.

But the work goes on...