

A Fresh Work of the Spirit in

Wales



Young men receive Christ after a skating outreach.



Joe Aldrete shares the Gospel in Wales.

**Taking the Gospel to a nation where
one of the greatest revivals began ...**

story and photos by Tom Price



*Nearby Caerphilly Castle stands as a monument to a country
rich in history but dark today in its spiritual relationship with God.*

The day of witnessing was over. Teams from CC Moreno Valley and CC Upland had shared the Gospel of Christ on the streets of Cardiff, Wales, throughout the day and into the evening. During a church service that night eight young skateboarders accepted Jesus as their Savior.

Ordering a bucket of chicken at a KFC, the visiting Christians could finally relax before getting some sleep and getting ready for Sunday church service the next morning. A group of local teens from a nearby table, however, were curious as to why a group of Americans were visiting Wales.

That discussion led the group to share their faith. Soon guitars were pulled out of their cases. The store manager turned off the piped-in music. A full worship service encompassed the entire restaurant. Two young women left, only to return later, feeling drawn back.

“I felt that I couldn’t go home until I understood more about what these people believed,” one of the girls would share later. “Something that these Americans had was what I wanted in my life. They all seemed so happy and peaceful sharing their faith—not anything I had seen in the churches here.” Both of the girls accepted Christ at the restaurant and were sitting in CC Cardiff when the group arrived the next morning.



The outreach team shared their faith in KFC.



Worship leader Reggie Gradias plays guitar with Sarah Bufton on vocals. Steve Vickery, on percussion, is the son of Pastor John Vickery.

Sending Out Their Best

“You never know when the Holy Spirit is going to bring about a situation like the KFC encounter,” mused John Milhouse, senior pastor of CC Moreno Valley. “You can plan what you are going to do, but on an outreach like this, you must remain flexible to let God direct you where He leads.”

John Milhouse is a veteran pastor of the CC movement. He began taking teams to Wales three years ago. Two of his assistant pastors at CC Moreno Valley, Reggie Gradias and Gregg Griffith, had felt led to move their families to Wales to assist a church plant there. “We are committed here,” John continued. “We have sent two of our best families as missionaries.”

CC Moreno Valley began twenty-two years ago in Reggie Gradias’ living room. John Milhouse was the senior pastor, and Reggie Gradias was the worship leader and assistant pastor. Laurie Gradias felt the Lord calling her family to Wales even before her husband, Reggie, heard God’s voice. They moved there in 2001. A year later the Griffith family, who had been part of CC Moreno Valley for seventeen years, joined them. Gregg had served as assistant pastor for five years at CC Moreno before moving to Wales.

“I felt God leading us in a new direction in missions,” said John Milhouse. Pastor Gary Ruff, CC Foothills, shared with him at a pastors’ conference about the first Calvary Chapel beginning in Wales. John told Gary he would be glad to help in any way he could.



Gary Ruff, CC Foothills, felt led to support the work in Wales.

during John Vickery’s visit,” said John Milhouse. Over the past three years, teams of fifty, sixty-five, and forty-five people have journeyed to Wales under the leadership of Gary Ruff, CC Foothills; John Snoderly, CC Antioch; Bob Grenier, CC Visalia; Randy Walls, CC Upland; Tom Luitwieler, CC Reno/Sparks, as well as John Milhouse.

John Vickery, the senior pastor of CC Cardiff, where the Gradias and Griffith families now serve, was invited to teach at CC Moreno Valley for a mid-week service during a visit in America. He taught from the book of John, Chapter Four. “God brought our hearts together



Cathy Griffith, right, welcomes two women to CC Cardiff, Wales, who had accepted the Lord the night before at the KFC. She and her husband Gregg had brought their family to Wales as missionaries from CC Moreno Valley, CA. Their daughter, Heather, stands to the left.

Coldness of Heart

John Milhouse has shared Christ in South America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. He has never seen people as resistant to the Gospel as in Wales.

“This is the most difficult place I have ever ministered,” he said, giving his initial impressions. “The vast majority of the Welsh don’t believe in God, nor care if there is a God. There is a coldness of heart. I realized it would take a work of God like there was in the Welsh Revival in order for the Gospel to flourish here again.

“But in this third year of outreach ministry, I have felt a genuine change. I have seen a softening of the hearts here and a growing interest in the Gospel.

“As more teams come and let their faith shine, the Welsh are beginning to open their hearts to Jesus Christ. The history of what God did in the Welsh Revival cannot be ignored.

“Let us never forget that the preachers of that great awakening never prayed for revival, only that God would pour out and reveal Himself and His Son through His Holy Spirit.”



Robin Milhouse, left, prays and asks for God’s direction at the ladies’ Bible study.



(l-r) John Milhouse, Gregg Griffith, Reggie Gradias, and John Vickery confer while at Caerphilly Castle. Gregg and Reggie are missionaries from CC Moreno Valley.

“I realized it would take a work of God like there was in the Welsh Revival in order for the Gospel to flourish here again.”

John Milhouse



Laurie Gradias, left, listens to Christine at the ladies’ Bible study. Laurie and her husband Reggie moved their family to Cardiff, Wales, as missionaries. They had been in the ministry at CC Moreno Valley for 22 years.



Professional skateboarder Richard Mulder shows his tricks to Vacation Bible Schoolers before sharing his faith.

John Vickery – CC Cardiff

It had been a tough first year for Pastor John Vickery at CC Cardiff, Wales. Leaving an established work, he was discouraged by the lack of clear progress in the country of his birth.

He journeyed to York, England, and visited a book fair with several pastors. Cold and weary, John was tired of old books. Reluctantly, he picked up one of the several thousand, carrying it around before actually looking at it.

Finally, John opened the book he was holding. On the first page he turned to was a story titled, “Bill the Boozer, the Worst Man in Cardiff.” Astounded, John read an account from his hometown during the Welsh Revival. Bill, acknowledged as the heaviest drinker in town, accepted a bet

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Pastor John Vickery, CC Cardiff, gives away a skateboard to a youngster that has cystic fibrosis.

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John Milhouse



John Milhouse shares with two youngsters after they prayed to receive Christ.



Skater Richard Mulder prays for healing of the young man.

REVIVAL, SIR

The *Welsh Evening Express* newspaper reported at the end of 1904:

The local magistrate sat alone in his courtroom, except for the court clerk. Normally the room would be filled with drunkards, thieves, domestic combatants, prostitutes, and an occasional murder suspect. Looking around, the judge asked the clerk why there were not any cases to bring his judgment upon.

The court clerk stood, looked around the empty room, and straightened himself to answer "His Honor" in his most proper English.

"Revival, Sir," the clerk replied and promptly sat back down.



A photo of Evan Roberts, taken at the beginning of the Welsh Revival of 1904.

The Christian revival of 1904-05 that swept first through Wales and then throughout the world was like none that was ever seen before or since. Newspaper accounts from that day offer a staggering glimpse of what the Lord will do when people pray for His Holy Spirit to descend upon their lives.

On October 31, 1904, a young pastor, Evan Roberts, encouraged his youth group to stay at the church with him throughout the evening and pray. The 26-year-old Welshman led the group as they sought Pentecost. His name became synonymous with the revival, even though Evan always prayed for Jesus Christ to reveal Himself and not for revival. What followed touched the entire world.

Like box scores from baseball highlights, the news accounts numbered the "converts" from each town and village every Monday evening.

November 8, 1904—REVIVAL HARVEST—10,000 Converts—Fire Spreads—More Localities Swept into Line

February 4, 1905—70,000 Converts—Pubs Shut Down—Courtrooms Empty—Joy, Joy, Joy—Rescue Work of Revival

May 6, 1905—91,508 Converts—Champion Boxer of Devon Latest Convert—Football Matches Cancelled—Gospel Spreads to Philipines, India, America



The Welsh Revival began at Moriah Chapel in Lougher, Wales.

In the same spring, the newspaper reported of a young man sitting with friends at one of the few pubs not closed due to lack of clientele. Laughing at the perceived idiocy that surrounded them, the young man went to reach for his drink. He found that his arm was unable to move. Struck with fear, the young man ran to the church where Evan Roberts was teaching. The crowd parted, and the young fellow saw his father on his knees at the front of the church. Walking to the altar, the young man knelt beside his father, who had been praying for his son's salvation. The young man accepted Christ and became another convert.

"Bend me, bend us, O Lord," Evan would pray. He had felt that the Holy Spirit was ready to do a great work, if only God's people would pray for it. The prophet Isaiah's words became his battle cry:

Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence. Isaiah 64:1

Smokeless Coal



John Milhouse preaches to the mission team at Moriah Chapel where the 1904 Welsh Revival began.

Coal mining was at the heart of the Welsh economy at the beginning of the 20th century. The product harvested below the surface of Wales was renowned for its lack of smoke as it burned, a rarity in the world. A newspaper reporter from the early days of the revival claimed that he had found the flame of Welsh religious enthusiasm as smokeless as its coal.

He found the meetings void of normal human conditions—pride, ceremony, showmanship, pomp, or even religious hysteria. The congregations were soberly sane, orderly, and reverent. At the same time, the revival leaders kept a loose rein on the order; anyone could speak as led by the Spirit. "It was never unruly or out of order," claimed the reporter. "Thousands thronged the streets or crammed into space built for hundreds, and no one seemed to mind. Everyone gleamed with holiness and praised their Lord."

A well-known, tough police officer came to Evan Roberts to protest that everyone had gone mad with this religious fervor. The man also complained that there was no police work left to do. Invited to come to the meeting, the officer burst into tears, confessed the error of his ways, and repented.

"Bend me, bend us, O Lord."

Evan Roberts



The Welsh children were excited to act out Bible stories they had learned throughout the week of VBS for their parents.



John Vickery with his wife, Julie, and daughter, Ruth, who graduated from CCBC in Murrieta last spring.

“Wales has had more revivals than any nation awakenings and revivals, the average congregation is less than 25 people, mostly elderly. Only 5 percent of the population attends church at all. A thousand churches have closed over the past 20 years.”

Pastor John Vickery



Sam Scotti leads Bible school in praise music.



VBS theme—Super Cool Undersea Adventure.

that he could not last through one of the revival meetings. Bill attended the service and became a convert. The story went on to tell how Bill had become a solid citizen in the community and a great winner of souls for Jesus Christ.

God spoke to John’s heart, “If I can change a man like Bill, can you trust Me that I will change the hearts of the people in Cardiff?” John purchased the book and keeps it as a promise of the glorious things God will do in his town.

John returned to Cardiff, encouraged that the Lord would indeed add to the church. It wasn’t long after that experience that two young people came and gave their lives to Christ. They have since been discipled and are growing in God’s Word.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Romans 8:18

Before feeling the call to return to Wales and begin a Calvary Chapel there, John had pastored a church in southern England. Previously encouraged by Brian Brodersen, CC Costa Mesa, John had shared this vision with Pastor Gary Ruff, CC Foothills, CA. Gary’s commitment to support the first CC church plant in Wales confirmed in John’s mind that it was indeed from the Lord.

“Wales has had more revivals than any nation on the earth,” said John. “Christianity came to Wales in AD 200. There was another Christian expansion in 400-600. In the 18th



Joel Milhouse tries to explain softball to a Welsh girl at Vacation Bible School.



Joel Milhouse listens to a Welshman sporting the latest hairstyle at an outreach.

century, great preachers brought the Gospel back to the forefront of Welsh thinking. In 1859, there was a spiritual awakening, followed by the Welsh Revival of 1904.

“One of the greatest sorrows for me is to return home after all these years away and find the church here in a terrible state. Despite all these awakenings and revivals, the average congregation is less than 25 people, mostly elderly. Only five percent of the population attends church at all. A thousand churches have closed over the past 20 years.

“Since WWII there is such a need to break up the ground in Wales so we can sow the seeds of Jesus’ love in people’s hearts. There is a body of apathy and suspicion here. No one has ever heard of Calvary Chapel. The Welsh feel that they don’t really need God.

“It has taken us the last two years to break up the hard ground, with the help of our short-term teams and the commitment of CC pastors back in the States. Now, we feel like we are in a place where we can start sowing the seeds and grow. We are ready to mature the small body of believers. God guarantees a harvest. How long it takes is another matter.”



Richard Mulder shares Christ while meeting locals.

John’s son, Philip, is the pastor of CC Oxford, England, an hour west of London. His other son, Jonathan, assists in the work there. John’s wife, Julie, has been an enormous support. His son, Steve, is in his second semester at the CC Bible College in Murrieta, CA, while his daughter, Ruth, has just finished her studies there and is home in Cardiff, playing keyboard for worship.

And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations. Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the foreigner shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

Isaiah 61:4-5

God encouraged John with this verse from Isaiah. He had no idea that the strangers would be the CC pastors that were to come and teach, or that the sons of foreigners would be working alongside him in the ministry.

“How could we have ever imagined that there would be teams of sixty short-term missionaries coming from America every couple of weeks during these last three summers?” said John. ☺



Pastor Randy Walls, CC Upland, with young missionaries.

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Team members lead two youth in the prayer of salvation while other locals mock their commitment (top right) on the streets of Cardiff.