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**2019 Shropshire Hope Conference
Prayer and *Missio Dei* Conference Booklet**

The Shropshire Hope Organising Team are taking their lead from our two speakers, Robert Mountford and Chris Densham. In this booklet is a summary of what both spoke about for you to take away and reflect on.

Our desire is that the Shropshire Hope Missio Dei Conference will encourage Christians in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin to focus more clearly on partnering with God in His Kingdom mission to our County, Borough. We encourage you to continue to pray into these specific areas so His Kingdom is further established here. You can also log on to the **Shropshire Hope website** [**www.shropshirehope.co.uk**](http://www.shropshirehope.co.uk) for information and links to other resources.

**Robert Mountford:**

**FOUR CONNECTIONS**

I mention four surprising points of similarity between the Midlands of the 7th and 21st Centuries:

1. An emerging regional identity

2. Significant immigration

3. A diversifying spirituality

4. A diversifying church

**FOUR CONVICTIONS**

Bearing all this in mind, I share four convictions:

A. Mercia will be reborn

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**…bringing HOPE to the people of Shropshire**

B. The Gospel must be replanted

C. The church must be re-imagined

D. Spiritual parenthood must be rediscovered

**FOUR QUESTIONS**

i) How do we ‘occupy the spiritual space’ in a re-emerging Mercia?

ii) How can we effectively sow the seeds of the Gospel to reach the whole of society?

iii) How/where/when/by whom will cells (places of spiritual transformation) be planted?

iv) How do we co-operate with God in facilitating a new era for the Gospel?

**Chris Densham:**

**BACKGROUND**

**The Changing Landscape of a Post-Christendom World**

Isaiah 43:10-19. Written to a people at a transition point in their history:

 - vs. 10-13 underline the Sovereignty of God

 - v. 18 emphasise that the future will be more impressive than the past

 - v. 19 The New thing is springing up now

**WHAT IS SPRINGING UP?**

Our theology is changing and we didn’t notice it: from Church to Kingdom.

 - Mark 1:14-15

 - Ephesians 1:8-9

This re-emphasis on the Kingdom of God underpins what we see arising:

a. Reshaped Christian Unity around Mission

b. We are well placed and well thought of in Society

c. The significance of the rising generation: Children & young people

d. Small is beautiful

**Will this lead to a disciple-making movement?**

**Praying for Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin**

**Kingdom Focussed Prayers for you or a group to use:**

We pray for the UK Church to:

i. Be clear in its presentation of the Gospel

ii. Seek the fullness of Your Spirit

iii. Be robust in its commitment to and support of the widow, orphan, poor, disenfranchised, immigrant and those in need

iv. Set a Christ-honouring example in how it speaks, acts and engages with people and our Society

v. We pray for a rich anointing so that the UK Church ministers in power demonstrating the reality of Your presence in it, and Kingdom minded purpose for it in our nation

vi. Empower Your Church to proclaim the reconciling love of Christ bringing His Kingdom reign of peace, righteousness, grace & truth to many. Amen

**5 Areas of Kingdom Prayer:**

**1. Connecting** - Lord, may Shropshire Hope act as a signpost to national initiatives & materials so that the Church here is further equipped and more clearly linked nationally to good teaching and useful practice.

As we learn about local good news stories, we give You thanks and praise for what You are doing among us. Guide us into new and innovative ways to encourage others to apply some of the Kingdom principles evident in the Seven Stories of Hope booklet – may You bless these endeavours. We pray that the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Church will be connected to key resource people from the wider Church so local Christians and Churches are enriched, equipped and blessed to fulfil the ministry You call them to. Amen

**2. Cohesion** - Father, thank You for the rich diversity of Churches, Denominations, Mission Agencies and individuals who all play their part in Your wider mission in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. We pray for further synergy between these so that Churches and Ministries can work together to see Your Kingdom come.

As Christians from different backgrounds partner in Your mission here - may they be inspired and encouraged by each other, and may there be a definite step change in the capacity to do things as a result, a synergy which creates greater outcomes, growing local churches, new emerging leaders who are men and women of quality - outcomes that honour and glorify Christ. Amen

**3. Co-ordinating** - Father, as Churches Together groups and local churches consider Kingdom focussed initiatives across the County & Borough – may the deliberations take place within the bigger picture which allows for good planning and good practice to be shared with others who may help or benefit. We pray that such initiatives will be well resourced with the Talent needed to make them successful, the Time necessary to properly plan for, and the Treasure of finances, people and resources needed.

Lord, we pray that Churches Together Groups, Local Churches and Mission Agencies will be aware of the available resources which could really help and make a difference on the ground. We also pray for an improvement in communication so that each local Church is aware of forthcoming events as a way of avoiding duplication and major event clashes which can dampen the enthusiasm and commitment to the local events. In Jesus’ name. Amen

**4. Culture** - Father, we live in a fast changing environment; it is so easy to get left behind and end up ministering without adaptability and flexibility. May the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Church guard biblical practice and theology which underpins our faith; however, may it also recognise ministry practice which fitted yesterday’s culture but is no longer applicable - we pray for the development of a culture of flexibility and adaptability which allows us to embrace new opportunities for mission and ministry as they arise.

We acknowledge that this may mean the pruning of much loved and formerly effective ways of doing things which worked in a Christendom setting but not in our post-Christian setting. We pray for understanding and insight to be able to keep foundational practice and theology, while being renewed in our thinking in order to make the most of new opportunities to honour Christ and bring His Gospel to the last, least and lost. In Jesus’ name. Amen

**5. Compassion** - Father, thank You that the Church in the County, Borough has a rich heritage of creating and facilitating really wonderful social action projects which have had a positive impact on some of the poorest and most vulnerable in our communities. Help us to also maintain this aspect of our heritage by resourcing projects that address both the causes and experience of poverty in all its forms.

May Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin be known as Compassionate places that really care for and work towards supporting and helping those in most need. In Jesus’ name. Amen

**Kingdom Priorities:**

**Chaplaincy** - Bless those who are already serving as Christian Chaplains in the County, Borough. We ask for more Christians to come forward to be interviewed, assessed for their suitability for Chaplaincy roles, and for many of these to be appointed. We pray that Christian Chaplains will be ministers of reconciliation, Kingdom minded ambassadors for Christ. May they minister redemptive change bringing Kingdom values into those organisations and agencies they serve. In Jesus’ name. Amen

**Children, Youth & Schools** - Father, we pray for the young people of our County, Borough. We ask for four things for them:

1. To be allowed to be children without the trappings of an adult outlook being forced on them

2. For Your blessing on Christian Youth ministries, and the development of new ones where needed, which allows them to engage with young people bringing Christian values, the Gospel and Your love to many

3. For Your salvation in Christ and blessing to flow among them

4. For a reorientation of their priorities away from worldliness to godliness, from consumerism to biblical stewardship, from individualism to being Kingdom minded citizens in community, and from Secularism & Rationalism to Christ-honouring & Kingdom minded principles for living. Amen

**We pray for schools and colleges:**

1. That the Schools and colleges which are open to contact and Christian ministry are adequately covered by local Churches & Churches Together groups

2. That those schools not currently receiving Christian input become more open to receive it, and for the raising up of persons of peace within them who will be key in welcoming Christian ministry

3. That we share good practice and experience among the Churches in order to develop the best possible ministries to schools

4. Be visionary in being able to consider how these links may further be developed in a Christ-honouring way in the future. In Jesus’ name. Amen

**Discipleship** – You call us to sacrificial, take up our cross daily, whole-hearted discipleship. We pray for a new season of submission to the will of Christ in our Christian walk and witness. Let Your Kingdom come and Your will be done. May Your Spirit of truth transform our outlook away from self to being Kingdom minded disciple-making disciples. Equip us to be Christians who engage with those we know and meet with grace and truth following Your pathway of love, righteousness and power in the Holy Spirit. Mature disciples whose lives inspire other to follow Christ. Amen

**Future Leaders** - Father, we pray for the development of many wonderful new Christian Leaders locally. We recognise the significance of and need for good leadership at many different levels if we are to have healthy local churches, and to have a positive Kingdom impact upon Society. In our current context, nationally & locally, we identify the need to develop flexible, adaptable leaders, who are secure in their calling, and growing in their maturity in Christ, with the ability to lead and make disciples in partnership with Your Spirit. In Jesus’ name. Amen

**Generosity** - We pray for the further development of a generous hearted Kingdom culture in our churches. Lord Jesus, You are the indwelling Christ who moved the Philippians to be a church of givers who excelled in caring for others. Help us to never overlook the power of a material offering; such offerings demonstrate a level of spiritual maturity that has been formed through a close relationship with You. It also greatly blesses those in need and helps demonstrate Your love to them. Amen

**Incarnational Ministry** – Father, we pray that local ministry will connect with the communities outside of the Church in order to establish in them the principles of the Kingdom. We are encouraged by the Talking Jesus research which states that 67% of the population who do not follow Jesus know someone who does. May the additional fact that 1 in 5 of non-believers are open to a further conversation about our Lord Jesus or an experience of Him in their lives – encourage more people to actually seek out divine appointments whereby they can talk to others about who Your Son is, and how He is able to bring us into a loving, living relationship with You. Amen

**Partnership in the Gospel** - Thank You for the partnerships in the Gospel that exist locally. We pray for good leadership of each Denomination and Churches Together group, a clear sense of purpose in what each does, and a growing sense of faith and hope within each.

As local Church leaders engage with each other in these groups, some from very different streams and theological outlooks, may the advance of the Gospel of the Kingdom take priority, and the principles that undergird Kingdom thinking be applied. May Your Kingdom come and may local churches experience a new season of blessing as they work with others in mission, in prayer and in the love of Christ. Amen

**Peacemakers** - We pray for the establishment of Christian peacemakers through the ministry of local churches – people able to bring together opposing parties, those in conflict, and families at war with themselves and create a platform for dialogue and transformation in Christ. Amen

**Society** - Lord, we proclaim Your sovereignty over our County and Borough, and over our nation – You are the Ruler of the nations. Governments and the political establishment are not only accountable to their people, they are also accountable to You for how they lead, the laws they enact, and for the philosophy they follow in determining the direction of the nation.

As such, we pray for local and national Christian politicians, Civil servants, those in the Media, & those involved in the political process: i. Grant them Wisdom - ii. Discernment - iii. Insight - iv. Understanding - v. and the Anointing needed to be Kingdom minded people - all You want them to be in the settings they find themselves in. Use them to change the present national dialogue, which reinforces division and anger, to one which speaks of love, respect and hope. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

**The Home** - Bless those who are single, those who are single parents, the couples, and families in our communities. If any are struggling to make ends meet – we pray for the development of effective Christian Stewardship ministries locally who can support those in need, but also teach and model biblical principles of Stewardship, including of our finances, time and our talents. May many homes become Christ-honouring. Amen

**The Kingdom Within** - Father, we recognise the potential significance of every single follower of Christ coming truly alive in the Spirit and thus truly understanding their place in Your bigger plan for blessing Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. May many more local believers understand and appreciate the part they have to play in Your Mission as a result. As Your Kingdom principles are established in the life of each person – we pray that these will give birth to a new confidence in and commitment to the cause of Christ. Amen

A verse to meditate on: *‘May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit’* – Romans 15:13 (NIVUK)

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