



The Nationwide Christian Trust

Press Release

A Vision for the High Street



In the weeks leading up to Christmas we waited with bated breath to see the outcome of the announcement that the Wesley Owen chain of bookshops had been put into the hands of administrators. The outcome; a few of the shops were taken over, but 26 were allocated for closure.

There is something really important at stake here because we believe that having a Christian presence on our High Streets is really significant. It isn't simply the existence of a bookshop that's important, but rather, we believe that each one represents a mission opportunity; an opportunity to impact the lives of the individuals from within that local community.

Part of the Problem

Up until now, many of the struggling Christian bookshops have retained a very narrow focus, namely they have simply focussed on Christian books and resources, and thereby the predominance of customers have been Christians. This has greatly reduced their viability on the High Street because no matter how attractive the shop front, and no matter how well laid out the stock is, the fact remains, there is little reason why people would chose to go in.

A Way Forward

We believe that by thinking imaginatively and innovatively, these shops could play an increasingly key part for the work of the Kingdom. It is naive to

think that any specific model or programme could simply be replicated throughout the country assuming that if it works in one place it will be effective in all the others. However we believe that certain principles can be applied which could bring about a transformation. Part of that thinking includes the possibility of introducing a high quality coffee shop facility, a large lounge area as well as a children's play zone.

An Expanding Vision

There are ongoing discussions with Store managers and local Christians to see what might be relevant and possible within any specific store. We want these shops to become centres of activity, with a life and vitality which goes way beyond the products on the shelves, including possible ways the premises can be used outside normal opening times for other imaginative projects or events.

Widening the Mindset

We will be seeking to envision local Christians towards a way of thinking which moves from Maintenance to Mission. We want these shops to not simply be places people occasionally visit, but instead are in a dynamic way being strategically used for the work of the Kingdom.

Partnering

We will be seeking to draw local churches on board to become stake holders in these opportunities, and get involved through prayer, volunteering and financial support. We are holding buffet lunches in 20 centres around the UK where Christian leaders will be invited for a buffet lunch and our team will be presenting our vision for the future.

YOU CAN HELP MAKE IT HAPPEN

To help this initiative become a reality, we are hoping that people throughout the country will want to be involved. We would be delighted to send you more information about the vision, and to receive a brochure, please call 01277 365398 (Option 4).

If you have questions or would like to talk with someone about it, please contact Andy Twilley as shown below.

With your support this vision will become a reality.

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