

“Big Brother House this is God calling, you are live on Channel 4 please do not swear” Glyn it’s now time for you to enter the Church.

First of all, my journey to Christianity didn’t just happen overnight. I was baptised as a month old and straight away became a member of the Christian family in Blaenau Ffestiniog, North Wales. I attended Sunday school and ‘Band of Hope’ (Christian after school club) as a child. I had great Sunday school teachers who knew their Bible’s thoroughly! I came from a Christian and sporty family so holding a Bible, sporting equipment and trophies came naturally.

I was very academic and social in school therefore I was elected the role of Head Boy and School captain in sporting events. Doing well in school and following my path felt rather tedious. I felt as though I was following God’s plan - do well in school, go to university, get a job, have children, retire, die. I felt as though I needed a big break or a bang to dismantle this given plan. At 18, I auditioned for Channel 4’s Big Brother. I had so much faith and determination to get a place on TV’s biggest reality tv show. I prayed and as always - God was listening. He guided me through the audition process easily until I entered the show. Back in 2006, 1 in 4 of the population would watch reality tv. I prayed for God to guide me through the game show and eventually, after 3 months of being locked in a house I finished as runner up. However, I prayed under the covers as I thought ‘being cool’ was more important than being a Christian which I heavily regret.

After the show, I was thrust into the spotlight. I was a guest on all UK tv and radio shows. I won a contract with Calvin Klein modelling agencies; I was a youth radio host for BBC Radio Cymru and I was given the title of ‘Ambassador of the Welsh Language’ by Rhodri Morgan, Wales’s 1st minister. I was invited to all sorts of parties and movie premiers - but deep down I felt lonely. During all this period I had left my faith behind. I had lost the real me in the middle of all the glitz and glamour of fame. I needed to get back on track. I had become someone I hardly recognised but yet everyone else felt as though they knew me. As a result, I tried to reclaim myself and go back to what I knew best - Academia and Sports.

I enrolled at Cardiff University where I studied BA in Welsh. During my time I was also a member of the tennis and athletics team. I came 4th in Wales and West in the 400m (which I was disappointed in) but managed to secure a bronze medal in the 4x400m in the Welsh Universities camp. I

also attended the Christian Union while I was at University. Looking back I thought I was a good Christian but now I realise I was a 'Christian on a Sunday' and didn't commit thoroughly as Jesus asks us to do. The CU was great fun, we gathered on a weekly and helped in the community, but my heart wasn't 100% where it should have been. The social life at University took priority. I graduated from University with a 2.1 degree and then I continued my studies to become a teacher with a PGCE in Secondary teaching.

I became a teacher in Aberdare and then a lecturer of Welsh at Cardiff University. But a part of me wanted to travel and see the world, experience new cultures and learn something new. A taste for this came when the local church in Aberdare asked if I wanted to volunteer with them in Uganda over the Summer break. I volunteered to teach English at an orphanage. It was such an eye opener - I taught in a shed with over 200 children sat on the floor. (The classes would run more smoothly to compare with 30 kids in a classroom in the UK) From that moment onwards, I knew I wanted to go out and explore the world. I also taught at the Sunday School in Kampala, Uganda. The experience was mind blowing and I will never forget their happy faces.

I was fortunate enough to be given a job at a British school in Jingan, Shanghai. I taught English Literature, sports and 'survival GCSE Spanish'. Teaching in a communist country - sometimes has its problems, teaching 'Animal Farm' for Eng Lit GCSE for example. However, I always find a way to overcome any hurdle in life. While in China I noticed there was something changing for the good. New ears and hearts are being opened to the good news of the Lord. On my induction to the school I was asked by a fellow teacher if I was a Christian. I replied and then I was introduced to Hengshan's 'Community Church' (Central Shanghai) Every service felt as though it was aimed directly at me - Very similar to Paul's journey to Damascus I felt as though there was a meaning for me to be in Shanghai. I grew in my faith in the five years I was in China. First of all I would attend Christian worship classes, Bible study, men's groups. Then I wanted to become part of the Church, so I volunteered to be in the Welcome Group, The Leader of the British Christians and I lead a successful Alpha Course. Being a Christian helped me find my place in Shanghai, God was always besides me. I travelled to all the countries in South East Asia and I found it remarkable how the Christian faith is growing on rapid speed. At the age of 30, I was one of the eldest in the

congregation which gives me great faith in the future. Unfortunately, due to Covid my time in China came to an end but I always remember my pastor saying, 'There will come a time when you leave Shanghai, take the faith with you to wherever you may go.'

As a result, I have done exactly what he has said since coming back to the UK. I have been a key member at St Collens church in Llangollen, helping Rev Lee Taylor out at any given opportunity. Even though I am 33, I am one of the youngest members of the church. I try to help him market events through the use of social media and other marketing tools. I also take part on a weekly basis by reading from the gospel, cleaning and help carry the cross etc. I have found my place in the church and with all my knowledge and experience - I feel as though I am ready to become a Priest myself but wanted a bit more experience.

While reading the Church Times I came across an add that were looking for Pastoral Assistants at Old St Pancreas diocese. I jumped on the chance and found myself in the role within a week. I gained a lot of experience and knowledge from Father Michael at St Michaels Church in Camden. From gaining people skills to general running of the Church I have embraced every second of it. I have never felt closer to God in my life and now I'm fortunate enough to find myself in a position where I'll be in full time training to become a priest with the Church in Wales starting September. The confidence I carry is thanks to my experience as a Pastoral Assistant and I'm looking forward to the next chapter in my life.