

AWAKEN NORTH DEVON

The Lasting Impact

As Awaken North Devon drew to a close, many of us found ourselves reflecting on a simple but profound thought: while we can count attendance, conversations and response cards, much of what God did through the outreach simply cannot be measured.



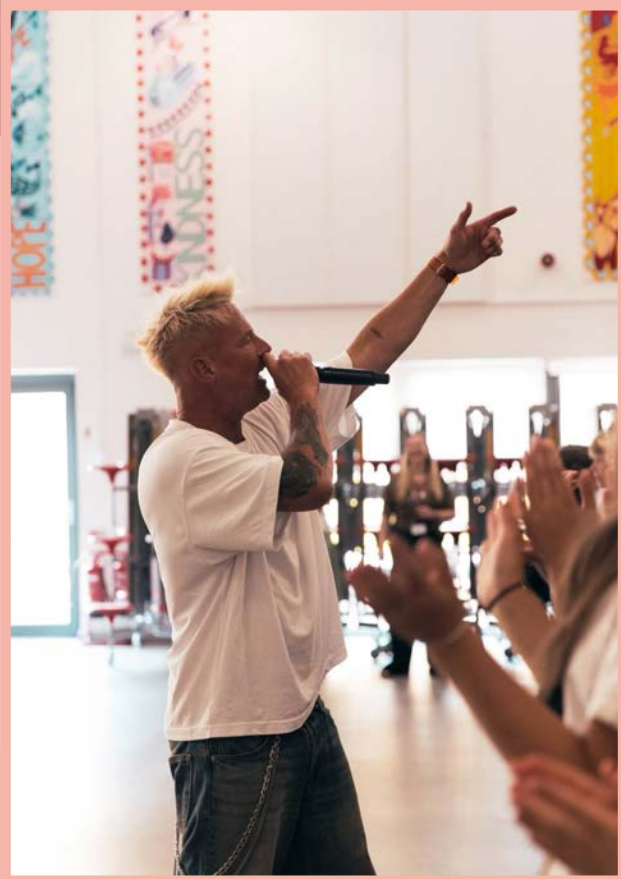
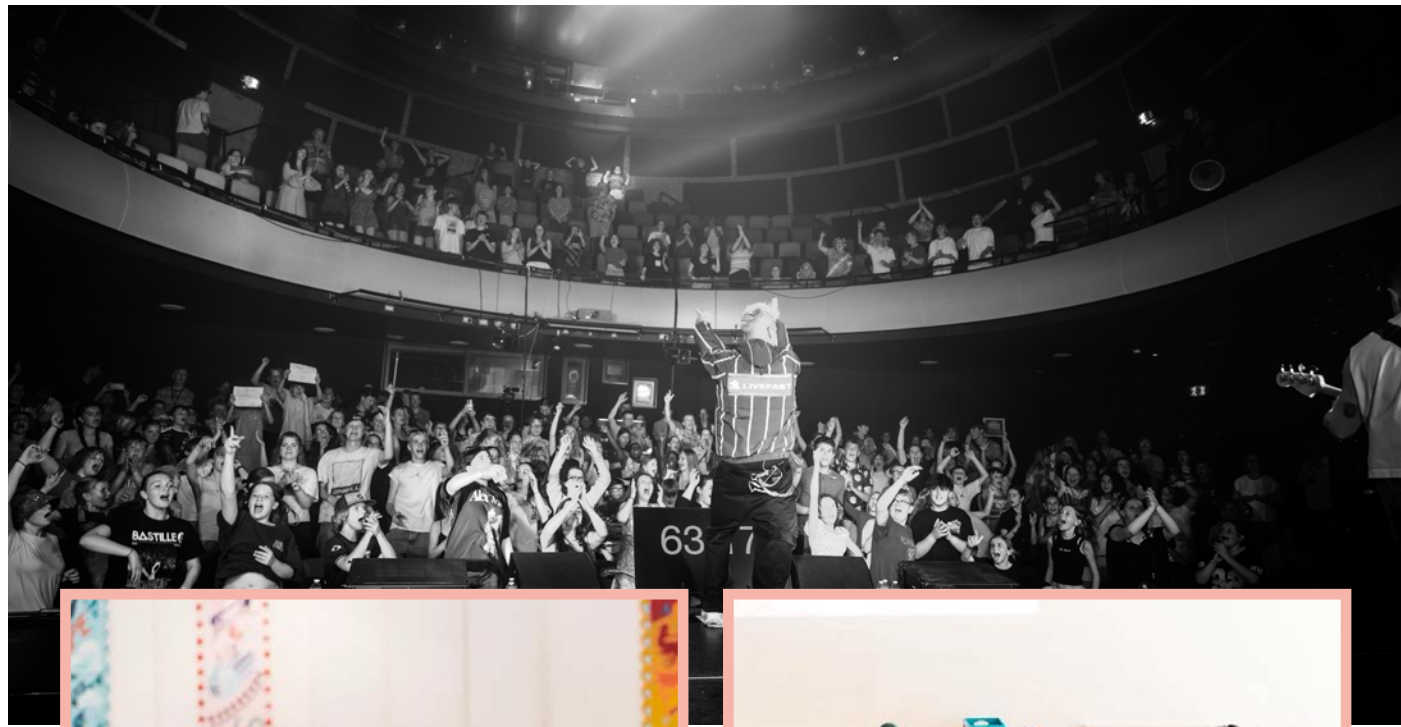
For months, churches from across North Devon had prayed, planned and prepared together with one shared desire: to help people encounter Jesus. For a week in July, those months of preparation came to life as our team was welcomed into school, communities opened their doors, volunteers served side by side, and hundreds of people attended a wide variety of events across Ilfracombe.

From school visits to a community lunch, a youth concert, a women's event and the final celebration at the Landmark Theatre, every gathering offered opportunities for people to hear the Gospel, ask questions, receive prayer and experience the love of God in tangible ways.



Serving at the mid-week community lunch





Schools work through the week that built towards the Friday night gig with LZ7 and Saintz at the Landmark Theatre.



One of the greatest joys of the week was seeing churches from many different traditions serving together with remarkable unity.

That spirit of collaboration was evident everywhere, from teams praying together before events, to volunteers welcoming guests, serving refreshments, chatting with people after meetings and following up those who wanted to know more about Jesus. Long after our team returns home, it will be these local churches who continue the conversations and walk alongside those beginning or renewing a journey of faith.



Local believers praying and serving together during the festival week.



Joint church Praise and Worship night a few months ahead of the festival.



The women's event provided one of the week's most moving evenings.

Wendy spoke with warmth, honesty and compassion, sharing both the hope of the Gospel and the faithfulness of God through life's joys and struggles. Alongside music from Leah McFall, the evening created space for women to reflect, ask questions and encounter God's love in a deeply personal way.

The written responses afterwards revealed something of what was taking place beneath the surface. One woman wrote: "I have only

recently come back to God, but it is helping me knowing that God will be there for me while I am currently going through some tough times. I feel I am reconnecting and tonight has been inspirational. Thank you."

Another, grieving the sudden death of her husband, shared: "I have such grief but never blamed Jesus. I just wish I could convince my friends and family that Jesus is here and He loves us all. I brought along a friend, but I feel that it will take more than tonight's wonderful event to convince her and open her heart. I will continue to pray."



Images taken at the Stories of Hope evening at the Larkstone cafe in Ilfracombe with Leah Mcfall singing and Wendy speaking.





These weren't isolated stories. Throughout the week there was a growing sense among the team that people were being gently drawn towards Jesus. Some were hearing the Gospel for the first time. Others were returning to a faith they had drifted away from years before. Still others simply found themselves asking questions they had never previously considered.

The response cards gave us one indication of what God was doing, and we thank Him for every person who requested follow-up from a local church. Yet many of us sensed that the visible responses told only part of the story. During invitations, there were often many more hands raised than cards completed. Conversations continued long after events had officially ended.



People lingered, shared their stories and asked for prayer. Time and again it felt as though God was quietly moving people forward.

One young girl who attended both the Friday night Illuminate youth event and Sunday's united celebration service captured that journey beautifully. She shared that she had responded to God's invitation during the week and later discovered that members of her family had been faithfully praying for her beforehand. Looking back, she realised that God had been pursuing her long before she understood what He was doing.



The week concluded with a family night of entertainment at the Landmark Theatre where Andrew shared the Gospel.