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A YEAR TO GO: CHRISTIANS COUNT DOWN TO THE OLYMPICS



# **BURN OUT?**

Getting the balance right

# HOUSING FOR GOD

Why the Church needs to invest in UK mission houses

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News from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales



# spot the potential



'Leadership is a key factor in the spread of the gospel'

James Lawrence, co-author of the Growing Leaders course

# Resources to grow leaders in your church

www.cpas.org.uk/growingleaders



Growing Leaders



Growing Women Leaders



Growing Leaders - Youth Edition



# idea

july/august 2011 eauk.org/idea

# **Editorial**

Like most, I like to get as much done as possible and fill my days. The benefit is I feel I've accomplished something. The downside: I'm stressed and tired through over-commitment. I'm too stretched to do anything else, let alone converse with God and find out how He really wants me to spend my time. If you're like me, see page 24 for reflections on balancing busy modern lives.

Inspired by sporting history, the nation is certainly excited about the Olympics. When online tickets went on sale, 20 million people applied. As the Royal Wedding showed, national events are not all about London. Read more about how you and your church can get involved in the Games as part of More Than Gold, the organisation committed to helping Christians make the most of the Olympics and share the gospel (page 28).

Public spending cuts and continuing economic fallout mean mission living in the areas least equipped to cope with the cuts is becoming a challenge. Read about four congregations' radical responses to make sure the Church is where it should be: in the thick of vulnerable communities (page 18). Inspire award nominee Zac's Bar (page 22), a safe place for kids in trouble just outside Bolton, is one of those places rising to that challenge. To make your nomination for a UK-based project, person or church, get yours in by 1 September. We highlight another inspirational Christian project working with the Dalit community in India on page 20.

Whether you are having a staycation or long vacation this summer – what can you do in your town, your village or your world for the rest of this year? Whatever you do, give time for God to speak and guaranteed you'll be getting

Rebecca Taylor Assistant Editor

involved in inspirational things...

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REST AREA

Christian burn-out



A year to go



Steve Clifford

# evangelical alliance uniting to change society

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Cover Image - London 2012

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# Worshipping as a man

While I agree with most of what is said in the article Men at Church (May/June 2011), I find the sweeping assertion that "the rise of the intimacy movement has alienated men" hard to take. King David was a man's man, a warrior with a poet's heart, and a soldier with a sensitive soul. His great longing was to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord (Psalm 27:4). In no way was he afraid of his emotions. Surely we can be both manly and worshipful? Does 'intimacy' have to be such a negative word? One of the key reasons why men are spiritually sluggish is that they are proud, and find it hard to repent. This never seems to be acknowledged by those who like to blame the Church. Another reason is that they conceal their hurt and pain and are afraid of intimacy at all levels. Many men need to discover the Father's heart and find healing and freedom, and then they would enjoy intimacy with God and those close to them.

Tony Horsfall, Barnsley

# Editor's reply

Thanks for the letters in response to the *Men at Church* article. We welcome the healthy debate created around the issues of providing a relevant church context for men. Readers also shared their thoughts on the issues of male and female influences in the church and continuing debate around male and female leadership.

# **Hearty support**

I heartily support Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin's appointment as Speaker's Chaplain (*Pastoring Parliament*, May/Jun). I very much hope she will bring to our MPs, in both Houses, the "Renewed in the Holy Spirit" new life. One of the Speaker's motives in appointing her may have been to niggle his critics in the Tory Party but it is undoubtedly, a divine appointment which will I hope lead to many conversions to Christianity and at least a return to Christian standards among members of both Houses. The MPs' expenses scandal shows a need for this in my opinion.

John Middleton, Boston Spa

# **Artistic expressions**

Lesley Sutton and Marijke Hoek (May/Jun) raise some fascinating points about the role of art in religion. However, I think some of the arguments in the article could be challenged. I wondered about the "atheistic" artistic expressions, full of "violent and ugly" images that are found in our art galleries. The authors sadly do not actually name any of these artists. I really wanted to know who they were referring to. I remember thinking that the sculptures of Barbara Hepworth were ugly and mis-shapen until somebody pointed out and explained the thinking behind them. Then they started to look rather pleasant to me. The paintings of Goya may look disturbing, but surely they reveal the sad reality of human history? NT Wright's plea for art that is "beautiful in itself" is therefore rather problematic. Beauty is hard to define.

Graeme Kemp, Shropshire



# **Keeping the Bible fresh**

It seems that the May/June 2011 edition of *idea* is a test to see who loves the Bible. When I was in my early 20s I loved Psalm 63 so much that I learnt the first six verses as they are so beautiful. Since that time I've learnt quite a few other Psalms as well. It's so lovely to be able to quote Psalm 91 to yourself wherever you are

when the Word of God is in your heart.

I turned to page 16 of *idea* and immediately saw a verse I love so much. I thought to myself "Does it say Psalm 62:1 to see if anyone can spot the mistake when it should be Psalm 63:1?"

I wondered if Biblefresh were seeing how many readers of *idea* not only read their Bibles but enjoy memorising the scriptures too. I tell you - it is such a blessing and a strength not only to read the Bible but to be able to learn the scriptures too.

Richard Smart, Hastings

# Missing generation

With reference to the letter from Phil Hobrough, Stockport (May/June) responding to Holy Matrimony (Mar/Apr). A Twenties Thirties Forties (now in its 19th year) which is open to both couples and singles we have been increasingly aware of the subtle message sent out by most churches, to singles, that if you are not married with 2.4 children there is in essence something wrong with you. However, as we have been trying to tell leaders of all denominations for many years now, the singles on the whole have far more time, resources and usually finance available, which churches generally miss out as the 'missing generation' continues to leave the Church as they feel neither useful nor wanted. I attended the Alliance's 18-30s symposium and although many good speakers spoke very eloquently on the subject, once again, the real issues were not addressed, but only spoken about. I hope the Church will wake up before it is too late (assuming that is not already the case).

Barry Mockford, Staines

## Corrections

In the last edition, we incorrectly referred to Crown Financial Ministries as Crown Financial Services on page 22.

In our hot topics piece Art: Revealing God's presence (p36, May/June) the credit for the artwork should have read Journey by Lin Holland and Jane Poulton (sitematerialobject.com). Graham Rodgers photographed the artwork.



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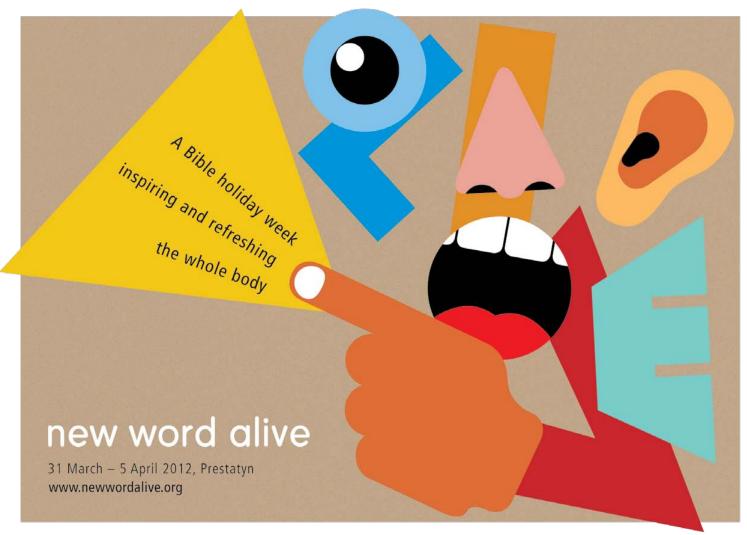
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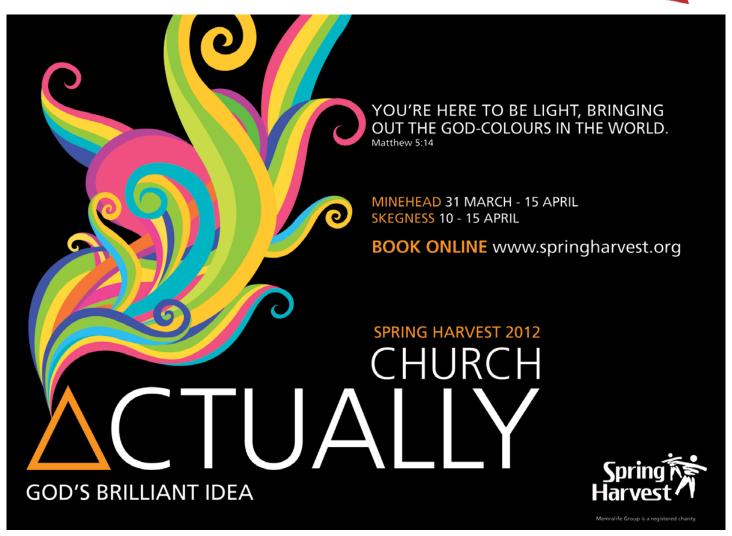
*idea* is published bimonthly and sent free of charge to members of the Evangelical Alliance. Formed in 1846, the Alliance's mission is to unite evangelicals to present Christ credibly as good news for spiritual and social transformation. There are around two million evangelical Christians in the UK, according to a 2007 Tearfund survey.

*idea* is published in accordance with the Alliance's Basis of Faith, although it is impossible in every article to articulate each detail and nuance of belief held by Alliance members. Articles in *idea* may therefore express views on which there is a divergence of opinion or understanding among evangelicals.

Letters and story ideas from members are welcome, and will be considered by the editorial board, which reserves the right to edit letters and stories for length and style. We regret that we are unable to engage in personal correspondence. Unsolicited material will only be returned if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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# A burly crew of bikers helped launch an innovative project to take the Bible across the country at Spring Harvest.

The Christian Motorcyclists' Association stormed the Big Top at the Skegness resort in April to pick up the first set of limited edition Bibles as part of the Viral Bible Project, launched by Biblefresh.

Over the coming year, 200 Viral Bibles, published by Hodder, will be given away at other major Christian festivals and events.

Each person receiving one of the special Bibles is asked to underline the verses that are most meaningful to them before passing the same copy on to another person who then continues the process.

The Alliance's Krish Kandiah, who heads up the Biblefresh campaign, said: "Although I grew up in a Hindu family, I felt compelled to read the Bible for myself and when I did so, I was amazed to discover how scripture is able to inspire hope, promote justice and change lives. "It is our prayer that as people up and down the country and abroad will read these Viral Bibles, they will share their experiences as well as inspire and encourage one another."

Each Viral Bible has a unique code inside, so those who get their hands on one should log onto the website, key in the number sequence and track its journey, as well as see how others have been inspired by other verses.

Hampshire, Yorkshire and Norfolk are among the locations the Bibles have been so far, but it is hoped they will travel throughout Britain and beyond before returning to the Alliance's head

viral<mark>bibl</mark>eproject.com

# **Translation** transformation

As well as encouraging UK communities in their Bible reading, the Biblefresh campaign also has a global focus: to raise money to translate the New Testament into Bissa Barka where speakers have no translation, and the Old Testament into Bissa Lebir, where speakers only have the New Testament. The languages are just two of the 66 dialects spoken in Burkina Faso.



Recently visiting partners there, Krish Kandiah said: "In the UK we know the value of native translation – having the Bible in English has shaped our culture. Our problem is that we've lost our appetite for the Bible. But in Burkina Faso, the president of the African Evangelical Alliance, pastor Samuel Yameogo, told me the people there would rather have a Bible than shoes.

"In the energy-sapping heat of 50 degrees, we visited a village church. It was hard to imagine anything stirring, but inside there was a lively literacy project running for women and girls who can't go to school. I realised the impact having the Bible in their language would have."

In the capital, Ouagadougou, he met a medical student running a children's Bible club in a shantytown. "They had a fantastic drummer leading worship, and all the children got a meal to supplement their meagre diet [and] I saw how giving a Bible to a Burkinabé Christian who can't afford one gets

immediately translated into works of compassion and kindness."

Wendy McTernan

biblefresh.com

# news in brief...

### TOGETHER WITH AFGHANISTAN

October will mark 10 years since troops have entered Afghanistan. Backed by eight organisations including Oxfam, Care International UK and Christian Aid, the Together Afghanistan campaign is calling for a fresh approach to the situation, including more focused aid and including more focused aid and development as part of a comprehensive process to end the conflict and ensure the Afghan people have a say in their country's future.

togetherafghanistan.org

# **CRUSADER MEMORIES**

office in London

in Easter 2012.

Following an idea to put together a book of memories after their 100th anniversary in 2006, youth organisation Crusaders, now called Urban Saints, is continuing to look for contributions from anyone who has been involved with them. Whether you have memories of Crusader holidays, CRUSOE overseas expeditions, youth fellowships, or national competitions, get in touch with Ali Tompkins ali.tompkins@googlemail.com or write to: Celebrating the 100, 28 Lynton Road, Hadleigh, Benfleet Essex SS7 200 with your 500-word contribution by 28 July 2011 urbansaints.org

# SU SOCIAL MEDIA

Scripture Union's interactive website WordLive alt, helps users engage with the Bible through a mix of media including sketches, animations, meditations, music, blogs, vlogs and pods to use alongside daily Bible readings. WordLive classic (formerly WordLive) continues to bring Bible passages, podcasts and images. The alt section also enables users to share content on Twitter and Facebook, adding comments in a journal on the WordLive site.

wordlive.org

# Alliance scoops top prize at Christian media awards

The Alliance's We're Better Together scooped the highest accolade in the category of best charity promotional film at the Christian Broadcasting Council Awards.

Celebrating the best in Christian programming on UK TV, radio and the web, the awards are run by the Christian Broadcasting Council

Hosted by Tim Vine, comedian and actor in BBC One's Not Going Out, the event on 19 May at St Mary's Church, Marylebone, also gave awards for best newcomer and best current affairs programme which included winners from the BBC and Channel 4.

Speaking to *idea*. Tim Vine said: "I've been really looking forward to hosting the CBC awards - especially when Christian broadcasting is such an expanding area. The great thing about a Christian award ceremony is watching all the winners try to out-humble each other! It's great to be involved, especially as CBC is going from strength to strength."

The Alliance was nominated for a film about the work that it does, including work uniting evangelicals and it asks viewers to consider joining as members. The film shows examples of groups large and small who are working together after first getting connected through the Alliance. The case studies are visualisations of what "being together" can look like.



Film-maker Andrew Horton, Chine Mbubaegbu and Anna Moyle from the Alliance's media team

Tim added: "I've often found there could be seven or eight churches within eight miles of each other who don't know what each other are doing. It would be great if those churches got together once in a while. It's important to have some sort of relationship and not be isolated."

Steve Clifford, general director of the Alliance, said: "We're so happy to have won this accolade and for our vision to foster unity among Christians across our nation to have been showcased in this award-winning video. We hope that many will be inspired and encouraged by it, and join us in our mission

Watch We're Better Together online...

to change society."



# Media matters

by Lizzy Millar, press officer



Viral Bible is our year-long experiment that involves handing out special edition copies of the Good Book to people at random and asking them to underline their favourite verses before handing it on to another person. At the front of the convoy was Oliver Hamilton, who, following our news stories on the launch, was interviewed by The Voice newspaper.

Easter proved another highlight in the Christian calendar with *The Times* publishing Steve Clifford's personal reflections on the death and resurrection of Christ along with his own testimony.

And in collaboration with media company Share Creative, we offered anyone anywhere their chance to play their part in the Easter story as part of online play Easter (LIVE).

Keeping up with the top stories, the press office issued a statement responding to Rob Bell's controversial book Love Wins which garnered considerable Christian media interest.

The campaign to keep religious education as one of the key humanities subjects in the new English baccalaureate saw Professor Trevor Cooling speak on more than a dozen BBC regional radio Sunday shows.

Meanwhile our parliamentary officer Danny Webster used the Alternative Vote referendum as a good opportunity to argue in online magazine Christian Today why Christians ought to engage with politics, which amounts to much more than choosing your MP.

Marijke Hoek attended the BBC Standing Conference on Religion and Belief, which focussed on diversity. The standing conference is a liaison point between the BBC and the major communities of faith and belief.



# Top stories published recently on the Evangelical Alliance website:

## **UK** elections

Analysis of the implications of the AV campaign and Liberal Democrat seat losses, Scottish Parliament and Welsh and Northern Irish Assemblies elections, and future of the coalition government.

## Osama bin Laden death

The Alliance called on Christians to remember the victims of terrorism and not join in with expressions of triumph. Other Alliance members also urge the church to use the opportunity for peace and reconciliation.

# Inspire awards 2011

The Alliance's Inspire awards website section is showcasing nominations of the people, churches and projects doing extraordinary things because of their faith eauk.org/idea/inspire-awards.cfm

# ...continued

### TWEETED PRAYERS

Thousands will take part in a prayer summit at Wembley Stadium on 17 September. The event will encourage Christians across the UK to pray for the country and celebrate the Global Day of Prayer campaign that has been running from Easter to Pentecost. Led by international conveynor of prayer, Jonathan Oloyede, events held over Easter and during June saw people tweeting the Lord's Prayer and using facebook and YouTube to highlight the prayer campaign. gdoplondon.com

# WALKING TO RAISE AWARENESS

Natalie Hust from Wonford Methodist Church in Exeter has just completed an epic walk covering 630 miles across the south west coast of the country, raising funds for the Leprosy Mission. After a trip to West Bengal visiting charity-funded projects she felt compelled to help. Natalie said:"I've always wanted to walk the South West Coast Path and this seemed like an ideal opportunity to raise much needed funds."

leprosymission.org.uk

# **POWERFUL WORDS**

Celebrating the first revision of the NIV in 25 years, Hodder Faith is inviting people throughout the summer to add words most powerful to them to a 'Word Wall' in St Martin-in-the-Fields, on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Basing thoughts on words such as forgive, compassion and peace, users nominate a charity - with the most popular receiving £1,000 from Hodder Faith. The findings will measure how 21st Century audiences use words that form the basis of the Bible.



You Tube twitter

# A different picture

Andy Crouch, author of *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*, documentary film-maker, campus minister at Harvard University and trained musician, has led worship for congregations of up to 20,000. Here he tells us how the Bible inspires his life...

# idea: What is your earliest memory of reading the Bible?

I'm not sure I seriously read the Bible until high school. I was raised in a nominally Christian family, but I don't remember picking up that book until I'd had a transforming encounter with God that made me want to read it. I remember reading the Psalms and discovering a language for prayer and praise and frustration that really fit for me as a teenager who had just come to faith.

# How do you stay fresh in your reading of the Bible?

Two things that I've found that have helped me to keep the Bible fresh are, first, to read longer passages. Not just to read short little verses, but whole books even. I find that gives me more context for what scripture I'm reading. And the other thing I've found myself doing is placing myself imaginatively in the story – not so much asking how does this story apply to my life, but how can I see my life in this story or in this prayer or in this situation?

# How does the Bible impact your day to day ministry?

For me scripture is most helpful in giving a big picture for my life. It orientates what my life is

ultimately supposed to be about, the story that my life is a part of. So day to day I still have to make a lot of very specific decisions, and some days the Bible seems to speak to those and some days it doesn't. But it's always giving me the grand direction that I need to make my life a part of. It's like the broad map that says: "This is where you fit in God's whole plan for His cosmos."

# What difference would a church that knows its Bible make to society?

Unless we know the stories, the prayers, the songs of scripture, all we have to offer to our culture are the assumptions we get from our culture. Scripture re-orientates us. It gives us a different way of looking at the world, a different sense of what to hope for in the world, a different sense of what to fear and what to avoid in the world, a different sense of what human flourishing is. If we're not deeply immersed in the story of scripture, we end up just taking our assumptions about what we hope, what we fear, and what we think the good human life is from the world around us, and we have nothing to offer. So at the deepest level scripture forms our imagination of the way things are and the way things could



For me scripture is most helpful in giving a big picture for my life.

be, and that's all the people of God have to offer: a different picture of the way the world was meant to be, and the way the world can be with faith in God.

# How would knowing our Bible help us to make culture better?

I find that many Christians have a working Bible that's missing four chapters – it's missing the first two chapters, and it's missing the last two chapters, which means that it starts in Genesis 3 with sin, and ends in Revelation 20 with the lake of fire and judgement. And if that's your working Bible, then you look at the Houses of Parliament or you look at Tate Modern, and you say: "That's just sin, that's the result of human fallenness." But if your Bible begins with the very good world God created, then you realise that arts and government and architecture are actually expressions of an originally good human calling. And if your Bible includes the New Jerusalem, this glorious city that's full of the glory and honour of the nations, then you realise that what human beings create in the world actually reflects God's ultimate intention for His world. So we're in the midst of culture - we're not here just as critics of culture, but actually as people who are trying to contribute to the flourishing world that God intended, and the flourishing world that God will ultimately bring about through His grace in the new creation.



# Bibles for Burkina Faso

Biblefresh's third pledge is to raise money to translate the Bible into two languages spoken in Burkina Faso, West Africa. As a fun way of raising funds for the campaign, the Alliance is encouraging families to build a 'tower of Bibles.' Start by getting everyone to search the house for Bibles including those in use and old ones consigned to the backs of cupboards, stack them up, and pledge to give £1 for every Bible you find! biblefresh.com/translation

### KESWICK CONVENTION July / August 2011 - Lake District

The annual Keswick
Convention runs Bible
teaching, worship
and fellowship, with
separate Kids and Youth
programmes (ages 3–18),
all combined with the
chance to relax and enjoy
the Lake District during
July and August. Week
1: 16–22 July; Week 2:
23–29 July; Week 3: 30
July – 5 August
keswickministries.org

# NEW WINE July / August 2011 – various regional venues New Wine conferences run from the end of July to the middle of August and are designed to help and resource churches network and work together to change the nation. For details of the regional conference

venues go to

new-wine.org

### SOUL SURVIVOR -WEEKS A, B & C July / August 2011 -Stafford and Somerset Also in July and August, Soul Survivor Festivals for young people aged 12-18, are being held at Stafford Showground and Bath & West Showground, Somerset. With morning and evening worship events, teaching, seminars on burning issues, venues for festival goers to hang out at and gigs are also available.

soulsurvivor.com/uk

### **FESTIVAL** 19-23 August - Bath & West Showground, Somerset A festival also run by Soul Survivor for 20-30s with morning and evening main events, seminars, 'do it yourself' workshops and evening gigs at The Live Lounge, The Union and films showing at the Celluloid venue. soulsurvivor.com/uk/ momentum

**MOMENTUM** 

### **LEADING EDGE** (BAPTIST UNION) 2-7 August -Warwick School Run by The Baptist Union of Great Britain this year's theme for this bible week for families will be Psalm 46: Step out of the Traffic! (Refuelling for Living). Leading Edge will also hold youth and children's work as well as the adult programme running for the week. baptist.org.uk

### **GREENBELT** 26-29 August -Cheltenham Racecourse Running for 37 years, live music, talks and debates, performing arts, comedy and expressive worship make up the festival for young people and families. Confirmed acts include Billy Bragg, Rob Bell, Adrian Plass and comedian Paul Kerensa greenbelt.org.uk

Online research panel

The Alliance research team is looking for people to join its panel of respondents to complete online questionnaires on church and social issues.

The next survey will be held in September and is part of a series of continuous research projects being rolled out as a result of the Alliance's 21st Century Evangelicals report published in January.

This research looked at the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of evangelical Christians in the UK and was compiled with Christian Research. Results reflected the diverse views evangelical Christians hold on a range of topics, including the environment, volunteering, miracles, prayer, giving, women in leadership and evolution.

At Easter, the Alliance carried out a follow-up survey showing more than 94 per cent went to church on Easter Sunday and 82 per cent agreeing that 'belief in the resurrection shapes the way I live now'. More than 1,150 people responded, with many sending examples of the Easter outreach they had done including one church who took gifts and Easter cards to the workers of massage parlours in their neighbourhood.

To ensure the questionnaire is truly representative of the diverse UK Church, we would particularly like to encourage Christians from ethnic minority backgrounds to take part.

Register your interest at eauk.org/snapshot or by emailing Lauren Sibuns on I.sibuns@eauk.org



As ever, the line-up planned for this year's Greenbelt Festival at Cheltenham racecourse (26-29 August) doesn't disappoint. Music appearances include Billy Bragg, folk Singer Kate Rusby, Martyn Joseph, LZ7 (previously the World Wide Message Tribe), Don Letts, Idlewild, Dweeb, Gentleman's Dub Club, gospel singer Mavis Staples, jazz singer Soweto Kinch and The Unthanks, recently featured in the *Guardian*, and *Uncut's* Best Albums of the Decade. Comedian Mark Thomas and Paul Kerensa, writer of BBC's *Not Going Out*, are also confirmed.

Speakers at the festival are a mix of orators from all walks of life, including Andrew Graystone, BBC producer and director of the Churches Media Council, American author and speaker Rob Bell, Clare Catford, national broadcaster and writer, and Nadia Bolz-Weber, former stand up comedian and now a Lutheran pastor. Paul Brannen, who heads Christian Aid's campaigns, policy and media

work, Brazilian theologian Rosalee Velloso Ewell and writer Shelia Cassidy will also feature at the festival together with writers Adrian Plass, Stella Duffy and Mia Gallagher. Church leaders who have not been to the festival before can get tickets for £25.





# Big ideas

Since coming to power last May, David Cameron has placed a lot of emphasis on developing a Big Society. Not always popular, and coming at the same time as significant cuts to public spending, it has been criticised for trying to make up for cutbacks by encouraging the public to do things for themselves.

Christians will disagree on many political issues; some will support the government's programme while others will disagree. Even those who support the same political party will see things differently. While disagreement causes challenges, it should not hold us back. Within the Church there are many different views, not just on politics; not everyone will agree with everything the Church says or does, but we all strive to support its overall vision.

The Big Society provides an opportunity for churches to continue and strengthen their long-term engagement with the local community. Regardless of opinions about the government's policies there is the potential for churches in communities large and small to provide an example of how lives can be changed.



Designing

· Printing

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# Volunteering society

One aspect of the Big Society is to encourage volunteering, based on the premise that if more people gave more of their time, less money would be spent on providing some of the services currently paid for through taxation. In this regard there is an economic aspect to the Big Society. But it is also only a small part of broader plans to decentralise power away from central government, and empower local citizens to take decisions affecting their lives.

Other parts of this programme include giving community groups the opportunity to start their own schools, using the voluntary sector to help the unemployed back into work, and the controversial, and now delayed, plans to reform the NHS. The irony of decentralisation is that it requires government action to give power away to community groups.

The Localism Bill currently under discussion in Parliament is the main way that the government is trying to hand over power to these groups. The result of this will be far greater opportunities for community groups, including churches, to get involved.

The Alliance recently took a group of leaders from the new church streams to see Andrew Stunell MP, a government minister in the Department for Communities and Local Government. Representatives from Elim, Groundlevel, Icthus, Newfrontiers, Pioneer, Salt & Light and Vineyard joined the Alliance's general director Steve Clifford and Don Horrocks, head of public affairs.

This was an opportunity to introduce the government minister to the diversity of church communities across the UK, and the breadth of work that is already done by Christians in their neighbourhoods. The minister was also reminded of the vital importance of ensuring this work can continue and is not hindered by bureaucracy or by local councils putting restrictions on Christian groups' activity.

Under the Localism Bill, community groups will be granted several new rights intended to increase their power over local issues. If there are buildings valued by the community they can be placed on a list and if put up for sale community groups get a first chance to bid to buy the premises. Other changes proposed will give local communities the opportunity to develop plans for their neighbourhood which, if approved by a local vote will provide a framework for what is built or how buildings are used.

The bill will also give community groups and charities the chance to challenge the right of the local council to run some of their services. If a church or a Christian charity thinks they might be able to provide services more effectively they would be able to put together a proposal and potentially take over the running of the service. Some councils already work with community groups but the changes proposed would provide local organisations with the power to challenge who provides the service.

Once the Localism Bill has been passed by Parliament and the details finalised, the Alliance will be producing guidance to help churches and Christian charities make the most of these opportunities to have a positive impact on their neighbourhoods.

Danny Webster

# WEA appeals for citizen journalists

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) is seeking new ways to tell the type of stories that they want broadcast in mainstream media – by asking members to double up as roving reporters.

Linking up with Crossroads Christian Communications Inc to recruit 1,000 citizen journalists from across the world, the WEA is asking ordinary people to provide stories from their churches and communities as well as give eye witness reports of breaking news.

In return, Crossroads say they will give candidates the tools and tips on becoming a budding reporter as well as a platform to communicate to an international audience.

Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe, international director of the WEA, says: "All around the world, there are Christ followers doing great work and their stories need to be heard on the global stage stories that encourage, motivate and inform."

Chairman and CEO of Crossroads, Don Simmonds, adds: "The breadth of WEA's global reach enables us to more quickly connect with trustworthy Christians in situations around the world who need a media platform to be heard."

Melissa McEachern of Crossroads says the stories will be primarily used on websites myVU and crossroads.ca/myvu. Exceptional content could also be broadcast on the channel's daily national telecast and on their primetime shows on mainstream network Global Television.

Melissa says: "Our goal is to give a wider voice from a diversity of Christian voices. It would be our expectation that instead of only hearing from a fringe element of Christianity we would actually hear a more balanced perspective on issues. A sense of redeeming the word evangelical is foremost in our mind. We trust that several voices along with our integrity can help accomplish that."

Lizzy Millar

# Uniting to change society

The Alliance is working to build unity among its half a million members across 70 denominations, 3,300 churches and 700 organisations. Members are linked through a UK and worldwide network of evangelical Christians who share in ministry and expertise. Benefits for churches are especially valuable, including access to resources, programmes and campaigns, as well as media training. For more information, visit, eauk.org/getinvolved

Meanwhile, the Alliance has welcomed new organisations and churches...

### **ORGANISATIONS**

- 1. Oasis House, Brighton
- 2. Crown Financial Ministries, Bristol

- 1. Alfred Tilly Memorial Baptist Church,
- 2. Cornerstone Christian Centre -Shepherd's Bush, London
- 3. Grace Harvest Church, Dagenham
- 4. Grace Outreach Church, London
- 5. Harvest Praise Church, South Norwood

- 6. Hillsong Church, London
- 7. International Evangelical Mission, London
- 8. Joel's Place Church, Ascot
- 9. Judah City of Praise, London
- 10. Kirkpatrick Memorial Church, Belfast
- 11. Llanelli Elim Pentecostal Church, Llanelli
- 12. Mauritian Christian Church, London
- 13. New Pastures Family Church, London
- 14. Redemption Faith Assemblies UK, Walsall
- 15. South City Church, Hove
- 16. The Beacon, Dartford
- 17. West Basingstoke Community Church, Basingstoke

**Awareness Sunday marks the** 10th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA and calls for an end to violence in the name of religion.

From time to time history presents us with a moment in which to reflect and renew our commitment to peace in our world. Awareness Sunday is such a moment. **JOEL EDWARDS** 

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11 SEPTEMBER 2011 www.awarenesssunday.com

Observe Awareness Sunday in your local church by holding a special service in your community and by committing to teach the Awareness Course. Make a difference in a world of difference and take the challenge to look afresh at faith in our age.

Special Awareness Sunday service at **Westminster Abbey, London** Sunday, 11th September at 6.30 p.m. All are welcome!

# Cope with redundancy as a Christian...



In this economic climate it is inevitable that many Christians will be affected by redundancy. *Claire Musters* speaks to Charles Humphreys, author of *The Christian Guide to Jobs and Careers* about how believers should respond when they lose their jobs and face the practicalities while still believing God has a hope and a future for us...

The start of Charles' story may sound very familiar to those facing redundancy today. After nine successful years in the careers advisory service, Charles discovered he was being made redundant during a restructuring meeting. Although it was a very unsettling time, Charles had a peace from God and believed that the redundancy was the right thing for him. For about four years he had been trying to write his book, and had been complaining to God that he didn't have time to get it off the ground properly. But now he definitely had the time.

Charles has gained significant insights - both practical and spiritual - over the years from his own personal experience and those of the people he has come across in his capacity as careers advisor.

He truly believes that God wishes to use difficult employment situations to bring His people closer to Him, and is passionate about offering encouragement to others during their journeys towards finding fulfilling employment.



His experiences have led him to come up with a number of tips to help and inspire those who are going through the pain of losing their jobs. Here's a top 10 based on his book:

### 1. Believe God is interested

God is interested in every aspect of your life, including your career. Many people ring-fence certain parts of their lives, such as employment, saying God is either not interested enough or is unable to bring about a breakthrough. But the Bible tells us that that is simply not true and His promises cover every facet of our lives – including our career aspirations and job situation.

### 2. Be honest and open with God

God wants you to pour out how you are feeling to Him – just look to the Psalms to see how David did just that. Realise that it is only when you open your heart fully to God that He can begin the healing and restoring process.

### 3. Ask God if there is something He wants to teach you

God often uses testing times in our lives to draw us closer to Him. Look at how you are responding to your redundancy – are you despairing or crying out to God? Perhaps God is using this period to increase your faith and/or trust in Him, or to create a more godly character in you.

### 4. Remember God's promises

Take time to reflect on God's promises both to you personally and in the Bible, which is full of stories revealing His track record of guiding His people. If you think God has abandoned you, looking back to how He has guided you in the past will build your faith levels back up.

### 5. Learn how God can reveal

God uses the Bible, the Holy Spirit and advice from others to reveal godly wisdom to you that may take you in a new direction. He has also placed natural desires and abilities within you as an individual that provide clues to what type of work you are best suited to.

### 6. Be persistent in prayer

God wants you to keep close to Him in prayer. He loves to talk to us and act on our behalf when we show Him how desperately we need Him. Sometimes His answer isn't 'no', it is 'not yet' because He has more to teach us – so keep praying about your job situation even if you don't see an immediate breakthrough.

### 7. Stand firm

By knowing God's word well, and by believing His promises, you can refuse to give in to negative thoughts, words and circumstances that may try to bring you down. It is important to read the Bible every day, even when you don't feel like it, so that you have it fresh in your mind. Often God leads us to the very passage we need to counteract the negativity we are struggling with at that time.

### 8. Take the time

You may need to invest time in brushing up skills you already possess, or learning new ones that will be needed for the areas of employment you are interested in. Don't rush past this part of the process, as it may leave you lacking at the interview stage.

### 9. Step out in faith

Sometimes God just gives us a bit of information and then wants us to act on it in faith before revealing the bigger picture. If you sense a call from Him, and have had this confirmed through godly counsel, then don't just wait for the job to land in your lap – go out and actively seek it.

### 10. Develop a realistic strategy

The book includes a host of information and practical help on how you can have a realistic strategy when searching for new employment. It is important to learn how to: create an action plan; research jobs; extend your network; recognise your skills and then extend them; write a winning CV and brush up on your interview skills.





Started in 2004 in Portsmouth, Messy Church is an alternative

type of church format aimed at families and their children for whom traditional services are more challenging. With more than 600 churches signed up to the initiative, it is proving a success with two new resources available this summer.

Messy Crafts and Messy Cooks looks at crafts and cooking for children and families in more depth, with a journal to write down your own creative thoughts included in the Messy Crafts resource. Speaking to idea, founder Lucy Moore says of the new resources: "We wanted to focus on these two crucial elements of Messy Church and help teams who are doing the hard creative work month by month. The impetus came from people requesting more on crafts and cooking and we always want to respond to what people ask for."

The Messy Church initiative is backed by the Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) which provides resources for work with children under the age of 11 in church.



Messy Church also wants to gather together ideas from the large groups of people involved in the initiative so that creative ways of doing things can be shared. "We want to pool ideas from across the huge global network and share them on the website and, where appropriate, in books," says Lucy.

As for the future, Messy Church are working with the Children's Society to follow on from the success of last year's Messy Christingle, a pack with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and Messy Sports Fun resource for the Olympics.

A Mess Round the Year book to help groups take part in events like Fathers Day is also being planned;

making sure churches won't be short of Messy Church materials.



# Connecting people to Christ

On a seven-day backpacking trip three years ago, Olaf Fogwill experienced a revelation about connection being essential for human beings. He decided he wanted to connect people with Christ who had either never connected, or needed to re-connect.

The thoughts resulted in the formation of the Connect4Life programme launched at the Christian Resources Exhibition in May, giving church members ways to talk to their friends and look at issues of identity, value and purpose.

Says church leader Olaf: "The gospel is so easy and simple but it becomes so alien for people. They don't have the language to understand it, it's a million miles away from their experience and background, but they can understand that connection makes things work."

Resources can be tailored to four different audiences: connected (committed Christian), disconnected (left church), re-connecting (rejoining church), or unconnected (no church experience).

Connect4Life is a new member organisation of the Evangelical Alliance.

connect4life.org.u

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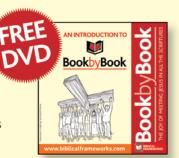
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# Northern Ireland news

# Mission possible

This edition we hear from **Evangelical Alliance Northern** Ireland initiative the Mission Agencies Partnership (MAP) on the work that it is doing to support churches in their local and global mission.

Mission Agencies Partnership (MAP), an Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland initiative, is to be hosted at Northern Ireland's largest Christian festival New Horizon on 16-22 July. Under the festival's theme of 'Unleashing the truth' MAP will present how Christians can reach those from the Muslim faith and unchurched audiences through Bible-teaching, discipleship, Bible translation, evangelism and church-planting.

Also hosting its popular Hope Street Café for live music, interviews, coffee and chat at the festival, the MAP café will open after the evening celebration meetings at the festival.

MAP, which originally started in 2004, now has 45 mission agencies who meet together to pray and organise various events across the country working under the vision, "Mission at the heart of church, church at the heart of mission".

Made up of six different groups, youth/ CU, personnel, New Horizon, communications, church relations and recruitment, each organises events and works on building relationships and partnerships in each particular area.

"All over the world the gospel is producing fruit and growing" (Colossians 1:6) and we now have a colourful, vibrant picture of this through the work of MAP.

Working across every continent among different people groups, 'Mappers' know that by working together some of them are able to 'plant' and others 'water' producing longer lasting fruit.

And there are some exciting events that MAP organises to do this.

Ignition is a programme encouraging young people to engage in mission with its



evening roadshows taken to many locations around the province, reaching hundreds of young people.

Working with students, the CU programme runs once a year in each of the six local universities and colleges in Northern Ireland. Together with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, the annual programme

Making friends with internationals

supports students in holding missions.

Paul tells us to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15). God wants us to be united as one Church, one body, to use our individual God-given gifts to complement one another: "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them (Romans 12:6)." MAP members focus on

different countries, each doing a unique work, but together we cover the whole world.

Also taking place every year, the World on Our Doorstep training day helps church members to reach international communities and personnel events run over three days aim to teach participants how to properly lead, send out and receive overseas mission teams from their church.

Over the next couple of months MAP wants to build tighter relationships with the Church and will be running a Mission Showcase for Churches event to encourage churches to consider aspects of mission outreach that are new to them. Covering a number of areas including how to set up and run a successful missions committee, partnering with a church abroad, supporting a missionary family and how to organise outreach in the local community, the event will take place in October.

It is MAP's vision to see mission at the heart of our church in Northern Ireland. It is our prayer that God makes our churches places of grace and righteousness. It is our hope that we would become a church that is fruitful not only in our own communities, but across the globe.

Please pray for MAP as we continue to fulfil our vision of "mission at the heart of the church and church at the heart of mission".

mapmission.org info@mapmission.org

Lindsay Davis

Dates for your diary

**SUMMER MADNESS** 1-5 July

Kings Hall Belfast summermadness.co.uk **NEW HORIZON** 16-22 July

University of Ulster Coleraine newhorizon.org.uk

**BANGOR WORLDWIDE MISSIONARY CONVENTION** 20 -27 August

Waterfront Hall, Belfast worldwidemission.org

# **Scotland** news

# **Scottish Parliament Elections**

The Scottish National Party (SNP) dominated elections to the Scottish Parliament on 5 May, winning an outright majority which many believed impossible in a proportional electoral system. Described as a "historic result", the SNP saw its vote increase by 13 per cent, gaining more than the 65 seats needed to run as a majority government for the next five years. Alistair Stevenson, public policy officer in Scotland, reflects on the events...

The SNP took seats right across the country transforming Labour and Lib Dem heartlands in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The Scottish Liberal Democrats, reflecting results in the English local council elections, were hit the hardest with most of their vote transfer to the SNP. The number of Lib Dem MSPs dropped from 16 to five, resulting in the resignation of their Scottish leader Tavish Scott. The Scottish Labour Party was unable to capitalise from the Lib Dem demise, instead seeing its vote dramatically reduced.

## What now?

It is now more than likely that the SNP will bring forward a referendum on independence in the second half of the parliamentary term which the UK government will not block, says the UK secretary of state for Scotland, Michael Moore MP. The win largely reflects a very successful campaign run by the SNP which at its heart was positive. The SNP did not make independence a core issue of its campaign, largely focusing on its own records and achievements in government. In contrast, the Labour campaign was criticised by many as scaremongering, focusing initially on the Tory-led coalition government and finally attacking independence directly.



The result will no doubt see a radical change in the way politics is conducted within Scotland. With a majority, the new SNP government will be able to push through its legislative agenda, having only to worry about keeping its own members in line. Consequently, the smaller parties and the one independent candidate Margo MacDonald will have much less ability to influence and act as a swing vote in key parliamentary votes.

# 7:14 Parliament Prayer

Around 200 people gathered outside the Scottish Parliament the night before the Scottish Parliamentary Elections to pray for the elections and future Scottish government. The Scottish Liberal Democrats, reflecting results in the English local council elections, were hit the hardest with most of their vote transferred to the SNP.

Organised by students and young adults, the hour-long event saw all ages praying and then kneeling together to say the Lord's Prayer. Praise and worship broke out throughout the night while others chose to walk around the Parliament praying silently.

The Alliance's Alistair Stevenson, who helped organise the event, said: "As both young and old gathered to pray, there was a real sense of unity as individuals from different churches prayed that God's kingdom would come, and His will be done throughout the nation. As we knelt together we all humbly declared that the Lord is sovereign over Scotland and any government that would be elected and formed in the coming days."

# Young Adult Leaders Day

The Alliance in Scotland brought together 30 emerging leaders for a day of equipping, resourcing and networking recently; part of a wider UK Alliance strategy to develop emerging leaders with similar initiatives taking place in England and Wales. Senior leaders Peter Anderson (Destiny Church Edinburgh) and Keith Short (leader of Scottish Network Churches and Barnton Baptist Church) led sessions on the key characteristics of a leader, how to plant and grow a church and valuing missional unity as leaders.

For the Alliance, the heart of the day was a vision to raise up a new generation of leaders who have unity at the core of their discipleship and mission.

# Easter celebration

Organised by local churches, the Scotland Trust and the Evangelical Alliance in Scotland, Easter Day saw more than 600 people from a variety of different churches across Perth celebrate the resurrection of Jesus together.

Rev Fred Drummond, national director of the Evangelical Alliance in Scotland, who helped lead the event, said: "We had a fantastic evening together celebrating the resurrection of our Lord. The event was a great example of local churches coming together in unity as a witness that God's Church is alive and that Jesus Christ is Lord."

Alistair Stevenson

# Dates for your diary

CLAN
GATHERING 2011
23 - 29 July

St Andrews, Fife clangathering.org.uk

IMAGINE SCOTLAND YOUTH FESTIVAL

2 - 6 August

Thainstone Centre, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire imaginescotland.co.uk

### **URBAN SAINTS**

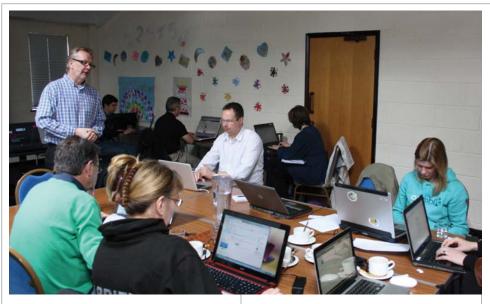
**16 - 18 September** - Spree in the Highlands

23 - 24 September -Spree in Skye

urbansaints.org/ spreescotland/



# **Wales** news



# CICC into Christianity

The Cymru Institute of Contemporary Christianity's (CICC) summer programme was launched by Gerard Kelly, well known speaker, writer and champion of practical theology and mission.

Addressing audiences in Swansea and Cardiff, Gerald and his wife Chrissie have 30 years of experience as youth workers and church leaders across Europe. Founding Cafe-net, a European missions project in 1995, the ministry became The Bless Network in 2004.

Speaking on themes of 'Story Wars' and arguing that the Church needs to recover the epic narrative of the Bible as it engages with culture, Gerald called on Christians to re-engage with the richness of the biblical drama, so that its message to the world could be renewed.

Also presenting his vision of Prismatic Church and referencing Ephesians 3:7-10, the speaker argued that as the light of the gospel hits the Church it needs a multi-colour dispersion. As the Church gathers to hear the Word it then disperses to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God.

The events, hosted by the CICC Bible and Church series, also saw leading theologians from Tyndale House, Cambridge, presenting scholarships to Christians in Cardiff, Swansea and Aberystwyth. Five sessions spread over the three sites, posed the same question: Can I believe the Bible? More information will soon be available on the Media Voice Wales website.

# Getting social about media in Cardiff

The Evangelical Alliance Wales (EAW) is to host a second social media training event with churches and Christian organisations in the autumn following a successful day with more than 20 delegates in April. Running its first ever social media training in Cardiff, sessions were led by Alliance Wales' media relations officer Gethin Russell-Jones with groups including YMCA, Gweini, Glenwood and Rhiwbina Baptist Church. Most had little or no experience of using social media, but were keen to learn how to use them in their work environments and saw the staggering power and effectiveness of social media.

Elfed Godding, national director Evangelical Alliance Wales, said: "Churches tend to think of media in traditional terms. Like it or not, many people these days pay far more attention to their Facebook and Twitter feeds than read a newspaper and the opportunities for communicating the Christian faith are endless. I really would encourage people to sign up to our new courses when they're announced."

### Social media facts: did you know?

- Facebook has more than 500 million
- An average Facebook user spends about 55 minutes a day on the site
- There are more than 181 million blogs
- Two thirds of bloggers are male
- There were more than 50 million tweets in 2010
- The 10 billionth tweet was posted in March 2010
- There are currently more than 110 million users of Twitter.

A follow-up event will take place in Cardiff, in the autumn - look out for dates

# Land of my father and mothers

Wales is different. With its own history, culture and devolved government, this small country is forging its own future within the UK. The nation's mother tongue is among the oldest European languages and is also one of the continent's fastest growing. From near extinction three decades ago, there has been an explosion of interest in speaking 'Cymraeg', resulting from education policy and learners wanting to learn a second language.

Setting aside the vagaries of the national rugby team, Wales is enjoying great cultural prominence, especially when it comes to music. Katherine Jenkins, Bryn Terfel and Karl Jenkins all have worldwide reputations and yet share modest backgrounds.

BAFTA-winning actor Michael Sheen recently took over his home town of Port Talbot during the national Theatre of Wales' Easter passion play. Tens of thousands of people visited the event to witness the passion of Jesus in a modern context.

But Christian mission in Wales also needs to be different. With church attendance in steeper decline than other parts of the UK, Christianity needs to look and sound contemporary to the nation. Recent news reports have highlighted the problems facing the Church in Wales. Declining numbers of clergy, falling investments and shrinking congregations have caused Archbishop Barry Morgan to announce a root and branch review of the Church's operations.

Under the banner of 'uniting to change society', Evangelical Alliance Wales represents and serves churches from around 30 different denominations. Its mission is to present Christ credibly in three ways:

- to the National Assembly for Wales and to the media
- to individuals by mobilising churches to work together in evangelism
- to communities by mobilising churches to work together in social action.

It is hoped that this collaborative approach to mission will engage the hearts and minds of Christians in living out the gospel in their various communities.

Elfed Godding, national director of Evangelical Alliance Wales, said: "Our approach to mission here is contextual. We need to understand and appreciate Wales' dynamic difference if we are to engage its people with the greatest news

mediavoicewales.co.uk

Gethin Russell-Jones

ever told."

# Dealing with conflict in the Church by Howard Stern

In a world of litigious attitudes underpinned by a rights-based culture, the one place that should be a sanctuary from such attitudes is the Church. Yet sadly, conflicts and disputes do break out in churches. They even occasionally cross the line of rejecting God's biblical principles, to the place where man's law reigns.

Jesus taught us many virtues, including not judging, forgiving and praying for our enemies. The Old Testament is full of advice on these subjects. In Proverbs the Bible says that we should not go hastily to court, and that when our ways please the Lord He makes even our enemies be at peace with us. So why is it that disputes and conflicts break out in the Church? After all, it should be a place of holiness and joy; and doesn't the world have enough troubles of its own without the Church creating more? Surely those seeking answers will lose interest in church should they experience more of the same.

The Apostle Paul wrote that we should pursue peace and the things by which we edify one another (Romans 14:19). These words were also echoed by Kofi Annan, former head of the United Nations, who said: "We should pursue peace, even when powerful forces conspire against it." In the body of Christ we know that powerful forces do indeed conspire against peace, as clearly explained in Ephesians 6. The enemy prowls like a lion seeking to exploit our human weaknesses, sowing seeds of discord and dissent among the ranks of God's children, to bring both shame and disrepute upon God and His people. Yet Jesus, the great mediator between God and man, has given us a ministry of reconciliation, so surely the Church should be at the centre of all things reconciliatory.

It is this ministry of reconciliation that I have taken to heart in my professional life,

where my experience has taught me that dispute resolution is a complex and dynamic process. The fact is, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to seeking reconciliation. The barriers and obstacles to achieving agreements can be many, and require careful exploratory work to uncover. Within the Church I also see recurring themes, such as poor communication, change, ignorance of God's word, apathy and that old but nonetheless powerful adversary - pride.

As human beings we are by nature creatures of habit and averse to change, yet often adjustment is needed. There are of course areas where change should be resisted. Change for change's sake is pointless. The Rock of Ages does not change. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. But sometimes we need to review how we operate as a church, how we teach, lead and manage the precious resources that God has blessed us with. But beware, wherever there is change, conflicting views and opinions are sure to follow.

## A house divided

Church-based conflict is especially damaging because a house divided cannot stand. The reputation of the Church suffers at the hands of those who seek to perpetuate conflict within His body; yet He clearly tells us that if we truly love Him, then we must obey Him. Samuel tells us obedience is better than sacrifice.

Therefore those with pride that seek to cause division within God's precious family

should consider carefully the prophet's warning: "For rebellion [against God's authority] is as witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry (1 Samuel 15:23)." These words may seem harsh, but let us not forget the promises of God that are for us and those that judge us. God's word does not return void and those who seek to derail peace processes and unsettle the house of God will reap severe consequences: "As they sow, so shall they reap."

Let me close by offering a few points for those facing church-based conflict, whatever its cause. Pray and forgive. Bless those that curse you. Love one another. Speak softly and turn away anger. Be quick to listen and slow to speak. Tame the tongue. Put yourself in the other person's shoes and ask yourself, how are they thinking and why are they doing what they are doing? Remember that pride and ego create a veil between God and man. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God

Howard Stern is a mediator and advocate at Amadeus Mediators, an international agency providing mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution services.



Church conflict is costly because a house divided cannot stand

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God. Matt 5:9



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In the current recession, the Church has one of the greatest opportunities to be truly radical and minister more directly to the poor. *Rebecca Taylor* meets church groups and housing associations tackling market forces and creating long—term mission and community opportunities in response...

Despite the economic downturn high house prices prevail even in deprived areas, meaning Christians wanting to commit to helping these communities by living there long-term are prevented from doing so because of the cost.

Tower Hamlets in east London is a case in point. It has one of the highest proportions of child poverty in the UK, despite having some of the highest house prices as a result of the Olympics taking place nearby and the impending market forces, according to research by Save The Children.

Fifteen years ago Chris Lawrence, a community worker, needed a £35,000 mortgage to buy a house; share-owning it with housing association Victoria Park Homes to live near his Hackney church. Today, he would need a £350,000 mortgage with the same property now valued at £700,000.

"That is such a huge leap. The economics stack against you," says Chris. "It seems crazy that people can't afford to live here if they want to do mission."

Robert Lantsbury, of Alliance member Affordable Christian Housing Association Ltd (ACHAL), says: "The recession has increased pressures, particularly in areas such as Tower Hamlets. Christian workers who have a strong calling to share their faith and live in the community can be frustrated simply because they are unable to find an affordable home."

# Fighting back

But four member churches in the area from the Tower Hamlets Evangelical Fellowship are fighting back. The E123 Mission House project led by Bethnal Green Mission Church, Victoria Baptist Church and church plants Hope asha and E1 Community Church, want to create an affordable household for Christians, so that the church can reach out in mission more sustainably and meet the stark needs of the local community more directly.

Based on a previous partnership between a housing association in Hackney that has seen great successes as households get involved in their community, the four churches want to do the same and buy two properties to create mission households in the community.

The churches' project is backed by housing associations Victoria Park Homes 1965 Ltd (VPH65) and ACHAL who are supporting the pilot venture by underwriting rental costs for the first year.

The E123 Mission House project is to start this autumn and will enable householders to rent at an affordable price and be involved in long-term mission in their area.

The housing associations will work with the churches to find funding of £600,000 for each house which the project will then own as mission houses for the next five years. After this, the money donated will be returned and if money is available the process will start again.

Rod and Vivi Boucher have been living in the present Hackney house supported by churches and a local housing association. Rod says: "Without their help we couldn't live here. Prices are becoming so high and churches are facing a real vacuum. [This] gives you enough money for rent and then have head and heart space to do local community and church work."

Chris adds: "The kingdom work is being supported through people's gifts and it's a way of connecting churches all around the country. Twenty-eight churches and individuals funded the last house in Hackney. From a rural church in the Chilterns to a city church in Derby, they were both able to give £50,000 and £10,000 respectively for five years which helped enormously."

ACHAL's Robert Lantsbury says: "Longterm investment is better. It provides stability and a focus for mission, and enables people to be a part of the fabric of an area rather than a short-term crash course of the gospel being declared."

The E123 Mission House project has big plans for its community work, including projects with the local Food Bank, youth inclusion groups, Olympic Games outreach and street pastoring.

Inspired by the tradition of Christians involved in social action in the area, the churches on the project want to create a place for long-term mission just like their predecessors.

Bethnal Green Mission Church was originally started by Annie McPherson who worked with child matchstick makers and was a friend of Dr Barnardo. The first Baptist mission church in the UK was founded in Spitalfields in the east end in the 1600s. The Salvation Army began in Whitechapel nearby, while Charles Wesley was famously active in the area.

And as figures show, hundreds of years on - the need is still great.

Visiting the area to interview Mike Houston Pastor of the Bethnal Green Mission Church, I chance upon a hotel just off the high street. It charges £1,000 a night. Mike tells me of a family of eight people nearby; three generations living in a two bedroom apartment - a very common situation in the borough, according to him.

The Food Bank initiative run by The Trussell Trust, giving emergency food to families in crisis, normally works with a few organisations in one town; in Tower Hamlets they work with nine different churches and other organisations to meet the demand.

International Christian speakers Christine and Tom Sine, founders of Mustard Seed that encourages simple living, supported the mission house in Hackney and are clear that the scheme is something the Church should support if mission is to continue in areas like Tower Hamlets. Christine says: "We all need to create a range of new expressions of community like this, from shared housing to co-housing that move to a very different rhythm of life and discover new ways to make

focus for mission

www.leeabbev.org.uk 01598 752621 relax@leeabbey.org.uk a little difference in the lives of our most vulnerable neighbours, locally and globally."

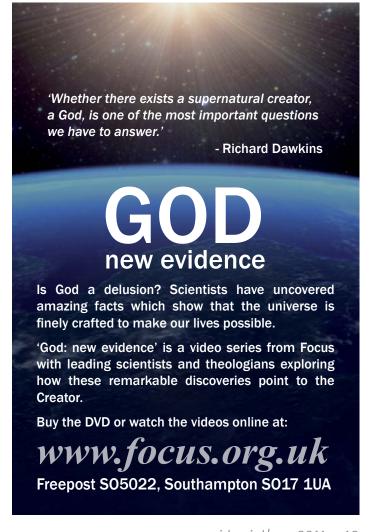
Chris adds: "It is soul-destroying to see how many people move out to the suburbs because they can't afford to live here anymore. These long-term mission schemes are really needed and the Church needs to support these people in what they are doing."

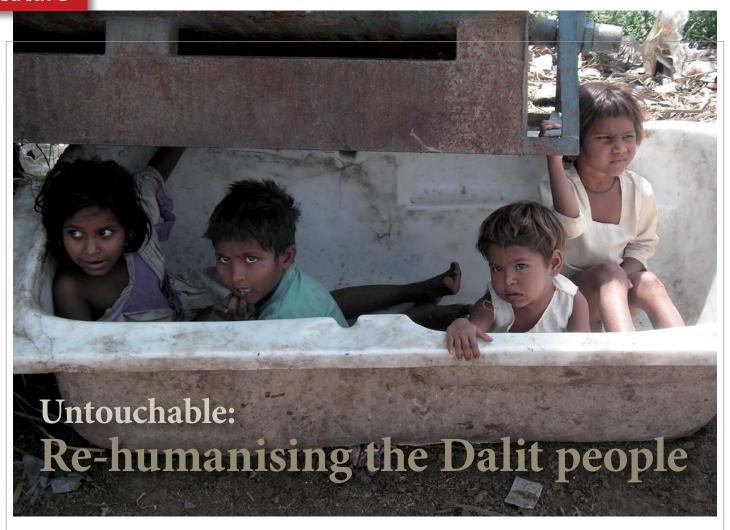
For more about the project contact Anne Cartwright at Victoria Park Housing 1965 Ltd on anne.housing@fishlife.org.uk

ACH has provided assistance to Christian workers in London for 24 years and has been involved in nearly 60 housing projects affordablechristianhousing.org









The Hindu caste system is bad news for the 250 million Dalit people classed as 'untouchables'. But a Christian entrepreneur is demonstrating how we can bring good news to this people group treated as social outcasts. *Chine Mbubaeqbu* writes...

Slumdog. Untouchable. Outcast. These are just some of the words used to describe the 250 million 'Dalit' people living on the lowest rung of India's ancient caste system. Born into a world where they are considered the scum of the earth, dehumanised and discriminated against without a challenge to this age-old system, the Dalits live bleak lives without hope. Global research and reports regularly site the Dalits as the largest number of people categorised as victims of modern-day slavery.

In the Hindu caste system, the four castes are said to have originated from four parts of the body of the god Brahma. At the top is the Brahmin priestly caste that comes from his head, followed by the Kshatriyas from his arms, the Vaisyas from his thighs and the Sudras from his feet. Where do the Dalits fit in? They are seen as complete rejects from the social order and not even made by God.

Because their humanity is denied, Dalits find themselves assigned to working in the most degrading jobs in society. Only Dalits can become 'safai karmacharis' – the name given to manual scavengers who have the task of cleaning out human waste from the latrines of wealthy households.

For Simon Hawthorne of Life Association, which has been working with the Dalit community in India for the past 20 years, we have an opportunity to radically reverse these

Despite abject poverty, the people living in Dharavi have a great sense of community

people's view of themselves by telling and showing them about God's love for them.

# In God's image

"As a Dalit, you start off living life thinking you are not made by God," he says. "It's such an oppressive system and, because of the sheer numbers of people, it's the biggest human rights issue today. But in the message of Christianity you were made in the image of God. There is nothing more opposite to the message of Christianity than the Hindu caste system."

It's precisely because of this love for people that Life Association has worked over the years to build schools and orphanages among the Dalit communities in India. The charity aims to address the daily issues that Dalits face – limitations in education, healthcare, employment and even where they can worship.

Life Association's vision is to broaden support for the projects in the Andhra Pradesh region of India where they mainly work, by building 50 projects including orphanages, schools and health centres over the next 10 years. The project also supports a foster home for street children in Mumbai.

### Shunned

For some people, such as Ashok Khade, who heads up a \$32 million construction business in Mumbai and employs more than 4,500 people, it is possible for Dalits to make something of their lives. But for the vast majority, daily life is bleak. They are shunned in every area of society.

If you're a Dalit who goes to a chai or coffee shop, you are even forced to drink from separate disposable clay cups so you do not pollute the vessel.

But Simon, in his 18 years of travelling to India and meeting Dalit people, is always struck by their grace and dignity even in the midst of such horrendous conditions.



"In glorious defiance of their oppressors, the women emerge from shacks in brilliantly coloured and beautiful saris, and their children, even when their clothes are almost threadbare, will have their hair in plaits of bows or decorated with a freshly picked flower," Simon explains.

"My wife Julia tells of one woman who carried an old tin can full of human excrement on her head. She wore a purple sari and the contents were dripping down onto it. She is a

sister, a mother and also someone's daughter."

Commenting on the plight of the Dalit community in India, Manoj Raithatha, national co-ordinator for the Alliance's South Asian Forum, said: "As a British Asian in the 21st century, it saddens me to see that the Dalit community are still being subjected to discrimination. And yet in the eyes of God we are all of immense worth, so much so that in Christ God gave Himself for the sake of all humanity.

"Thankfully, in Christ's commandment of 'love your neighbour as yourself', we have a wonderful mantra for change and we as the Church must continue to shout even louder this important message of committing our lives for the welfare of others."

Simon, an entrepreneur who spent 30 years in the fashion business and also set up music, retail and wholesale businesses, as well as colaunched The Message Trust with brother Andy, has now launched Dalit Candles – a company which raises money for the Dalits in India.

The candles are manufactured in Dharavi – Asia's largest slum and home to more than a million people right in the middle of India's financial capital of Mumbai.

"Despite abject poverty, the people living in Dharavi have a great sense of community, contentment, almost full employment, virtually no crime and recycle 80 per cent of Mumbai's plastic, as well as being incredibly enterprising," says Simon.

"While the level of poverty is unacceptable I believe we have much to learn from them."

Sales from the candles and their clay

Indian-style clay pots go towards raising awareness of the plight of Dalits and raising funds for Life Association.





# Inspired

Pick up any paper and you'd think there wasn't anyone in the world willing to help someone in need – let alone go out of their way to do something extraordinary. But the organisers of the 2011 Inspire Awards know different. Rebecca Taylor brings us a taste of the nominations so far...

Run by *Inspire* magazine and the Evangelical Alliance, this year's Inspire Awards panel are looking for examples of the thousands of ways they know churches and individuals are bringing hope to many.

We've received a wide variety of nominations including detached street work with young people in Bolton, interactive lessons with schools in Bexley, and work with recovering addicts in Weston-Super-Mare. Other nominees include those working on issues of domestic violence, fundraising in the UK for gypsy communities overseas, drama and creative arts work with non-church communities and street pastor volunteers in York. Real people making a real difference. And we are looking for more outstanding entries that will inspire others to do the same.

### Cultural mix

Located in the south-east of the UK's second city Birmingham, Springfield has a rich mix of cultures, but it also has higher than average levels of deprivation. Inspired to help, a local church has been tackling the area's poverty and inequality head-on. Nominating the project for an award, Reverend Thomas Thomas said: "The Springfield Project has been working for over 10 years in a deprived, multi-ethnic, multi-faith area to deliver high quality services to local children, young people and families – it has



enabled good community relations to flourish while also serving families in genuine need."

Partnering with the city's council to run a children's centre in 2008, St Christopher's Church in Springfield has been running services for the community since 1998 - initially through a Play and Stay group for mums.

With the area being in the top 20 per cent of the most deprived parts of Birmingham and having one of the highest infant mortality rates in the city, the church wanted to demonstrate God's love through a service to the community.

Soon after starting the Play and Stay group the church saw that families also needed support in other areas. Angie King, head of centre at the Springfield Project, says: "It became clear that families had other pressing needs such as nursery places for children to progress into, and support with issues, often associated with the effects of poverty. The project found funding, employed a manager and started to develop its services."

Providing those services to more than 1,000 children under five and their families, the work that St Christopher's has been

# YOU CAN NOMINATE IN THREE CATEGORIES:

- An individual Christian in the UK who is an inspiring role model
- A UK church making a dynamic impact on its local community
- A UK-based Christian-run project serving its local area



doing in particular with the Pakistani Asian community has been widely recognised with the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams opening the Springfield Centre in 2008.

If it were not for the Springfield Project, mum Um-Hamza believes her life, and that of her son, would be very different: "I want my son to have a fulfilled and innocent childhood, to be safe and secure. Life can be difficult in many ways for families but the Springfield Project offers a haven of security and of protection, and is helping us all to work towards a healthier and happier society. It should be thanked for what it does."

Asked about how she felt about the project being nominated, Angie said: "I feel excited and humbled. The Springfield Project is able to make a difference to the lives of young children and their families because of the support it receives: support from St Christopher's Church, our staff and volunteer team and parents who use our services. Being nominated for this award recognises the value of this contribution, people of different faiths and none, helping to transform our community and create a better future for our children."



The inspiration was to have somewhere on the high street run by Christians but for all young people - suitable for everyone.

Inspire AWARDS 2011

in partnership with the Evangelical Alliance

# **Pro-active projects**

Zac's Bar is a project run for young people in Farnworth, near Bolton. Set up in 1995 by the Sycamore Project and open six days a week, it provides vital services to more than 700 young people who may be in trouble and have nowhere else to turn. It also runs youth clubs, holiday clubs and after-school activities.

Mrs Daeth from Ludlow who nominated the project for an Inspire Award said: "Since they have been working there the police have found there is less crime in the area and it has made a real difference. The young people often stay on and become volunteers. It is such an important thing to have in an area like this."

With the area affected by alcohol, drugs and crime, a place to come and talk is vital for many. Stuart Barnes, who set up the project, says that because the young people know the staff they feel comfortable talking to them.

# WAYS TO NOMINATE

- You can email us at inspireawards@eauk.
  org with your contact details, the contact
  details of your nominee, describing what
  they do in up to 25 words and why you
  feel they deserve an Inspire award
- Or send your nomination to Inspire Awards, Evangelical Alliance, 186 Kennington Park Road, SE11 4BT

"The biggest issues for young people are lack of aspiration, hope and confidence and low self-esteem. It's these things that often work their way out through drugs and alcohol," he explains. "I think the reason that it works so well is that the young people know the youth workers and have confidence in them and aren't being referred to someone they don't know."

Zac's Bar is housed in a dilapidated wine bar in Farnworth, one of the poorest towns in the country. Establishing a non-alcoholic bar and learning workshops on life issues, the project runs activities for children with physical and learning disabilities and with the local Asian Muslim community.

Stuart adds: "There were a number of us involved in church-based youth work –trying to reach out to non-churched kids and finding that the church building was a barrier. The inspiration was to have somewhere on the high street run by Christians but for all young people – suitable for everyone."

Stuart has seen the impact of the work. One girl came to the project and wouldn't take guidance and was continuously banned. After waiting for her friends to leave the centre, she would hurl abuse at the staff and go to the park to drink and do drugs. But then something changed.

"When it started getting colder she would come to the Bible study sessions as an excuse to stay out of the cold, but something had changed and she began to come along every week. She started going along to the local church youth

group. A year later she decided to give her life to Christ. She has completely changed her life around and now is an active member of her church and volunteers with our special needs young people."

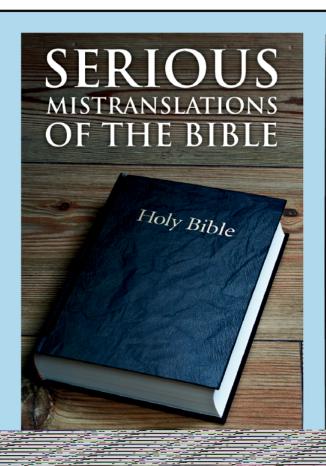
But times are not always easy and Stuart says that faith among him and his staff has really made sure the project has carried on. "There are also pretty tough times when there is no money to get paid or the young people are struggling. When I started out 12 years ago it was just me and an idea. Now we are working with more than 700 young people, have 12 staff, 50 volunteers and we are opening another centre with a third in the pipeline. It's only through faith that we have kept going. I was very surprised to be nominated. We don't go out for recognition but it's brilliant."

# THE PRIZES

As well as a wall plaque and prize for the winners in each section, prizes include £250 (for individuals), £250 of CPO resources (for churches) and £250 of training from the Evangelical Alliance (for projects).

# THE PRIZE GIVING

A prestigious awards event for the winners will be hosted by MPs in Westminster in November.



# JESUS SAID

"MANY ARE CALLED, FEW *HAVE* METTLE" FEW *ARE* QUALITY (FIT FOR IT) **NOT** "MANY ARE CALLED, FEW *ARE* CHOSEN"

"HAVE GOD'S FAITH" **NOT** "HAVE FAITH IN GOD"

"THIS PEOPLE SHALL NOT PASS AWAY UNTIL THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE"

NOT "THIS GENERATION SHALL NOT PASS AWAY UNTIL THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE"

"O FAITHLESS AND PERVERSE GROUP (OF GUYS)"

NOT "O FAITHLESS AND PERVERSE GENERATION"

"FOR THE SONS OF THIS AGE ARE MORE SHREWD AMONG THEIR OWN KIND THAN THE SONS OF THE LIGHT"

NOT "...IN THEIR GENERATION THAN..."

Why the number 3 is important in "the measures of meal" parable

lots more people with whom we would simply have lost touch with in previous times."

James, a vicar in an inner city parish, feels that it is not modern life per se that contributes to pressures but the options life presents us: "I don't think modern life is primarily responsible for people's busyness but modern life can give the impression of being busy due to so many distractions pulling us in different directions," he says.

Rachel, mother of two and Christian for six years, says that for those with families, the expectations of having the perfect, well-balanced life actually adds pressure: "I think perhaps we all put pressure on ourselves. We like our houses to look nice and host friends. We feel we need a holiday at least once a year to get over the stress of the rest of the year. Our families should eat well-balanced home-cooked meals, the kids should be doing a sport and playing an instrument. As a mum it all feels like quite a juggle along with some part-time work to help finance it all."

# Time squeeze

And time is often not of the essence. As recession bites and people fear losing their jobs, pressure to work harder to ensure an income and enable that better life is strong, and time, ironically, gets squeezed out.

And the financial pressure really is on. The Office for Budget Responsibility raised its forecasts to average household debts rising to £77,309 by 2015, rather than the figure of £66,291 made in previous projections.

With tough economic times adding work pressures to already busy lives, something has to give with both families and single people finding themselves 'time poor' as a result.

Research by the Organisaton for Economic Co-operation and Development recently showed working mothers spend one hour 21 minutes a day looking after their families and children. In April, new paternity laws meant fathers could take extended leave of up to six months to look after their child if their partner returned to work, but research showed 41 per cent of men would not be taking it for fear of losing their jobs.

So should the Church be helping families manage their time to have a better life balance in hard financial times?



# **Balancing** act

Says Evelyn Sharpe from InterHealth: "The Church needs to make sure people are getting support from somewhere. That duty of care extends from the congregation right up to the minister and all those in leadership."

According to some, the Church needs to encourage people to live a balanced life so that they also spend time with friends and on activities with those not in church.

"My church is fantastic at encouraging a balance, emphasising the need to mix it up, seeing that as integral to our vision, and giving people space to do so," Josie says. "I sometimes see people get totally absorbed by church life and seemingly forget to be involved with 'normal' non-church areas of life or keep up with friends outside the church."

Jesus spent time with his disciples, but he also spent a lot of time with people far away from faith: "While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples." (Matthew 9:10)

For Rachel, getting the balance right, whether on church or outside activity, needs to

be decided by each individual or family. "What we mustn't do in the Church is inadvertently place more pressure on single people and families by telling them what is a good pace of life or an acceptable amount of activity," she says "We can't expect to cruise through life at a constant speed. That would be very dull."

James adds: "The Church, by the grace of God, needs to help people with the whole of their lives. However, rather than a balance, my hope would be that people find a rhythm of work, rest, study, prayer and play that works for them."

Determined to combat the pressures that many in the youth ministry face, the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS) launched new programmes *Thrive* and *Pitstop* this year, aiming to directly equip people for longer term ministry, and tackle any imbalances and burnout they feel is constricting their work.

Ruth Hassall, leadership development adviser at CPAS, says: "Many youth ministers only stay in a post for a relatively short period, often feeling tired and isolated. If we want to see more young people come to know Jesus Christ, we need youth leaders rooted in a

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Email: sales@ccli.co.uk



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The Church needs to make sure people are getting support from somewhere.

church to develop them through relationship; people who are able to continue being developed and discipled themselves."

So how do we get the magic balance? Weird author Groeschel suggests that instead of trying to do everything - 'I would like to start an inner-city ministry and coach my kids' football team' - focus on making those things an 'or' instead of an 'and'.

"I could start an inner-city ministry or coach my kids football team....Keeping an "or" in the water prevents filling your boat with so many good things that they ultimately sink the ship," the author says.

Despite filling his days, Jesus also had times where he re-charged and rested in order to do the things he knew he needed to do well.

By relentlessly doing activities, the focus of what really matters and what God is calling one to do can often be lost. In Matthew 11:28 –30, Jesus says: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Taking regular time to rest can be like "punctuation marks in a piece of prose",

according to author Ann Persson, whose latest book *Time for Reflection* explores the value and refreshment found in taking periodic quiet days to recuperate from busy schedules. She says: "I see the book as a woven circle. There are three main strands—time, the Christian calendar, and the seasons of the natural year with their spiritual analogies."

James in Coventry says: "As the Nooma Shells video shows us you have to know what is important in life and recognise what matters. You shouldn't be afraid to say no to people when necessary although it's difficult to say no

to something unless you've already said yes to the thing that matters!."

In his famous book *The Screwtape Letters*, CS Lewis writes as the senior devil writing to the junior trainee devil about how to ruin a young man's faith in God saying "allow him to keep busy – it'll mean he has less time to commune with God".

Josie adds: "It's a constant battle, with so many amazing and appealing pulls on our time. Currently I am finding creative ways to pray more – too much activity can very easily mean not enough relational time with God. That is my single biggest challenge. CS Lewis highlights that Christian busyness can keep us from communing with God."

Groeschel writes: "Jesus doesn't say he'll need you to work overtime, answer every email within twenty-four hours, or keep your home looking like Martha Stewart's. Jesus says he will give you rest for your souls and peace. When is the last time you were completely at rest?"

# **Competition:**

We have five copies of Ann Persson's book *Time for Reflection* to give away.

How do you find time for rest and reflection?

Send us your responses by emailing idea@eauk.org

# Resources

## **ORGANISATIONS**

- InterHealth interhealth.org.uk
- Church Pastoral Aid Society Pitstop – 28-30 November
   Thrive – 30 November-2 December cpas.org.uk

### **SPEAKERS**

Fil Anderson author of *Running On Empty* and *Breaking The Rules*, will speak about burnout and renewal at Mandate men's conference run by Evangelical Ministries and CARE. Belfast Waterfront Christian Fellowship Church 12 November themandate.net.

## **BOOKS**

- Weird, Craig Groeschel, Zondervan Publishing
- Messy Spirituality, Mike Yaconelli, Hodder Christian Books – a book about getting involved in what really matters in the Christian life
- Time for reflection, Ann Persson to purchase a copy of the book go to www.brfonline.org.uk

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

 Shells, Rob Bell – video resource challenging Christian leaders to look at the busyness of their lives and really think about what is important

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# David Landrum

# by Lizzy Millar

Dr David Landrum took up his new role as director of advocacy for the Evangelical Alliance in June. We discover more about the man behind the role...

In a typical week in his previous role as parliamentary officer for the Bible Society, Dave Landrum might have found himself tackling politicians on the pitch during a five-a-side session with the parliamentary football team. Or he could be relating lessons learnt in the Old Testament story of Esther to an audience of celebrities and Cabinet ministers. If one man knows how to combine politics and Christianity with a spot of footie with people from all walks of life – it's Dave Landrum.

Appointed as director of advocacy for the Evangelical Alliance Dave leads the public policy, press office and theology teams. His aim is to encourage Christians to articulate a confident, distinctive and dynamic message of transformation across the nation.

And at a time where there appears to be a secularist agenda to push faith out of public life, Dave wants to re-energise and resource Christians in the UK to be more effectively and extensively engaged in politics.

He says: "Despite the gains made by the atheist agenda in the last century and more recently, with God's help, the future for the public influence of evangelical Christians could be bright."

Ordinarily, this would be a tough job for one man. However, Dave won't be relying solely on himself. That's because he hopes to galvanise the members of Alliance into action.

"There are many challenges, but also many opportunities for shaping our culture with the gospel, and I am looking forward to continuing to contribute to the Alliance's important mission to be a network, a resource, and a voice for evangelicals," he says.

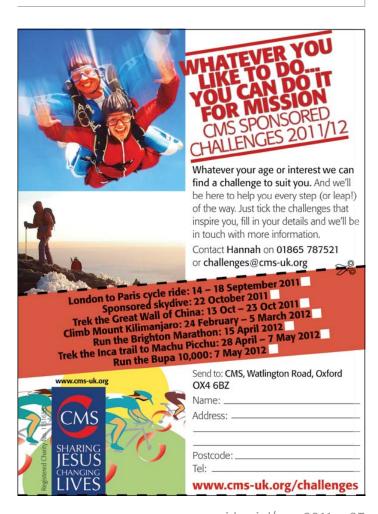
Dave grew up in the working-class area of Bootle in north Liverpool where he left school without any qualifications. After becoming a Christian nearly two decades ago, he went on to gain a first class degree in contemporary politics and urban policy studies, before completing a doctorate in politics and policy process in education.

Dave believes that there has never been a better time to take up the mantle if Christians can gain a renewed sense of confidence to articulate their opinions and exercise their faith in all areas of life.

He says: "We need to avoid context confusion and acknowledge that we live in Babylon not Jerusalem. On this basis we need to prayerfully seek God making an impact in public life in the UK, while resisting the temptation to see ourselves as becoming just another self-designated victim group protesting from the sidelines. Rather our agenda is to engage at the very heart of social, political, cultural and economic life in the UK – because our God has a view on these things, and calls us to get stuck in."

Dave lives in Surrey with his wife Gill, an intensive care nurse, and they have two grown-up sons, who are all Everton FC supporters.







This is an opportunity for Christians to show radical hospitality

The Olympics will present a great opportunity for Christians to come up with innovative ways of getting involved with our communities, *Chine Mbubaegbu*, writes...



We are a year away from what, for many of us, will be the biggest cultural event - Royal Wedding excluded - in our country in our lifetimes. Next summer, the eyes of the world will be watching as some 15,000 athletes and 500,000 spectators descend on the capital for the Olympic Games 2012.

It will be far more than a sporting event. Like many Christians living in Olympic host nations have discovered since the first contest in 1896, the Games present a unique and extraordinary opportunity to share something of the gospel.

That's why hundreds of churches across the UK are coming together under the More Than Gold banner to draw up a co-ordinated, strategic approach in preparation for the Games and to make sure they do not let the moment pass them by.

More Than Gold, of which the Alliance is a founding member, is an umbrella organisation representing the main denominations in the UK and bringing them together to help churches seize the opportunity that the Olympics provide.

Its mission is to enable the Church to engage with the 2012 Games and help "thousands of churches to taste the excitement of reaching their community in fresh and ongoing ways in Jesus' name". More Than Gold also serves as an interface between the UK Church and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), headed up by Sebastian Coe.

More Than Gold's CEO David Willson has seen his fair share of co-ordinated Christian outreach during sporting events. Despite 18 years of involvement in Olympic Games mission, including the contests in Barcelona, Athens, Atlanta, Sydney and Beijing, he is optimistic that London 2012 will be the most successful yet.

"It will be without question the largest Olympics outreach that we have seen since we started recording in 1992," he says. The amount of enthusiasm of UK churches that have got on board the More Than Gold vision is down to a number of factors, according to David. "First of all, we're a sports-crazy nation. It's estimated that 85 per cent of the population here watched at least 15 minutes of the Beijing Games, and this time it will be in our own country. The popularity is also down to the fact that we have got a large population within a small, confined area, making the Games more accessible to people across the country."

The general population's appetite for the Games is clear. Some 20 million people applied for tickets when they went on sale in April, with 1.8 million applications made for the 100-metre final alone.

With the country's eyes set to be on the Games, More Than Gold organisers say Christians need to get on board to show we are in-touch and relevant to the rest of society.

"The press is talking about this every day. We're not having to hype it up," says More Than Gold's national director, Jon Burns. "This is not just a sporting moment, this is a cultural moment and if the Church is not involved, then we will be irrelevant."

There are a whole host of ways the campaign is urging Christians to engage with their communities before and during the Games. They can run holiday clubs for young people, for example, or sports tournaments and

quizzes. More Than Gold also offers churches training and advice on running creative and performing arts programmes.

Churches or Christians could also help host community festivals for all the family during key moments in the Games such as the opening ceremony, a major sports Saturday or the closing event; organising big screen showings, face-painting, clowns and competitions and barbecues.

Jon says: "If I'm watching the opening ceremony in my lounge then I'm not providing an evangelistic opportunity. But imagine what God could do if I held a street party for 200 people. This is an opportunity for Christians to show radical hospitality and service to their community."

Jon also dismissed claims that only Londoners are interested in the Olympics and said churches across the country are getting Olympics fever.

"The Royal Wedding showed us it's irrelevant where you live when something this big happens in your country," says Jon, who is from Teesside. "This will be 17 days that's beyond sport and bigger than London. Lots of people up and down the country will be hooked on it."

It's certainly a national event. The Torch Relay which kicks off in May next year will mean the Olympic flame will be within a one-hour journey for 95 per cent of the UK population throughout its 70-day journey from Land's End towards the capital.

The relationship between Christians and sport has not been a smooth one over the years. Fifty years ago, many believers felt they could not take part in the enjoyment of sport – particularly sport played on the Sabbath day. This is despite the Christian roots of many of the nation's sporting teams. Aston Villa FC, for example, has its origins in the Aston Villa Wesleyan Chapel Cricket Club which started in 1872.

Keith Procter, managing director of Christians in Sport – one of 30 Christian organisations with a significant focus on sport, is excited that the Church is re-engaging.

"Fifty years ago there was a real disconnect between sport and faith. But now, with more than 10 million people playing sport every week in our country, Christians need to get involved as part of holistic mission."

Good things can happen when the Church reaches out to those with a passion for sport, as Christians in Sport has found. Over the past year, 1,070 people have attended the organisations guest events.

"It's been a joy to hear of men, women and young people coming to faith through our events," says Keith. "We have really enjoyed seeing these people go on a journey and realise that this Christianity malarkey is worth investigating."

More Than Gold organisers, church leaders and Christians across the country are praying that London 2012 will provide even greater

# What can your church do?

- Give a sports theme to an existing activity like your children's holiday club or quiz night
- Assign a Gold Champion a church representative to be the channel for information for the campaign and link up with other Gold Champions in the area to share ideas, plans and opportunities
- Provide volunteers for the service and hospitality programmes, including hosting an athlete's family or providing accommodation for an overseas mission team member
- Hold guest events such as a sports quiz or sports thanksgiving service
- Host prayer events for the Games For more ideas, visit morethangold.org.uk

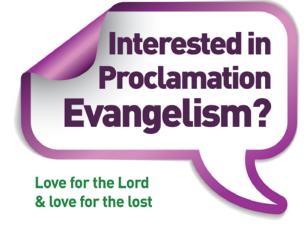
testimonies as they reach out and join with their friends and neighbours in celebrating this historic event.

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# Filling the days One Day Looking for conversation starters, Sophie Lister finds relevant themes in popular culture...

Sophie Lister writes for



finds relevant themes in popular culture...

It was one of those books which everybody seemed to be reading. David Nichols' One Day, with its distinctive orange and white cover, became a common sight in cafes and on trains when it was released back in 2009. Climbing to the top of bestseller lists, and drawing widespread praise from its reviewers, the tale clearly struck a chord. And at the end of August it will arrive on the big screen, starring Anne Hathaway and Jim Sturgess as will-they-won't-they lovers Emma and Dexter.

At one level, the story's appeal is a no-brainer. Catching up with Emma and Dexter at intervals after an intimate encounter on the night of their graduation, it's a classic romance, filled with frustrating complications and unspoken longings. Like When Harry Met Sally, or the unending saga of Ross and Rachel in Friends, it teases us with the characters' inability to see what is all too plain to us: that they belong together. There's an element of wish-fulfilment, too, as we imagine ourselves in their place – a mere arm's length away from the one who seems sure to understand and fulfil us, if only we could just work things out.

# Loss and hope

Most catastrophic of all is the inability of well-meaning philanthropy to alter life's darkest realities. When events veer into a shock scenario for which neither Dexter nor Emma's philosophy can offer any comfort, it hits home that every life – whether well-lived or wasted – must end. The story is suffused by a sense of loss: not only literal bereavements, but the death of dreams and passions, and the passing of better days. Compromise, and the cruelty of fate, seem to have the final say.

Are these the tough truths that we must all grow up and accept? Or is there hope for a different kind of life? Jesus never promises his followers exemption from the mundane or from the tragic, but he offers 'life to the full', not chasing pleasure or ticking the boxes of career, relationships and good deeds. There has to be more than just another way of filling the days. We all sense, somehow, that we're meant for something bigger.

# Scuppered ideals

But One Day does something a little darker and more complex than the average romantic drama, and it's for this reason, perhaps, that it has resonated with so many. When we meet them, the protagonists are fresh from university, full of energy and with hope for the future. But the journey they will take through the years is about more than working out whether they should be together or apart. As so many of us find in the real world, it's a journey of scuppered idealism, misplaced plans, and seemingly meaningless tragedies. Emma and Dexter both find their share of happiness, but they must also deal with the disappointments and disillusionment that come with growing older.

Both are preoccupied, when we first meet them, with the question of how they will fill the days ahead. The studious Emma is convinced that the purpose of her life is to make the world a better place, while Dexter is more interested in having "a lot of fun and no more sadness than absolutely necessary". Though his pursuit of pleasure is eventually taken to extremes, there are few of us who won't identify with this goal at some level. It seems appealing to believe that we owe nothing to our fellow human beings or to God, and it is easy for us, like Dexter, to suppress the knowledge that we will be left empty in the end.

The flaws in Emma's philosophy are less obvious because it is built on principles which are essentially good. The story is not overly optimistic, however, about the survival of such principles in the long term. Emma is forced to make concessions, initially by an apathetic world, but eventually by her inability to live up to her own moral ideals. One Day recognises the uncomfortable reality that, though living to change the world for others is far more positive and satisfying than just living for ourselves, trying to do it entirely through our own effort is problematic.

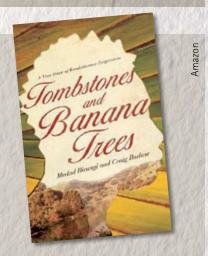


# Books

# **AMERICAN GRACE**

by Robert Putnam (Simon and Schuster, 2010)

How has American religion responded to the cultural revolution of the 1960s and the decline in religious observance among young people since the 1990s? Authors Putnam and Campbell peer beyond the polarising headlines to discover a rich tapestry of religiously observant, and non-religious, communities living and thriving side by side; going to the same schools, being civically involved, even intermarrying. Their writing is based on robust sociological research done in recent years, but they pepper the overarching story with colourful vignettes of various religious groups and their dayto-day activities. For the UK student of American religion, this is a must-read.



# TOMBSTONES AND BANANA TREES

by Medad Birungi & Craig Borlase (David C Cook)

A moving account of how a man's life – ripped apart by abandonment and rejection – was made whole by discovering the power of forgiveness. Medad Birungi was left by the side of the road when only a child, and grew up under the shadow of this neglect and the abuse that continued from his wider family and neighbours. But this is only the beginning of the story; a story which stretches to the present and tells of the wonder of forgiveness and healing it can bring. This is a book that reminds us of the power of forgiveness even as we are shocked by the way human cruelty can be exhibited.

DW



# RISE

RT

by Jason and Rachel Gardener (IVP)

An engaging and street-wise book on how to rise to the challenge of leading a truly credible Christian life. Written by Jason Gardener, head of think tank Fuse and former lecturer at the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity, and Rachel Gardener, director of the Romance Academy, who appeared on the BBC TV series No Sex Please, We're Teenagers, the book is written for both individuals and groups. The sections are accessible and easy to relate to normal life, with relevant everyday examples to identify with. A great opportunity to discover or remind yourself of the basics of faith in a refreshing format.

# THE LIBERATING TRUTH

by Danielle Strickland (elevation)

In this short, sharp but surprisingly extensive book, Salvation Army major Danielle Strickland attempts to smash the idea that women must be subservient in the Church and provokes women to use their God-given talents for the kingdom. Strickland does not skirt around the issues but in a daring, passionate and well-crafted way backs up her argument with anecdotes, stories of the treatment of women around the world, historical examples of women God has used over the years, and most importantly - biblical exegesis.

CM

# CDs

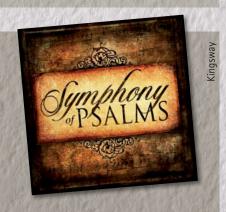


# **BANQUET**

by Graham Kendrick (Kingsway)

This album reminds you why Kendrick's songs have been so popular. From *Building a House* about the joy of Christians worshipping together, to the title track and slightly folk-sounding *Banquet* about redemption and the cross, the mixture of lyrics and music make it both a good easy listening and praise album. *Love Each Other*, a reflective song about the church following Christ's example in love, is especially pertinent, together with the rousing call in *Holy Ground* to strive to stay holy.

RT



# SYMPHONY OF PSALMS

by Mark Niedzwiedz (Kingsway)

This set of sung psalms gives an amazing mix of songs in other languages and more traditional formats. The album is relaxing and reflective and helps transport you to a meditative place to reflect on Christ, away from the busyness of life. A perfect accompaniment to taking a break, if our feature on pages 24 and 25 on burnout resonates. A calming listen and great to have the Bible's key verses for life sung.

RT

# Giving sanctuary

Honoured for his services to journalism at the British Press Awards recently, we spoke to The Venerable David Meara, rector of St Bride's – affectionately known as the 'Cathedral of Fleet Street', on his life as a writer and his ministry in supporting people working in the highly pressured news world.



In our lives all we need ask of God is that He will help us to walk and not faint.

idea: You have said that journalists value somewhere to belong and be understood – do you see your ministry as giving that sanctuary?

St Bride's is a sanctuary only in the sense that it is a place of prayer and remembrance where journalists can come to commemorate their colleagues, and renew their commitment to the highest ideals of the craft. But it is not a place in which to hide away from the world. Journalists need encouragement and affirmation, as we all do, but also sometimes to be challenged when mistakes are made. In that way St Bride's tries to be a 'critical friend' to the industry.

### What is your favourite book?

Apart from the Bible, it's *Selected Poems by R.S. Thomas*, an Anglo-Welsh poet and Anglican priest who ministered in remote parts of mid-Wales, ending up on the Lleyn peninsula in north Wales. He writes about the Welsh landscape and the people of Wales, but also about his struggles to approach God and to exercise his ministry. These are poems of beauty and insight to which I return again and again.

# Incidents like the *News of the World* phone tapping revelations have given journalists a bad press. Do you think this is fair?

The phone tapping scandal is a stain on the industry's character. But I believe lessons have been learnt since the 1980s when the practice was fairly common across the industry. We need good investigative journalism more than ever – particularly in the face of High Court judgements that seem to be bringing in a privacy law by stealth. But the media industry must police itself more robustly and stamp on practices that are not only illegal but immoral.

# You write widely yourself with articles in *The Sun* and *The Times* on architecture and faith. Does this enable you to identify with a journalist's world?

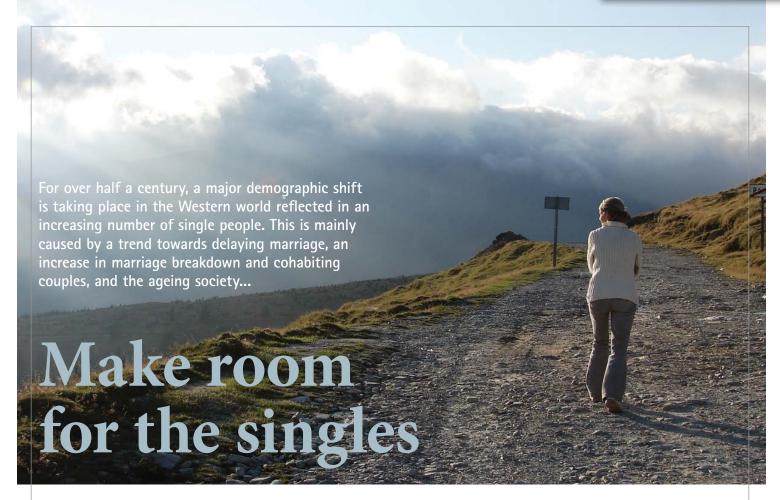
Because of my role at St Bride's I am often asked for comments and write occasional articles too. I have no journalistic training, but my involvement with the industry has enabled me to understand the pressures journalists work under, and the great skills involved in producing a lively, well-designed and readable newspaper day after day. And the tabloids are just as impressive pieces of craftsmanship as are the broadsheets.

## What is your favourite Bible verse?

Isaiah 40: 31: "They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." It's wonderful poetry, but it contains an important truth. It looks as if the writer has got the order the wrong way round – mount up, run, walk, a descending scale which feels like an anti-climax. But the writer is saying that although it is splendid to have spiritual 'highs' in our religious lives, the Christian faith is earthed in the daily round and is daring and divine enough to find its climax in the commonplace. So in our lives all we need ask of God is that He will help us to 'walk and not faint'.

# What piece of work are you most proud of?

In my ministry at St Bride's I am most proud of the ongoing work of building links with and ministering to the journalistic and media world. Last November we held a moving and high profile service here honouring those journalists and cameramen who have lost their lives during the first decade of the 21st century. All the major newspaper groups and broadcasters were represented, and the event was attended by HRH The Duchess of Cornwall who met some of the families of those who had died. It was greatly appreciated by the industry, and is a sign that St Bride's retains its place as the spiritual home of journalists and remains the heart of the now dispersed Fleet Street village.



One in three Christians is single. There are more than twice as many single women as men in the evangelical church. Yet, the Church has been relatively silent on the subject. Teaching, training and ethical discussions focus mainly on family and (re-) marriage. In the absence of a vision for the single lifestyle, we have developed a community ethic in which marriage is portrayed as 'the norm' and the only context for human fulfilment. The calamity of such emphasis is that we don't address life in biblical terms and poorly equip ourselves for life and for mission.

The New Testament has a far richer balance. Both Jesus and Paul lived single lives and affirm marriage and singleness as viable lifestyles within God's purposes. Marriage was a self-evident institution in first century Greek society and in Hebrew society little place was given to singleness with exception of the prophetic community. Having affirmed marriage, Jesus' radical teaching on singleness in Matthew 19 aims to enlarge the view. It is sandwiched between a double call to "accept", a word that means 'to make room for', 'to understand with a view to a changed life' ('choreo').

Paul also affirms marriage and singleness. His vision is for a community undivided in its devotion to the Lord and unhindered by social settings in its mission (1 Corinthians 7). Throughout the chapter, the theme of 'calling' is central. Our social setting is given by God to live out our call. Our status may change – single, married, divorced, bereaved, engaged. But whatever our social status, it is meant to be the context for our flourishing.

Paul and Jesus pose a positive challenge. The primary focus on the kingdom, and secondary nature of all else, places singleness prominently in the light of 'a freedom to' rather than 'an absence of'. They themselves are obvious role models, fulfilling the purposes of the kingdom of heaven and enjoying a close relationship with God and people. Similarly, the older widows who serve and pray are commended (1Timothy 5).

### Two are better than one

Two are better than one. This text in Ecclesiastes 4 reflects on the strength of relationships. No longer is "a man without a brother". To 'belong' is a biblical answer to a basic human need (Genesis 2:18). Our inherent incompleteness causes us to seek community in the form of marriage, family, tribe, friendship, fellowship and society. The Bible reflects on a wide range of relationships that enrich us and provide a vanguard for life.

In his book *Urban Tribes*, Ethan Watters describes the growing culture of young urban singles who weave relational webs as a kind of extended family, networks with a strong social cohesion. Friendship is a rich gift indeed (John 15). And the Church is potentially even richer as we cross generations. Jesus and Paul widen the 'family' concept, a new context of belonging, inclusion and mutual support (John 19, Romans 8). They express God's heart. After all, He places the lonely in families (Psalm 68:6).

Jesus and Paul understand singleness within the vocation of costly discipleship, and so, they also reflect on an element of struggle. Discipleship places clear moral requirements on us all, whether married or single. For some, married life is advised to establish a framework for holy living. Others have chosen the single lifestyle, many are single because that's what life has brought (so far). For some, marriage is not a viable option, others are bereaved or divorced. Not all will be made well on this side of life. Paul's endorsement of the single life is partly based on the view that "the time is short". The grief and unfulfilled desire are part of our groaning as we wait for the fullness of life. Marriage, singleness, grief, happiness, possessions – the whole of life is placed in the wider context of eternity.

Where the biblical witness shows a balanced view on singleness and marriage, the Church throughout much of its history reflects little balance. Yet, we can delve into a treasure of exemplary singles. Francis of Assisi, Thomas Aquinas, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Corrie ten Boom, Mother Theresa, John Stott, scores of nuns, monks and missionaries. Have we been curious enough to learn from their wisdom on singleness I wonder? Jesus' double punch line calling us to make room for the single lifestyle challenges us to recover a vision for singleness as a valid and authentic lifestyle. Such vision will contribute to a healthier in-house climate and will lay the foundation for maturity in our teaching, pastoral care, community life and mission.

Both marriage and singleness play a role in becoming the community God intended. Making room for the singles is vital. As the Corinthian church was repeatedly called to be re-socialised by the gospel, so also are we called to be shaped by a biblical perspective that will enhance the personal and communal wellbeing as we more faithfully reflect the shalom of God's kingdom. The question 'How then do we live?' will be shaped by us all, married and single, as we aim to glorify Him. So make room for the dialogue to continue.

Marijke Hoek is the Alliance's Forum for Change Co-ordinator

# Open our eyes to see

General Director Steve Clifford says that in the busyness of life, let's look for where God is working and focus our efforts there...

A few years ago my wife Ann and I planned a long weekend away. Leaving responsibilities behind, the destination was Venice. Neither of us had been there before, and, catching a boat bus from the airport to the centre, our first impressions of the city were breathtaking. It was hard to believe it was real; I found myself touching the buildings to make sure it wasn't a Hollywood set. The weather was great, the sights beautiful, but the most lasting memory was on the final day. On Sunday morning we got up and decided on a short walk before breakfast. Making our way along deserted waterways on the edge of the city we came across a tucked away but impressive church building. We had seen so many by this stage and it wasn't in our guide book. We decided to go in and have a wander around. The inside of the building was covered in art work that really caught our attention. The paintings were better than anything we'd seen and suddenly we realised the place was filled with paintings by one of Italy's most famous renaissance artists, Tintoretto. What on earth were they doing here? Why were they not protected? Why wasn't there a big sign outside? We couldn't understand why there wasn't big fanfare to announce this church; but there was a story to explain it. According to the lady who kindly allowed us in, rumour had it that the artist had committed some crime and as punishment was required to produce a certain number of paintings - one way to get a freebee. Madonna dell'Orto is a church and a parish that most Venice tourists never see. This was Tintoretto's parish church. He is buried with his family in the chapel to the right of the high altar - and it is rich in his works.

The overwhelming emotion for Ann and I that Sunday morning was one of amazement to have found treasure in such an unexpected place. My experience as a Christian leader over the years is that there are spiritual treasures to be found. God is at work in ways and among people, in circumstances and situations, that I would never have predicted and indeed, had I been God, probably would not have sanctioned. It seems to me that God refuses to be put in a box. Whether it is a box of 'my network or denomination', a box of 'my neat theological framework' or a box of 'this is how things should be done'. God is the one who will always surprise us.

The Apostle Paul prays for the Ephesian Christians that "the eyes of your heart may be enlightened (opened) in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints". If it is true for those first century Christians, it is certainly



We need God to open our eyes, to see clearly where He is at work and how we can put our time, effort and finances behind His purposes.

true for us today. We need God to open our eyes, to see clearly where He is at work and how we can put our time, effort and finances behind His purposes and activities in the world. It is an amazing thought that Jesus could say of his own ministry, he only did what he saw his Father doing. Surely that needs to be true of us? As a young new convert, I was given this advice by a wise Christian leader – "find out what God's doing and get involved in it". Those words have often echoed in my thinking as I've tried to live my life with that as a test.

So how about asking the question as we look at our workplace, neighbourhood, place of education and of course our church - where is God at work and how can I get involved? We might find we are surprised discovering treasure in an unexpected place. Who would've expected even 10 years ago that thousands of Christians late on a Friday and Saturday night would be on the streets of our cities as pastors for those who need to get home safely? Who would have imagined hundreds of debt counselling centres, food banks, parenting courses....? Who would have dreamt of Alpha courses in prison or Messy Church for families or Romance Academies for teenagers? God at work in surprising places, with surprising people, with some amazing results. Of course it is not just the big scale impressive stuff that God's at work in. It could be that friendship with a neighbour, that work project that could have huge impact on the team, or perhaps it is in our own family. God's concerned about what we might regard as the small and insignificant. His economy doesn't seem to work like ours, like the shepherd leaving the 99 sheep for the sake of rescuing the one.

So as we ask God to open our eyes to see, let's be encouraged that God's at work in our world and we are included in on all His activities.



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