

# idea

THE MAGAZINE OF THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE  
WINTER 2024

EAUK.ORG

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark curly hair, wearing a black sequined top, blowing a stream of white and silver confetti towards the camera. Her eyes are closed and she has a joyful expression. The background is a solid teal color.

A time to  
celebrate

 Kingdom Bank



# Give your money a mission.

Discover savings, mortgages and insurance  
purpose-built for mission and ministry at  
[www.kingdom.bank/idea](http://www.kingdom.bank/idea)  
or call 0800 6 44 55 66



Protected

Kingdom Bank Limited is registered in England and Wales No. 4346834. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Registered Office: Media House, Pudge Road, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 2RS. Our Financial Services Register number is 400972. The financial services register can be viewed at <https://register.fca.org.uk>

f evangelicalalliance

t EAUknews

ig evangelicalalliance

**Membership queries and updates**  
020 7520 3830  
membership@eauk.org

**Advertising**  
020 7520 3830  
sales@eauk.org

**Design**  
Sarah Fisher sarahfisher.co.uk

**Evangelical Alliance leadership team**  
Gavin Calver, CEO  
Peter Lynas, UK director  
Fred Drummond, director of Scotland and prayer  
Jo Frost, director of communications and engagement  
Rev Dr Israel Olofinjana, director of One People Commission  
John Gibson, director of finance and operations  
Danny Webster, director of advocacy  
Hil Sewell, director of people & culture

**Evangelical Alliance offices**  
**Head office**  
176 Copenhagen Street  
London N1 0ST  
tel 020 7520 3830  
info@eauk.org

**Northern England**  
1a The Mailbox  
1 Exchange Street, Stockport  
Gt Manchester SK3 0GA

**Northern Ireland**  
First Floor, Ravenhill House  
105 Ravenhill Road  
Belfast BT6 8DR  
tel 028 9073 9079  
nireland@eauk.org

**Wales**  
20 High Street, Cardiff CF10 1PT  
tel 029 2022 9822  
wales@eauk.org

**Scotland**  
c/o MAF Scotland  
29 Canal Street  
Glasgow G4 0AD  
tel 0141 353 0150  
scotland@eauk.org

The Evangelical Alliance. A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 123448. Registered Charity No. England and Wales: 212325, Scotland: SC040576. Registered Office: 176 Copenhagen Street, London, N1 0ST

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

*idea* accepts advertisements and inserts to offset printing costs. Advertising in *idea* does not imply editorial endorsement. The Evangelical Alliance reserves the right to accept or refuse advertisements at its discretion. Articles may be reproduced only with permission from the editor.

# Welcome

**W**ith so much devastation, hardship and conflict all around us, it can often feel like there is very little reason to celebrate. But Nehemiah 8:10 reminds us that the joy of the Lord is our strength, and so in this edition entitled, 'A time to celebrate', I pray that we can inspire you to shift your focus to the One who sees all things, knows all things and cares about all things and to celebrate Him in all His matchless glory. I once read that you cannot experience gratitude and anxiety at the same time. It is impossible to have a heart of thanksgiving and to be consumed by the emotions of fear and worry at the same time, so I encourage you and myself today to realign our posture to have an attitude of gratitude. This does not mean that we do not acknowledge the many challenges of this world and the things that are happening around us that are negatively impacting our lives. But it means that in the midst



04

of darkness we must look to the Light and we are rooted in joy and hope for a mighty move of our God, who is just, righteous and compassionate towards His children. Every new dawn is a blessing, every breath is a privilege and so let us count it all joy and remind ourselves daily to celebrate Him, each other and the promise of Him coming again and taking us to a place free from pain, devastation and grief. Glory to your name Jesus.



Nicola Morrison  
Editor

## Highlights

**04 MAF**  
As Christian organisation Mission Aviation Fellowship celebrates founder Jack Hemmings' 102nd birthday, we learn how his vision and humanitarian efforts are transforming lives on a global scale and bringing the gospel to the doorstep of some of the world's most remote places.

**10 Youth With A Mission**  
Youth leader Andy Kennedy explains how the work and legacy of the organisation, 40 years on, continues to powerfully impact young people in Warwickshire and beyond.



10



22

**08 Spotlight!**  
We shine a light on the incredible work of our membership team and celebrate our growing membership.

**22 Heart Behind The Art**  
Inspiration from a talented music producer, worship leader and musician. Hear the compelling testimony of Steve Thompson as he shares how he chose faith over fortune.

**28 Annual Report**  
Gavin Calver, CEO, brings us a snapshot of the Evangelical Alliance's annual report and shares the many highlights of this last financial year.

# LOOKING UPWARDS AND OUTWARDS IN *alive*



**Rev Deirdre Brower Latz** gives a refreshing look at the many demonstrations of celebration in the Bible, and offers some practical insight into how we too can be people of celebration in our everyday lives.

Wonder what comes to mind when you hear ‘A time to celebrate’? A single moment, maybe a birth, or a memorial service, a jubilant football parade, a special birthday, the delight of retirement, or a new job? Perhaps a moment soaked in love and laughter, friends and family, joy and maybe even tears comes to mind. Times to celebrate punctuate our lives, and as disciples, we serve a Saviour whose very life makes us stop in our tracks and celebrate with full hearts! His birth, life, death and resurrection shape us as people with many reasons to celebrate.

Years ago, I had a 360 review, where colleagues had a chance to reflect on my leadership. Amongst the good and the ‘to improve’ comments emerged a thread: that I didn’t pause very often to celebrate. I realised that was absolutely true. In my full life, with lots of ideas, vision and passion, I didn’t always stop, look up, and celebrate the achievements, or pause to reflect on them. I wasn’t very good at the ‘wonder, awe and collective joy’ part of my life – either at work, church, or at home. But of course, I know that this is not God’s desire for me or us. We’re wired to stop, pause, and take time to celebrate in multiple ways – in song, dance, prayer, feasting, worship, breaking bread, at moments of great importance and in small moments of life.

The Bible is saturated with this. The people of God ‘as they go’ make time to celebrate who God is, and to share in one another’s joy. Remember Noah? He builds an altar to celebrate survival (Genesis 8:20). Or, do you recall when the people of Israel were heard in their suffering and oppression in

Egypt and set free? After all the high drama of plagues and reparations, there’s the miracle and fear of the Red Sea in Exodus 14. After the people make their way courageously between heaped walls of water, and get to dry land, they immediately stop, singing, dancing and rejoicing in overwhelming jubilation and relief. Telling the story of God’s goodness in wild celebrations (Exodus 15:19–21). Imagine!

My favourite moment of celebration in the Bible is much later though. It’s the moment when (in Luke 2:25–38), the old, faithful, prophet, and wrinkled widow Anna, and the gnarled, bearded, devout Simeon encounter the newborn Jesus – their joy in Him is directed upwards, and they celebrate. It’s not a light-and-fluffy moment, it’s laden with importance. In noticing Him, in hearing God’s voice, in cradling the baby, their celebration is in the moment and a part of their hope, pointing ahead to who Jesus will be.

When I think about these times – and more besides – I realise that a time to celebrate has some common features.

We need to take time to recognise that this moment is in fact a time to celebrate. For some people, their time isn’t easily their own, and so together we must find ways to weave celebration into our lives – celebrating the resurrection weekly. We must advocate to be a people with a rhythm of stopping, worshipping, adoring, singing, praying alongside each other and looking upwards.

Celebration is also woven into normal life, including the suffering, painful, and hard parts. The celebration of little moments along the way – the end of cancer treatment, the life well-lived, the successful pregnancy and new birth,

the antics of a puppy, the school party and nativity, getting debts managed through Christians Against Poverty, the baptisms of new believers. A time to celebrate is about real life being interrupted, noticing the good, and pausing in gratitude.

Celebration is best shared. We can do a personal happy dance when something goes right, but the best celebrations throw open the doors and whole-heartedly invite others to share in the gift of joy. We have the example of Jesus, showing up for the dinners, and describing a lot of our faith through wedding feasts and tea parties, when wrongs are righted, and lives are transformed, Jesus wants to sit around and hear all about it (think Zacchaeus)!

As a response to something, someone, or God’s acting for us, celebration helps us realise all over again that we’re created to be a people who live in whole-life resurrection joy, full of hope for a celebration where there will be no more sickness, dying, tears or hunger.

*Rev Deirdre Brower Latz is principal of Nazarene Theological College, a validated college of the University of Manchester, and senior lecturer in pastoral and social theology. Born in Canada and the daughter of passionate Christian parents she moved between the UK and Canada several times before finally settling in the UK. She is interested in issues of justice and transformation, urban realities and practices – all joined with an intense love of learning and theology.*

# A wing and a prayer



Jack flies Miles Gemini, March 2022 © Darren Harbar

**Jo Lamb**, of Mission Aviation Fellowship UK, celebrates co-founder Jack Hemmings' 102nd birthday, and reflects on his lifelong passion for aviation, which led to him creating opportunities for Christian aid to reach some of the most isolated places on earth.



Stuart King and Jack Hemmings in 2019

“I was 19 years old when I volunteered for aircrew,” smiles Jack, as he speaks to a reporter about how he first realised his love for aviation. “I thought, ‘If I am going to fight in a war, I may as well do it sitting down!’” he remarked.

Jack has so much to celebrate. As he spends a memorable day as special guest at Eastbourne Airshow to mark his 102nd birthday, it is evident he’s lost none of the youthful humour, tenacious

spirit and unwavering passion that led him into aviation over 80 years ago.

Surrounded by air crew and journalists who stopped by to shake his hand and hear him recite fond memories, Jack recalls adventurous tales of wartime RAF and pioneering MAF – the Christian charity which has grown to become the world’s largest humanitarian air service.

Mission Aviation Fellowship began as a question in the hearts of a handful



*Jack at the controls*

of Christian airmen and women in the aftermath of the Second World War: *Could aircraft used so skilfully for war be operated as vessels for peace and love?*

Jack Hemmings and RAF engineer Stuart King were among them. They had the bravery to go and find out.

Setting off in January 1948, in a wooden Miles Gemini aircraft with little more than a compass and the river Nile as their guide, Jack and Stuart became the first British pilots to survey the humanitarian needs of remote communities dotted across central Africa.

“Although we were professionals in aviation, we were amateurs in mission,” recalled Stuart, who passed away aged 98 in 2020, but served MAF from its genesis. “We just felt the call to go. We didn’t think ahead to what it might become!”

Never has the phrase ‘on a wing and a prayer’ seemed more apt.

MAF’s first 10-month survey revealed the acute dangers of isolation – dangers which still exist today. Many villages where Jack and Stuart landed were completely cut off from medicine, education, and the gospel – and most had never seen an aircraft.

Tragically, even in 2023, 675 million people still live without electricity according to the UN. And Operation World believes roughly two billion people have not yet heard the gospel.

Isolation continues to be an increasing problem, but MAF’s mission

continues to grow, despite the inevitable setbacks and ongoing challenges that face those who pioneer for the sake of Christ – as Jack and Stuart did 75 years ago.

Their brave assignment to land at more than 100 remote outposts in 1948 ended abruptly when their aircraft was caught in a downdraught while climbing the Burundi foothills.

“Miraculously we both stepped out of the wreckage unscathed,” Jack grins to a captive audience of young aviators at Eastbourne. “Stuart had a few bruises, and myself a cut on my little finger!”

Completing the final leg of their survey in an old four-wheel drive, the pair returned to London more convinced than ever about the importance of aircraft to bring help, hope and healing to remote communities.

After prayerfully rallying funds for a replacement aeroplane, Jack and Stuart established MAF’s first base in Sudan in 1950. From Sudan, MAF’s services expanded across central Africa, while prayer and financial support grew back in Britain, in the USA, Australia and across Europe.

By the early 1960s, MAF had African bases in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Chad. On one occasion, Stuart flew evangelist Billy Graham to Tanzania and the fleet began to include Cessna aircraft.

During the 1990s, we flew Bob Geldoff and the BBC 19 times to broadcast devastating scenes which would go on to spark Live Aid and a global humanitarian awakening.

Today, MAF operates a fleet of 116 aircraft in more than 25 low-income countries and employs more than

1,300 people – almost 80% of them from local communities. Flying to more destinations than any other airline, a MAF aircraft takes off or lands every six minutes.

Jack, who continued to fly until his 101st birthday and performed aerobatics for his centenary, has remained passionate about using aircraft for the good of humanity throughout his adventurous life.

“I’ve never got into an aircraft and regretted it,” he beams. “Flying gives a feeling of detachment from all the problems of the world – and there are many problems.”

This determined, passionate and faithful pilot never fails to inspire. He will leave a legacy that saves hundreds of lives every day; a vision that was born from the Great Commission in Matthew 28, and continues to fuel the MAF fleet across the world.

“We could have imagined half a dozen aircraft in Africa,” Jack concludes, “but today MAF has expanded beyond anyone’s expectations. Every flight does some good – it’s like the international Good Samaritan of the air. Pioneering MAF wasn’t a question of hope. We just went out and did it. Faith in itself is a doubtful merit, but it’s what you have faith in that truly matters.”

*Jo Lamb joined MAF’s communications team in 2018. Spurred on by MAF’s brave pioneers, Jo continues to inspire new audiences with MAF’s lifesaving work.*



*1948 MAF survey of eastern and central Africa*

# CHANGING THE WORLD, ONE FLIGHT AT A TIME

Since the days of Jack and Stuart's initial flight in 1945, we have been flying light aircraft over jungles, mountains, swamps and deserts to help people overcome the challenges of isolation

We enable aid, development and mission organisations to bring medical care, emergency relief and long-term development. Our pilots and personnel deliver relief workers, doctors, pastors, school supplies, food, medicines — everything that can only be safely and speedily delivered by air.

It is only through generous gifts, from people like you, that all this is possible each year. Please consider giving today to help us keep flying into the future.



WE FLY OVER  
**115 AIRCRAFT**  
IN MORE THAN  
**25 COUNTRIES**



WE SERVE  
AROUND **1,400**  
**ORGANISATIONS**  
WORLDWIDE



EVERY **6**  
**MINUTES** AN  
MAF PLANE TAKES  
OFF OR LANDS



Donate now by scanning the QR code or visit  
[www.maf-uk.org/idea1](http://www.maf-uk.org/idea1)



SCAN ME



# LORD, WE CELEBRATE YOU



**John Gibson**, finance director at the Evangelical Alliance and church leader, shares a prayer of thanksgiving and jubilation as we are reminded to delight in Him as He delights in us.

**“For the Lord your God is living among you.  
He is a mighty Saviour.  
He will take delight in you with gladness.  
With His love, He will calm all your fears.  
He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.”**

*Zephaniah 3:17*

**R**ejoicing God, we come before you today confident in the completeness of the work of the cross. Thank you that through the blood of Jesus we are welcomed into the holy fiesta before your throne, amazed that we get the privilege of bringing our offering of praise to the only One who is truly praise-worthy.

We thank you that you are a Father revelling in the work of your Son. How great is that celebration – always and forever.

Glorious God, it is beyond our comprehension that you should delight in us, be thrilled by us, sing joyful songs over us! We hear the sound of your rejoicing, and our faith rises. What joy to know that our heavenly Father is an exuberant God, who rejoices over us.

Thank you Holy Spirit that not only do we get to hear this glorious sound but you invite us into the dance, guiding us through the various rhythms of life.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that your joy over us is not based on our effort or earning. Your song is not a reward for the diligence of our work but a love song in the truest sense – an overflow of the deepest affections of your heart.

We pray that today, people around us would hear the sound of your song over our lives and be drawn to the singer. That they may hear the melody that you are singing over them and find their hearts harmonising with yours. That they would discover that far from being distant, you are closer than the breath on their lips or the most secret song in their hearts.

Never-changing One, who celebrated creation and rejoiced at resurrection, thank you that your joy is our strength. Grant us the grace that we may never forget that you are the jubilant God who rejoices over us with joyful songs.

*Amen.*



We have much inspiration for celebration as **Lizzie Thomson** updates us on all things membership at the Evangelical Alliance and we learn about the team's amazing work and all of our new members.



**H**i, I'm Lizzie, membership team lead here at the Evangelical Alliance.

The membership team exists to look after our church, organisation and individual members. From the moment you become a member of the Evangelical Alliance, we want you to have the best possible experience with us. We are committed to making sure you feel valued, supported and equipped as you seek to love and share Jesus in your everyday lives.

I can't believe that it's been two whole years since I joined the membership team. It really has been a joy to work with people who serve Jesus so faithfully in their everyday work.

We are so grateful to all our members for their prayerful support over the years.

**Our team consists of:**



**John**, our CRM co-ordinator & memberships insight lead, oversees the new Dynamics CRM system where we store all our members' data and how our staff interact with it.

I am the membership team lead, I oversee the team and work on campaigns to engage and inspire new and current members.



**Hannah**, our membership co-ordinator, ensures that everything runs smoothly behind the scenes, overseeing the vast array of membership processes the team carries out.



**Aimee**, our giving and membership administrator, divides her time between the worlds of membership and fundraising, providing the best possible care to our members.



**Tim**, our head of digital and membership, looks after our website and leads on digital initiatives that ensure you are able to make the most of your membership.

**Stephanie, Lisa, Cara and Klara**, our membership administrators, onboard all our new members and act as the first point of contact for many who phone or email us each day.



## A momentous year!

This year we have been blessed to celebrate many exciting developments in the world of membership.

We are so grateful to have welcomed more than 3,500 new members since January 2023, our largest increase in this time period since the 1990s. This has meant the membership team has been extra busy making up lots of welcome packs – a very good ‘problem’ to have! We welcomed many of these new members at events over the summer, such as Elim Leaders’ Conference and the Keswick Convention, and speaking engagements at churches around the UK.

We always love meeting members and celebrating in our shared mission opportunities, learning from the challenges you and your churches are facing, and finding out how long you have been with us. In fact, our longest standing member has been with the Evangelical Alliance for an amazing 73 years!

The Evangelical Alliance only exists because of our thousands of churches, hundreds of organisations, and tens of thousands of individual members. Together, we form the oldest and largest evangelical unity movement committed to serving and strengthening the work of the UK church. We are so grateful to all our members for their prayerful support over the years, and I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to you all!

We also celebrated the launch of our new database in 2023. This really has transformed the membership team’s work and the efficiency of our processes so that we can serve you, our members, better. It also means that we can communicate with you in more intelligent ways, like making sure you hear about the areas of our work that you are most invested in.



## Looking ahead to 2024

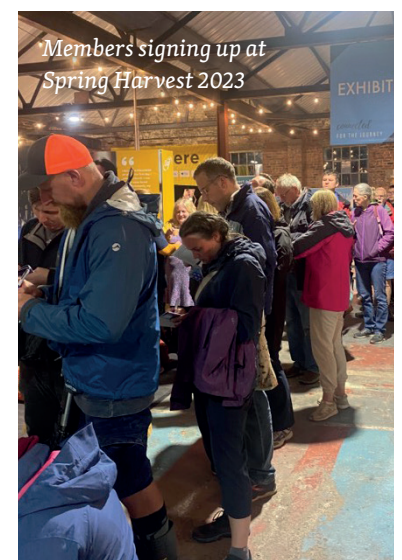
As 2023 comes to a close and we welcome in a new year, the membership team remains committed to serving our members in the everyday.

We’re looking forward to attending more conferences and events, where we hope to meet lots of our members and share how the Evangelical Alliance is supporting and strengthening the work of the UK church. Going hand-in-hand with this, our speakers will continue to travel across the UK visiting our members, celebrating good news stories and offering our response on what is happening culturally and politically. Remember that, as a member, you can invite an Evangelical Alliance speaker to your church or organisation by visiting [eauk.org/speakers](http://eauk.org/speakers)

We at the Evangelical Alliance have set ourselves a vision to increase our individual membership from 22,000 to 50,000 over the next 10 years, something I’m sure you will hear more about over the months and years ahead. It’s clear that the Evangelical Alliance is only as strong as our voice, and our voice comes from all of you, our members, who choose to stand with us. With every individual, church and organisation member who joins us, the louder our collective voice and the greater our impact can be, as we speak into the

corridors of power, campaigning on religious liberty issues and advising on public policy. This is why, over the coming months and years, the membership team will spend more time thinking of new ways to welcome even more people into the Evangelical Alliance.

We’re excited about all that God has done over the past year and look forward to celebrating all that He will do in 2024. As always, I’d like to thank you for your membership and, as you stand with us over the next year, please do pray for the church in the UK and the role the Evangelical Alliance plays in equipping Christians for the work we’re called to do. Together, we are making Jesus known.





# CELEBRATING THE NEXT GENERATION

As Youth With A Mission gets ready to celebrate 40 years of mission, serving young people and connecting them with the gospel, youth and family worker **Andy Kennedy** highlights the amazing transformation the organisation is making in the lives of young people in Warwickshire and beyond.

I live at YWAM The King's Lodge, which is a missions sending and training centre located in Nuneaton. We are an all-age, full-time missional community who live together, often representing around 15 nations. We are deeply inspired by a vision that Loren Cunningham, YWAM's late founder, had as a 20-year-old in 1956. He envisaged waves of young people bringing the good news to every nation until every continent on earth was covered. In the 60 years of its history, YWAM has equipped and sent out over four million people.

We offer a six-month residential course called the DTS (Discipleship Training School), open to those 18 years and older. Three months of live-learn faith formation is followed by two to three months of fieldwork nationally or internationally. It's all about growing in knowing God before stepping out to make Him known!

One of the young people who has just finished her DTS is Karyna, 19, from Ukraine. She said, "DTS has been one of the best experiences I have ever encountered. It has been an opportunity to experience quality and depth in



© Youth With A Mission

“I’ve found my identity and my faith has been strengthened. I have stronger foundations in God for the future.”



friendship with people from different nations, learning to live, worship and serve together... I’ve been changed and healed. I’ve found my identity and my faith has been strengthened. I have stronger foundations in God for the future.”

Since 2002, my wife Catherine and I have led or facilitated intergenerational teams to more than 25 nations, including China, Indonesia, Philippines, South Africa, Bosnia, Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Tanzania, Senegal and Greece. We call these teams ‘Wildfire Teams’, and they are open to all 10–18-year-olds as well as their families. We passionately believe in mission as the missing ingredient in so much discipline of young people, indeed any age group.

The local schools in Warwickshire are very open. Two primary schools have allowed us to run lunchtime or after-school Christian clubs for 15 years. Local teacher Debbie wrote in the SiAMS (church school) inspection report in June 2023: “The King’s Lodge is instrumental in sharing and promoting God’s love amongst our school community and gives our children a sound understanding of the worldwide nature of the Christian faith.”

From this school’s ministry, a new youth group was formed. Parents approached us in the playground asking for something to help their youngsters leaving primary school, so our Wednesday Youth Club started. It

is led mainly by the young people with input and encouragement from the older generation. We call it family-based youth ministry because parents are welcome to get involved as well!

One solo mum Suzanne said to me: “This is the only place my two kids, [aged] 12 and 15 feel safe and able to be themselves.”

In the past 18 months we’ve noticed a fresh hunger for God in our young people. In the place of prayer, they heard God’s broken heart for their own generation. After hearing from a guest speaker who shared a vision, one of our young people heard from God at school one day. “I felt a million ideas downloaded in a moment. I saw the field with tents and a stage. I got the words ‘Deluge Project’.” The youth group enthusiastically embraced this and started praying for their non-Christian friends. They raised £8,000, and booked bands like ChipK from Manchester and Deluge became a reality in July 2023.

It was a powerful weekend of local youth groups coming together to encounter God. Conor, a local 16-year-old, told me, “I’ve never known the presence of God like I experienced Him on Friday and Saturday night at Deluge.” Highlights included 80 young people on the local street sharing the good news and raising the joy level.

Please pray for us and that the work we do with young people may long continue.

## Prayer points:

- That God would send us more workers to reach every child and young person in the Midlands.
- Please pray for the YWAM King’s Lodge community celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2024, that we will continue to make Jesus the centre of all of our lives and mission.
- We are currently praying and planning about having one or two teams in France, especially with the Olympics there in the summer of 2024! What a great opportunity to take all ages, to partner with churches across that great nation and practise our French!

*This article is dedicated to founder Loren Cunningham who passed away on 6 October 2023.*

*Andy Kennedy has been a professionally trained youth worker for 42 years. The last 31 have been with YWAM and he’s ministered in 72 nations.*

After 25 years leading Wellspring Church in Watford, **Tim Roberts** has just passed on the leadership baton to focus on a new assignment at the YMCA. During a season of major transition, we asked him to share wisdom from his journey so far...

# LEADERSHIP:

# SEEKING A HIGHER

# PERSPECTIVE

*Tim at Wellspring Groundbreaking*

**M**y abiding reflection on an adventurous life of love, leadership, parenting and mission so far is that God seems to repeatedly lift me to see things from a higher perspective.

Pastoral leadership was never our goal or desire, yet as Helen (my wife) and I look back on the last two decades we are so grateful for the privilege and joy of seeing our church family grow into an energetic, diverse, missional, and worshipful church family. We've fallen in love with this influential market town just outside London, and we've recently seen the young man I started mentoring in the mall's food court at 14 become the senior minister!

One of the most memorable takeaways from an Assemblies of God (AoG) conference in our second year of

ministry was, 'your success will be your successors'. Looking at Jesus' example, we were challenged to live with a 'grandparent mentality' in how we led and disciplined others, raising spiritual parents to see God's work expand beyond our generation.

That insight grew into an awareness that the focus of Christian leadership mustn't become the leader. The sermons were not about the preacher. The church plant was not about the planter, and the kingdom of God was so much bigger than our local congregation.

Repeatedly, we've discerned the Holy Spirit urging us to see beyond who was doing what each Sunday morning, in our tidy church family. There's more to the kingdom than our little empire! In 2003, standing atop the prominent YMCA tower block, praying over the

town, I grew more deeply captivated by a vision of there being one church in Watford. Over the years, it's been my deepest joy to inspire and encourage churches and Christian agencies to make every effort to 'keep the unity of the Spirit' as Paul writes, in a town that has been blessed by Christian harmony in powerful ways. Successive elected mayors have been partners in this mission.

This same call to a higher perspective resulted in us being awarded a piece of land by Watford Borough Council for

It's been far from easy. Pastoral leadership is often painful, confusing, and disappointing.

“Come up higher,  
look again, see  
what I see.”

the building of The Wellspring Church Centre. We could so easily have settled for a refurb on the outskirts, yet God patiently showed us His vision for a place of refreshing in the heart of the town. Tens of thousands have used the building, seven days a week, to make use of the foodbank, training facilities, and spaces for children and families. The centre is often full to bursting.

I’m so grateful to have travelled to 42 countries, in most of which I’ve had the privilege of supporting church planters and development partners with a focus on Africa, Europe and the Middle East. I had no idea that accepting a role on the AoG World Ministries team in 2003 would be so formative. So much has been learned from the people I’ve met, and the friendships formed, nurturing a ‘world view’ beyond the classroom and beyond the walls of The Wellspring.

It’s been far from easy. Pastoral leadership is often painful, confusing, and disappointing. On one hand we’ve seen more than we imagined, and on the other, nothing like all we dreamed. It’s complicated. At this hinge point in ministry, it occurs to me a common refrain from heaven has been, “come up higher, look again, see what I see.”

Like the words of Isaiah who famously declared God’s comfort to the exiled, discouraged and weary people of Israel:

“... those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles.”  
(Isaiah 40:31)

That higher view, seeing above the clouds, reminds me of one of my father’s favourite sayings. He was a US Air Force fighter pilot and would often declare, “The sun always shines in my office!” Even on a cold February morning, he could see the curve of the earth, sun-kissed above the grey.

Only the Author of life could write this story. Two years ago, I started part-time work for One YMCA, the second biggest in the country (the one with the high-point prayer tower overlooking Watford). Working as the head of Christian mission and culture is now my main assignment, and I am joyfully discovering how God wants to use my ministry gifts in an entirely different setting. It means creatively revisiting the Christian foundations laid by Sir George Williams in 1844, and encouraging missional leaders across the 121 countries where YMCA serves 64 million people a year. A great commission, an enormous challenge.

Now as I write, we’re personally being called to see daily life itself from a higher perspective. Medics have given



Tim and Helen Roberts at Wellspring

my wife Helen a terminal diagnosis of a rare untreatable cancer and each day we’re negotiating a difficult path of knowing Jesus’ miraculous power to heal while accepting that this is not guaranteed. There are many things that God chooses not to reveal to us right now, but the gospel is enough.

While a merely temporal view of life and leadership would lead to despair, thank Jesus that His eternal perspective will lead us to Himself, in glory.

*Tim Roberts is the head of Christian mission and culture at One YMCA, an author and speaker, and member of the Evangelical Alliance’s council. He and Helen have three adult children.*

Tim speaking  
at Christians  
Across Watford



**Saramine Mukute**, key relations lead for the Strong Women Strong World initiative, highlights the importance of Christian activism against abuse against girls and celebrates the work that they are doing through World Vision UK to stem the flow of female exploitation all over the world.



# ALL GIRLS

**12** million girls marry before the age of 18 every year. That's 22 girls every minute! At least 120 million girls under the age of 20 (about 1 in 10) have also been forced to engage in sex or perform other sexual acts. At least 200 million women and girls aged 15-49 have undergone Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in 30 countries, where data is available.

This is why World Vision UK is fighting for the rights of girls and women everywhere and why this role is

so important to me.

As a child-focused and Christian organisation, one of World Vision UK's child wellbeing aspirations is that children experience the love of God and their neighbours. Our work is a tangible expression of God's love. World Vision's founder prayed, "Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."

Our Strong Women Strong World initiative combines world class programmes in health, water, education, child protection, economic empowerment, and a Bible-centred approach to building healthy mindsets to help women and girls break the cycle of poverty and reach their full potential.

When practical barriers are eliminated and they're supported early in their lives by their families, community leaders, and faith leaders, women and girls thrive. That's what makes strong women. Strong women like Leah...

Leah is 14 and lives in Kenya. Her Maasai culture views FGM and child marriage as hallmarks of adulthood. "I used to think that FGM is something good because it is considered a major achievement for girls or women in our culture," Leah explains.

But after taking part in a local World Vision UK project, her eyes were opened to the true impact of these horrific practices. She was also heartbroken by the stories of women and girls who were forced into FGM and marriage at a young age.

"Most of them dropped out of school before finishing their primary education. They suffered complicated childbirths that almost killed them. And, due to the lack of education, they are unable to get jobs or other opportunities that can give them money to take care of their children and families."

Now, Leah is a Child Protection Champion. She's advocating for girls' rights and ensuring that girls in her community are spared the suffering and bleak future that FGM brings. At school, she's raising awareness among fellow pupils - both boys and







# MATTER

“Sometimes children feel like they are helpless, yet they also have the power to fight for their rights.”

girls – on the effects of FGM through the Child Rights Club, which sheds light on harmful cultural practices. In the evenings and during school holidays, Leah gathers children in her neighbourhood to empower them to stand up for their rights.

“Sometimes children feel like they are helpless, yet they also have the power to fight for their rights. I always make them know that if they are facing threats like FGM and other types of child abuse, they can report [it]. This has been of help to many children,” she says. Leah urges her peers to embrace education. “When you are educated, you are empowered,” adds Leah.

The problem of abuse against girls is global and widespread. In Nepal, approximately 33% of girls are married before their 18th birthday, and 8% are married before the age of 15. Chadani,

18, was one of them, and entered into a marriage arranged by her parents at the age of 14.

“In our society,” she explains, “girls do not have the freedom to speak. They say that girls are someone else’s property, and they are not allowed to have opinions.”

Chadani herself has never been to school, even before she was married. She hoped at least that after the marriage she could get some more freedom at her husband’s house, like wearing clothes she wanted or going to school. However, her hopes were quite quickly dashed as she came to realise this would not be a reality.

“After marriage my life has changed for worse... I have a three-year-old son and currently I am six months pregnant. I do not want my children to suffer like I did. I will not allow my children to be married before 18.”

Under the Marriage Registration Act the minimum age of marriage in Nepal is 20 years.

World Vision UK is working with Chadani’s community and others to end the practice of child marriage by collaborating with local bodies, religious

leaders and governments to tackle the problem.

Our hearts are broken by the inequalities and injustices faced by so many girls across the world and we are committed to the vision to see more than six million women and girls empowered to live safer, healthier, and more prosperous lives by 2024.

World Vision UK helps vulnerable girls through child sponsorship, but there are other ways to help girls fight for their rights. Why not sign up to World Vision UK’s Strong Women Strong World newsletter and find out more about World Vision UK’s work and how you – with others – can transform girls’ lives – and their communities.

*Saramine Mukute is key relations lead for Strong Women Strong World, an initiative by World Vision UK. She is passionate about advocating for equal rights for girls and women and “making the world a better place for all females”.*

# Hallelujah!

## WE ALL HAVE A PLACE IN JESUS

**Nathan Strathee**, of Dunblane Christian Fellowship, explores why purpose and place are so critical to creating unity amongst our pews and beyond, into our communities.



**R**epresenting a true version of Christ in today's world can be difficult, especially in a world that's constantly changing. One of the most important things that we have found at Dunblane Christian Fellowship is that we meet people where they are at, loving and valuing them unconditionally. If Jesus did it for us, then not only are we obliged to do the same to represent Him well, but we should desire to love everyone, no matter how unlovable or offensive they may seem to us. Church should be messy, people are messy, and as a father of two under threes, babies are messy! They need lots of attention, nurturing and unconditional love, much like potential new Christians, and possibly some older Christians whose names might have just crossed your mind!

With that in mind, we have developed a culture where everyone is welcome and has a role to play, even if we don't know exactly where they fit yet. Obviously godly wisdom must be used to decipher where to place them and who to put alongside them, so everyone grows spiritually, not just individually, but also as a family.

Families have a range of ages, and the church needs that too. Someone will need a parent or grandparent, someone else a son, daughter or grandchild. We all have human needs that can also be met by a loving, functional church family.

**A young mum, reflecting on how much joining the congregation had positively impacted her, shared, "I didn't know I needed God, now I realise I do, and I feel like I am home."**

**Another mum, struggling with mental health, said: "This place has been a lifeline, it's the only place I can leave the house and feel at peace."**

We have watched relationships organically form. In one instance a young person from our church drove 30 minutes to an older member of the congregation's home, because they just want to spend time together. Both had a family need the other could fulfill. Throughout Covid, as a church, we all had to adapt quickly to continue to meet some of those needs. As lockdown lifted, we all had new challenges and restrictions to deal with, which made being a close-knit community difficult. We used lockdown to get before God and seek His heart to discover what was next for our church and nation. He gave us a clear picture for what our service, cafe and family outreach should look like in this new world.

**A teenager, who tried to commit suicide not too long ago, has now started coming to church, volunteering, attending groups and more importantly restarting a relationship with God, and said to me recently: "You have no idea the amount of lives you are impacting, the work you are doing is amazing."**

Change comes at a cost, but if it is of God then it's always worth doing! We made the changes we felt we were to make, and many people left the church because of them. All very good people who love God, they just didn't see where we were now going, and that's ok, we were obedient to God. We started our toddler group and after the second week, had to start a booking system to limit how many were coming. We expanded our café as part of the changes and it became too small again very quickly. In the last six months we have seen a 50% increase in the church. We knew our building was to become a community hub and we now have roughly 1,000 people through the door every week. They don't all come on a Sunday, but church is every day, not just a Sunday.

People are drawn to what God is doing here and all we are doing is loving them.

We've had parents in tears because their teenagers have come back to God.

And we've witnessed older people who haven't been to church in years, hungry for God again. We have seen healings and miracles including eyesight restored and long-term pain leave people.

The verse we keep taking back to God for revival is 2 Chronicles 7:14, "if my people who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

We believe there is a harvest coming, if the church will get on their knees before God and intercede for our nation. If we do everything in love and are led by the Holy Spirit, no matter how uncomfortable we may get. Revival is happening now, not only in Dunblane but in our land - catch the wave of His presence!

*Nathan Stathdee is a member of the leadership team at Dunblane Christian Fellowship, a church family that amongst other things, strives to be a place that helps people discover the true value Jesus has placed on them.*

# Celebrating a membership LEGACY

**Gill and Ken Morgan** have been members of the Evangelical Alliance for 40 years – what a cause for celebration! So, when the opportunity arose to meet them, I couldn't pass it up.



By Nicola Morrison,  
editor at the  
Evangelical Alliance.

**T**o call Gill and Ken Morgan extraordinary doesn't quite seem to do them justice. Now 80 and 78 respectively, they have enjoyed remarkable lives, involved in a wide range of exploits in the name of the gospel and have journeyed with countless young people during their 45 years together. Their warm and open personalities, comedic anecdotes, and elaborate stories coupled with their generous passion for hospitality in their home, with an ever-open-door policy, and whimsical Narnia-inspired walk, made them all the more fascinating and special to meet.

Residing in the leafy suburbs of Surrey, I met Gill and Ken on a sunny autumn morning for breakfast at their home. For a city dweller the gardens could feel intimidatingly impressive, but the couple who greeted me at the door were friendly, inviting, and down to earth. Showing no signs of slowing down and taking things easy was clear from the outset, as they explained that they had already been to the gym and the swimming pool before my arrival. They then went on to tell me how they have always been 'people on the go' in both their professional and spiritual lives – Ken as a chartered

accountant and Gill as a groundbreaking tax inspector, becoming one of the most senior women at the Inland Revenue. "You never retire!" laughed Gill, as the couple went on to tell me about their eventful lives as local leaders and serving on national committees. Their interests extend widely: Ken as a Compassion trustee, (UK board and International board) and Gill as founding director of both CWR and Fusion, as well as school governors and a number of other charities in a variety of roles. They continue to be instrumental nationally and locally and I soon realise not retiring is a sentiment that they deeply take to heart.

When I asked them what they would say was their motto for ministry and indeed for life Gill prefaced her response and warned me that as self-professed opposites, Ken would probably disagree and that I should quote them individually. "Everything we do is looking to Jesus," she said, "Similar to the motto of the Crusaders." (The Crusaders has since been renamed Urban Saints).

For the most part Ken agrees and says that he is inspired and amused by Romans 12:13, "Practice hospitality and support the saints." Hospitality was ever-present in his home, and he has supported Southampton Football club (the Saints) since he was 12!

I am met with fits of laughter from the couple as I ask them to elaborate on the statement of being total opposites, and as they share humorous stories of having completely differing approaches to things, they go on to explain that somehow their contrasting personalities work together and have complimented each other throughout their 45 years of marriage. It is evident as they talk, the undeniable love, adoration and compatibility between the two and it is heartwarming to watch.

Both from Christian families, Gill explains that she joined Girl Crusaders at the age of 12 and at age 16 attended the Wellesley Fellowship, a mixed group of young adults. "It was a breath of fresh

air... it opened up my whole world!" she recalls.

Ken joined Urban Saints, then called Crusaders, at age 20, after a year in India on voluntary services overseas, which deepened and intensified his faith. "I became so passionate on that trip," Ken recounts. "When I came back Mum suggested I apply." Soon after, Ken experienced an unexpected call to leadership following the tragic death of the group's leader. It was through the organisation that the couple would later meet. Soon after marrying, the couple opened up their home and created a sanctuary for young people to "share their life, have fun and learn about Jesus".

*Article continues overleaf ▶▶▶*



## Yes, I'll help you, as together we make Jesus known.

I would like to make a one-off gift of

£30  £100  £250

Other amount

to help the Evangelical Alliance serve and strengthen the UK church.

I understand that this gift is additional to any membership donation

Scan the QR code to give online or visit [eauk.it/give](https://eauk.it/give)



I wish to give by cheque/charity voucher payable to Evangelical Alliance.

I wish to give by Mastercard/Visa/Debit/Charity Card (delete as appropriate)

Card number

Issue date  /  /  Expiry date  /  /

Issue no. (if req.)  Security code

Name as it appears on card

Signature

You can also call us on 020 7520 3830 to make your gift.

“We are totally relational people,” Gill states.

The couple, along with other supporters, launched Virginia Water Crusaders, going door to door in their neighbourhood, knocking and inviting young people to attend a new Bible class.

The response was astounding. “On the first day 137 young people turned up and 13 volunteers came to help, it was extraordinary!” Gill recalls. The weekly group went on for 20 years, growing in size and support. As a result, Gill and Ken have seen hundreds of children, and children’s children come through their home.

But the couple repeatedly affirm that they couldn’t have done it on their own. “We were so blessed to have so much help,” Gill gushed, “... great commitment from a fabulous bunch!”

Gill and Ken talk fondly of the amazing people they have met and the incredible legacy their parents left them of compassion and hospitality.

“We are so grateful to our parents,” says Gill.

“We are blessed,” Ken adds, “My parents were extraordinary people!”

Gill reflects on the many God-ordained moments which allowed friendships to blossom as they galvanised support for their life’s mission. “People have been very generous and supportive over the years,” she says.

Ken reminisces on the beautiful

friendship he experienced with the late, great Joel Edwards, the former director of the Evangelical Alliance. He becomes moved, as he remembers that he had once told Joel that he wanted him to speak at his funeral, “Sadly now that will never be,” Ken laments.

The couple joined the Evangelical Alliance as members due to the compelling ‘pitch’ by Clive Calver at Spring Harvest. They say they were inspired by the vision of the organisation and its work, to make Jesus known to all people from all walks of life.

Ken himself was the treasurer for the Evangelical Alliance for 17 years.

When I asked the couple what they wanted their legacy to be, they pondered and Ken replied, “We want the work we’ve done to continue.”

Gill replies: “That’s right. All we can do in our lifetime is plant the seeds.”

The more they talk, it becomes apparent that everything Gill and Ken do demonstrates their love for others and commitment to serve people, their community and those in need. As they then walked me around their incredible garden, one part inspired by the children’s book, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Ken explains: “Narnia is a significant expression of the gospel - C S Lewis wrote it that way. Rowan Williams wrote in his book *A Journey Into the Heart of Narnia*, ‘it offers the opportunity of coming across the Christian story as if

for the first time’. So it’s not just a bit of frivolity on our part, but an expression of our belief, and as Aslan says, ‘I am in your world, but there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name.’”

I see their eyes light up as we embark on our tour and they recount the many stories of children who have passed through this wondrous place and their experiences of adventure, glee and exhilaration as they discover its many finds, from the surreal wardrobe, to the train station complete with train track and functioning motorised train, to the treehouse and ‘life size’ Aslan, buried in the deep forest at the end of the trail. It is a truly magical place, and every inch of the land they steward, conveys that they are people who care about people. It is evident to me that it is their true heart’s desire to see joy on the faces of everyone who they encounter, and I have no doubt that they do, myself included!

The more they talk, it becomes apparent that everything Gill and Ken do demonstrates their love for others and commitment to serve people, their community and those in need.



# TOGETHER, WE CAN BE THE GENERATION TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Tim Nelson**, CEO of anti-trafficking charity Hope for Justice, reveals the shocking truth about slavery in the UK and highlights how your partnership and prayer can make a difference.

*Hope for Justice outreach worker*

**M**odern slavery is a reality in the UK and in our world today. Men, women and children are sold and traded, stripped of dignity and privacy and hope, forced to work or made to commit crimes, trapped in domestic servitude, or pushed into the sex trade. It is an affront to Christians everywhere.

There are no exact figures, because this is a hidden crime, but it is estimated that there are 50 million people living in modern slavery worldwide. About 122,000 of them are in the UK. Numbers like this are too vast to really comprehend, which is why when I hear them, I don't think in terms of statistics and percentages. Instead, I think of Pawel,\* trafficked to the UK and forced to pick onions to supply major supermarkets, told he would be dumped in a shallow grave if he tried to escape, then forced to watch as a friend was viciously beaten.

I think of Solin,\* a teenage girl in Vietnam whose family were tricked by a trafficker who forced her into exploitative labour in exchange for a kilo of sugar.

I think of Elita,\* who was told she was going to be working at a hotel in the Midlands – but it was a brothel, where they used drugs to keep her compliant.

## Profiting from human misery

Deceived victims are kept in these conditions through violence, fraud or coercion, and often end up living and working in abominable circumstances. There are almost certainly trafficking victims in your community. They work in factories and at car washes, as gardeners, waiters, leaflet deliverers... others are forced to work in construction or in nail bars. Young women are forced into prostitution, moved from house to house and town to town. Domestic slaves have even been discovered in outwardly respectable homes.

It is an evil crime, profiting from human misery and taking people's freedom in humiliating and often barbaric ways. That's why Hope for Justice was founded 15 years ago. We are committed to bringing an end to modern slavery, by preventing exploitation, rescuing victims, restoring lives and reforming society. Our vision and values are founded on principles rooted in the teachings of Jesus. We believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect, and we work with everyone who can help us achieve our vision: a world free from slavery.

## The power of prayer

We could not do any of this without dedicated supporters. Abolition groups around the country meet and pray and fundraise for us; businesses and individual donors feel called to support our vision; church partners help us financially, through prayer and in so many other ways. I have seen throughout my own years in church leadership positions how a motivated and passionate congregation can make a real difference.

Many of those we help have faced such trauma and exploitation that I can't even imagine or begin to communicate to you. Pray for them, that whatever is in their past, their future is greater. Pray for wholeness, for their thinking and their mindset, so they may be renewed into their new lives as free men and women.

We believe that freedom is worth the fight. If you believe that too, we would ask you to join us. Churches and individuals can be part of bringing hope and freedom to people trapped in these desperate situations. Find out how at [hopeforjustice.org/church](https://hopeforjustice.org/church)

*\*Real case studies of people helped by Hope for Justice; names changed to protect survivors' identities*

With three decades in the music industry, having worked with household names, travelled to more than 100 nations, and been given a Step Forward Award celebrating services to Christian and gospel music, the world might expect producer, composer and lecturer **Steve Thompson** to rest on his laurels, but that couldn't be further from the truth...

A portrait of Steve Thompson, a Black man with a shaved head, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and out of focus.

# HEART BEHIND THE ART:

## AN INTERVIEW *with* STEVE THOMPSON



By Helen Locke,  
editorial co-ordinator,  
Evangelical Alliance

**T**he way Steve spends his time and lifts others up testifies to the humble, perceptive and generous heart he has for God's kingdom, behind what is an impressive CV. He and his beloved wife Velveta (also a gifted musician) recently relocated to the Midlands and are ready for the next phase of God's plan for their ministry, Beracahmusic Ministries International.

Steve's late father Rev Sydney Thompson was a pioneer in the New Testament Church of God, and Steve grew up listening to his sermons, but God's power particularly impacted him when he witnessed a healing at a church conference. "I remember saying, 'God I have heard about you, and that you can heal, but I have never seen a healing. God is the healer, it is not the man but the Holy Spirit at work through the man.' That was a distinct moment of faith catching up with my theology."

As a fledgling musician in the Majestic Singers (one of the first Black UK gospel groups) and through organic worship

in his church, Steve was immersed in instruments throughout childhood: "We didn't have the structured worship leader system in my father's church, anyone could start a song! You found the key and got on with it!" Steve laughs, "That was my musical education, learning the song while you played it. But what we did learn about then was what was a community, how to function and serve one another in community."

In 1987, Steve followed God's call to Bible college in Germany. While there, he was offered a glittering career opportunity, but when he went to discuss it with the college principle he



“A huge part of where I am today is walking in obedience and how to listen to the voice of Jesus.”



Steve with Exo choir

was challenged by his response: “what is in your heart?” the principal pressed. Although Steve “knew all the spiritual rhetoric”, he had never been asked that before, which gave him pause for thought. He decided to freshly press in; on prayer walks in the German forest, seeking a reason why theological study was so urgent, he heard this word from God: “When you go back to the UK, I will use you to aid in the converging of the Black and White churches.”

When Steve returned from Germany after his studies, he was invited to lead



Steve with wife Veletta

worship with Graham Kendrick at Spring Harvest. They started working together, and Steve has since produced many of his albums. Decades later, and now a mentor himself, Steve still seeks out Graham’s advice. The word God gave to Steve at college rang true when Graham asked him to give three months out of his life to facilitate worship in Black and White churches.

Steve reflects, a “huge part of where I am today is walking in obedience and how to listen to the voice of Jesus.” When Velveta fell ill and went into a coma for five days, Steve’s faith was challenged. Eventually, the Spirit prompted him to pray ‘Daughter of Zion, awake!’ His prayer was answered when Velveta miraculously woke up. Steve shares, “We all have challenges but in that we learn how good the Father is.” During that hard time, Steve found out that his and his family’s worship had moved people’s hearts in the hospital, as they listened through the wall.

Though Steve is an introvert and loves working on music projects, he loves people too, as he travels internationally to equip worshippers. As arranger and co-producer for French worship band EXO, his arrangements have blessed audiences in French-speaking nations such as the Ivory Coast.

There are multiple strings to Steve’s

bow, but the common thread is to be “faithful to the calling”, which he says is the greatest value his father Sydney instilled in him. Steve remembers asking his father why there are so many disparities in various ministries. Sydney reminded him of the most important thing: that the gospel goes out. Sydney even preached his last sermon to Steve on his deathbed, drawing him near and saying: “I’m taking off my shoes – and putting on my robe.”

Steve is keen to prepare his students for life by “teaching life principles as well as the content,” as he lectures at London School of Theology. Through God-given skills, hard work, and mentors who recognised his gifts, today Steve has a readiness to do the same for others. It’s clear that Steve is not interested in plaudits but in the revelation that becoming a worship leader involves laying down the instrument and recognising what God can do beyond it: “Becoming is greater than achieving.”

Steve and Velveta are looking forward to how God will keep using them: “We believe some revival is about to take place in the Midlands; we don’t see the picture fully but walk in obedience. Somehow the right doors open and close... We learnt over the years to really trust God.”

# Are you hiring?

Advertise your job with us  
on [easilyfound.it](https://easilyfound.it) and access  
a mailing list of over 4,500

For more information or  
to receive our media pack  
email: [sales@eauk.org](mailto:sales@eauk.org)

evangelical alliance   
together making Jesus known



**Keswick  
Ministries**  
HEARING BECOMING SERVING

**WEEK 1**  
13 July - 19 July  
DAVID GIBSON

**WEEK 2**  
20 July - 26 July  
ANDREW SACH

**WEEK 3**  
27 July - 2 August  
VAUGHAN ROBERTS

KESWICK CONVENTION 2024

# RESURRECTION

For some, it's a much-needed holiday with family. For others, it's a week of Bible teaching they can find nowhere else. For all, it's a time to be refreshed in God's creation, enjoy fellowship with His people, and be equipped to serve His mission.

Free and accessible for everyone:  
experience the Keswick Convention for  
yourself next summer.

Find out more at [keswickministries.org](https://keswickministries.org)





# MEETING THE RESURRECTED JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING!

Rachel Jordan-Wolfe of Hope Together explains why Easter is a perfect opportunity to engage not yet Christians and signposts some useful resources to aid us in our daily evangelism.

From Jesus' first followers, to those who met Him on the days after His resurrection, to now – we cannot deny meeting the resurrected Jesus changes everything. This Easter the UK church has an amazing opportunity to introduce people to the resurrected Jesus. To help us do this we're launching the Alive series.

The Alive series began in Easter 2012 with Kingsgate Church Peterborough, when the pastor Dave Smith and his team decided to do something different. They had always put a big emphasis on Easter Sunday as an invitational service and had seen two to three times their normal numbers attending. Dave explains what they did for Easter 2012, "We decided to try something different, which was rather than just run an Easter Sunday, we ran an Easter series based on the principle, if we can get more people coming back, they were more likely to go on a journey of faith. During that season, we saw treble the number of people give their lives to Christ or make a recommitment in that same window.

"The series was simply a journey of the post-resurrection appearances to Jesus' disciples, and God obviously blessed it!"

**44% of the population believed in the resurrection of Jesus – some were completely convinced but for others there were degrees of belief.**  
– Talking Jesus research, 2015

The Hope Together team (one of the partners in the research) saw even more clearly the importance of the resurrection and Easter as one of our biggest opportunities for evangelism. When the *Talking Jesus* data was shared with Dave Smith and his team from Kingsgate it resonated with their experience of Easter 2012 and the beginnings of the Alive series was conceived. One final partner was needed, and Andrew Ollerton from Bible Society joined the team. He is enthusiastic for the project saying, "The resurrection of Jesus is the basis of our confidence, in this life and for eternity. Our world needs to experience this hope more than ever. Alive provides us all with an opportunity to share good news in a personal and practical way."

**When the survey was repeated in 2022, 45% of the UK population said they believed in the resurrection. The Alive series has been created for this group of open but unsure people in the UK population.**

Alive has five short films that enable the viewer to journey with the first disciples who met the resurrected Jesus. The experience continues as the viewers find out about followers of Jesus today who have also been transformed by their encounters with the resurrected Jesus. It invites all those watching to encounter

and experience Jesus for themselves.

There is small group material to go with the film series to deepen engagement and a 'deep dive' book. We don't want anyone to miss out and so there is also a specific film series for young people and young adults, so the whole church can be involved, reaching out to all generations.

Dave Smith is expectant "that as we explore the evidence for the resurrection, and the wonder of the fact that Jesus is alive, He will meet with both Christians and seekers alike, transforming their lives as He did the first disciples, filling them with new love, hope, peace, freedom and purpose."

And "that exploring the wonder of Jesus' physical resurrection will bring greater clarity and confidence in the prospect of our resurrection when He returns, and will help minister to people, including freeing those who might struggle with fear of death."

Our invitation to the UK church is to join in and offer the life of Jesus who is alive and to do this together this Easter 2024.

To find out more visit:  
[thealiveseries.com](http://thealiveseries.com)

**hope**  
23-24

Join the united  
year of mission

[www.hope2324.com](http://www.hope2324.com)

# Shifting the landscape and celebrating change

**Mark Greene** of LICC sets the challenge to lean into changing church culture and creating ‘whole-life disciple-making churches’.



**Y**ou can change someone’s life in a sentence.

In Ed’s case it took two, but we’ll come to that...

It is often said that people don’t like change, but that usually depends on what the change is. God often plants a yearning in our hearts to see a particular change – a friend healed, human trafficking stopped, or undernourished kids getting enough to eat. Oh yes, we want that change. But to get involved in making that change happen, we need something we can actually do.

There needs to be some dissatisfaction or people have no reason to change. There needs to be compelling vision or there’s no motivation to change. And you need some doable first steps, or you’re stuck – you need all three.

Back in the early 90s, I realised the vast majority of Christians didn’t

really believe that their ordinary lives mattered to God – not their everyday work, home or away, not their enthusiasms, whether football or philately, not really anything that most of us do in the 95% of the time that we don’t spend doing church-related activities.

But this is a soul-withering, heart-shrinking, mission-limiting heresy and I’ve yearned to see all God’s people rejoice in the reality that everything they do matters to God. I’ve yearned to see local churches empowering all God’s people for their everyday mission. That’s the change the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) has been working on for 40 years. Which brings me to Ed and my then colleague Neil Hudson.

Ed approached Neil after a speaking engagement. He told him he was overqualified for his job in a factory, and bored. He needed out. And he’d

been praying for quite a while. Then he’d asked his small group to pray. Then he asked the whole church to pray. No response from God. Now I wonder, what would you say to Ed?

Neil said two things. “So, if you’ve prayed, your home group has prayed and the church has prayed and God hasn’t given you a new job, what do you think He wants you to do there?”

Then he quoted Jeremiah 29:7: “Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

“Oh,” said Ed, “do you mean that I’m meant to be a blessing there?”

And that’s exactly what he tried to do. It didn’t stop his job being boring, but his day wasn’t boring – he was working with God. A few years later, Neil bumped into Ed. He’d found a new job but said that he was now so grateful for that job and all that God taught him.



The great thing about this whole-life discipleship approach is that it brings the leader and the church together in a shared vision and mission.

You can change a life in a sentence. Or two.

But helping good local churches turn into good local churches that empower all their 'Eds' and 'Edwinas' for everyday discipleship requires rather more.

Back in 2004, when LICC really started focusing on the local church, we went looking for whole-life disciple-making churches. Maybe there were some out there, but we couldn't find any in the UK. But we did find 16 brave churches that wanted to work out how to change. We spent three years learning alongside them and today we can point to many churches of different sizes and

flavours who have found a way to create a whole-life disciple-making culture – and sustain it. Not thousands, but enough to reassure us that this change is possible. One of the many pastors who's been on the journey is Martin Robinson from Heathervale Baptist Church:

"The LICC approach to whole-life discipleship has revolutionised my approach to all aspects of my leadership. I now seek to preach with a focus on how the application of the sermon needs to engage people in how to be effective on their front lines. Our small group resources and discussions are now centred on how to help people grow as disciples on their front lines. The great thing about this whole-life discipleship approach is that it brings the leader and the church together in a shared vision and mission."

Of course, once you have examples of the change you want to see, it's easier for others to join in. And we

have a cornucopia of examples (and resources) for individuals, oodles for church leaders, and quite a few for theological college educators. And we can point to denominations and dioceses that are reshaping their strategies around Jesus' call to make whole-life disciples empowered for their mission in everyday life.

There's the beginning of a movement.

Steve Clifford, the Evangelical Alliance's former CEO, put it this way: "Whole-life discipleship has become part of the church's conversation. Now it needs to be embedded in the culture."

Amen anybody?

*Mark Greene, former NYC adman and former vice-principal at LST, is the mission champion at The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity – [licc.org.uk](http://licc.org.uk).*

# ANNUAL REPORT SNAPSHOT 2022-23

“There has been much to celebrate this last financial year”



Once more, I find myself at the end of a year feeling so grateful to the Lord for all He’s done and His incredible provision to us at the Evangelical Alliance. As memories of the pandemic faded away, we found ourselves facing some new challenges, not least a significant cyber-attack at the beginning of our financial year, that had a big impact on us internally. Meanwhile our work has been affected, like for us all, through changes in government across much of the UK, and with the cost of living continuing to rise. However, yet again we have experienced the faithfulness of the Lord, as we have walked together seeking to have a positive impact in an ever-changing landscape.

Membership continues to be the heartbeat of what we do at the

Evangelical Alliance, and it has been a great delight to welcome people into membership at an increasing rate. By standing together, our mission is more effective, and our voice can be so much louder. We have continued to speak up in the corridors of power on the issues that matter most to evangelicals, and we are so grateful for your part in this. There have also been amazing opportunities for connecting with churches, and it’s been a great privilege for the team and I to be out and about on the road, meeting so many Christians nationwide and sharing our hope in Jesus. It’s also been great to have partnered with Alpha, CV Global, HOPE Together, Kingsgate Community Church and Luis Palau Association to see the latest version of the *Talking Jesus* research come out, that highlights the incredible opportunity and openness to the gospel right now.

At the end of another full year at the Evangelical Alliance, I’m feeling

very grateful. There have been battles and blessings, but the blessings do outnumber the battles. Thanks so much to every member, every donor, every friend who prays for us, without whom none of this would be possible. The Evangelical Alliance is not a staff team, though we have one, it’s an alliance of thousands of churches, hundreds of organisations, and tens of thousands of individuals who come together to make Jesus known. Thank you so much for your part in this.

Most of all I’m thankful to the Lord, for His presence, favour and comfort. I’m still believing the best is yet to come. Let’s continue to together make Jesus known.

Every blessing,

Gavin Calver  
CEO

We welcomed  
**more than**  
**2,700**  
new members

That's even more than last year!

# A year of strengthening the UK church...

Another full year of making Jesus known, together.

## April

Launched the *Talking Jesus* report 2022, in partnership with Alpha, CV Global, HOPE Together, Kingsgate Community Church and Luis Palau Association, revealing how people come to faith.

1 of 12 resources we produced or co-produced this year

## June

Alongside Serve Scotland, presented a *Stories of Hope* report to Scottish Parliament highlighting the significant contribution of Christians in supporting drug and alcohol addiction recovery (helping more than 2,000 individuals within the past decade).

## August

Joined the 'Enough to live' campaign, coming together with key voices to call on the government to take urgent action on the cost of living crisis.

## May

Kicked off our unity tours with six dates in northern England - since then our unity team have travelled more than 1,300 miles ranging from Lancaster to Truro, gathering more than 400 leaders together across 14 locations to lay solid foundations for collaboration.

## July

Attended the UK Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast, which turned out to be a significant moment for UK politics; we agreed with the keynote speaker about the importance of integrity in public life.

## September

Gathered stories from our members on how they are helping those most in need in the cost of living crisis.

600+ meetings with church and organisational leaders

250+ speaking engagements, talks and teaching sessions

40+ key moments of government or parliamentary engagement







## October

Shared our resource *Living for Jesus at work* (produced with the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship) in an online webinar, providing guidance on how to live out and share our faith in the workplace.

## December

Our joint letter to the Scottish Government with Restore Glasgow and 14 co-signatories against the sexual exploitation of women and girls had a positive response from MSPs.

## February

Launched a suite of resources on friendship centred around the new book by Phil Knox, *The Best of Friends*, to help Christians tackle the loneliness epidemic, make connections and share Jesus within meaningful relationships.



## November

Held a cost of living event in Westminster with Christians Against Poverty to share with MPs about the support churches and Christian-led organisations are providing at this time.

38

next-generation public leaders supported on our Public Leader programme

## March

In Northern Ireland, we gathered to celebrate women of faith and influence on International Women's Day; on St David's Day in Wales, we led closing prayers for Senedd at the Welsh Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast.

Around 100

TV and radio appearances carrying the voice of the UK church

## January

The One People Commission facilitated an in-person Intercultural Church Conversation, sharing why we need intercultural churches and how we can move in the right direction. Rev Dr Israel Oluwole Olofinjana's keynote speech subsequently had more than 600 views online.



# Financial review

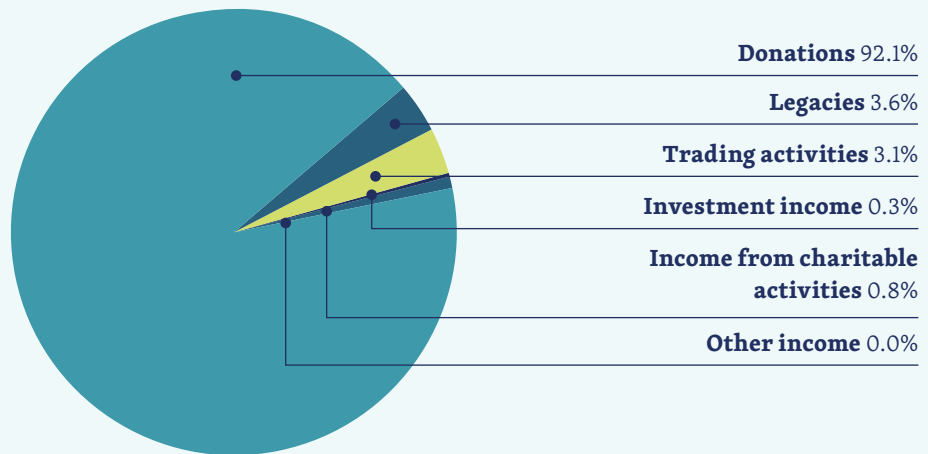
“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”  
– 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

## INCOME

£2,590,073

up from £2,518,612 last year

In a challenging year, we maintained our income thanks to our charitable trust partners, offset by limitations in renewals and appeals due to the cyber-attack.



## EXPENDITURE

£2,761,442

up from £2,470,471 last year

Income generation 1.3%

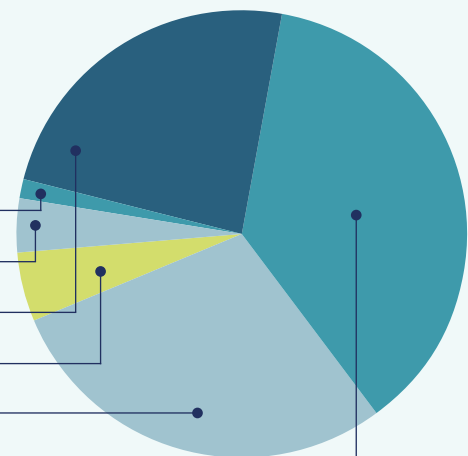
Fundraising & publicity 4%

Property & IT projects 4.8%

Communications & membership 28.9%

Unity & mission initiatives 37.1%

Advocacy initiatives 23.9%



We increased our expenditure in line with our strategic objectives: increasing the staff team, improving pay scales and launching great initiatives, such as the *Talking Jesus* report and unity tours.

# FREE MISSION SUPPORT

 Scripture Union

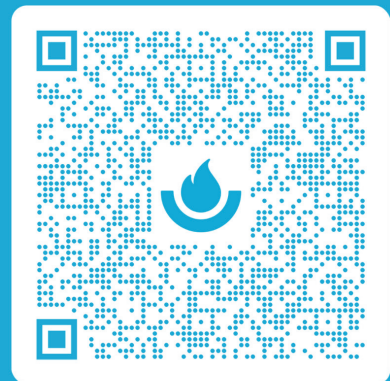
Unlock the full potential of your outreach to children and young people with **FREE** Mission Support from Scripture Union.

.....

Sign up today for inspiration and advice from experienced professionals:

[su.org.uk/missionsupport](https://su.org.uk/missionsupport)

WE'D BE  
**GREAT**  
TOGETHER





# An ethical investment that changes a life



**Imagine lending some of your savings to help provide a home for someone who is homeless, whilst you earn a return.**

That's the smart but simple idea behind investing with Green Pastures. After a set time (that you choose) your money is repayable - with interest, having been used for the Kingdom to help change someone's life. Green Pastures use invested funds to buy properties to be used by local ministries to provide a secure home and compassionate wraparound support for people in need.



**Invest from £1000**



**Earn up to 5% annually**



**Transform Lives**

Registered with the  
Financial Conduct Authority

**[greenpastures.co.uk](https://www.greenpastures.co.uk)**

**0300 365 4500**