

HOPE

past | present | future

MISSION

Two women share their hope in Christ

IN DEPTH

20 years since the Good Friday Agreement

THEOLOGY

The hope of Jesus' return

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Heather Tomlinson: At a time when many people feel negative about the future and have despair at current events, it's more important than ever to really reflect on what we have our hope in.

idea-torial

Hope and transformation

It's a great privilege to be asked to 'guest edit' this edition of *idea* magazine. I've particularly enjoyed working on the theme of 'hope,' which has inspired and encouraged me.

Some of the subjects discussed in this edition are not normally associated with hope: Northern Ireland and the Middle East refugee situation in particular. Yet, the stories demonstrate that it doesn't matter how dark a situation seems; God is at work. Sometimes the light shines most clearly when in contrast to the darkness.

If I ever need an injection of hope, I tend to turn to biographies and testimonies of Christians who have seen great transformation in their lives or the lives of those around them. In particular, I love stories of the old revivals of the 18th and 19th centuries, and reading the writings of Christians such as Evan Roberts, Andrew Murray and Charles Finney. So I was particularly excited to read about missional work in Wales, both the Higher tour of schools (p.4), and the ministry of evangelist Marilyn Harry and the 'Love Wales' campaign (p.8). Wales has such a strong heritage of revival, I have hope that there will a fresh move of God there.

As well as the hope of more hearts turning to Christ, as believers we have the great hope of Jesus' return. Should we reflect on this more, as a Church? I really enjoyed Calvin Samuel's reflection on the second coming (p.12) and how it anchors our hope in the present.

Ultimately the hope for the world is Christ, his future coming and his work through the Church at present: the faithful prayers and evangelism of ordinary Christians, sharing Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, bringing transformation, one heart at a time. There are so many ways we can reflect on this great hope and build our faith.

Heather Tomlinson

Guest editor

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Cover design: Tim Coysh

FIVE THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW UNTIL THIS ISSUE

The considerable progress that has been made in Northern Ireland over the past 40 years, and the urgent need for spiritual transformation and reconciliation

How evangelicals of the 1840s were brought together by the Evangelical Alliance following years of division

That being a female evangelist in the 1980s was unusual

How the One People Commission is working towards greater unity in the Church

The range of inspiring Christian books that are still for me to read! As a result of our recommendations (p.30) I picked up Immaculée Ilibagiza's account of her faith during the despicable horrors of the Rwandan genocide, and found it incredibly powerful.

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

8 Mission:

idea speaks to Marilyn Harry, an evangelist in Wales for more than 30 years.

10 Testimony:

We hear how Jesus transformed a Kenyan woman's life from despair to love and hope

12 Theology:

Reflecting on Jesus' second coming, by Calvin Samuel, principal of the London School of Theology

14 Spotlight:

The work of Open Doors with refugees in Jordan and Iraq



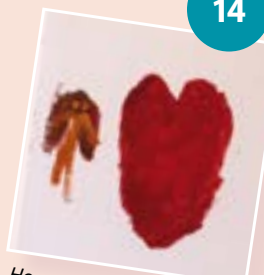
'I have so much hope'

22 In depth:

Hope in Northern Ireland, 20 years after the Good Friday Agreement

26 From the archive:

The meeting that began the work of the Evangelical Alliance



How art is helping traumatised refugees

28 Advocacy:

How the Evangelical Alliance is nurturing leaders within the public sphere

30 Reviews:

Five books to inspire hope

32 Short story:

The winner of our under 18s competition



Northern Ireland and hope

34 Last word:

Our director, Steve Clifford, reflects on his hope for the church

Seeking the 'greatest move of God' in Wales

By Gethin Russell-Jones

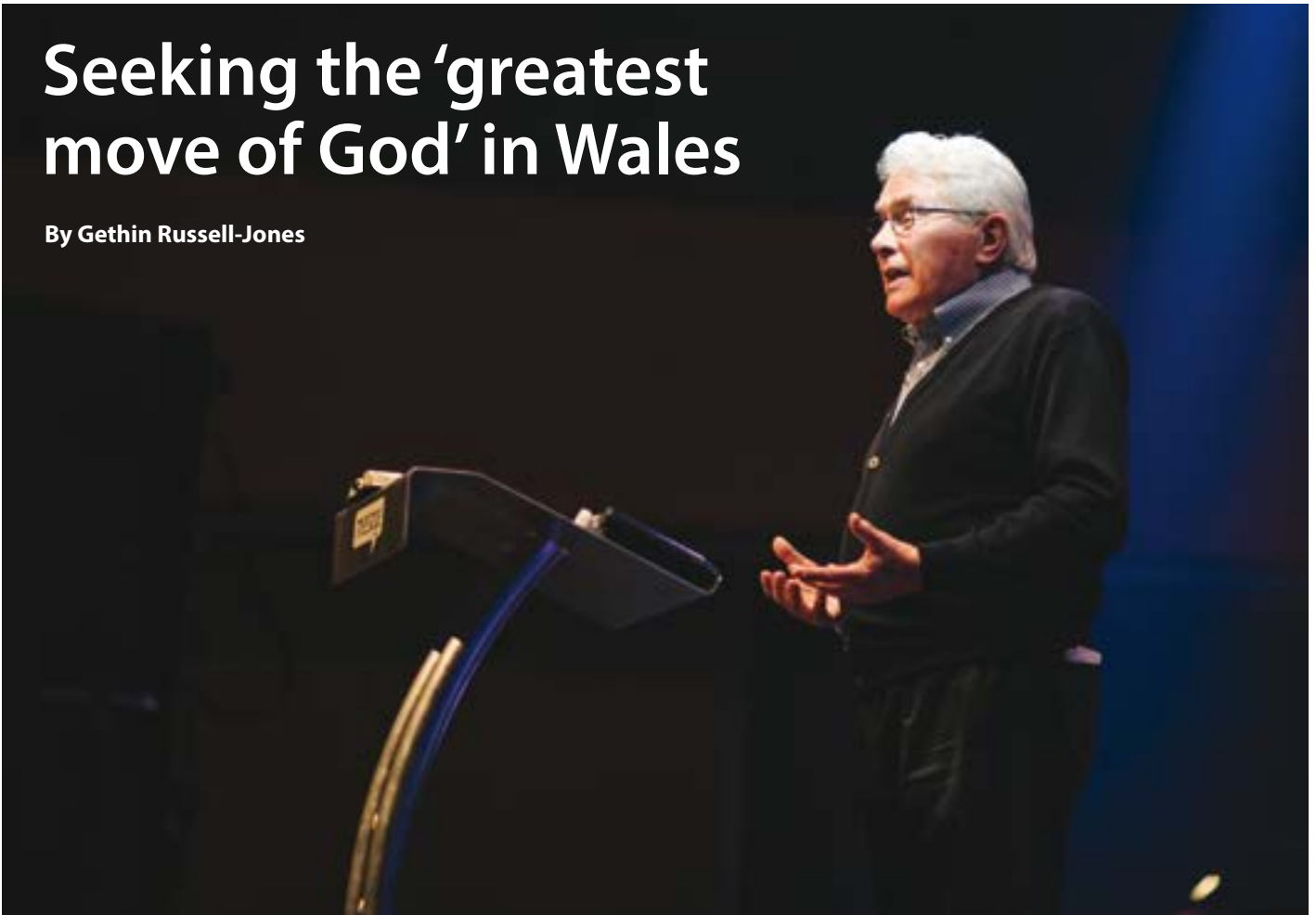


photo credit: Hannah Owens

Veteran evangelist Luis Palau encouraging believers to share the gospel at the launch of 'Higher'.

'This generation will see the greatest move of God that this nation has ever seen,' said Gary Smith, evangelist and director of Message Wales, a member organisation of the Evangelical Alliance.

Gary was speaking in November at the launch of Higher, a youth evangelistic tour that boasts the slogan: "The largest youth mission to the UK for a generation." The launch took place at St David's Hall in Cardiff, with speakers including evangelists Andy Hawthorne OBE and Luis Palau.

'We want to see a culture-shifting number of young people encounter the gospel of Jesus Christ and become life-long disciples with the help of the local Church', Smith said.

Higher will tour schools in Wales from 5 - 23 November 2018 and there will be a youth conference on Saturday, 29 September 2018. The tour will involve teams from Message Wales, the Welsh arm of Hawthorne's youth ministry The Message, visiting more than 50 secondary schools across South Wales. Higher is also visiting Cambridgeshire in early October and the Midlands in February and March this year.

Smith said the teams will be "delivering innovative lessons and inviting young people to local gigs that will include live music and a bold presentation of the gospel, with an invitation for young people

"...we want to see young people added to the local Church and those who respond to the gospel will be encouraged to join discipleship groups being run by churches in their communities"

to respond. With Higher, we want to see young people added to the local Church and those who respond to the gospel will be encouraged to join discipleship groups being run by churches in their communities."

Hawthorne, who is the founder of The Message and the Eden Network, told a packed audience of church leaders that the recent Higher event in Manchester had resulted in hundreds of young people coming to a personal faith in Christ and joining church-based discipleship groups.

Veteran evangelist Luis Palau also spoke of his involvement in the tour, and of Wales' evangelistic and revival heritage. He urged this generation of Christians to make known the good news of God and work together across churches for the sake of the gospel. Luis was involved in a mission to Cardiff in 1977.

To learn more about the Higher tour in Wales or to partner with Message Wales contact Caitlin Woodington at 02920 512 247 caitlin.woodington@message.org.uk Check out highertour.com for more information about the initiative.

Northern Ireland encouraged to 'Be Reconciled'

A new small group resource is being launched to encourage Northern Irish Christians to look again at the Bible's teaching on reconciliation and apply it in their local communities.

"Be Reconciled" is a DVD resource that features interviews with key Christian leaders from the region, including former Methodist president Rev Dr Heather Morris, Baptist minister Alan Wilson and the Bishop of Down and Dromore, Harold Miller. It aims to encourage Christians to think about their context and how to bridge the sectarian divide.

"Be Reconciled is a gospel initiative to resource and empower the local Church in Northern Ireland in peacemaking," said Rev. Catherine Simpson, the curate's assistant in Seapatrick Parish, Banbridge who wrote the resource and partnered with the Evangelical Alliance in its development and production. "It is a contextual response to our troubled communities, centred on the reconciling message of the gospel: at the heart of the gospel is the gift of reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ."

She said that the videos will ask the local Church to: look in - to understand their present context; look up - to what God is calling the local Church to do, and to be led by the Holy Spirit in responding to God; and then look out - into their community, and to call others to reconciliation with and through Jesus.

"We want the evangelical churches to see reconciliation as an imperative to how we better bear witness to Jesus in this context," said David Smyth, the public policy officer of the Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland. "It's the heart of the gospel: the reconciliation of God to man and us to each other; living out new identities in new relationships."

Other teachers on the DVD include Rick Hill, the head of discipleship for the Presbyterian Church Ireland, Jasper Rutherford at Christ in Youth, Bishop Ken Clarke, Mission director of Sams UK and Ireland, and Rev Dr Trevor Morrow, former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Prayer points

In this issue focused on hope, thank God that whatever is happening in the world, that we have the sure hope of Christ's return and our deliverance in the future.

Pray for the evangelistic initiatives on these pages: the Higher tour and 'Hope Together 2018'; that they will inspire and equip Christians around the country to work together to bring the Good News of Jesus to those who have never heard.

Pray for God to use the new small group resources: the updated Discipleship Explored and the new 'Be Reconciled' series, to help believers grow closer to Christ.

The resource will be available from April 2018. Find out more at reimaginingfaith.com.

For an in-depth analysis of the history of Northern Ireland and prayer points for the current situation, see page 22-25

HT2018

Hope Together 2018 is underway, with a number of

missional initiatives throughout the year. 'Try Praying' offers resources for people to begin communicating with God at <https://www.trypraying.co.uk>. The National Weekend of Invitation takes place from 15-17 June, when Christians are encouraged to invite their friends to church. Hope Together is also encouraging Christians to organise 'peace parties' for Armistice Day in November.



DISCIPLESHIP EXPLORED RE-LAUNCHED

The second edition of Discipleship Explored (DE) is relaunching in March 2018 - the 10th anniversary of the first edition. The videos help viewers explore Paul's Letter to the Philippians and are the latest offering from the group behind Christianity Explored.

The new version includes interviews and real-life stories from around the world, about how the book of Philippians has influenced believers. Footage comes from Greece, Serbia, Jordan, Rwanda, India, Peru and the United States.

DEEP IMPACT 2018

More than 370 leaders braved the chilly winter weather in January to head to Aviemore in Scotland for Deep Impact 2018, one of the UK's biggest youth and children's work training conferences. Run by an Alliance coalition of youth work agencies, delegates attending this conference contribute more than 200,000 hours of youth and children's work in communities across Scotland. During the weekend delegates heard from a number of contributors including Ian Wills, Allan McKinlay, Lucy Moore, Pete Gilbert, Erin Docherty and Gill Lyth.



In your words

We love hearing from you, so have your say on any of the issues raised in *idea* or make any comments about the Evangelical Alliance by emailing idea@eauk.org

HEARD IN TWEETS



NO HIDING!

I just wanted to say how inspirational was the latest edition of *idea*! Thanks for putting it all together. The Resurrection of Hope, James Catford, forming habits, Ruth Awogbade's work...

Amazing to see in our society, where we can be bogged down by the negatives of Christians forbidden to speak at work, trapped by laws, seemingly pressed into smaller and smaller hidden bundles, you show you can't keep the 'Good News' of Jesus hidden; it'll burst out, just like Jesus from the tomb.

Hurrah for the Power of Resurrection! Keep up the good work

D Blenkinson,
Glasgow

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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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Out of the 80 million Easter eggs sold in this part of the world every year, The Real Easter Egg is the only one which has a copy of the Easter story in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and supports charitable projects.

The Real Easter Egg was launched in 2010. It was a real struggle as all the supermarkets turned it down at first. To date, we have sold more than one million eggs with 750,000 of these sent through the post directly to churches and schools. Not only has there been an increase in Fairtrade chocolate sales, but nearly £250,000 has been donated to charity.

To allow us to continue to make The Real Easter Egg, we need people to switch and buy.

More information at www.realeasteregg.co.uk



The woman with a fr

Marilyn Harry has been an evangelist with Elim Pentecostal Church since 1982. The daughter of a coal miner from Rhondda Valley, she came to Christ at the age of 19 and worked as a nurse and midwife until 1980 when she went to bible school. She travels abroad regularly to teach, and sees 'signs and wonders' such as healing. She tells *idea* magazine about her passion for the gospel and her hope for the Church



How did your ministry as an evangelist begin?

There was a position in Merseyside as an assistant and I helped to pioneer a new church in the Docks. Because it was such a long time ago, 36 years ago, it was unusual for a lady to be doing what I was doing. From the day I was saved I wanted to tell people about Jesus.

How have you reached people with the gospel?

Early on I had a vision, which is very rare for me. There was a big tent, and I knew I would see 500 people in that tent. Within two months the Lord gave me a 500 seater tent. The first time we used it, 12 churches came together for an event, and on our first night 46 people decided for Jesus.

I still do tent missions. I also lead a ministry called 'Love Wales', which is part of Elim but interdenominational. Our goal is the re-evangelisation of Wales within a 10

year period by working together across denominations to lift up Jesus Christ our Saviour.

It sounds like you put on traditional 'tent revivals'?

No... Wales is the land of villages, so we would go into a village that would maybe have a small population, maybe 500 houses,

like the village of my birth. We would take a marquee. We would visit the homes and invite them to come. There is a lot of poverty in Wales, so we would do acts of kindness - put on BBQs, face painting, bouncy castles. Through the love of Jesus we would share the gospel message.

The church has become better at doing social action, but we mustn't forget we need to tell the message of Jesus. So we train the local churches how to share their faith in a non-confrontational manner, so everyone can share the message one-to-one. At the end of the mission, you see the church encouraged that they have the confidence to reach out with the gospel.

What was it like being a female evangelist in the early 1980s?

It was unusual. Occasionally people told me I was in sin, because I was a woman I shouldn't be doing what I was doing, but that was rare. I've been very blessed and

“
Britain has become much more secular, but I do think people are still very open to the gospel”

Fresh hope for Wales



Marilyn teaching on evangelism in Rwanda, with her translator.

Photo credit: Lou Thomas

“
**I can't do much
 at all, it's only the
 Lord's grace and
 mercy”**

very encouraged over the years. I speak to everyone, men, women, boys and girls - everybody.

There are many more ladies now evangelising, which is wonderful.

How do people respond to the gospel?

People are much more open than we think. I think young people are very open, and children. I think the poor are very open.

Recently I was in London speaking in Harrow, and 70 people decided for Jesus. Many people were baptised in the Holy spirit. One Turkish lady was wonderfully healed. She'd had a car accident and she couldn't move her arm and head very well. She was prayed for one night and didn't seem very different, but the next day she

came and told us she was healed.

It's only the Lord isn't it? I can't do much at all, it's only the Lord's grace and mercy.

What have been some of the highlights of your work?

One highlight was the incredible move of God in Long Eaton in 1998. We brought the 500-seater tent for one week, and the Holy Spirit fell for 16 weeks. In total 1600 people responded to the gospel, and there were many signs and wonders. Still today I meet people and they say, 'I came to Long Eaton and God touched me there'.

What have you seen change over the years?

I think Britain has become much more secular, but I do think people are still very open to the gospel. The Church is beginning to wake up and realise we need to share the gospel in the community. And I think that is very encouraging.

I think the Church is coming back to its place of prayer. I think the Church is coming on. Some are coming on more than others, but there are lots of people who love Jesus in our country.

MARILYN'S TOP TIPS FOR EVANGELISM:

1. Love Jesus with all your heart.
2. Learn how to give your own personal testimony in a couple of minutes without using churchy language.
3. Pray with all your heart.
4. Ask Jesus to give you appointments to share your faith.
5. Carry some good quality Christian material with you.
6. When you pray to lead people to Jesus, see if you can have them disciplined too.

From suicidal despair to a life filled with love

Five years ago, Christine Chongwo was finishing her degree in mechatronics at JKUAT in Kenya. She was struggling with the idea that life was just about getting a good job and having a family: it seemed meaningless. Her life dramatically changed when she became a Christian

I was almost committing suicide because I just hated life, it was just too much for me, and life meant nothing at all. Life was just crumbling and I did not want to live anymore.

I thought I am studying so I can get a good job, then I can get a family, and then I can get kids, and then the cycle would continue for them and I just thought, this is just... I cannot do this, you know? After working so hard and then you die and then what?

Just right before I crashed, really, a friend of mine came and talked to me about Christ and I became a Christian and since then life has never been the same.

I love... everyday I see the sun rising, it's another opportunity to do something good for someone else. For me that is what motivates me, that God has been so good to me and I want more people to come to know the goodness of God and to live a more hopeful life. Not just thinking about today or tomorrow... no, there is something more.

There's something greater than just thinking about myself, thinking about my career, thinking about future plans, marriage or kids and all these things.



Christine in the engine room of the OM Ship, Logos Hope, where she volunteers regularly.

“I have so much hope because of what God has done in my heart, because of what I know, because of who God is”

There is something greater than all these things and to know that there is a person who actually gave himself, and he died himself, he took up all my sins so that I may be free, and to accept that gift actually and to live it out because he died, I can live.

That is really the major thing that I want people to know.

I want people to know that Jesus died.

They do not have to die in their sins, they do not have to die in hopelessness because

Christ died for them, and it is that hope that we have, that I have, that I want many people to come to know.

Now, when I look at my life, I feel I have so much hope because of what God has done in my heart, because of what I know, because of who God is.

That I know Him, and He loves me, and that He wants the best for me, and that has really changed me and I am now more hopeful.

I feel I can love people because I feel loved so I can therefore share the love that God has had for me.

I know there could be many people who are going through a downhill also or sometimes they just feel or get to a point like they feel they are crashing, but there is someone who is greater than all our problems and I want people to know about him.

The video footage of Christine's story was produced by Christian Vision as part of their campaign, yesHEis.

Christine's story is available on the Great Commission website, along with many other inspiring testimonies and encouragement to share the gospel with others.

Check out greatcommission.co.uk



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Our future hope

How does the hope of Jesus' return influence our lives in the present? Calvin Samuel reflects on hope, justice and Jesus' return.

Hope is important to human flourishing. We can endure almost anything in the present if we have hope for the future. As long as we are persuaded that our present situation is not our ultimate destination we can endure the present as we hope for the future.

Hope is not only important to human flourishing, it is a vital element of Christian understanding. 1 Corinthians 13 ends with this observation: "Now these three things abide, faith, hope and love." We Christians speak a great deal about faith, and a great deal about love, but we hear comparatively little of hope, especially if we are talking about the hope of Christ's return. In some parts of the Church the doctrine of the second coming is in danger of becoming an embarrassing little secret.

"It's more than singing songs about heaven or 'pie in the sky when you die'"

What is that hope? It's more than singing songs about heaven or 'pie in the sky when you die'. Christian hope is the conviction that this world is not all there is; injustice in this world will not be left unaddressed; death is not the end, and the horizon of our hope does not expire with our final breath, for ours is a God of life and death.

The birth, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus all point us to the hope of a new heaven and new earth. Christian hope is not simply a doctrine to which we give assent; rather it is a way of understanding the world in light of the coming of Jesus, who was empowered by the Spirit and sent by God the Father of justice.

Too many of us appear to act as though the coming of Jesus is no longer true. But our creeds and sacraments make no sense if the horizon of our hope is this world and this life alone. As Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 15:19: 'If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.'

The problem with eschatological hope, that is, hope for the eschaton, the end, is that it is difficult to believe, not least when we



Resurrection Fresco in Chora Church, Istanbul. Christ is standing in the middle and pulling Adam and Eve out of their tombs. The fresco is thought to date to the 14th Century.

look at our world. The disciples on the road to Emmaus felt that way, as they told the stranger about the crucifixion of Jesus: 'But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel (Luke 24:21): That simple phrase 'had hoped' is telling. They had hoped once upon a time, but life had taught them that their hope was misplaced.

In recent months, we've heard of the social mobility commission's report of the 'self-reinforcing spiral of ever growing division' in many areas of Britain, we've seen the murder of more than 300 worshippers in a single incident in Egypt; there seems to be violence and strife all over the world including our own communities. Such a perspective on the world does not naturally lead to a sense of hope.

However, Christian hope is more profound than a simple optimism that things will get better by and by. Instead it is a deeply faithful response rooted in the idea of a God whose nature is justice and from



Credit: Joel Canillet

“That is our hope: one day, wrongs will be righted, justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream”

whom our very ideas of right and wrong, fair and just are derived. If such a God exists then that God cannot leave injustice unaddressed. And that is our hope: One day, wrongs will be righted, justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

That day for us is the day of the coming of Jesus as king and judge; and it is for that coming that we wait in expectant hope.

This expectant hope is not a passive exercise, where we do nothing until the Lord comes again. Instead our hope for the future requires active engagement with issues of justice in the present wherever they be found, whether in Zimbabwe or Myanmar, London or Newcastle. Why? Because we work towards, in the present, that for which we hope in the future.

That hope is expressed every time we pray: ‘your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’ That hope is expressed in every effort we make to live according to the values of Christ’s kingdom. That hope is expressed when we love the Lord our God with all our hearts and minds and strength and our neighbours as ourselves. That hope for the future is what makes possible joy in the present.



Providing refuge for the Iraqi victims of IS

The Jordanian woman inspired to feed, clothe and heal the traumatised refugees in her hometown



Photo Credit: Open Doors

Maran with a child at Al-Hadaf. The refugees are offered art therapy to help them process the emotions from their traumatic experiences.

More than 1 million people have taken refuge in Jordan from the vicious conflicts in neighbouring Syria and Iraq with Islamic State (IS) that began in 2014. For Maran Maayah AbuJabar, CEO of a Jordanian charity for refugees, the human cost of the conflict became real when she met a group of Iraqi refugees sheltering in a local church.

"They looked like me, they dressed like me," Maran recalls. "They were doctors, nurses, well-educated people, who looked like my uncles, my aunts. They were on the floor, with nothing, traumatised. The kids couldn't speak – they were in complete shock."

So she began taking beds, food and meeting other needs. These simple gestures have developed into a broad program for humanitarian action through Al-Hadaf, her charity based in Amman, Jordan. It provides meals, emotional support and clothing to the refugees there.

Maran says it is very important to her that they are served with dignity. Al-Hadaf doesn't just give out food packages – they

present them as a gift, wrapped in ribbons. They don't just cook meals – they set out the centre like a restaurant, with tables, chairs and flowers, and the team eat meals together with the refugees. And they don't just give out clothes – they have created a second-hand clothes boutique, where families can come and 'shop' using vouchers.

Maran says, "We only take clothes that we would wear... that have a high level of quality. We dry clean them, we iron them, and we set them out in a boutique style. Each family comes with a coupon, and they 'shop' in that boutique. It gives dignity to these families. And it's so funny, they will come and bargain, 'No, this is worth 2 coupons, not 3 coupons!' We love it. It's like being in real life again."

"We just share these moments of being normal again. This is something we're very passionate about, keeping their dignity."

Though Al-Hadaf is now busy meeting the needs of the refugee crisis, the charity began 12 years ago to support Jordanian orphans, after Maran experienced a dramatic change

"I decided at that moment, I'm going to take care of these children, in my country, in the Middle East and in Jordan... that is what I'm going to do for the rest of my life"

of heart. "A video changed my life," she says. "I saw a video of a child being abused by a care-giver in an orphanage in Jordan, and another child was videoing it.

"I decided at that moment, I'm going to take care of these children, in my country, in my area, in the Middle East and in Jordan. That is what I'm going to do for the rest of my life."

Alongside practical support, Al-Hadaf also provides treatment for trauma through workshops and art therapy. This began in response to seeing how emotionally damaged some refugees were: "This young girl... would come to our office and sit in the

continued on p.16...



Father Daniel is just 27.

Father Daniel supports displaced Iraqi Christians in Erbil, Northern Iraq. In 2014, his church, Mar Elia, found itself hosting 1,600 people, including 350 children, who had fled from the Nineveh Plain to escape IS.

He says the children were incredibly traumatised when they first arrived at the church; some would wake in the night screaming 'IS is coming!'. They displayed aggressive behaviour and would break games instead of play with them.

Open Doors gave Father Daniel and his team training in how to help these children deal with the trauma. He saw their artwork change. "Early on, we asked them to draw what they wanted to be when they grew up. Many of them would draw themselves in the army, saying that they wanted to kill ISIS. I was very worried by this," Father Daniel says.

"But six months later, after we had been working with them... they wanted to be doctors, nurses, teachers – even Britney Spears or Lady Gaga."

Daniel himself had experienced persecution as a young person when living in Baghdad. "On my 16th birthday, my family received a threat from Islamic extremists, saying that we should leave or be killed," he says. "Instead of gifts and a party, my gift was tears. But my misery turned into ministry."

Father Daniel was in the UK in December to present the Hope for the Middle East petition to the UK government, signed by 808,172 people worldwide, including 186,390 people from the UK and Ireland. The petition calls for a better future for Christians and other minorities in Iraq and Syria.



GOD'S PURPOSES In Later Life

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When? Saturday, 12 May 2018

Where? All Nations Church
Frog Island, Leicester, LE3 5AG

Time? 10.00am – 4.00pm

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Providing refuge for the Iraqi victims of IS

...continued



Photo Credit: Open Doors

This is a painting a child drew of her mother – who was beaten so severely by Islamic State militants that she became paralyzed – next to a big heart. “When we met these kids, none of them were able to speak. But little by little they started drawing,” Maran says. “They were able to express their huge love for their mother this way.”

corner, completely traumatised - we could see how scared she was,” recalls Maran. “She never spoke to anyone.”

After several months of taking part in workshops, this girl felt able to share her harrowing story: “She had gone into labour the day IS were coming to her town. Over loudspeakers there were announcements saying, ‘You have 24 hours to leave or we’ll cut off your head.’ She went to every doctor, asking them to deliver her baby, but they were all too busy trying to escape. Finally, she found one who agreed, and as soon as she had delivered the baby, she fled.”

This girl was given practical aid through Al-Hadaf, as well as emotional support and English classes. Maran says, “This mum is amazing. She’s back to a normal young lady who’s 20 years old.”

Another woman, a widow, said she would

“**Art therapy works with people with this level of trauma, who can’t even speak about what they’ve seen**”

be dead if it wasn’t for Al-Hadaf. Maran explains, “Her husband was a professor at the University of Mosul. They were very rich, and her husband was very well-respected in Mosul... [they had] a four-storey house, cars, all their money was with the Bank of Mosul. But IS took their money, and they became homeless overnight.

“He comes to Jordan, goes to take a food package, and while he was in the line, he had a stroke and died. This widow thought she had nothing left. She had chosen a day to take her own life.”

Art therapy is particularly helpful for children, helping them to work through the emotions from their terrifying experiences. Maran said you can see the change in their paintings as they progress. “At first it was black black black, very dark colours. But after a while, after five or six months, there were faces with eyes, smiles, with names, which was very different from what we used to see.

“This is where we found out this works with people with this level of trauma, who can’t even speak about it, they can’t even speak about what they’ve seen.”

Maran almost had to stop the work of Al-Hadaf due to lack of funding. She had applied for grants 40 times. “I was rejected for being a woman, I was rejected for working in the Middle East - they said it’s an unstable region to fund any project. So I prayed. I said, ‘You know what God, I’m done. I applied for funds, I’ve been rejected 40 times. It’s your turn.’

“The next day, someone from Open Doors came to my office. I had never approached Open Doors, never applied to them to become a partner, I didn’t even know much about Open Doors.

“A few days after I got this money from Open Doors, they said, ‘We want to honour your vision, your heart. This is for your work.’ I was in tears because I had almost closed the centre. I was done, I was very exhausted. I was at the weakest point of my life. But in my weakness, He is strong, this is what I’ve learned.”

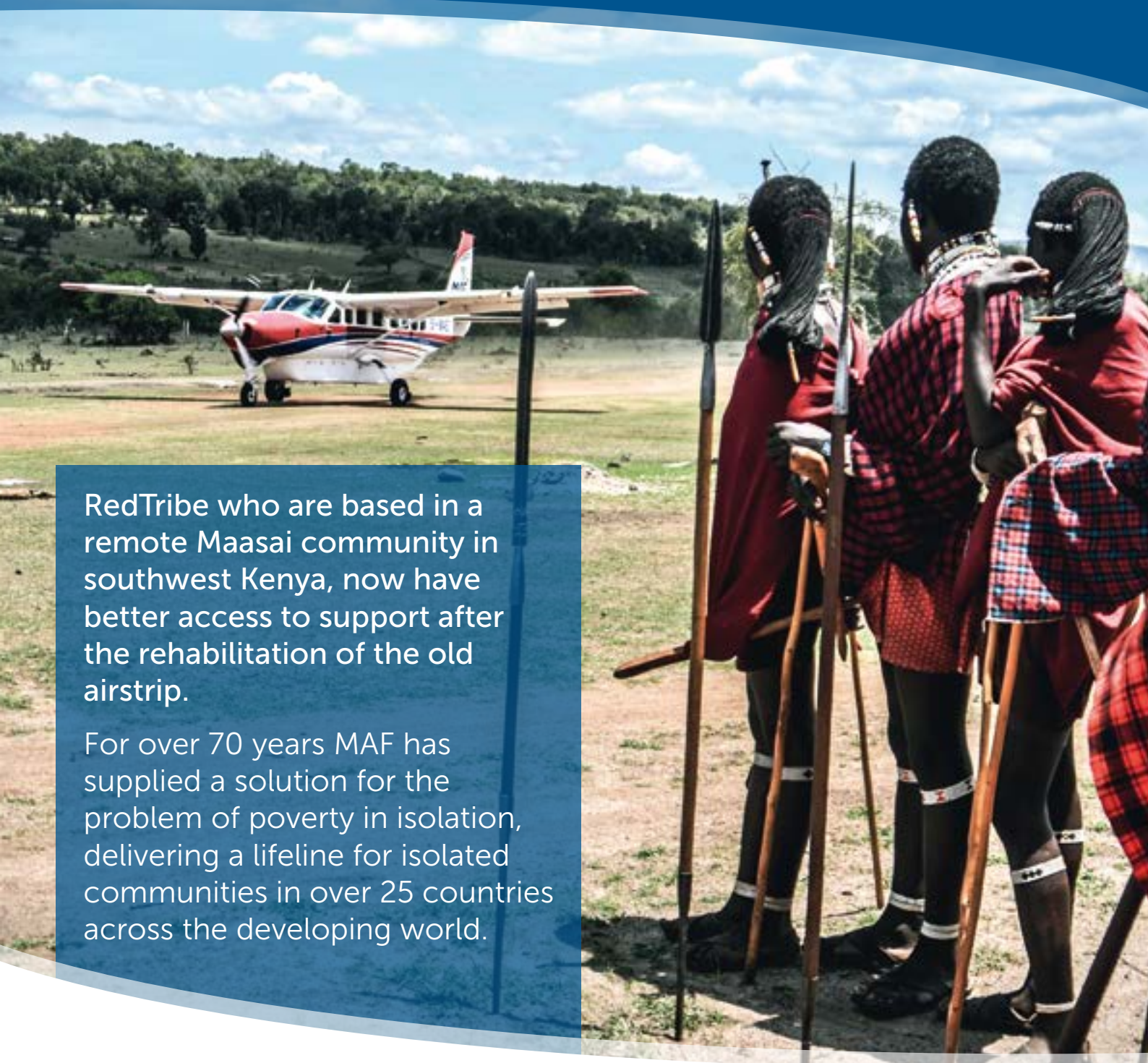
Open Doors is now Al-Hadaf’s main partner, and Maran relishes the prayer support as well as the necessary income.

“With the body of Christ,” she says, “you can be weak, you can cry with them, hug them. We are just one big happy family.”

Open Doors is currently running the Hope for the Middle East campaign, a global, seven-year campaign mobilising Christians around the world to stand with families like those being served by Al-Hadaf. Visit the Open Doors website to find other ways to get involved:

opendoorsuk.org

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We believe in life before death

New vision for evangelical women in Africa

Evangelical women leaders in Africa met to share ideas and develop a fresh vision for African churches late last year.

Despite the challenges of travel, women representing five regions in Africa, from countries including South Sudan and the DRC, met to “revive enthusiasm, build connections, help women to share good ideas and encourage practical strategies” according to a World Evangelical Alliance press release.

The meeting was convened by Fortuna Tioye, who is the new head of PACWA, the women’s wing of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. She is originally from Burkina Faso and now based in Kenya, while studying for her PhD.

The meeting aimed to support and encourage the women, and share ideas about effective prayer, social issues such as trafficking and FGM, and fundraising.

“I am so blessed to witness the work of



Fortuna Tioye, the head of PACWA, the women’s wing of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa

women folk in the Church throughout history,” said Rev Dr Aiah Foday-Kabenje, the general secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. “When the going gets tough, it is the women who dare.

“We are about to see yet again, when the women who dare visit the grave stone or the tomb, while the menfolk are in the

hideouts and would not dare. This is how they announced to the world: “Christ is Risen!” Indeed, the African women are here to announce: “It is time for the Africa God wants; a transformed Africa”.

If you want to know more about the work of PACWA, contact Fortuna, fortunatioye@gmail.com

Evangelical leader meets with Pope Francis



Pope Francis meeting with Bishop Efraim Tendero, General Secretary of the WEA (left) and Thomas Schirrmacher, the Chair of the Theological Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance

Bishop Efraim Tendero, secretary general of the World Evangelical Alliance, met with Pope Francis in December to discuss global religious freedom and Bible distribution.

At a private meeting on 14 December 2017, Bishop Tendero and the Pope discussed the potential of a closer partnership for distributing Scripture as well as the issue of persecution. It is estimated that some 100 million Christians face some form of discrimination for their faith in Jesus Christ every day.

“We want to see this world to be a place where peace, justice and righteousness reign, where everyone has a decent standard of living, and where Jesus Christ is recognized as Lord of all,” said Bishop Tendero.

The WEA has a long history of engaging with the Roman Catholic Church, while recognising theological differences. This allows the exploration of areas of common concern, especially moral and social issues.

Unity in diversity



Photo credit: Eve Balshaw

Members of the One People Commission gather to pray together last year.

The Evangelical Alliance's Alexandra Davis on how the One People Commission is working towards unity in the Church.

We have all heard the stories of division and partisanship in our culture at present. We hear them in the news, in our neighbourhoods, even in our churches. We know the division that exists in our own hearts - the division between what we want to do and what we actually do.

The Church in the UK has to ask itself: "Will we follow society and slip into division? Or will we seek out the counter-cultural unity that the family of Christ is called to?"

For the last seven years, the Evangelical Alliance has been facing the challenge of racial division head on, through the One People Commission (OPC). This is a gathering of leaders from across the different cultural and ethnic expressions of the evangelical Church in the UK. It was established in response to a challenge by key black church leaders to the Evangelical Alliance council in 2011, that if we are truly committed to racial and cultural unity in the Church, more effort needed to be made.

Pastor Chrisanthy Sathiyaraj, leader of a Sri Lankan church community in Southall and one of the first church leaders to join the OPC, shared a vision of the Church at the Movement Day in October 2017. She saw it as a series of islands, all with our different colours, races, cultures, experiences, expectations, all knowing we need to get to the mainland, the place of unity. Each of us in our different expressions of Church are little islands, doing our bit for God's kingdom; but each of us is also trying to reach the mainland: true unity within all God's people.

“The OPC is part of a process of intentionally growing relationships, choosing to put aside differences, and humbly learning from one another in order to achieve the greater goal of Christian unity”

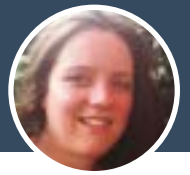
Chrisanthy describes the OPC as a kind of bridge, helping us reach from our own islands, giving us a path to tread, a journey to go on, to reach the mainland and join with our brothers and sisters in Christian unity.

To this end, we joined together in prayer last December at the annual OPC gathering. Brothers and sisters from across the ethnic expressions of the UK Church gathered to plan, prepare and pray for more unity in the Church. Leaders from Latin American, South Asian, white British, Caribbean, Arabic, Korean and African church communities who are rooted in the UK were there as a demonstration of the unity of the body of Christ.

The OPC is part of a process of intentionally growing relationships, choosing to put aside differences, and humbly committing to learning from one another in order to achieve the greater goal of Christian unity.

How are you crossing divisions in your local faith community? Do you need to intentionally choose to cross divides? Why not visit other church gatherings to receive and be encouraged? How could you start to have the honest conversations about why the church is divided and how we might need to change?

For more information about the One People Commission, see eauk.org/onepeople



Hope in Northern Ireland: past, present and future

Marking 20 years since the historic Good Friday Agreement, *idea* magazine spoke to Christians in Northern Ireland about how their hopes for their country have changed and been realised over the past 40 years. They say that the hope for the region lies in the gospel and its power to bring transformation and reconciliation.

It may seem a strange time to write about 'hope' in relation to Northern Ireland. Despite a period of relative stability, in recent months the dominant media narrative has turned much more negative. At the time of writing, the Northern Ireland Assembly has not sat in Stormont for months, and unionists and nationalists seem unable to resolve issues ranging from same sex marriage to the use of the Irish language in the region.

Furthermore, issues related to Brexit and the Conservative Government's power sharing agreement with the Democratic Unionist Party is said to have threatened the peace brought by the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) those 20 years ago. At least, this is what the London-based media often tells us.

“***There was a sense of despair and a fear that you could feel***”

Yet those on the ground say that recent events are only exposing some of the underlying issues that have been buried for years, and need to be resolved for real progress to be made. For example, the question of sovereignty. The GFA helpfully 'parked' this debate, and any proposed constitutional change will depend upon a referendum. Another vital unresolved issue is the difficulties of investigating what happened to some of the victims of the Troubles and administering justice in a way that is fair to both 'sides'.

Most importantly, the spiritual wounds of the people still need to be tended to. Healing through forgiveness, reconciliation and the breaking down of sectarian barriers, is essential.

WHAT IS THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT?

It was a ground-breaking agreement between political parties in Northern Ireland which helped to bring peace after 30 years of conflict. It established a framework for governing the country that transferred power from Westminster and shared it between nationalist and loyalist groups, and established new government institutions.

It also paved the way for the decommissioning of weapons, the early release of "political prisoners", proposals for addressing the past and cross-community measures for developing better social cohesion.

However complex and difficult the political and spiritual situation seems at present, it looks a lot more positive when stepping back and comparing it to the state of Northern Ireland 20 years ago in 1998, when the Agreement was signed. The present situation is even more hope-filled when compared to the 20 years prior in 1978, one of the worst years of the Troubles.

In February of 1978, one of the most notorious IRA bombings of the troubles took place at the La Mon hotel. Twelve people died and dozens more were injured. Three IRA members were killed after a shoot-out with British soldiers. Violence and hatred seemed the norm, and reconciliation seemed impossible.

The scale of the strife is difficult to imagine now, even when looking at the shocking statistics [see box on p.25]. In a recent BBC NI programme, 'Fools for Christ', peacemaker Rev Ken Newell recalls returning to Belfast in 1975 to a city that was "reeling from violence and very polarised."

"It was like a bonfire of bitter emotions and it was consuming people," reported the Belfast Telegraph. "There was a sense of despair and a fear that you could feel. The churches were largely distant from each other, as were the communities and the politicians and, to some extent, the schools."

Few people at that time had hope that the violence could end. "In the early 70s, when things were at their worst, I remember hearing the eminent theologian Jurgen Moltmann speak," recalls veteran Methodist minister Rev Harold Good, who played a significant role in the peace process and ran the ground-breaking cross-community Corrymeela Community. "He said, "Never forget that Jesus takes the inevitability out of history!" I held to that throughout my ministry... especially when so many around me were saying nothing would ever change."





Murals were a prominent feature of the Troubles, usually depicting sectarian slogans and characters. This is a 'peace mural' in East Belfast. Some murals celebrating reconciliation and peace have been painted over sectarian murals.

Photo credit: Jamie Baird

Yet change came. Little by little, steps were made towards a political agreement. In 1998, after two years of intensive talks, the peace process reached a climax, and the Good Friday Agreement was signed in Belfast.

This was a time of real hope for the people who had suffered through the violence of the previous 30 years. "At the time of the GFA in 1998, I was expectant for a different world from that of my childhood," said Rev. Catherine Simpson, curate assistant in Seapatrick parish and co-developer of the Evangelical Alliance's new resource for Northern Irish churches, 'Be Reconciled'.

The current uncertainty reflects an urgent need for a deeper healing

"There was an air of expectancy that 20 years after the GFA, tribal politics would be a thing of the past. People were expectant that we would have a flourishing, rejuvenated society, a culture of hope, and a restored community."

This progress came with a cost however, particularly for the thousands of families who had been hurt or even destroyed by the Troubles. "There were some tough things to swallow in the GFA,"

recalls David Smyth, the public policy officer for Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland. "Terrorists and people convicted of murder were allowed out if they served two years. There were concessions on all sides. But, there was a feeling of hope, there was a feeling of peace having been won."

In the 20 years since 1998, huge progress has been made, despite practical difficulties and long periods when the Stormont Assembly has not sat, and the UK government taken charge. Yet many obstacles have been overcome, and many are optimistic. "Belfast today remains buoyant and hopeful, a bit of a Copenhagen kind of feel, it's an exciting place," says Smyth. "In the years since there has been investment and employment, and for most people it's quite a normal place to live. That's not lost on those who have come through the Troubles."

Political hopes have been realised beyond expectations and dreams. Whatever happens in the near future, the story of the last 40 years is that seemingly intractable issues can be lessened, if not resolved.

However, the current uncertainty reflects an urgent need for a deeper healing. The boil of bitterness, hurt and sectarianism has not yet been fully lanced. This has to change if the peace of the last 20 years is to continue.

"The GFA was a really good agreement for a transitional period," said Smyth. "What needs to happen now is that the deeper issues are actually addressed. Previous attempts to deal with this are a sticking plaster over a cancer. The underlying issues are constitutional, as well as the need for forgiveness, repentance, truth, justice, also core issues of identity – Irishness and Britishness. We need to ask, how do
continued...

Hope in Northern Ireland: past, present and future

... continued

we live well as neighbours, and who is our neighbour?"

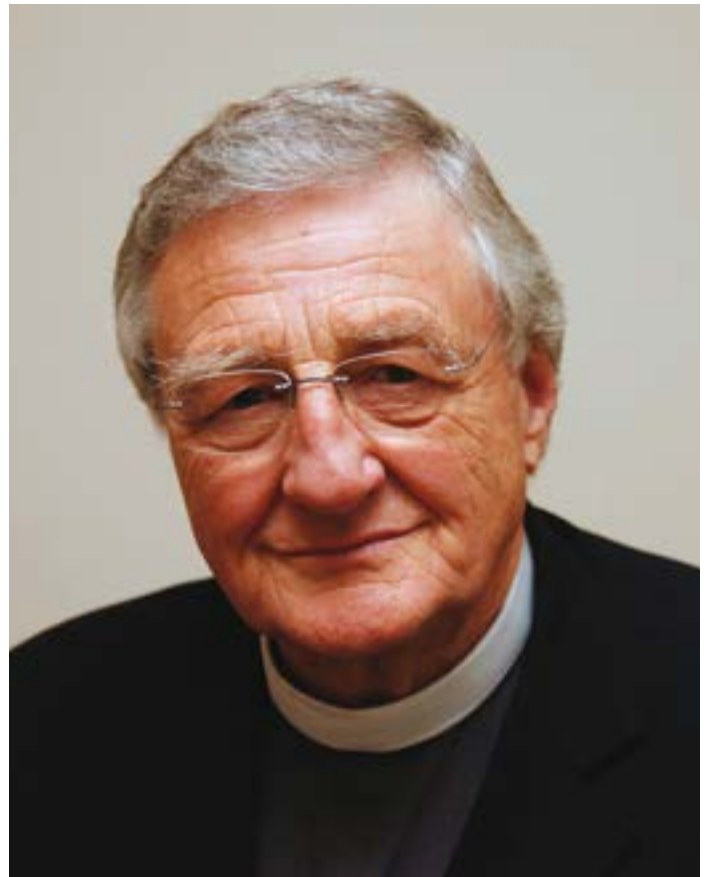
This relational aspect of reconciliation is necessary for true healing to take place, and vital for addressing difficult issues such as the tradition of parades, which though mostly peaceful, can at times heighten community tensions. Legacy inquiries and reparation are piecemeal and contentious and as yet no agreed format for 'dealing with the past' has been properly instituted.

"My hope is that we take more joint risks together," said Smyth. "The GFA was a huge risk and came at a huge cost to many people. A cheap peace will not weather the vital but difficult paths which lie ahead as we look to address things like legacy inquiries, survivors and parades. To do this well and wisely, we need bold and gracious peace-makers who are prepared to prophetically live out in the present the future relationships they are working towards."

“**In a culture emerging from conflict, death and broken relationships, the local Church needs to be pointing to the life-changing message of the gospel**”

Rev Good said Northern Ireland still needs to look within and do the old-fashioned work of repentance and forgiveness. "We all need to be honest, to confess wherein we have failed, to acknowledge our part and the part of those within our community and history who have contributed to our brokenness," he said. "We need to truly understand the meaning of grace. And struggle with the meaning for us in our time and situation of that most difficult of words, 'forgiveness'".

Grassroots change is required. The media's focus of the last 40 years has usually been the politicians and the governmental apparatus, or



Rev Harold Good played a significant role in Northern Ireland peacemaking.

the church leaders and the institutions, and their contribution or the barriers they produce to peace. But this ignores the real arena for change – the lives of the people on the ground. And every person can contribute, whatever the political situation, or the failings of the institutional Church.

"While the [church] institutions may not have been in the vanguard of change there are many, many recorded and unrecorded stories of how individuals, clergy and lay, from all of our churches have made significant contributions to our political and social life," says Rev Good. "I sometimes think of how in situations of war, it is not always possible to move as a battalion, so there are stories of 'foot soldiers' who go into the difficult situations where the battalion chose not to go."

T I M E

23 December 1920- partition – Ireland was divided into north and south with two 'home rule' governments

12-14 August 1969 – riots in Bogside, a Catholic residential area.

30 January 1972- Bloody Sunday – 13 people in Londonderry were shot dead by the British Army during a civil rights march against internment.

21 July 1972 - Bloody Friday – IRA sets off 19 bombs in Belfast, killing 9 people and injuring 130.

1960s - Civil rights protests – drawing inspiration from Martin Luther King, a non-violent civil rights campaign began in Northern Ireland to demand an end to institutional discrimination against Catholics.

9 August 1971- Internment – internment without trial for those suspected to be involved in violence; c. 350 people were immediately arrested.

30 March 1972 - Direct rule – Northern Ireland's Stormont government was dissolved and direct rule imposed by Westminster.

1973- Sunningdale Agreement – an attempt to establish a power-sharing Northern Ireland Executive and cross-border Council of Ireland, that collapsed in May 1974.



Sources: *Lost Lives* (2007), McKittrick, Kelters, Feeney, Thornton and McVea; also http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/victims/docs/group/htr/day_of_reflection/htr_0607c.pdf

If or when the political process gets more difficult, again individuals and churches can make the choices necessary for long-term change. "The biggest contribution of the church was thousands of good neighbours," says Smyth. "Every day during the troubles the Church, a scattered body of believers was living in the midst of violence and crossing thresholds with the message of peace."

Such a message transcends the political process, and comes to the heart of the Christian message. "Northern Ireland simply needs gospel transformation, and the Church in Northern Ireland must give context to the gospel by playing its part in societal healing," says Rev Simpson. "In a culture emerging from conflict, death and broken relationships, the local Church needs to be pointing to the life-changing message of the gospel: a message of peace and life; a message which offers a new relationship with God, and a new relationship with others across society, through the empowering work of the Holy Spirit."

The machinations of politics can be depressing at times. Yet Christians have a better hope. When we look back at what has happened in Northern Ireland, we can see that anything is possible.

The Evangelical Alliance is launching a new resource for churches with teaching on the importance of reconciliation. See page 5 for more details, or reimaginingfaith.com in the months ahead.

Additional reporting by: Joey Robinson and Lauren Agnew.

PRAYER

20 years after the agreement, there is so much to be thankful for. For example, the end of conflict, the end of violence and for the creation of institutions.

Pray for progress in some of the promised routes of truth and justice, providing a means for people to find out what happened to their relatives, and enabling greater healing.

Pray that the new small group resource, 'Be Reconciled', being co-developed by Evangelical Alliance will be used by churches and the Holy Spirit to bring communities together. That the Church will be an agent of change for reconciliation between communities and most of all, with God through Christ.

Pray for those who profess faith in Christ in name to live out his life more fully, transcending sectarian barriers with his love.

For renewal and revival in the churches of Northern Ireland. For many people to come to a true and real relationship with Jesus Christ and find his healing and wholeness.

LINE

1981 - Hunger strikes – culmination of a five-year protest by Irish republican prisoners in Northern Ireland.

1994 - IRA announces ceasefire – though in 1996 the IRA reversed this decision.

April 1998 Good Friday Agreement – establishes the Northern Ireland Assembly, a power-sharing deal to govern Northern Ireland.

2007 – The British Army ends its military operation in Northern Ireland, 38 years after troops were first sent to support the police.

1985 - Anglo-Irish Agreement – Margaret Thatcher and Garret FitzGerald, the Irish Taoiseach pave the way for co-operation between the two governments.

1996 - Peace talks – cross party talks begin, chaired by US Senator George Mitchell.

August 1998 - Omagh bombing – 29 people killed by a car bombing in Omagh planted by dissident splinter group, the Real IRA. This was the greatest single atrocity of the Troubles.

The hopes of 1846 evangelicals for unity have been realised, 170 years on



Photo credit: Freemasons' Hall - In Microcosm of London, 1802.

The Freemasons' Hall, the site of the 1846 conference. The venue was regularly used for social events at the time, not just for Masonic purposes. Surprisingly this wasn't considered an issue at the time.

If you're concerned about unity within the evangelical movement at present, it's worth looking back to the mid-19th century, when evangelicals were riven with division. There were differences on theological topics from infant baptism to slavery. The biggest rift was between the established Anglican churches and those in the Congregational or 'Free' churches.

That evangelicals within the Anglican and Free Churches are broadly unified now is partly due to the hard work of the founders of the Evangelical Alliance and their earnest prayers. If we look into the records of the inaugural Evangelical Alliance conference in 1846, it's clear that the hopes and prayers of those Christians have been answered in many ways.

At the time evangelicals were worried about what they perceived as increased Catholic influence in the Church of England and in the British government, as well as more liberal theological trends and spiritual groups such as the Oxford Movement.

Yet some evangelicals were barely able to bring themselves to talk to one another. Rev John Jordan, an Anglican minister, confessed to the 1846 conference that he had refused to meet the minister of a 'dissenting' church who had sent him an invitation, but felt a 'deep sense of sinfulness' at such divisions and the 'manifold evils which have resulted'.

Many of the theological divides were vigorously debated at the two-week conference. One of the most significant disagreements was over slavery. The

**“
But these fears have passed away, and have been changed into strong hopes; and those anxieties have yielded to firm confidence”**



SENT

SERVING GOD'S MISSION



Convention 2018	WEEK 1 14 - 20 JULY	WEEK 2 21 - 27 JULY	WEEK 3 28 JULY - 3 AUG
SPEAKERS INCLUDE:	CHRISTOPHER ASH	CHRIS WRIGHT	DAVID COOK



Photo credit: Culling-Smith: Archive

Sir Culling Eardley Smith, chairman of the inaugural Evangelical Alliance conference and a prominent Congregationalist.

conference was diverse for the time; there were mission agencies from Asia and Africa, American representatives who spoke in favour of slave owners, Caribbean victims of racism who spoke against slavery, as well as British evangelicals from varied different theological and denominational backgrounds.

Yet the hope of the 1846 conference was that all of these evangelicals from across the world could meet and unite on the essentials of their faith. A Free Church of Scotland minister, Rev James Begg, told the conference: "We must aim at complete unity... Oh! what a glorious spectacle would it present before the Christian Church, if we were to go out from this Hall... into the world... as one united army, one in thought,

one in the interpretation of the Divine Word, as well as one in feeling!"

Despite the theological and cultural differences, the Christians managed to come to an agreement on the essentials of evangelicalism, and the Evangelical Alliance was formed. It gave the attendees great hope at the time. Rev Dr De Witt said: "I was not without my fears—and fears were expressed by my Christian friends—that, in proportion to the exceeding desirableness and magnitude of the object [of forming the alliance], was the danger, lest the safeguards of truth should not be united with the cement of love.

"But these fears have passed away, and have been changed into strong hopes; and those anxieties have yielded to firm confidence."

From the vantage point of 2018 we can see many more examples of how the hopes and prayers of the 1846 evangelicals were answered. Many of the disagreements of that day would be seen as 'second order' issues by evangelicals today, not reason for separation. We can rejoice that evangelicals now have one mind in opposing the evils of slavery.

Were the founders of the Alliance to know that the fruits of their work are seen some 170 years later, we can guess that they would praise and thank God. Sir Culling Eardley Smith, chairman of the conference, said in his opening address: "I do not doubt but that gracious God who has bought us together from every part of the habitable

world will cause us to come to united conclusions; so that this 19th day of August 1846, coming generations of the Lord's people may have cause to glorify his name."

Today, we can praise God for how He has kept such a large part of the Christian Church unified within the Evangelical Alliance. The current challenges to unity may be different, but we are still brought together around the essentials of our faith.

Whatever difficulties we face, we can have confident hope that our prayers for unity will be heard, as were those of the Alliance's founders.



Rev James Begg D.D., George Square, 1881.

Collection: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh Photographic Society Collection, gifted 1987

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Nurturing the leaders of the f

The Evangelical Alliance has been considering how to help grow leaders in the public sphere in all areas of society over the last few years. During this season we've had the surprises of Brexit, Trump and the snap election; sometimes it seems that the only certainty is uncertainty.

This means that bringing hope and good leadership into the public arena is needed now more than ever. From the local community centre to our national parliaments, from the staff room to the boardroom, we need hope-filled Christian public leaders who are living out the kingdom of God in every area of society, for the glory of God and the benefit of all. This has been the goal of our public leadership programme.

A significant breakthrough came in 2016 when we pioneered our first public leadership course in Scotland. A similar course is now underway in England and a version will launch in Northern Ireland in the autumn.

The concept is fairly simple. We recruit a group of emerging leaders from fields as

varied as politics, art, media, law, business or the charitable sector. They attend a series of events covering key areas of Christian public leadership, we pair them up with a mentor, and introduce them to senior leaders. Through it all we create a network of Christians who are passionate about public leadership and can pray for and support each other long after they have finished the programme.

“We’re equipping them to have influence that is distinctly Christian”

“We’re equipping them to have influence that is distinctly Christian,” says Danny Webster, advocacy and media manager at the Evangelical Alliance. “It’s not just about learning to do their own jobs well, but

recognising that their faith transforms their leadership for the good of all.”

So far in Scotland, 34 people from different areas of public life have done the course. They have benefitted from teaching and mentoring from key Christian leaders such as Professor Tom Wright and the former chief executive of SSE (Scottish and Southern Energy), Ian Marchant. They also take part in social and networking events at locations of significant cultural significance, making connections for the future.

The participants have considered different aspects of leadership, such as how to build a vision, how to work with people well, and how to manage employees as well as considering how the Bible informs these issues. They go on weekend retreats to learn and grow together and visit different contexts, such as the Scottish parliament or the football stadium, to learn how Christians in those areas live out their faith.

The latter is due to input from Roy MacGregor, the chairman of the football team Ross County, who is a Christian and has thought hard about how his faith influences his company and his team. He’s a



Ian Marchant, the former head of Scottish and Southern Energy, teaching at the Scottish Public Leadership course last year.

Photo credit: Madeleine Macaulay

uture

local guy from that region in the Highlands, who wanted to create a club for the whole community, so they run community events, and visit schools.

The Scottish Public Leadership course has enjoyed good feedback. One participant told us: "It has helped me see how God is working in Scotland... it continues to serve as a testimony and constant reminder to me of how important and influential a role Christians can play in their workplaces and how essential it is that we support, pray for and encourage one another."

While they receive a lot of input for themselves personally, it's hoped they leave with something beyond their own individual development. That is a crucial component, but there is also a bigger vision – how could some of the relationships built on this course enable us to work together to have a bigger vision for transforming society? We want to encourage participants to ask: 'How do I work with others to tackle a particular social need, or bring the gospel into this sphere I'm working with more effectively?' It's about uniting people to bring transformation.

We want to transform Scottish society through a network of Christians in different leadership roles, to be salt throughout society, to bring kingdom transformation to our nation. Rather than 're-establishing Christendom' as this could be interpreted, the course is seeking to ask the question: "Why is this good for Scotland?"

The Alliance is now looking for more suitable young adults and pioneering future leaders



Photo credit: Tharaka Gunaratne

Participants on the Scottish Public Leadership course relax after a visit to the Scottish Parliament.

to take part in our programmes. "We're looking for people who want to have a significant influence across the nation, and have an outlook to impact people beyond their role," said Abi Jarvis, the Public Leadership coordinator for the Alliance. "We want to get people together from different sectors because we want people to meet people they would not normally meet, and discover how they can work together and support each other."

Later in 2018 the Alliance will be releasing a four month study resource for groups of public leaders to use to help them develop and work for transformation in their context. This will enable many more people to engage with Public Leadership on a local level and complements our national

programmes in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

"Who wouldn't want organisations and communities that are run more fairly, selflessly, to have more kindness, generosity – these kind of kingdom values?" says Jarvis, "If we have more Christian leaders living out the gospel where they are, everyone can benefit from it."

If you are interested in taking part in one of our programmes, or would like to gather together a group of public leaders locally, please contact hello@thepublicleader.com

You can find out more about our Public Leadership work at thepublicleader.com

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Five books to inspire hope

We asked five contributors to this issue of *idea* to recommend one book that inspired them with hope

LEFT TO TELL: DISCOVERING GOD AMIDST THE RWANDAN HOLOCAUST

Immaculée Ilibagiza

Hay House UK

Left to Tell is the heart-rending story of Immaculée's survival through the

Rwandan genocide of 1994. The book was published 12 years after those horrendous 100 days in which more than a million people were killed.

Rwanda was brutally transformed from a breathtakingly beautiful homeland into a darkness littered with burnt buildings and bloodied bodies. Immaculée, a Tutsi, and seven other women, were forced to hide in a tiny bathroom. A Hutu pastor concealed them for 91 days with barely enough food to survive. As Rwanda was tearing itself apart, the main battle of this story takes place inside Immaculée's head: "All we have left is hope so let us hold on to it." She struggles to repel doubt, hatred and anger as she holds onto hope and learns forgiveness, even to those who don't deserve it. She grows closer to God through continual prayer.

I was overwhelmed by the hope, bravery and faith Immaculée demonstrated despite being a heartbeat away from doubt, despair and death. It is a story of more than survival; it is one of forgiveness and hope . . . hope for the genocide survivors and hope for a broken world.

Recommended by Amisadai Monger, winner of our under 18s short story competition.



GOD AND CHURCHILL: HOW THE GREAT LEADER'S SENSE OF DIVINE DESTINY CHANGED HIS TROUBLED WORLD AND OFFERS HOPE FOR OURS

Jonathan Sandys and Wallace Henley

SPCK Publishing

I found it inspiring how the Lord used Churchill's nanny, Elizabeth Anne Everest, to be a life-long influence on Winston. The book tells the story of his difficulties in childhood, yet how he knew he was going to help Britain in a crisis. God used his nanny to teach him to pray and instil Christian values in his life. It shows how the Lord can use an unknown, ordinary lady to influence a child who God would use in later life. I was amazed that when Churchill died at 90 years old, he had a photo of his nanny at his bedside. Love makes the difference.

Recommended by: Marilyn Harry, evangelist with Elim Wales.



THEOLOGY OF HOPE

Jurgen Moltmann

SCM Press

This is the book that I find most helpful on hope. Moltmann published this book in the mid-1960s, around 20 years after his experience as a German prisoner of war held in in Belgium and Britain after the end of the second world war. Theology of Hope basically is an argument which says that if you get that Jesus is the hope for the world, you gain a sense of perspective on the world and on your life that you don't otherwise catch. It's also a book that argues that our theology is therefore important. So no surprise that I like it, I guess. It's obviously an old book now but I prefer to think of it as a classic on hope.

Recommended by: Calvin Samuel, principal of the London School of Theology.



THE FULL BLESSING OF PENTECOST: YOUR GREATEST NEED

Andrew Murray

Hardpress Publishing

Reading this book fills me with faith and hope. Murray is a passionate writer – passionate about Christ, and the ability for every believer to be thoroughly transformed through their relationship with Him.

Murray's take on the 'full blessing' is to have such a closeness and intimacy with Christ and his love, that victory over sin is found and a greater freedom known. Not through striving or human attempts at holiness, however. The key, Murray argues, is surrender of self and real faith: truly believing that Christ has won for us the entrance into the presence of God through His blood.

This little book is a great mixture of inspiration and challenge. It makes me ask myself what I have my faith in, and whether I'm really believing the promises of scripture. Ultimately, it gives me hope that a closer relationship with Christ is possible, and makes me hungry for this to happen, for myself and for all Christians.

Recommended by: Heather Tomlinson, guest editor of idea.



THE IRRESISTIBLE REVOLUTION

Shane Claiborne

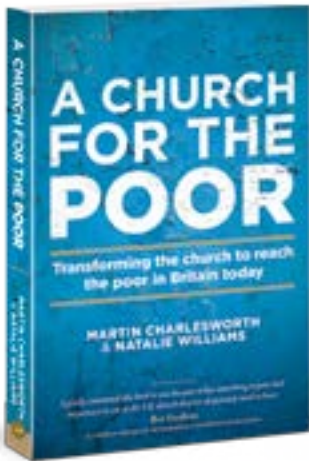
Zondervan

I recently read this book and was struck by both the challenge and hope of the call to live as radical disciples of Jesus. It's a few years old now but the challenges to consumerism, selfishness and shallow Christianity are as relevant as ever. What I love about Claiborne's writing is that he doesn't fall into the trap of negativity that can often befall creative, missional and prophetic thinkers. He's incredibly challenging but there are tones and examples of hope right throughout the book. You may not agree with everything he says but it's impossible not to be inspired by the picture of radical discipleship and community that he paints. As someone who is part of an incarnational mission team it inspires me to see the possibilities of hope for our community as the Kingdom of God is lived out in our local area.

Recommended by: Kieran Turner, Public Policy Officer, Evangelical Alliance Scotland.

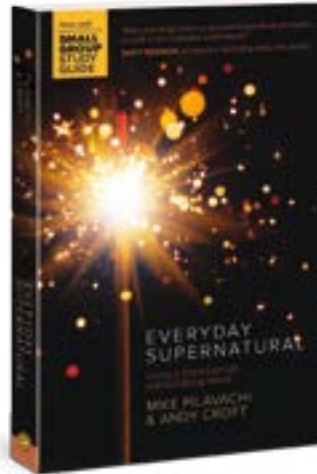


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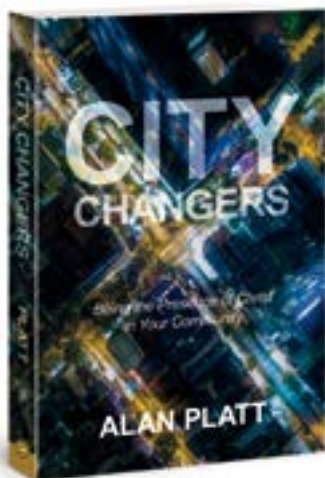
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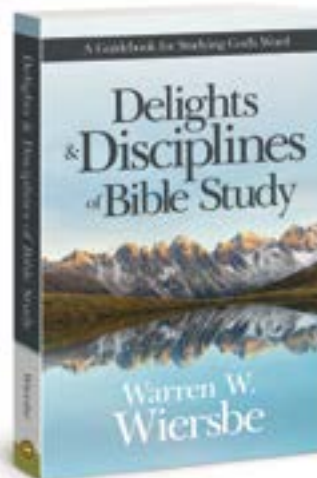
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We were very impressed with the standard of the entries for the under 18s short story competition. This winning entry, by *Amisadai Monger*, is based on the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:23–35.



Mr Mdaiwa's Mercy

Swahili Vocabulary

Dagaa – small lake fish

Mdaiwa – debtor

Bei nzuri – good price

Tatizo – problem

Mwenyekiti – village chairman

Samehe – forgive

Sawa – ok

Asante – thank you

Bwana – Sir

Rehema – mercy

Nipe pesa – give me money

Dawa – medicine

Ugali – traditional Tanzanian meal of maize meal

The red sun was emerging from the depths of Lake Victoria. Fishermen tugged at their nets full of dagaa. Mr Mdaiwa stood at the shore listening contently to the friendly hustle and bustle of the nearby market. 'Bei nzuri' merchants cried as they lured buyers to their stalls of mangoes and pineapples.

"Mdaiwa!" A shrill voice cut through the gentle lapping of the water of Lake Victoria and the squawks of Malibu storks. Mdaiwa

turned around, annoyed. He groaned inwardly, it was none other than his obnoxious neighbour, Tatizo.

"What do you want?" scowled Mdaiwa. He looked into Tatizo's sneering face.

"The Mwenyekiti, Mr Samehe, wants to see you. He wants the money you owe him."

Mdaiwa's face dropped. Of course, he had been dreading this day. He owed Mr Samehe a very large sum of money which he hadn't managed to repay ... yet. He would find a way. But for the moment, he would have to face the Mwenyekiti's wrath. Mdaiwa set off towards the village office, trudging slowly, trying to ignore Tatizo's taunting jeers.

Mr Samehe was sitting at the single wooden table in the shadows of the small office. "Mr Mdaiwa, I loaned you 100,000 shillings for your new boat. You promised the money back after one month." He clapped his hands sharply together. "It has been five months and still you have not laid down the money. Where is it, Mdaiwa?"

Mr Samehe frowned at Mdaiwa from behind his desk, crinkles forming on his forehead. Mdaiwa wiped the sweat from his brow. He didn't have the money. He had used it for a relative's wedding and did not have enough to buy a new boat.

"Please, Mr Samehe, I will repay it! Give me more time, I beg of you! Just one more month." Mdaiwa beseeched.

"Ehhhheee" Mr Samahe exclaimed crossly. "You must give it now."

Mdaiwa knew he could not repay that money. And how would he get the money if he didn't have a boat to catch fish? If he could not fish, how would he and his wife and seven children live? No, he would have to sell everything and his older children would have to go to the city to beg for money. He pleaded for forgiveness and mercy.

Mr Samahe looked at him with compassion. "Sawa, Mr Mdaiwa, I will have mercy on you. I shall cancel your debt all together!"

"Asante Bwana! I am forever grateful!" Mdaiwa shook Mr Samehe's hand and quickly made his way back down the dirt track to his house. As he walked through the fields of brown tipped maize, he came across Mama Rehema carrying her buckets of water back from the Lake. She was a widow, one of Mdaiwa's neighbours and owed him 10,000 shillings which she had borrowed for medicine for her sick child.

Mdaiwa stopped her in the path. "Rehema, where is my money? You should have repaid it ages ago. Nipe pesa!"

"Please Mdaiwa, my child has been so sick. She has malaria again and I still need the money for more dawa. I'll give it to you once my child is better. I promise!" She implored.

"That's no excuse. Your child is not so sick! See she still cooks ugali and sweeps the dust off your floors! Give me the money! If you don't, I will take your goats and throw you out of your house."

Rehema begged his forgiveness, but Mr



Mdaiwa refused to listen. In the end she wept and ran off in the direction of her house.

Tatizo had seen and heard the whole encounter. He soon passed by other neighbours and told them how Mdaiwa despite being forgiven his debt was refusing to forgive the debt of widow Rehema. The neighbours took the news back to Mr Samehe, the Mwenyekiti.

Later that day, as the sun began to sink into the glistening Lake, Mr Samehe and some of the other village leaders stood at the doorway of Mdaiwa's tiny house overlooking

the lake. Mdaiwa could tell by the fierce look on the Mwenyekiti's face that he was not just coming to share his ugali.

"Mdaiwa, I had mercy on you just this morning by cancelling your debt completely. Why then do you not have mercy on your fellows? Why did you threaten poor Rehema with taking her goats and throwing her out of her house? She owed you only 10,000 shillings, whereas you owed me 100,000 shillings. Surely you are the one to be punished. You must sell all your belongings, including your old boat and house, to repay your debt. Your children

will have to beg on the streets of Mwanza, and you... You shall be put in the village jail. Let this be a lesson to you."

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'"

Amisadai Monger, age 13, has lived most of her life in Tanzania, East Africa where her family served as missionaries in the Mwanza region. Her story is set in the modern-day village of Kayenze on Lake Victoria.



Steve with Pastor Chrisnanthy Sathiyaraj, at a meeting of the EA's One People Commission.

Photo credit: Eve Balshaw

To see the coming kingdom is our hope

For me, to think of hope is to think of the Church. We might be used to hearing that the Church is dead, but I just don't believe it. The Church is God's idea, He's not changed His mind. The Church is God's chosen instrument to bring change to the world. It is Christ's body on earth. As an organisation, the Evangelical Alliance exists to serve this Church, and we have the privilege of working together to bring the great hope of Christ to the world.

I don't mean the Church as an institution. When I decided to follow Jesus, I was captured by a much bigger vision than just my Church. I signed up to seek his kingdom first, and offer my life to join the great story of what God is doing in this world. This is a huge vision, and it's a vision that is full of hope.

Of course the institutions of Church have their ups and its downs, they can lose sight of the true hope of Christ, getting bogged down in issues that are irrelevant to its greater mission. Ultimately all power structures and institutions within the Church, including denominations and even the Evangelical Alliance, are challenged by the call to submit to God's agenda for His kingdom, His rule and reign.

That doesn't mean that we should abandon the institutions, the procedures

“ We have the great privilege of working together with Him on this amazing project, to work for God's purposes, to advance God's kingdom and bring hope to the world”

and the structures of the Church. God forbid! We need them, here in the UK, and internationally. We just need to remember that they are a means to an end, not the end in themselves. They're only useful if they are serving the greater purpose of the coming kingdom.

These structures and organisations are simply scaffolding that will support the

living building of Christ's Church that is being built. As Christians, we have the great privilege of working together with Him on this amazing project, to work for God's purposes, to advance God's kingdom and bring hope to the world.

Of course to do this, we must work together across these structures and institutions too, and transcend any barriers that are in the way. I feel hope at the moment when I consider the new movements of unity between different Christians, often working together to make Christ known in our communities. God is bringing Christians together from so many different backgrounds, cultures and across so many divides – whether ethnicity, gender, clan or age. For me, in recent years, one of my greatest joys has been the growing relationship God has given me with leaders from the black and ethnic minority churches. Their impact on my life has been enormous.

God desires His family to live together in unity, to demonstrate the love to one another that comes from God; to make visible what is invisible. Then we can come together to make Christ known, and observe the radical transformation that takes place when Christ is honoured and hope is established in a person's heart. To see the coming kingdom is our hope.

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DATE	TIME	CHURCH	SPEAKER	CONTACT
Sun 18th March	10:30 a.m.	Holy Trinity Matlock Bath Derbyshire	Katalin Tar	01629 583924
Sun 18th March	10:00 a.m.	Manor Mission Essex	Julia Pascoe	01268 544706
Tues 20th March	1:45 p.m.	St Nicholas Kent	Julia Pascoe	01732 740340
Wed 21st March	7:00 p.m.	Uppingham Methodist Peterborough	Daniel Balogh	01572 820574
Sun 25th March	10:30 a.m.	Community Church Killingworth Newcastle Upon Tyne	Zigmund Rogoff	07739 393469
Sun 25th March	7:00 p.m.	Stockton Baptist Stockton-on-Tees	Zigmund Rogoff	01642 602223
Sun 25th March	6:30 p.m.	Tove Valley Baptist Fellowship Northamptonshire	Katalin Tar	01327 354173
Sun 25th March	10:00 a.m.	Crawley United Reformed West Sussex	Julia Pascoe	01293 551709
Tues 27th March	8:00 p.m.	Hope Church Sutton Surrey	Julia Pascoe	07747 897215
Tues 27th March	7:00 p.m.	St Columba's Church of Scotland Aberdeen	Zigmund Rogoff	01224 825653
Wed 28th March	7:00 p.m.	Christ Church Winsford Cheshire	Madeleine Pires	01606 861 860
Thurs 29th March	6:30 p.m.	St John's Saxmundham Suffolk	Katalin Tar	01728 602687
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Fri 30th March	7:00 p.m.	St James Muswell Hill London	Julia Pascoe	02088 836277
Sun 1st April	11:00 a.m.	Calvary South Lakes Kendal Cumbria	Daniel Balogh	07976 035655
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