

# KINGDOM

His glory | His reign | His will

# IN DEPTH

A call for united prayer and action

# **ADVOCACY**

Remain steadfast amid changes in the UK

# **SPOTLIGHT**

Raising children of God



Hosted by Mike Pilavachi with guest speakers including John and Debby Wright, Neil & Janet Young, Mark Marx and Wayne Drain.



A call to prayer and action

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# From the editor

# God's plan

As I laid in bed in the early hours of Friday, 12 January 2018, the day I would resign as publications officer at St Mary's University, Twickenham to take up my post as editorial content manager at the Evangelical Alliance the following month, I thought about God our Father and the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

As I did, the word 'idea' came to mind, along with the thought that God gives us, His children, good ideas: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights" (James 1:17). He makes known to us His ideas, ideas that He hopes we will act upon, to glorify Him, edify the church and extend His kingdom.

This revelation enabled me to have a better understanding of *idea*, the magazine of the Evangelical Alliance—its purpose, and even its name and logo. For one of its aims is to be a platform for members of the body of Christ to share their God-inspired ideas, to edify one another and stimulate collaborations to fulfil the great commission of the Great High Priest.

This edition of *idea* magazine is packed with good ideas that are helping to make God's kingdom known in the UK and further afield. From the Evangelical Alliance's inaugural Above and Beyond event, to the Church of England's Thy Kingdom Come campaign, to Mission Aviation Fellowship's and Whiteinch Church's outreaches, I assure you, what God is doing through His people is nothing short of beautiful.

My hope is that *idea* will go from strength to strength, providing a home where evangelical Christians can connect with and encourage one another, in the precious name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

# Naomi Osinnowo

Editor



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# Hope for Europe: growing together

Hundreds of evangelical leaders from up to 33 European countries will come together in an event that crosses geographical boundaries to talk and share strategy, best practice and valuable insights.

Hope for Europe, the third in a series of congresses, aims to support greater collaboration among the evangelical communities in the continent, to achieve the ultimate objective of growing the kingdom of God. Fifteen programme tracks include arts, children's ministry, cities, disability, education, leadership, prayer and religious liberty.

Country meetings, theme-specific seminars, communal prayer, worship, panel discussions, workshops and training sessions, are among the features of the week-long convention, which will take place in Tallinn, Estonia. The final day includes a Hope in the City event, when delegates and local Christians will create a good news presence in the city through a variety of activities open to the public.

The event will run from 8-13 October and will be hosted by the European Evangelical Alliance and the Evangelical Alliance of Estonia. Visit **www.hopeforeurope.org** for more information and to make a reservation. A UK delegation will be hosted by Helen Calder, the UK representative on the EEA board and a former member of the EAUK leadership team.

# Algerian authorities urged to safeguard religious freedom

The World Evangelical Alliance's Religious Liberty Commission called on authorities in Algeria to safeguard the religious freedoms of people of all faiths amid increasing government pressure on churches and Christians in the north-African country.

According to reports, Algerian authorities formed a committee towards the end of 2017 to inspect churches on their compliance with safety regulations. It is believed that the committee is not only carrying out safety checks, but questioning churches on whether they possess permits to run religious activities. The committee has ordered several churches, two Bible schools, and a Christian-owned bookshop to close down.

Godfrey Yogarajah, the deputy secretary general of the World Evangelical Alliance, asked the Algerian government in February this year to "ensure that the religious freedom of Christians is safeguarded in accordance with international law". He added: "We also call on the government, in keeping with the country's constitution, to take all steps necessary to guarantee the freedom of worship for all religious groups in the country."

The Algerian minister of religious affairs denied discriminating against the country's Christian minority by ordering the closure of several churches in recent months.



# **Both Lives Matter fundraising dinner success**



Both Lives Matter fundraising dinner.

Both Lives Matter hosted a dinner on 9 February 2018 to celebrate the first year of the campaign. In the 12 months leading up to the event, the team has credibly established that more than 100,000 people are alive in Northern Ireland today because of balanced laws on abortion which protect both lives. Both Lives Matter also won the UK Public Affairs Award for the best campaign in Northern Ireland.

Dawn McAvoy, co-founder of the campaign, commented on the dinner: "We were joined by almost 300 women and men, young and old from across the Unionist and Nationalist, Catholic and Protestant divides. Unity like this is still an achievement in itself in Northern Ireland. We shared a meal and a common purpose – together we are reframing the conversation on abortion here and further afield. We also raised thousands of pounds to help fund the campaign and provide practical care for women and unborn children in pregnancy crisis."

Dawn added: "We are telling a better story than abortion as the solution, a story that wrestles with complexity and difficulty but that is ultimately more creative and more hopeful. The support our dinner received is evidence that this story is captivating people. We're so encouraged to see more people entering this debate from the simple but profound starting point that both lives matter."

# The Evangelical Alliance updates its privacy policy in response to GDPR

We have updated our privacy policy to maintain the confidentiality of our members following the introduction of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which comes into force on 25 May.

Visit www.eauk.org to review the updated privacy policy. You can change the way we contact you or the kind of material we send you at any time by getting in touch with us on 020 7520 3830, info@eauk.org or by mail (see our postal address on page 1). Go to www.eauk.org/
stayintheloop if you would like to update your email preferences online.

Keeping your data secure is very important to us, and we have been working hard to make sure we protect your privacy and treat you and your data well. We are dedicated to uniting, enhancing and equipping you in mission and in voice. Without your prayers and support, we could not do what we do. Thank you for being part of us.

# **Movement Day Doncaster**

Movement Day Doncaster will take place on 20 June, and Christians across the town are being urged to join this celebration of unity and drive to help Christian leaders bring about positive change in their areas of influence.

To mark the 20th anniversary of One Heart One Voice, a comprehensive programme has been put together to equip Christians who are involved in any form of church,



commercial, civic or community leadership in Doncaster with the tools they need to make a difference to the wellbeing of their communities.

The event, to be held at Cast in Waterdale, will close with a celebration of Christian unity, which is open to everyone. Visit **www.celebration.org.uk** to find out more about Movement Day Doncaster and make a reservation.

# GOD IS CALLING US TO ACT. Will you help make Jesus known today?

You and I live in unique times. Today, I'm convinced that there is a greater spiritual openness than I can remember for decades. Yet at the same time we face opposition.

I believe that, right now, God is calling us to act. And that's why I wrote to many of you recently – to ask you if you could help fight the opposition and seize more opportunities, by giving a gift today.

We face both opposition and opportunity on a scale not seen for decades. It's vital that we work together. If there's ever a time to stand against the opposition and grasp the opportunities, it's now. With our connections and reputation, the Evangelical Alliance is

uniquely placed to make a difference. But it will only be possible with your help. By giving your support today, you could do three things:

1. Help ensure Speak Up booklets get to where they're needed, so people can understand the law and their gospel freedoms, and give Christians confidence to share our faith more widely.

2. Build up the Great Commission online hub of tools for sharing the good news, including evangelism videos, resources and training for churches. This will inspire Christians to believe that sharing their faith really does make a difference, and they'll take more opportunities to talk about Jesus.

3. Put Christian advocates into the corridors of power, to protect our freedoms, so that the government will drop proposals to regulate churches, Sunday schools and youth groups.

These are extraordinary times, and God has entrusted us with an extraordinary commission. *This is the time to up our game*.

Please help make Jesus known by donating today at www.eauk.org/springappeal

Yours in Christ,

Steve Clifford, general director

# Above and Beyond launch

More than 300 delegates from churches, charities and Christian organisations across the UK flocked to the Evangelical Alliance's inaugural Above and Beyond event to gain more clarity and insight on regulation and law, and how to navigate the challenges, maintain compliance and thrive.



The main hall.

Expert speakers from organisations that specialise in the charity and faith-based sectors, as well as a prominent member of parliament, gave keynote presentations, led seminars and participated in a panel discussion, to cut through much of the haze that has left many organisations within these sectors concerned and confused about changes in the legal landscape and how to keep up.

Held at St Mary's London, a stone's throw away from Baker Street, on 20 February,

the day-long event saw representatives from law firms, a PR and communications agency, and a Christian charity talk across a selection of pertinent subjects, including General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), gospel-shaped governance, the Equality Act 2010, the culture of money in the church, working with the Charity Commission, and safeguarding.

The turnout for some of the seminars gave an indication as to which topics may be of particular interest, or concern, to the



Keynote address by Fiona Bruce MP.

Evangelical Alliance's members. *General Data Protection Regulations: towards May 2018*, which was delivered by Victoria Hordern, head of privacy at Bates Wells Braithwaite (BWB), was highly attended. During her address, Victoria clarified that among the main purposes of this new regulation are to protect individuals' dignity and personal lives, and compel organisations that hold data on people to be more accountable and responsible, or risk hefty fines.

She urged attendees not to panic about the looming deadline, as the Information Commissioner's Office had declared publicly that it doesn't expect all organisations to be 'GDPR-ready' by 25 May, when the regulation becomes enforceable. "Instead, set some key priorities to prepare for the regulation coming into effect: develop a plan, raise awareness among staff, review existing policies, and develop policies if existing policies are absent," said Victoria.

Safeguarding: A framework for dealing in healthier churches and faith-based organisations, which was led by Emma Dowden-Teale, a partner at BWB, attracted a large crowd also. In her presentation, Emma discussed the legal framework and statutory guidance for children and vulnerable adults, and provided tips for dealing with safeguarding issues. Emma acknowledged



Roundtable panel.

# WHAT ATTENDEES SAID

The Evangelical Alliance asked delegates at the Above and Beyond conference what attracted them to the event and what had been a particular highlight.

"I work at a church that is growing and we need to ensure that we know how to comply with the law and navigate any new challenges that arise. The GDPR seminar stood out, due to it being enforceable so soon. There have been several highlights at the event, including Fiona Bruce MP's keynote speech; it enhanced my faith. It's reassuring to know there are still people who are bold about their faith in Christ."

# **Kemi Falomo**

Church administrator, Revival Christian Church of Enfield

"It's good to get professional signposting to the legal requirements that a church has to meet from external experts; we like to make sure that we're compliant. GDPR was among the highlights of the event. We have many different databases, which can seem quite daunting, so getting down to what's essential and what we have to do has helped a lot."

### **Stephen Walker**

Operations manager, Holland Baptist Church

"Information on both GDPR and 'the culture of money in the church' is relevant to my role, which is why I attended these seminars. Victoria's presentation on GDPR clarified the subject so well. The event has

been absolutely brilliant; I hope there'll be more events like this."

# **Veronica Sharpe**

Parish treasurer and administrator, the Parish of Hackney Marsh

"Above and Beyond covered several subjects that I'm interested in, including GDPR, safeguarding and the Equality Act 2010, which is why I signed up for the conference. The event has helped me to understand that although Christianity may seem under attack, the law is protecting Christians. I now have a better understanding of how to make use of the law. Above and Beyond also helped me to appreciate that it's our time to continue the legacy of impactful Christian work."

### **Joseph Dominique Clem**

Public affairs and religious liberty leader, Balham Seventh-day Adventist Church

"SCHF is a new charity and we attended Above and Beyond to get some insight into what we have to do to be compliant. The most interesting part of the conference for me was the seminar on GDPR; we were quite concerned about this new regulation, and I was reassured by what I heard."

### **Jonathan Ruben**

Honorary secretary, Strathern Children's Holiday Fund

# **Speakers**

Speakers from the organisations below attended the conference.

**Anthony Collins Solicitors** 

**Bates Wells Braithwaite** 

**Bournemouth University** 

**Christians Against Poverty** 

**Edward Connor Solicitors** 

Jersey Road PR and Communications Agency

**MW Solicitors** 

**Wellers Law Group** 

Stewardship

# **Webinars**

Webinars will be available soon. Please contact **info@eauk.org** for more information.



Attendees at one of the seminars.

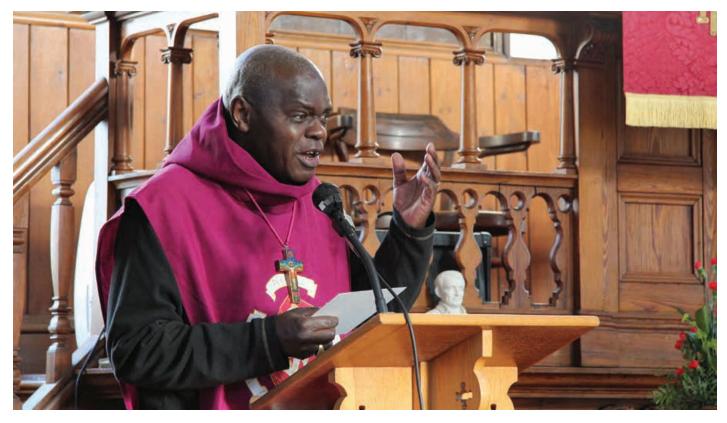
that the law and legal requirements for safeguarding are complex, which, we at the Evangelical Alliance believe, made the launch at Above and Beyond of the draft consultation A Safeguarding Framework for Christian Faith Contexts timely.

At the conference, which was supported by Stewardship, Fiona Bruce MP spoke heartfelt words of encouragement in her keynote address entitled *The contribution of faith groups to civil society*. She pointed to the recognition MPs (Christians and non-

Christians alike) gave to Christian organisations making a difference in communities across the UK, and emphasised the importance of retaining the freedom to practice our Christian faith.

Referencing Romans 10, Fiona concluded with the following call to action: "Our Christian faith needs to be lived out practically; it can be a real force for good. We need to be as clear and outspoken as our forebears in making Jesus known. The great commission is to bring the message of eternal life to people who are hurting, lonely and vulnerable through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Go to see your MPs and tell them of the work you are doing and why. They will be pleased to speak up for you."

# Thy Kingdom Come 2018: a call to prayer and action



Archbishop John Sentamu leading pilgrimage prayers.

The Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, is urging Christians throughout the UK to join a global wave of prayer for people to come to know Jesus Christ. Known as Thy Kingdom Come, this extraordinary united petition to God will take place in the run-up to Pentecost Sunday, 10 to 20 May. The Archbishop tells readers what the campaign is about and why you should get involved.

# When we pray 'thy kingdom come', what are we praying?

We have to start with the Father: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name". The glory of God is the first thing that God's children, who have been adopted by His grace in Christ, should desire; and it is the object of one of our Lord's own prayers: "Father, glorify

your name" (John 12:28). It is the purpose for which the world was created.

English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote so beautifully in 1877 in *God's Grandeur*: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God." It is also the end for which the saints are called and converted. It is the main thing we should seek: that "God in all things may

As we pray we are drawn into the life of God, which is fullness of life, God's gift to us in Jesus."

be glorified" (1 Peter 4:11). It is only after recognising the glory of God our Father, that we can pray, with Jesus, 'thy kingdom come'.

It is as if, when we say, "our Father in heaven", we let Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit take us by the hand and lead us into our Father's home (John 14:2). By His Son, and His Spirit – the two hands of God – the Father embraces

his prodigal children and draws them to Himself. As we pray we are drawn into the life of God, which is fullness of life, God's gift to us in Jesus.

# Why is now a good time for Christians to think about the kingdom of God?

You ask why now is a good time for this. It's because there is no time like the present, and there is no point just praying about the past, or praying about some distant future. We want God to be glorified now. We want to see His kingdom in action now. We want to see His will done now. This means we must be ready to do it!

As we pray these three petitions: "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done", we are praying that the entire world may discover God's true identity and dwell in His house. We give our life to God so that, through us, God can share this divine life with others. So, our purpose is to glorify God, to honour His name, to desire and delight in His kingdom, and always to be ready to do His will.

The Thy Kingdom Come campaign began as a challenge from yourself and the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2016 to Christians to pray for evangelism in this country. Why did you and Justin Welby feel it was an important call to make? In what climate was that request made?

When I was doing my pilgrimage of prayer, witness, and blessing around the diocese of York in 2016, I became very aware, walking around meeting people and sharing Christ with them, that what God has to offer in Christ is an amazing and free gift, and it is within reach of everyone.

As I went about I spoke only really about one thing – the Lord's prayer – because I wanted people to know that sharing in the very life of God was something everyone could do. Praying 'thy kingdom come' means we are all sharing in Jesus' prayer to the Father for His world; it unites us in God's mission, and it raises our expectations.

This is what we need today. As Christians we have become too glum; it is time to become who we are by God's grace and live out the faith, hope and love that are God's gifts to us.

I am praying with all my brothers and sisters in Christ that God's power, wisdom, holiness, rule of justice and peace, be made known, honoured and glorified by all God's creatures."



The launch of Thy Kingdom Come at Bishopthorpe Palace.

It is wonderful how this call to prayer and action is being taken up not only here in this country but also around the world."

# Did you expect that request to grow into an international and ecumenical call to prayer? What are your thoughts or reflections on the growth of Thy Kingdom Come over the past couple of years?

It is wonderful how this call to prayer and action is being taken up not only here in this country but also around the world. This is a great encouragement to us to pray along with our brothers and sisters in Christ from other churches and denominations.

I am not surprised, though – after all, in Matthew 13:31-32, Jesus spoke about a tiny mustard seed growing and becoming a tree big enough for the birds of the air to nest in. In the kingdom of God, exponential growth is normal. We should expect it, and pray for it.

# Can you share with us any encouraging testimonies that have been inspired by Thy Kingdom Come?

I just think of one of our churches nearby here, where it was the young people who took this up, and arranged a prayer room in the church hall to be open all week. There were a variety of imaginative prayer activities there: a prayer graffiti board, some craft activities, as well as other opportunities for people to share their prayers for friends and family. It was relatively easy to set up, and it was open to everyone. Then they all went to York Minster for the beacon service on Pentecost Sunday, which wonderfully drew everyone's prayers together.

This ordinary parish church has since sent young people to join in missions in five or more countries in four continents in the past year. I happen to think that all this prayer has something to do with this. None of this is rocket science; it is a matter of churches deciding what they can do, and setting out to do it.



The Archbishop speaking with the general public in Easingwold Market.

# What will you and your constituency be praying for during this time?

When I pray this, I am praying with all my brothers and sisters in Christ that God's power, wisdom, holiness, rule of justice and peace, be made known, honoured and glorified by all God's creatures. There is an evangelistic zeal to this.

We know, through Jesus Christ, God's name, God's kingdom and God's will. So, we should have a burning desire to make them known by our witness. As we honour and glorify our Father's identity, God's name, and do His will, we live the kingdom as ambassadors for Christ.

My hope is that praying 'thy kingdom come' will turn us all into people able to communicate the good news of Jesus in a

way that brings healing, the assurance of forgiveness, and hope for the new life that is God's gift to us.

# What are your top tips for those who will be participating in Thy Kingdom Come?

Just one: do it—pray. Pray as Jesus taught: "When you pray, say... 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come'...". When we pray, we must be ready to listen to God for guidance as to how we can help make this happen.

# What's your hope for Thy Kingdom Come in the years to come?

I hope we will keep going with this special week leading up to Pentecost – at least until 2020. But after that, why not?



It is my prayer in any case that we shall continue growing in confidence to share Christ; that we shall see the Holy Spirit bringing joy, healing, reconciliation, and hope to many, and bringing new life both to

As Christians we have become too glum; it is time to become who we are by God's grace."

church and community, to the glory of God the Father.

Remember, whilst the big events are fantastic, Thy Kingdom Come is really about being part of a movement of prayer, so small is beautiful; for Jesus says: "Where two or three gather together in my name...".

# What is the Christian community in York up to and what can our readers learn from these individuals and organisations?

Parishes up and down this diocese are arranging prayer walks, prayer stations, prayer meetings, and getting together to pray between the different churches.

In York Minster we are holding a beacon prayer event, with a particular focus on young people. The great thing about this is that there is no one single pattern, except for that which Jesus Himself has given us.

Everyone can join in. As for me, I try to pray the "our Father who art in heaven..." on the hour every hour – as far as possible. Will you join me?

# **PRAYER TOOLS**

The Church of England has released new prayer resources and ideas to help churches, individuals, and families and young people pray during Thy Kingdom Come. Visit www.thykingdomcome.global/prayerresources to find out what's available. Many resources can be downloaded free of charge.



# TOGETHER WE'RE'STRONGER



When an envelope lands on your mat this Christian Aid Week, please give. Or visit caweek.org/together-idea

We believe in life before death

# A union that transcends differences

The director of One People Commission, Yemi Adedeji, explains that although he's seeing barriers between the people of God disappear, we must continuously look to our shared heritage in Christ to celebrate ethnicity while promoting unity in the UK church.

Chapter 17 of the gospel of John, where Jesus prays for all believers before He goes to the cross, is at the heart of the One People Commission (OPC), as well as the Evangelical Alliance, through which the group was formed. Anyone who's been to the Evangelical Alliance's offices in London will have seen John 17:20-24 in extra-large font on the wall. It wasn't a surprise, then, that within minutes of my chat with Yemi, he pointed to those verses and said he wants to see all evangelical Christians across the UK "unified without being uniform, for it is in our unity that we celebrate and honour the kingdom of God".

Now, those who have met Yemi will know that he's practicing what he's preaching. He often rocks up to the Evangelical Alliance's offices in floral prints, bright blazers, skinny jeans, fancy shoes and, if my memory serves me correctly, cravats. So, when he says "without being uniform", he means it! But, on a more serious note, he explains that our unity is so much deeper than a shared culture or language; it's our shared heritage in Jesus Christ. Yemi emphasises during our hour-long conversation that he wants us to remember that, because in doing so we'll be a healthier church that glorifies God.

The OPC was formed to make the evangelical church in the UK more effective,



The OPC's annual general meeting in December 2017.

by bringing together key national church leaders from all ethnicities to promote unity and collaboration. "We can glorify God in our differences and uniqueness," says Yemi. "When we at the OPC pray, we pray for complete unity in our Lord. We pray that different nations across the country will come together as one—of one accord and purpose, jointly thanking and worshipping God, and thanking each other."

In his role at the OPC, as well as in his ministerial work and personal life, Yemi sees the barriers that separate us disappearing. When the leaders come together for meetings, for example, they celebrate God in their ethnic mix, embracing the different traditional foods and dress, and learning from the different ways members pray. Yemi says diversity is also visible in many of the churches he's been to.

Despite the headway made so far, Yemi concedes that we still have more progress to make to ensure the emerging generation is

not divided by what has separated previous generations. He explains: "Many of us have grown up with a particular mindset that is shaped and reinforced by our environments. In many cases we believe that who we are and what we are is the best. When we meet others from different backgrounds, or people who express their faith differently, we can often feel uncomfortable and struggle to embrace what they bring."

Yemi admits that he's no exception and initially "felt like a fish out of water" when he participated in a prayer meeting in the House of Commons. "I was told it's a silent prayer for around one hour. I couldn't understand that; being Nigerian with a Pentecostal background, I'm used to talking aloud to God," he says. "But I've come to realise that God created His children differently and with unique characteristics for His own purpose. God doesn't flow in my arena alone. It's important we all come to realise this and live accordingly."

# We want to see the kingdom of God break out across Scotland

Following the closure of the church in Whiteinch, three couples moved into the Glasgow district to restore the worshipping community. More than 20 years after the revival of Whiteinch Church, Shona Stirling, director of pastoral care at the church's charity, Whiteinch Transformation, tells readers how the church and its charity are on a mission to see the kingdom of God break out across Scotland.

# If you could sum up Whiteinch Church in just a few sentences, what would they be?

We see church as much more than what we do on a Sunday. We, as followers of Jesus Christ, are the church, and we believe that we are to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the communities in which we find ourselves. We are a church that equips and empowers every member of our family in Christ to live in the fullness of all God meant for them, and to do what He has called them to do. We believe that in church, everyone gets to 'play', and so we see our whole congregation as ministers of the gospel, challenging them to be just that wherever they are.

# How did Whiteinch Church become a parish in its own right when so many churches were closing? What challenges did you overcome along the way?

The church in Whiteinch closed and the congregation joined with those in the neighbouring parish of Scotstoun. In 1996, it was decided that it was time to replant back into Whiteinch. Three couples from the Scotstoun church moved into Whiteinch,

We see our whole congregation as ministers of the gospel."

becoming the core team for this plant. They met together to worship and pray. Soon, others from the community gathered with them and they outgrew their meeting space. In 2000, we became a parish in our own right, bucking the trend of church closures.

The congregation doesn't only worship in Whiteinch; we live here and look for opportunities to serve the community. From children's holiday clubs to helping people to move house and deliver furniture, we have found ourselves becoming part of the heart of the community. We have served on community councils and school boards, gaining credibility and favour. Over the years, we've gathered to worship in Whiteinch in various locations: a small shop front on the main street, both local primary schools and, since 2007, in the Whiteinch community centre.

There have been many challenges along the way. Because we haven't had our own building, space to be able to work from has been limited. Setting up and taking down chairs, sound system, etc., every week for our Sunday gathering is time consuming and heavy work. Financing what we do has been, and continues to be, a challenge because we have always been a church which punches above its weight in terms of what we do. We have intentionally invested in people, raised up new leaders and then given away our best. Although this is a kingdom principle, which we continue to adhere to, it does present us with obvious challenges. In its partnership with charity Whiteinch Transformation, Whiteinch Church is involved in a range of project work.

In 2000, we became a parish in our own right, bucking the trend of church closures."

# Why do you believe the church has a responsibility to meet the needs of communities?

Historically, the church has been at the forefront of change in society. As the people of God, we are supposed to be carriers of the gospel, which is good news. All around us we see hopelessness; this is not the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is good news. Jesus came to bring hope to the hopeless, to release the captives, and to bring sight to the blind. And, in the great commission, He sends His followers out to make disciples and to do the same. We are told to go into all the world and do what He did. Jesus didn't create problems, He brought solutions. He fed the hungry, He healed the sick, and He encouraged people to right their wrongs. He didn't just talk it, He did it too.

# How is the church meeting the specific needs of people in Glasgow?

Through our partnership with Whiteinch Transformation, we currently have four main strands of work: church planting, emotional health, children's work, and 'Love Whiteinch'.



We believe that we are a church that is called to plant churches. We are currently replanting in a community in the east of Glasgow, but we expect that this is the first of a number of plants. We also train others in church planting and have been doing that for several years, now as part of the Forge Network. We want to see a vibrant, worshipping, witnessing church in every community and network in Scotland.

Healing for the Heart is our project concerned with emotional health and wellbeing. We have a counselling and an inner-healing service, offering appointments to folks in Whiteinch and beyond. We offer up to 30 hours of counselling sessions, and we train other churches and organisations to deliver effective pastoral care and ministry. Our team of 18 volunteer facilitators offers around 20 hours of ministry appointments a month.

We work with both children and young people within the community. We are currently in partnership with the local Roman Catholic primary school to provide them with a member of staff to work with their vulnerable families and children, and

to run the local toddler group. We take 40-50 children and young people from our community away to a summer camp each year, which we organise and run, and we provide a weekly gathering point for these young people throughout the year.

Love Whiteinch is the umbrella name for our local projects that are addressing poverty. As part of this, we run a weekly foodbank and have a Christians Against Poverty debt centre. We also work with the local recovery community, offering support and mentoring for those overcoming addictions.

# Do you have a particular story of the church's work that stands out to you?

It's hard to pick one testimony because there are so many. Two real high points in the last five years have been the impact that Healing for the Heart has had on our church and our community, and being given the keys for the empty church building into which we are now planting.

Five years ago, Healing for the Heart was a small ministry team of six, which offered a few inner-healing sessions a month. Now we have five part-time members of staff and 18

We all have something to offer that, without us offering it, a gap is created. Go fill the space that is there and that is just your fit."

volunteers, offering counselling and ministry for adults and children. We are currently partnering with other community groups to work with some of the most vulnerable people in our community, who wouldn't be able to access what we can offer in any other place.

For 20 years, we have believed that we were called to be a church which plants churches. ▶



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# As the people of God, we are supposed to be carriers of the gospel, which is good news."

We have studied, learned, talked and prayed about this and finally, in 2017, we were given the keys to Ruchazie Parish Church, which is the first of these church plants. We are now one church in two places and we are seeing the kingdom break out beyond our parish.

# What is the church's vision for the future?

Our vision is to develop an 'Urban Monastery'. This follows the pattern of the Celtic Monks, and will see our work continue to develop across five areas: prayer and worship, mission, training, healing and renewal, and creativity. The 'House of Prayer and Worship', as it was with the Celtic Monks, is at the centre of this urban monastery. We will continue to place the highest value on prayer and worship underpinning everything we do, encouraging not only corporate but also personal rhythms.

Our mission base keeps us looking outward and focusing on bringing the good news of Jesus to those who haven't heard it and who don't know Him. This may be through more church plants. But it is, just as importantly, about encouraging individuals to share their faith and their testimony with others. We are developing a centre for training, which is essentially about discipleship. We have a vision to see thousands of people discipled, trained and released to go and make more disciples.

Our centre for healing and renewal carries with it the vision for a multidisciplinary therapeutic centre, which can offer social prescribing and will see the health of the community improve. It is essentially about transformation, whatever that looks like. The centre for creativity is about exploring all aspects of creativity, again in the broadest sense. It will encourage all forms of art, but will go beyond that to seeing creative solutions to what seem to be unsolvable problems.

In this edition of *idea* magazine, we've focused on the kingdom of God, thinking specifically about the Lord's prayer when Jesus prays 'Your kingdom come'. How does Whiteinch Church's ministry make God's kingdom a reality on earth?

In Whiteinch, when we pray 'Your kingdom come', we are inviting in the rule and reign of God and all that brings. Our ministry is about seeing the kingdom of God break out in our community, our city and our nation. That means we want to see the rule and reign of God in every area of society – government, the media, education, healthcare, the arts, business, etc. As we engage with the things that people care about, we bring the light of Jesus into what is often darkness. We believe we are called to do what Jesus did: He was at

We want to see a vibrant, worshipping, witnessing church in every community and network in Scotland."

the heart of His community, often among those who no one else wanted to be near. He saw value in everyone – even those who society didn't value. He engaged with the lost and the least but also with those who held power and influence.

At the Evangelical Alliance's inaugural Above and Beyond event, held in February, Fiona Bruce MP urged attendees to live out their faith practically. What's your call to action for Christians in the UK?

When the Pharisees asked Jesus which is the greatest commandment, He tells them in Matthew 22:37: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: love your neighbour as yourself."

At the centre for all of us who are part of a faith community is prayer and worship – loving God. Our relationship and connection with Him is what makes us more than a social action group, but we should never be so heavenly minded that we are of no earthly use. Flowing from that relationship with God has to be action. We are meant to be the salt of the earth and the light in the darkness.

We all have something to offer that, without us offering it, a gap is created. Go fill the space that is there and that is just your fit. You don't need to be anyone else; you simply need to be yourself, bring your loaves and fishes to the Lord, and let Him work His miracle. Offer your piece into the big picture; stop for the one and make a difference one life at a time. You don't have to do what we're doing, just look for what God might be doing in your context and join in – He's already gone ahead of you, and everyone gets to play.







**Top left** Pilot Greg Vine speaks with a family in Uganda

**Bottom left** Siobhain Cole, Ground Operations Manager in PNG

**Right** Pilot Dave Forney (inside left) and Sam Baguma, Country Director in Chad (right)

Have you ever wanted to be part of something bigger? Would you like to use your skills in a movement where you can be part of adventure, hope, transformation and rescue?

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) is a global movement founded in 1945 by a group of Christian Second World War servicemen and women who shared a vision to use aviation to spread the love of God. Today we are the world's largest humanitarian airline, with over 130 aircraft bringing hope, help and healing to thousands of isolated people in more than 25 developing countries across the world.

MAF Uganda's **Chief Pilot Greg Vine**, sees on a daily basis how MAF is part of bringing hope to the communities we serve: 'I have one of the best jobs in the world. I get to do what I love, and I know that this is helping to make a difference. MAF fly many legends to broken parts of the world, where they build, heal, feed, counsel and love.'

Many of our technical and engineering roles require a special

skillset and a high level of expertise and experience, but for those who can offer their talents, the rewards can be life-changing. Keith Ketchum, MAF Maintenance Training Co-ordinator, has experienced first-hand how he has been part of transformation for some of the most isolated people across the world: 'Working for MAF, much more is required, but much more is given back; you know that what you did today will change someone's life tomorrow.'

Siobhain Cole, a Ground Operations Manager based in our Papua New Guinea (PNG) programme, may have a desk job, but she is still part of bringing hope and rescue on a daily basis: 'I have a job in front of a computer, but my team are based throughout Papua New Guinea, which allows me the privilege of visiting them and seeing different aspects of PNG culture. While flying to the other bases I get to see medical evacuations or people buying things out of the Bible boxes. This a brilliant opportunity to be reminded of why I spend most of my time at my desk.



I'm not trying to make our operation more efficient to earn more money for a faceless corporation. My team and I are trying to make our flying programme more efficient to allow more people to take MAF flights so that remote bush communities will have a better lifeline to the outside world, women will not die needlessly in childbirth and people will be able to read the Bible in their heart language. Nowhere else can you get that level of job satisfaction from sitting behind a desk!'



There is no doubt that flying one of our small aircraft into an isolated airstrip in some of the most remote places on earth is an adventure – but as **Pilot Dave Forney** shares, it is so much more than that: 'Sure, I love adventure but there are easier

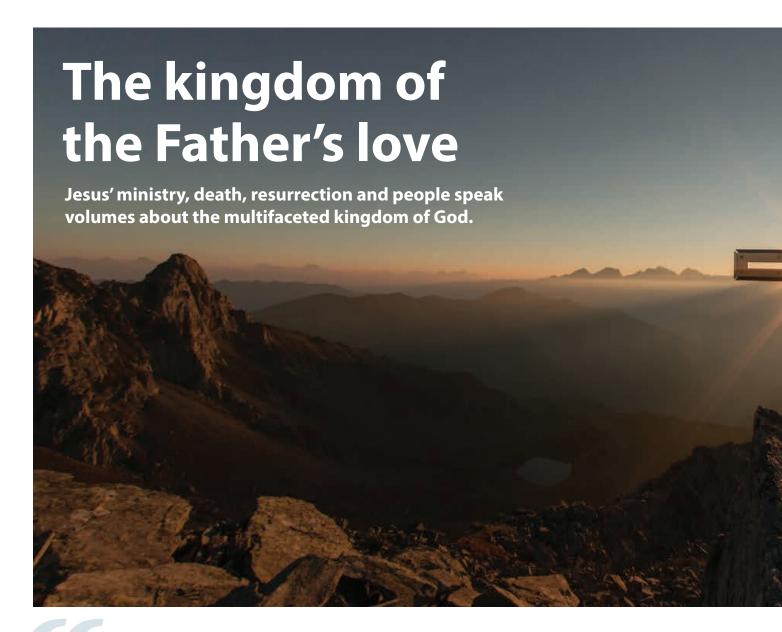
and cheaper ways to get that fix. No, we do it for the people, we do it to help and to serve, in the name of Jesus. And trust me, you can't quantify that with a salary or compare it to a benefits package. What we do provides a level of personal satisfaction, joy and fulfilment that can't be measured in numbers.'

When Sam Baguma took on the Country Director role for our Chad programme, it was his family's first full-time assignment for MAF: 'I feel I'm able to do it because it's God who has actually empowered me. We said we were happy to go wherever the need is and were told that the needs in Chad were urgent. We were very excited because from a family standpoint, we were at that stage where our children were still very young, and we could be adventurous enough to go wherever MAF needed somebody to go. I'm very excited to work here with MAF but one thing I can clearly tell you is that you don't have to be a pilot to work in MAF. I'm not from an aviation background. I'm an accountant by training. I grew up in

a not very wealthy family. But what I received, I can actually use that for Christian ministry. I want to use the gifts that God has given me.'

Come and be part of something bigger. As well as pilots and engineers, we need many other professionals to make our mission happen. From finance and HR managers, to teachers, IT technicians, communication officers and community volunteers. Everyone has an important role to play in our life-changing work.

Find out how to Be Part of Something Bigger, email **hr@maf-uk.org** or phone **01303 850 950** 



The kingdom and the cross are inseparable. The death and resurrection of Jesus revealed the triumph of God's kingdom and the victory of the King."

Perhaps the most basic but clearest description of what the kingdom means comes from pastor and author John Piper on his website Desiring God: "God's kingdom is His reign." John explains that the kingdom is not a physical place nor a people, but rather it is a governance – the rule of God.

# The ministry

You can tell what a person is passionate about by how much they talk about it. Jesus regularly spoke about the kingdom of God. In the four gospels, He taught, preached, illustrated and mentioned the kingdom of God more than 120 times.

Jesus came to restore God's kingdom on earth in a new way, the only way. Through His ministry, the Son of God was revealed, and He set in motion a radical, cosmic renewal that will fulfil God's will and purpose in His relationship with all creation. God's desire is to redeem His people, to restore relationships. It is to beautify creation and fulfil hopes and dreams. It is where the King reigns, and justice, mercy and hope flow from His kingship.

The kingdom of God is a love story, not a power story. It is the good news of salvation and restoration. It challenges the individual and corporate kingdoms of our world. Where wealth, power and authority are the idols (seen so clearly in the conversation Jesus had with Pilate (John 18)), it reveals an upside-down kingdom where the loving reign of God brings about a new, transformational way.

## The cross

At the heart of the inauguration of God's kingdom is the sacrificial and obedient death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection. God demonstrated His rule and Jesus' kingship only through Jesus' death. Not



only did God exemplify His kingdom of love and restoration, but through Jesus' resurrection, and subsequent ascension, He demonstrated the power and authority of Jesus' kingship.

The kingdom and the cross are inseparable. The death and resurrection of Jesus revealed the triumph of God's kingdom and the victory of the King. Not only did it deal with the issue of our sin that led to separation from God and rebellion, but it also defeated every other power, authority and kingdom: one day every knee will bow. The cross guarantees that the kingdom has come and is coming; the kingdom is both a present and future reality. In the words of English New Testament scholar Nichols Thomas Wright, Jesus has established 'a cruciform theocracy' – a cross-centred rule.

The loving rule of God changes everything. The kingdom has been demonstrated, but it has come in submission and sacrifice, initiating a new creation. This new way of living is demonstrated by a people of all languages, tribes and nations, who live the kingdom way: in obedience to the will of God the Father.

### The people

Crucially, through repentance, salvation and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, Jesus created a people of the kingdom: those who understand and willingly live in loving obedience to Him. This learning from and living with the King is the heart of discipleship.

How are we to live in the kingdom? Firstly, we are to take up our cross daily. Our lives are to be a constant abandonment in love to the rule of King Jesus. It is to be salt and light, penetrating a world desperately in need of the love of the King.

What does this lifestyle look like? I believe the kingdom people are those who are called to live out the sermon on the mount (Matthew 5). We are to be the pure in heart, The kingdom of God is a love story, not a power story. It is the good news of salvation and restoration."

meek, peacemakers, who forgive and live as signposts pointing to the rule that is coming.

We are also the praying people. It's not possible to separate living the kingdom from praying for God's kingdom to come. We must recognise that when we pray for the kingdom to come, we are submitting our plans to God. The kingdom people are those who daily seek to demonstrate the values and authority of the King through love, sacrifice and forgiveness.

The King rules. The kingdom is present and still to come. Jesus invites us to surrender all to join with Him in revealing the wonder of the upside-down kingdom. We do it as salt and light, refusing to take on the methodology of the world but by God's love pointing to the better way.

As the community of love, we go in to the world with gracious humility and great confidence, because we know that God reigns and Jesus has won. We live the humble path of followers who preach, pray, heal and set captives free in the King's name, so that His kingdom will be revealed and come on earth as it is in heaven.



# God's kingdom and our dual citizenship

When the will of those who govern the UK moves away from the will of God, evangelical Christians often come up against challenges. In the face of these tests, let's remain steadfast in the truth.

Jesus Christ's central message was that all people should have a change of heart (repent), for the kingdom of God is at hand. Given that 'kingdom' quite literally means the 'king's domain', this would no doubt have been of concern to the ruling authorities at that time, both Roman and Jewish. Not least because, in declaring Himself as both Lord and Saviour, Jesus was announcing the start of a whole new social and political order, and the beginning of the end for theirs. Not so much a revolution, but the revolution.

### **Governance without God**

For the following 2,000 years, as Christians have sought to receive and demonstrate this 'now, but not yet' kingdom of Jesus, tensions have surfaced between those who stand by the word of God and the authorities on earth who don't. For instance, some governments, having realised the benefits, have embraced the good that comes from God, while others have violently resisted it. Some were successful (for a time) in confusing the kingdom with the church and then blending it with their own pagan power structures – think of aspects of Christendom. While others tried to copy the values and principles of the kingdom but without God in the picture, to disastrous effect - think of communism.

# **Dual citizenship**

In many contexts, the tension is still present today. It is often expressed through the idea of citizenship as it relates to identity, allegiances, rights, and obligations. On one hand, the Bible tells us that our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20), and that we are "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy

nation, God's special possession" (1 Peter 2:9). On the other hand, we are also citizens of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. We have passports to prove it, and we seek to contribute to the common good of our society, which is a prominent part of evangelicals' history. It is also at the heart of advocacy work at the Evangelical Alliance.

Ordinarily, the two kingdoms are able to coexist and we do what's right by both, with Romans 13 giving us guidance for being good citizens: paying taxes, obeying the law and respecting the authorities, etc. However, problems sometimes arise because, although God (His nature, His word and His holiness) is unchanging, human ideas of citizenship are not. So, as fashions, trends and appetites change, the dominant set of ideals and beliefs of a particular time is exalted above the will of God.

It was St Augustine who famously explored this problem in his fifth-century book *The City of God Against the Pagans*. Written as a response to accusations that Christianity brought about the decline of Rome, the book poses questions that are relevant today, such as: What happens when these two kingdoms begin to separate sharply or even collide? How do we as followers of King Jesus respond? What do we say? How do we live?

# Much change in the UK

Today in the UK, especially following moves such as the redefinition of marriage, the relationship between the state and historical, mainstream Christianity has become increasingly taut. Despite an



enduring public respect for the historical contribution of the Christian faith to society and culture, as our ruling elites have become ever more secular, we have seen a growing hostility towards Christians who hold fast to the word of God.

Consider what recently happened to former Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron. Politically this is introducing a contradiction: while there's a general appreciation for the good works of Christians in society – from foodbanks, to street pastors, to youth work, to healthcare, and much more – there's also a growing disdain for our words.

The local and national authorities tend to like what we do, but it's becoming more apparent that some don't like aspects of our beliefs. At the Evangelical Alliance we are dealing with a range of challenges to religious freedom and identity across politics and government, amid attempts to recast



'British values', to introduce a new set of norms.

Proposals to change sex education and to redefine gender threaten to undermine parental authority, while moves to extend 'hate speech' laws and rethink what counts as 'harmful' or 'extremist' threaten fundamental freedoms. As Archbishop Michael Neary of Ireland recently observed, there is now a "huge temptation to assimilate, to accept and conform to the dominant values which are at variance so often with our faith".

## A hopeful response

Our response to these challenges needs to be hopeful and imaginative. That's why alongside being a voice for the church through our public policy work, the Evangelical Alliance's advocacy work seeks to encourage the voice of the church by cultivating public leadership. It's why we

produced our *What Kind of Society?* resource – to help Christians to cast a better vision, to describe the coming kingdom of Jesus.

Let's certainly not forget that the Bible tells us to pray for our leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Why? So that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and all wisdom. When there is peace we can more effectively proclaim the gospel – extend the kingdom of God – so that His will for everyone to be saved comes to pass.

## Steadfast in the truth

These issues may make us feel uncomfortable, but we shouldn't be surprised. It's not new for followers of Jesus to experience such pressures and paradox. Indeed, unwelcome as it is, it may even be a sign of the health and vitality of the church in these days—an indication that we are faithfully witnessing to both the truth and grace of Jesus in our society. So, as "we are

The local and national authorities tend to like what we do, but it's becoming more apparent that some don't like aspects of our beliefs."

receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken" (Hebrews 12:28), let's remember that to "not conform to the pattern of this world" (Romans 12:2) is itself a witness to a coming kingdom and a coming King.

# Home is where the heart is in the kingdom of God

Two Christian organisations that invest millions of pounds in homes to rebuild communities open up about how obeying God's call is enabling them and their partners to transform lives.

As I put my fingers to the keyboard to write this article, I'm still struck by my interview with Pete Cunningham, director of Green Pastures CBS Limited. Pastor Pete, as he is known, insisted that we meet face to face at the Evangelical Alliance's head office in London for the interview; and if we hadn't, I wouldn't have been able to perceive how much he loves Jesus and the extent to which he's modelling his own ministry on that of Christ's

Green Pastures buys properties to help churches and Christian organisations across the UK house local individuals and families who are homeless and hurting. This community benefit society, based in Merseyside, was set up almost 20 years ago by Pete, his son Andrew, and Vicki Woodley, who each used their own money to purchase the first property. Pete cashed in his pension, Andrew used part of his monthly salary, and Vicki remortgaged her home.

# Faith in action

"The Bible tells us to speak and live out the gospel," emphasises Pete when I asked him why. "Jesus reached out to the marginalised and outcast in society, and so do we. We take the love of God to people who are struggling with drug addiction, failed asylum seekers, rough sleepers, ex-offenders, the casualties of broken marriages, and many more. We're ministering to the needs of communities, just as Jesus did; and, in doing so, we are extending the kingdom of God."

The first house was a great success, so Pete and his team continued investing in property. It wasn't long before a friend, stirred up to support the initiative, offered to put down a deposit for another house. It was that act of generosity that birthed a business model which would not only see vulnerable people, who tended to be unbelievers, housed and exposed to the goodness of

God blessed us with an affordable and sustainable business model."

> Pete, director, Green Pastures

God, but Christians and churches sow into the kingdom of God and share in a spiritual and financial harvest.

## **Godly business**

"We didn't want to go around with our cap out; we wanted to be self-funding," explains Pete who, at 75 years old, exudes the enthusiasm and energy of a younger man. "God blessed us with an affordable and sustainable business model." Individuals and organisations lend the community benefit society money for a return of up to 5 per cent interest per annum (www. greenpastures.net/invest). This money is used to purchase the property. Rent, which is typically covered by housing benefit until tenants get on their feet, pays the mortgage and yields a profit, which enables Green Pastures to offer investors a return on their loan and expand its housing ministry.

"It's brilliant," declares Pete, before he leans towards me and adds: "We're doing the work with Jesus. And it's this submission to God's will that has caused Green Pastures to grow over the past 20 years, the broken and homeless to come to know Jesus Christ, and churches to invest money, which would otherwise be dormant, and get a return that they can put into their churches and communities. The more people who come to

Christ, the more righteous the UK will be."

### **Success stories**

From the moment Pete and I shook hands upon his arrival until the point we hugged before he went on his way, he excitedly shared example upon example of success story. It's no wonder the meeting, which was scheduled for one hour, lasted two; and it could've easily gone on for longer. "We've spent £10m on property this financial year," he says when I asked him to list some of the achievements. "We also saw 25 per cent of our residents either come to faith or be encouraged in their faith last year."

Pinpointing specific examples, Pete talks of the recent acquisition for £1.5m of a block of 38 self-contained flats in Chesterfield. "Since December 2017, 18 tenants have been born again," he shares. Keen to highlight the value of the smaller projects, he mentions Luke, who was determined to help others after he became a Christian and overcame a heroin addiction. Green Pastures, and Luke's church, backed the purchase of a house last year which is run by Luke. So far two tenants have given their lives to Jesus.

The list of success stories goes on, but we editors are limited by word counts (visit www.greenpastures.net to find out more). Pete says the following has helped him personally and in his ministry: reading the Bible daily, talking to Jesus frequently (becoming a personal friend), fellowshipping with other believers, and talking about Jesus. "And obeying the promptings of the Holy Spirit, although this remains an area for growth – I have a tendency to disagree with God," Pete concludes.

## A housing association on a mission

More than 200 miles south-east of Merseyside, Mission Housing is investing hundreds of thousands of pounds in homes in London to help key Christian workers spread the love of God in areas



of need and opportunity. The charitable housing association raises funds from, mainly, wealthy Christians, and uses that money to buy properties to house Christian ministers, youth workers and other kingdom employees, who would otherwise be priced out of the capital.

Not long after my appointment with Pete, I caught up with Jim Gilbourne, Mission Housing's chief executive, to find out more about the organisation and the positive change it's helping to bring about. I had a long list of questions for Jim, both on a sheet of paper and in my head. One of the things I wanted to understand was why these individuals are moved to part with such large sums of cash. He speaks of one man, for instance, who is investing £150,000 across three properties. He then mentions a group of seven people who pooled their

funds through Mission Housing to buy a property in Clerkenwell, central London. (Need I mention, that property wouldn't have been cheap.)

# Spreading God's wealth

"We offer a vehicle that enables individuals who have wealth to support people who can't access the housing that they need to carry out their work in churches and



Christian organisations around London," he explains. Jim stresses the importance of key Christian workers being able to live in decent and affordable housing within the communities they serve, and that this has become increasingly difficult due to the spiraling cost of housing. "A lot of Christians, particularly young couples, are being priced out of the city; they just can't afford to live here," he says as we meet at the Evangelical Alliance's London resource centre at Kings

"If salaried Christian workers can't afford to live in the areas where they serve, or volunteers are spending most of their time struggling to make ends meet, how can they successfully get into the hearts of communities and reveal the kingdom of God – God's love – to the people who need Him?" So, Mission Housing offers cheaper rent on its properties, which is typically more than 50 per cent below the market price. It's a model that's mutually beneficial, Jim

It's this submission to God's will that has caused Green Pastures to grow over the past 20 years."

Pete

explains: Christian workers are equipped to extend the kingdom of God; communities come into contact with the love of God; and well-off Christians are able to support what is essentially mission work (which is why Jim calls it 'missional investment') and, as with Green Pastures, be partakers of the spiritual and financial harvest—Mission Housing also offers supporters a return on their funds.

# More than money

Yet Jim is keen to emphasise that it's not the prospect of profit that makes these individuals support. "First and foremost, they want to see lives transformed by the love of God," he states. "That is why it's not uncommon for an investor to donate the interest gained on their loan to Mission Housing at the end of a term, or to reinvest the original loan and the interest all together." Jim also gives an example of a lady who donated one of her houses to the nonprofit organisation, which was formed through the merger of Victoria Park Homes and Affordable Christian Housing Association in 2014. "It's great that these individuals who have been blessed by God in their personal lives are using that money to help extend God's kingdom," Jim delights.

### The need is great

Many cities, towns and villages UK-wide need ethical housing projects, which is why Mission Housing is offering consultative support to groups outside London that would like to set up something similar. But Jim acknowledges the size of the challenges in London and the need for Christian intervention. He says: "London is so much more expensive than other parts of the country, and when people's financial

It's great that these individuals who have been blessed by God in their personal lives are using that money to help extend God's kingdom."

Jim Gilbourne, chief executive, Mission Housing

needs are combined with their spiritual needs, 'spiritual ghettos' emerge. We want to continue to help change this pattern through the provision of affordable housing for Christian key workers."

### Joint effort

Speaking with Jim and Pete about how Mission Housing and Green Pastures, with the much-needed assistance of their partners, are helping to change lives and rebuild communities through the provision of housing, such a basic need, got me excited. I was, and still am, excited by what God does through His people, and what can be achieved when Christians pull together.

# Flying the gospel to the ends of the earth



Mission Aviation Fellowship will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2020. David Leek, head of HR in the UK, says that although the Christian organisation continues to fly holistic support to people in hard-to-reach areas, rising natural disasters and civil unrest make the need for such services and specialist staff even greater.

The developing world has seen no shortage of calamity, conflict, instability and suffering over the past century. Folk just have to turn on the news to see communities torn apart by war, battered by floods or stifled by insufficient medical care. So frequent are these types of news stories, that video footage of people screaming because their relatives have been killed or queueing at public taps with empty half-gallon water bottles because the natural water supply is drying up seems quite ordinary.

For Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), the challenging circumstances endured by many communities around the world – specifically those in remote and isolated places – is much more than a news bulletin. As the organisation flies 2,000 different mission, relief and development agencies to districts that need help and lack the necessary infrastructure to be self-sufficient, it sees first-hand what's happening on the ground and the inhabitants' physical as well as spiritual needs.

"Although many thought the need for humanitarian work would diminish, in many ways it has increased. The basic needs remain similar to what they were almost 75 years ago, when WWII pilots set up MAF after the war in order to see isolated people transformed physically and spiritually in the name of Jesus Christ," says David, who has worked at MAF for a decade. "There remains an enormous amount of need in these localities! There has been a rise in strife and civil unrest, and climate change has led to an increase in natural disasters, which affect the poor the most."

These global conditions make the work of MAF more vital than ever. While David delights in how the organisation continues to enable the likes of World Vision, Compassion, Medair, smaller mission agencies, as well as pastors, missionaries and church workers, to name just a few, to provide physical and spiritual transformation to those who are afar off from life as we know it, he says with regret that "some of the services that we do provide have been

hampered because we don't have the staff to support them".

"One of the biggest challenges for us is the shortage of experienced staff, including pilots, managers, and licenced aeronautical engineers," says David, who started his service at MAF as a pilot. "Without experienced people, we can't take the gospel to individuals and families in remote and isolated places." David explains that MAF sees the gospel as both physical and spiritual, and that they can't exist separately: "When we pray the Lord's prayer, we don't stop at 'your kingdom come', we also pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven."

David urges Christians to make God's will a reality on earth, by walking in justice, love, mercy, light and hope, which characterise the kingdom of God. "The gospel is a message for those in the West and those living in the jungles, desert and isolated places where there's no roads and infrastructure," he says. "Taking His kingdom to the most isolated places in both word and deed is MAF's mission, but we can't do it without you."

David says there is a disconnect between the West and rest of the world, where "we live such comfortable lives and take so much for granted, while some of our distant neighbours don't have access to the everyday things we take for granted". He therefore challenges Christians to take a few moments to reflect, and ask themselves: can I do something to help?

# Establishing God's kingdom in the next generation

The word of God tells us to "train up children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not depart from it". Andy Frost, who is working alongside Care for the Family on the Kitchen Table Project, explains how this much-needed initiative is helping mums, dads and carers establish in their children a lasting faith.

"Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom
come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is
in heaven (Matthew 6:9-13, KJV)." This
manner in which Jesus taught us to pray
inspires me to make my life count for the
purposes of God. It inspires me to play my
part in seeing churches grow as people
come to faith, to see the different realms
of society transformed, and to see the
nations more fully reflect God's glory.

The word 'kingdom' makes me think big picture—His kingdom here on earth. The danger is that I can sometimes make it solely about 'out there' and not about 'in here'. I can fail to ask what God's kingdom looks like for my life and perhaps, in particular, I can fail to ask, what does His kingdom coming in my family look like?

We can spend our lives looking for ways to influence the cultural spheres in which we operate and end up missing both the opportunity and the responsibility that many of us have to influence our family and to see God's kingdom come in the lives of our children.

Our children have an innate curiosity about God and find it easy to believe in a creator." Eloise and Tilly, my two young daughters, with their flowing locks of blond hair and infectious giggles, are growing up in a world very different to the one I grew up in, with the escalating pressures of 21st century life. I long for them both to be in a relationship with the King and to find their role in His kingdom, but shockingly statistics suggest that just 50 per cent of children who grow up in Christian homes keep their faith as adults, according to the Church Growth Research Programme.

We know there are no guarantees and that ultimately our children will need to make their own decisions, but perhaps we have underestimated the role we can play? The early years are important. Recent research from the Church of England shows that 56 per cent of practicing Christians came to faith under the age of 11. Early childhood is particularly important in faith formation, as our children have an innate curiosity about God and find it easy to believe in a creator.

### **New campaign**

Over the past year, I have been working with Care for the Family on a new campaign, the Kitchen Table Project. It's a growing movement of mums, dads and carers learning from each other and sharing ideas to inspire faith in our children. At the heart of the project is a recognition that if we want to see God's kingdom come, then we need to help the next generation discover their identity in Christ and what it means to follow Him. A primary focus for the campaign has been around helping parents to realise that they have the most influence on their children developing a faith that lasts. As local

churches have made leaps and bounds in their children's work programmes, the danger can be that we delegate that responsibility away to professionals, rather than looking for how we can add to what happens on a Sunday by nurturing faith in the day to day of life.

Through a range of resources that we have launched this year, we have seen groups of parents connecting to explore how they can encourage one another to be more intentional in inspiring faith in their children. Life is busy but if we are really committed to the kingdom, then we need to create space to think through how best we can nurture faith in the home.

Embarking on this journey with the Kitchen Table Project, I have discovered the simple things that I can instil into our family routine that will help my daughters' faith flourish. I've seen how I can create more moments of prayer on the way to school and when my children have bad dreams. I've been able to build into our life habits that remind us of God's faithfulness and what it means to be part of God's people. I've become more aware of how to frame conversations that demonstrate to my little ones how important Jesus is to our family.

Whilst we can't neglect the big picture vision of 'Your kingdom come', we need to hold that in tension with looking for how we can pass on faith in our homes. Whether we are parents with young children ourselves or whether we know of parents in our congregations who we can support, we all have a part to play in seeing His kingdom established in the next generation.



Andy Frost and his family during the launch of the Kitchen Table Project.

# **HELPFUL RESOURCES**

# **Inspire session**

Inspire is an easy-to-run small group discussion to start us thinking about how to build faith in our children. It's designed with a fun, relaxed and interactive format, allowing parents to share ideas and experiences. In the downloadable session pack you will find:

- Step-by-step leader's guide to help you run the session.
- Two short five-minute video clips on faith at home and what the Bible says.
- Questions and activities to help parents talk about their experiences and struggles.
- 28 discussion cards to help us think about how we can be more intentional about building faith in the everyday.

Anyone can run Inspire – all you need is a group of mums, dads and carers, 90 minutes and off you go.

All the resources are free to download at **kitchentable.org.uk/inspire** 

# **Church toolkit**

The toolkit has been designed as a pickand-mix of resources that you can use in a way that suits your individual church. The aim is to develop a culture among parents and the church as a whole that helps us all to be involved in nurturing our children's faith in a real and natural way. Our vision is that as a result, many more of our young people grow up with a lasting faith in God.

### **Key items include:**

- A booklet for leaders, Inspiring a faith that lasts – How churches can support parents in nurturing their children's faith, which is free to download.
- A four-part sermon series with discussion questions which could be used by small groups.
- Leaflets and posters you can order to give out at church.

Find out more at kitchentable.org.uk/
toolkit

# Social media

Follow Kitchen Table Project on Facebook for regular ideas, verses, articles and motivation to help on the journey. These reminders of what builds faith help us be intentional each day in pointing our children to God.



Just 50 per cent of children who grow up in Christian homes keep their faith as adults."

# **Raising Faith**

Written by Katharine Hill, director at Care for the Family, and Andy Frost, *Raising Faith* is full of real, down-to-earth stories and encouragement to help you feel enthused and confident to inspire faith in your children. Full-colour throughout, it's packed with bite-sized articles and helpful ideas for building faith even in the middle of the busyness of family life.

Care for the Family is giving away five free copies. Alternatively, purchase a copy at **cff.org.uk/shop** or from your favourite bookshop for £4.99. Discounts are available when you buy more copies. Please contact Care for the Family for details on 029 2081 0800 or **mail@cff.org.uk** 

# United mission in the gospel of Christ

Taking a leap of faith in the '50s, the Evangelical Alliance put its weight behind Billy Graham's fledgling UK ministry and formed a partnership that brought the love of God to thousands of people in the country and a greater emphasis on evangelism.

"My one purpose in life is to help people find a personal relationship with God, which I believe comes through knowing Christ," were the profound words of American evangelist Dr Billy Graham. Billy, who went home to be with the Lord at the age of 99 in February this year, spent a lifetime living out his purpose. All who knew him, or knew of him, would agree that he took seriously the great commission and went around the world and preached the good news of Jesus Christ.

Who would have thought that the first couple of talks Billy gave in the UK would have such an influence on the way the country 'did' evangelism and lead to mass conversion? This is what happened: in 1946-47, just over 10 years after Billy became a Christian and around three years after he graduated from Bible college, he led several evangelistic youth events in the UK as part of Youth for Christ's annual conferences, having been appointed the charity's full-time evangelist.

### Paradigm shift

It was at these events that evangelical leaders in the UK caught sight of Billy, who was under 30 at the time, and began to consider the potential of mass evangelism in Britain. So, what happened next? The UK's evangelical leaders took steps towards a collaboration that saw the southern Baptist minister lead a remarkable crusade on this side of the Atlantic which targeted adults. The Evangelical Alliance, which at the time had decided to place a greater emphasis on evangelism, backed the Greater London Crusade, by helping to organise the 12-week drive.

Known informally as the 1954 Harringay Crusade, the series of large-scale events, which was held at the Harringay Arena in north London and culminated at Wembley stadium, achieved an aggregate attendance



of two million people, and became the largest Christian event of its kind in UK history. The result: thousands of people responded to Billy's calls to accept Christ Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Did it stop there? No. The following year saw Billy evangelise in Scotland, and the Evangelical Alliance set up a TV relay system to enable churches around the UK to watch Billy live in their own churches.

"Straddling every continent on earth, Billy's ministry brought him to the British Isles on 23 occasions, when I was privileged to be his chairman. I was a participant in all of those missions, beginning with Harringay when I was a teenager, in what for me was the most single formative three-month period of my life," comments the Rev Richard Bewes OBE, one-time member of the UK Billy Graham Board and former rector of All Souls Church Langham Place.

The crusade was also a formative period in the life of the Evangelical Alliance. The partnership between the representative of evangelical Christians in the UK and Billy's team, which exists to this day, helped the Evangelical Alliance to live out further its own calling to promote in word and deed united mission in the gospel of Christ. This was demonstrated at the time when the organisation provided financial backing for the crusades and the follow-up work, and risked its own financial viability in doing so.

Steve Clifford, general director of the Evangelical Alliance, comments: "The ministry of Billy Graham in the UK and the Evangelical Alliance have been uniquely intertwined in the second half of the 20th century, since the events at Harringay Arena in 1954. I am sure that his legacy will live on."



# Why not try?

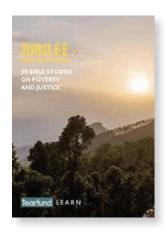
The Evangelical Alliance recommends five resources which will help you in your walk with God and any ministerial work with which you may be involved.



Check out *Discipleship Explored*, an eight-episode documentary series with accompanying handbooks, which will take you on a journey into the book of Philippians. It's shot all over the world, features interviews with believers across seven countries and five continents, and aims to answer the question: how could Paul, under house arrest, say that he had discovered the secret of contentment (Philippians 4:12)? And is that secret something we can discover for ourselves? www.discipleship.explo.red



Request a copy of the Change the World small group course from the Evangelical Alliance. The handy resource, which forms part of the organisation's public leadership offering, helps to equip budding Christian leaders who want to bring about positive change in the places they live, work and spend their time. Contact a member of the public leadership team on hello@ thepublicleader.com for your free copies.



Explore one or more of Tearfund's 50 Bible studies which form part of *Jubilee: 50 Bible studies on poverty and justice*. To mark its 50th anniversary, the charity brought together in one book 38 jubilee-themed Bibles studies taken from a number of its publications and 12 new reflections, to create this useful tool for independent or group learning. Visit **learn.tearfund.org/jubilee** to find out more.



Read the sermon on healthy churches delivered on 9 May 1860 by C H Spurgeon. The Prince of Preachers, as Spurgeon was known, had a long relationship with the Evangelical Alliance. His uncompromising style sometimes brought him into conflict with the organisation's leaders, but mostly the relationship was harmonious and he spoke on behalf of the Evangelical Alliance at some of the its public meetings. All his sermons are available on the Spurgeon Center website: **spurgeon.org** 



Consider buying yourself a copy of *The Difference* by Samuel Lane. Released by Vineyard Worship, formerly known as Vineyard Records, the fresh, gritty and distinctive worship album encourages listeners to continually look to Jesus, knowing that when we fall short, He offers His hand; when we are weak, He is our strength; and when we fail, He is the difference. For a taster, visit www.vineyardchurches.org.uk/releases/difference-samuel-lane or YouTube.

# Christ is King, not me

When Jesus taught us to pray 'Your kingdom come', He was inviting us to seek God's rule and reign in every aspect of our lives.

At the heart of the kingdom of God is the King. For me to learn how to be a citizen of that kingdom, I need to learn how to submit my rule to Him. Submission does not come naturally to me: I like to be in control, I heed my own opinions, and I trust my own judgement. I don't even like the word submission; I associate it with force and oppression. But, God's rule is never oppressive; it is life-giving. So, if my inclinations are opposed to submission and yet I know that through submitting to God's rule in my life I will come to experience God's kingdom more readily, then I would be wise to learn how to submit.

Here are three intentional habits that help me learn how to submit to God:

# 1. The practice of not having the last word

In conversations (especially heated ones), having the final word can feel a lot like winning. Holding my tongue, giving respect to another person and letting go of the need to be heard, is a humbling and powerful act. It helps me to remember that God knows my heart and my intentions and I do not need to prove anything to anyone else.

## 2. The practice of submitting to another's opinion

I know best. This lie has caught me out so many times. And, even if I do know best, when I do let go of my incessant need to control, I get to bless others with the control that I cling to so tightly for myself.



## 3. The practice of being a guest

I love to practice hospitality, to welcome and include people in my family's life. But Jesus was rarely a host; Jesus was often a guest. If I'm honest, I like hosting because I'm in control. I like to be seen to have a nice home and serve good food. Plus, I feel at ease in my own space. When I give the opportunity to someone else, it can be a beautiful opening for God's kingdom to come into their context and to bless them for who and where they are.

Jesus often spoke of the kingdom starting in the small and seemingly insignificant, yet having far-reaching effects. I want to see God's kingdom come, in my life, in the lives of those around me and throughout the world. These practices may seem inconsequential, but I do believe "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much" (Luke 16:10). As I learn to submit to God's rule in the little things, I am convinced I will see the effects of God's rule spill out and God's kingdom come.



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# Developing resilience

It has been a wonderful privilege over the years to become close friends with some amazing men and women of God. I have made it a habit to observe their lives and learn as much as I possibly can.



I not only study how they go about their work or ministry, but how they conduct themselves behind the scenes, at home with their families and when out and about with people they meet in everyday life. I have learnt a lot, been challenged and indeed encouraged by their example.

I confess, however, that there have been other relationships which I now look back on with great sadness and pain—friends who have lost faith and fallen away, some disastrously. It's as if they pressed a selfdestruct button, walking away from their marriages, families and their faith. For others it was slower, a gradual erosion of their passion for God, their relationship with God's people, and their sense of God's calling on their lives. These were people with whom I had worked, prayed, planned, planted churches, and seen people come to Christ. Yet today, they are far from the faith and no longer with their marriage partners or children.

I've often asked myself the questions, what went wrong? and, was there more that I could have done? The answers are never simple, but as I reflect back, I find myself returning to one word, 'resilience'. The

writer to the Hebrews spoke to Christians who were under pressure. Some had been imprisoned, others had lost social status, and others their property and relationships. Some were in danger of losing their faith. The writer wanted to encourage and strengthen them. Hebrews 12:1, using the imagery of a race, exhorts us to "run with perseverance the race marked out for us". The word 'perseverance' is very close to the word 'resilience'.

I thank God that there is a race marked out for us. God has a purpose for every one of our lives, but it's possible to get off track and lose sight of the race. The resilient Christian life means putting in place the necessary habit patterns – the ways of thinking, behaving and relating – which mean we don't just survive, but we flourish. Resilience means that when issues come our way, we have the ability to face them, to surmount them, and to continue the race. As I have observed lives lived with resilience, I've noticed how such lives result in healthy families, healthy relationships, healthy businesses and healthy churches.

As Christians living in 21st century UK, it seems there is an increasing need for

us to develop and indeed strengthen our resilience. Let's not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the pervading narrative of a media dominated by the secular humanist narrative. Let's remain strong in our faith and confident to tell our stories and share our convictions. After all, we are convinced we are the bringers of the greatest good news story anyone could ever hear. We are the followers of Jesus.

Finally, by way of encouragement, I had the privilege of attending the funeral of Billy Graham who died on 21 February 2018 at the age of 99. From very humble beginnings, born on a dairy farm in Charlotte North Carolina, he was to preach the gospel to nearly 250 million people across six continents. At his funeral, leaders gathered from around the world and heard reports of a race well run, a life which remained faithful until the end. For me, the most moving part of his funeral were the personal accounts of family members. As Franklin, his son, made clear, his dad was the same man off the platform as he was on it. Billy lived a resilient life both publicly and privately.



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