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GOOD QUESTION



CULTURE



IN YOUR WORDS

BIG INTERVIEW

Ruth Awogbade:
changing perceptions

THEOLOGY

Merging social and
spiritual transformation

Making all things new

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Our Lent Study Guide for 2018 brings to life God's passion for new beginnings.

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Photo: Paul Jeffrey



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Rebecca Taylor: All of us can, whether in large or small things, be part of transforming the communities around us, helping to make life better for all.

idea-torial

Transforming times



Once again, it's a great time to be editing *idea*. I have the honour of producing an edition that will reach you as Christmas celebrations abound, and as you approach 2018 with all your hopes for the year ahead. Many of you will feel excited at the prospect of the new year, others will be wondering what it will bring, and even: "how will I cope?" I hope this issue of *idea* gives you expectation and inspiration for celebrating the most wonderful transformation of God into a baby. I also hope it will be a chance to be inspired to reach new limits in your aspirations for next year.

We're excited to report on the amazing impact Movement Day in October had, and hear your stories of ongoing social, spiritual and missional transformation (see page 24). We celebrate development agency *Tearfund's* 50th birthday in 2018, charting its rise from church donations to the Alliance in the 1960s to its international impact in our feature on page 16. Our archive section also gives a flavour of those years on page 20. We also hear from Newcastle-based *Safe Families for Children* providing you with incredible examples of lives changed through volunteers on page 12.

Our Good Question looks at how we share our faith alongside practically helping our communities. Rosalee Velloso Ewell, executive director at the World Evangelical Alliance, provides us with a theology of fusing spiritual and social transformation on page 27. We hear from former Bible Society chief executive James Catford on how he makes quiet time work for his 9-5. There is a great *idea*-list of his recommended books to use moments of silence to make a difference. See page 22-23 for more.

Our Big Interview is with Ruth Awogbade, internationally acclaimed founder of women's faith and lifestyle platform *Magnify*, on her inspirations to see people transformed. Steve Clifford marks the galvanizing impact of Movement Day and encourages us to be inspired as we go into 2018 on page 34.

We never know what lies ahead, and 2017 has been no exception in the highs and lows of humanity, but all of us can, whether in large or small things, be part of transforming the communities around us; helping to make life better for all.

Romans 12:2 says: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Now that's an aspiration I want to aim for.

Rebecca Taylor
Acting editor

Join the conversation #EATransformers on Twitter or follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Just type *Evangelical Alliance* as a search and say hi!

We're on Twitter!
Follow us @idea_mag



FIVE THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW UNTIL THIS ISSUE

Tearfund started as a 'fund' made from the generous donations of Christians sent to the Alliance in response to the refugee crisis in the 1960s

The commitment of leaders, churches and volunteers as they transform the places they live

The endless moments of grace we are given each day if we just pause

Why so many organisations and individuals are proud to be members of the Alliance

The Alliance won best new website award at the Premier Digital awards for greatcommission.co.uk.

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James Catford on making quiet time work in his 9-5.

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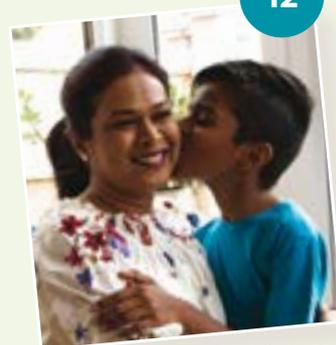
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Why am I a member?



credit: Compassion

On our website every month, we celebrate why our members are part of the Alliance – and its inspiring.

Take a look at some of the reasons people love being members. To become one too see more on our members page www.eauk.org/join

World Vision:

‘We believe that the Church is the greatest force for good in the world and that we play just a small part in that. We feel we’re called to be very much part of Christ’s body here in the UK and one of the best illustrations of the unity is through being a part of the Evangelical Alliance.’

It is an honour to be part of a network of Christians which spans denominations across the UK.”

Woolwich Central Baptist Church:

‘We are strong believers in the importance of unity within the body of Christ. We also believe that Christians are agents of transformation and good news. We love the emphasis the Alliance places on inspiring and equipping Christians to be good news in their communities.’

Compassion:

‘Like the Alliance, Compassion believes that the key to long-lasting change, whether it’s at home here in the UK or all across the world is Christ’s bride, the Church. It is an honour to be part of a network of Christians which spans denominations across the UK, working together in unity, service and friendship to transform communities.’

Kevin Ashman:

‘I became a member because of the Evangelical Alliance’s advocacy. I believe that Christians should be actively involved in the political process and should try to ensure that legislation and government policy are informed and influenced by Christian values. Dave Landrum, director of advocacy at the Alliance, is doing great work here. The more organisations and individuals who are members the more weight is attached to the Evangelical Alliance’s views.’

Mahabba Network:

‘To expand into all this, we need some respected evangelical Church leaders as great champions behind us, and some long term financial partners. We have found that the Alliance has been the best forum for sharing and networking in the UK and Europe, with the European Evangelical Alliance asking us to help mobilise European evangelical leaders.’

Five prayer points

As the new year approaches, it’s the season for aspirations of self-improvement, so join us as we pray for a radically better way, seeking true spiritual transformation in 2018:

- Let’s pray for **transformation** in the year ahead – for our personal spiritual transformation, transformation of our towns, cities and communities, and transformation of the society we live in, all for the glory of God.
- Praise God for a fantastic and inspiring **Movement Day UK** in October. Hundreds of Christians gathered to seek the peace and prosperity of their towns, cities and places.
- 2018, will mark 50 years of **Tearfund’s** life-saving and life-changing work since it was released by the Evangelical Alliance in 1968. So join with us in giving thanks for this wonderful organisation.
- Please pray for our upcoming event, **Above and Beyond**, in February 2018, where we will be providing information on the legal and regulatory issues challenging the smooth running of hundreds of churches and organisations across the UK.
- Pray for **leaders** across our nations to stand and work for true transformation of the places we call home.

Public Leadership
Learn >> Speak >> Lead

“I WANT TO BE A LEADER.”

It’s easy to say but not so easy to put into practice. We know from meeting many of you that you have the passion and drive for leadership, but feel under resourced to make it happen.

So how do you move from the vision to application?

We want to equip you to lead in public places, so in early 2018 we are hosting four evenings to help you to develop understanding, skills and confidence for leadership.

Each evening will feature an expert speaker on four key themes for effective public leadership. We’ll be looking at world views, distinctive Christian leadership, leadership competency and change in your community context.

To give as many of you as possible the opportunity to engage, talks will be provided as part of a resource pack so that you can replicate these evenings in your own location.

The pack will include workbooks with

discussion questions, Bible reflections, prayer points, and activities that can be accessed on our website.

Understand your world; develop your skills; work collaboratively; be challenged to set your vision into action. Dates and location to be announced soon on thepublicleader.com





Protecting your data

Opt in

You may be aware that new data protection regulations, known as GDPR, come into force in May 2018. Using your data as you'd like and protecting your privacy is very important to us.

The Evangelical Alliance is dedicated to uniting, enhancing and equipping you in mission and in voice. Without your prayers and support we couldn't do what we do. So thank you for being part of us.

In order for us to be able to email you to ask for financial or practical support for this work, we need your consent. We will be writing to our members in the coming months. And in the meantime, you can simply update your contact preferences now at www.eauk.org/stayintheLOOP

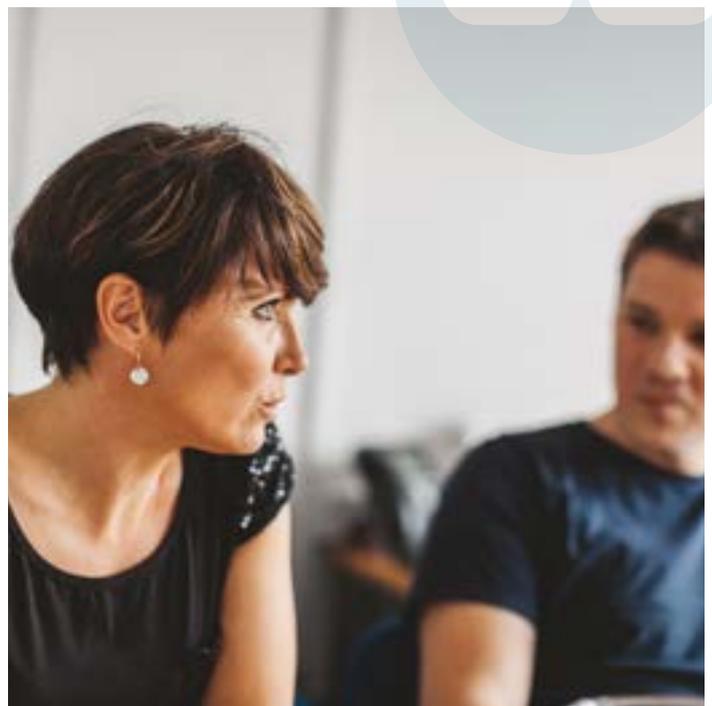
The new regulations make it easier for you to tell us how you want to be contacted and what you want to be informed about. You can also find out how we keep your data secure and private and how it is used, by checking out our privacy policy at www.eauk.org/privacy

Public leadership launch in Northern Ireland

Alongside other events and initiatives for leaders in the coming year, the team at Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland are excited for the launch of a year-long Public Leadership Programme in autumn 2018.

Says Stuart Bothwell, mission coordinator: "Public leadership is about modelling the way of Jesus in the public square as he makes all things new. It means caring about the place where God has put us, speaking hope and engaging positively in public life. It means contributing towards the good, the true and the beautiful across Northern Ireland and beyond."

For more information on the launch of Public Leadership in Northern Ireland, visit reimaginingfaith.com/leadership





HOPE transforming communities



HOPE is a catalyst that brings churches together to transform communities. Churches across the spectrum of denominations are working together with HOPE towards 2018 and a united year of mission in words and action to make Jesus known.

Villages, towns and cities are preparing for the year of mission. Canterbury's HOPE 2018 will be launched in January at Canterbury Cathedral – one of many launch events nationwide. Churches in Hungerford are planning an eight-day mission at Easter 2018; and have been using the 2017 Christmas HOPE magazine to prepare the ground. In Hucknall there are plans for churches to use HOPE banners throughout the town linking what they do to the national initiative.

HOPE is inviting churches to pray, speak, give and invite as part of the mission year.

PRAY

HOPE, the Evangelical Alliance and the Church of England brought 40 denominational and ministry leaders together in Windermere for 24 hours of prayer in September 2017 to launch HOPE 2018. The *Talking Jesus* research (talkingjesus.org), which came from the first Windermere Summit, shows us that one in five of the people we talk to about Jesus wants to know more. So, HOPE is inviting Christians to pray for five friends, family members of colleagues, asking God to give opportunities to introduce them to Jesus.

SPEAK

The *Talking Jesus* resources are designed to give church members fresh confidence in using words to share their faith. *Mission Academy Live* is HOPE's youth initiative to equip young people to share their faith in words and action.

GIVE

HOPE has a range of top quality materials that will help our unchurched friends on their journey to faith. HOPE's Christmas and Easter magazines can be used as an invitation to Christmas carol services and Easter guest services. HOPE's gift book *Who Do You Say I Am?* helps people to discover more about Jesus, why he died and what his resurrection can mean for us today. One pensioner, a lifelong church goer, told HOPE: "I can recite the creed backwards, but *Who Do You Say I Am?* helped me to make sense of the Christian faith for the first time."

INVITE

HOPE encourages Christians to be intentional in inviting people into their homes, into their lives, but also into the events with our church family: Christmas carol services, Easter guest services, and courses like Alpha and Christianity Explored.

RHYTHM OF MISSION

HOPE has developed a rhythm of mission through the church calendar to help churches work together to transform communities.

LENT AND EASTER

Through Lent, 40 Acts from Stewardship helps Christians to put faith into practice. HOPE has also published '40 Stories of HOPE' – a Lent course drawing together stories from prisoners, prison chaplains and ex-prisoners, whose lives have been transformed. The book, adopted by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland as its Lent course for 2018, includes readings and prayers from Mark's Gospel.

HOPE encourages churches to make the most of Easter as a season of invitation, inviting local people to discover how they can live in the power of the resurrection.

SUMMER FUN DAYS

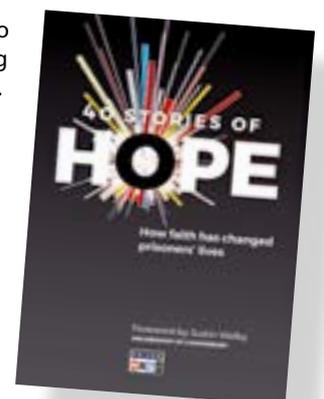
The warmer summer weather makes it easier for churches to get out of their buildings, serving local communities through practical projects such as cleaning up a play area or holding a summer fun day.

HARVEST

Inviting neighbours or colleagues to a harvest supper is a great way to build bridges of friendship. HOPE and World Vision's Share A Meal project aims to bring communities together to enjoy food and make friends.

CHRISTMAS

As well as using Christmas church services to explain who Jesus is and why he came, HOPE encourages churches to get out into communities delivering the *Christmas HOPE* magazine door to door. Flash mob choirs, karaoke carols in pubs and sports stadium carol singing events are all ways in which churches are reaching out to share HOPE during the festive season.



Sign up

To find out more about HOPE 2018 and to sign up for regular updates visit hopetogether.org.uk

This Lent, Krish invites you
on a journey...
...into the words of Jesus on the cross

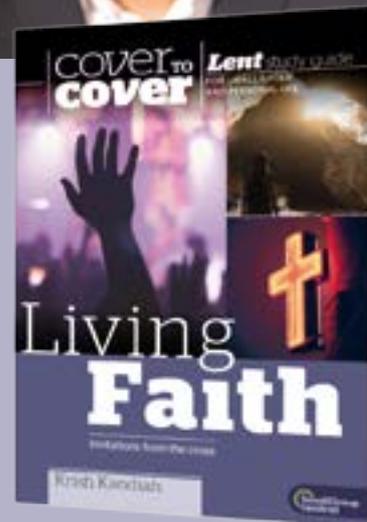


*'They're an invitation to adventure, invitation to trust
and an invitation to persevere. It's going to be an
incredible journey...'*

Join broadcaster, theologian and activist Krish Kandiah,
and countless other Christians this Lent!

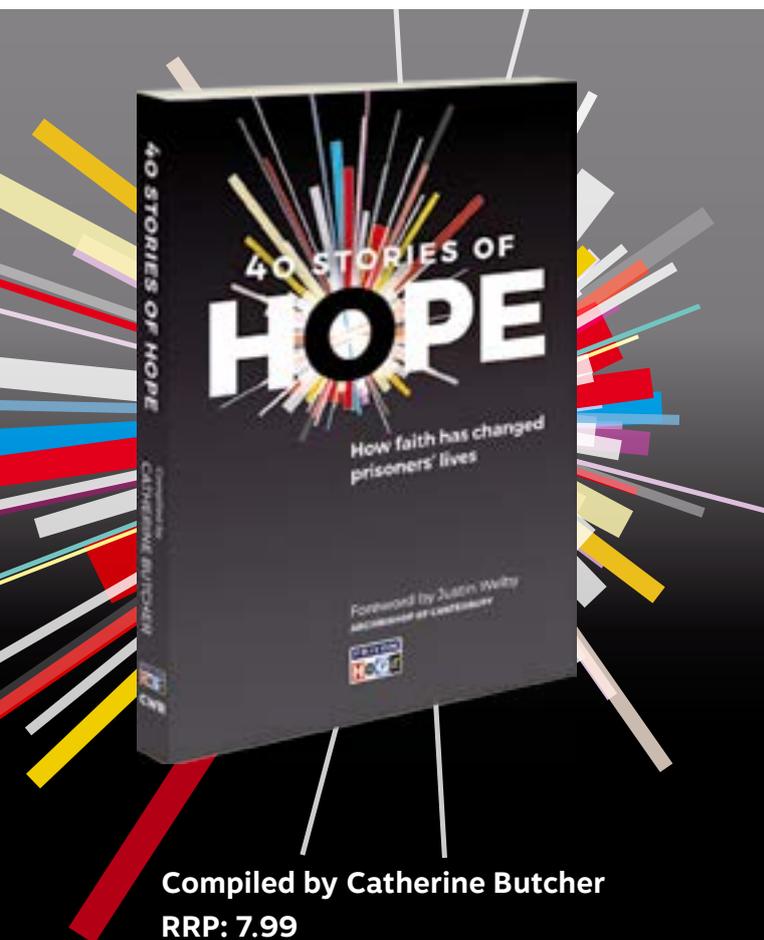
Find out more about this study guide at
www.cwr.org.uk/lent

Available online and in Christian bookshops.



RRP: £5.99

ISBN: 978-1-78259-691-2



Compiled by Catherine Butcher

RRP: 7.99

ISBN: 978-1-78259-759-9

'This is an extraordinary book'

Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

- 40 extraordinary testimonies from prisons
- 40 extraordinary encounters with Jesus
- 40 extraordinary chances to inspire your faith
- 40 opportunities to inspire your small group

For each individual copy of *40 Stories of Hope*
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will send an additional copy into prisons.

Recommended 2018 Lent resource of Churches
Together in Britain and Ireland. Bulk order
discounts available.

Find out more at www.cwr.org.uk/hope
Available online and in Christian bookshops.



eauk.org

Stay in the loop with everything the Alliance is up to online



Share this

We were delighted to win the award for best new website at the Premier Digital awards for our greatcommission.co.uk site in November. We launched a year ago to help you and your church share your own stories of how Jesus has changed lives. Get inspired to reach your community with the good news by signing up to Great Commission's e-newsletter greatcommission.co.uk/keep-updated and follow us on social media.



Sign up to this

Each week brings news stories which get everybody talking so why not sign up to our weekly Friday Night Theology? FNT reflects on a current news story from the world of politics, media, sport and culture from a Christian perspective to help us in our conversations each weekend.

Like to keep up with everything advocacy? Sign up to our monthly bulletin from the Evangelical Alliance's advocacy team, *Everything Advocacy*, bringing you news of the work we are doing in parliament and in-depth analysis of key public policy issues.

Visit www.eauk.org/stayintheloop to sign up.



Read this

Leader at Above Bar Church Southampton, previously chair of Keswick Ministries and on the Evangelical Alliance Council, John Risbridger's reflections on mental health were one of the most popular views on our website recently. Find it here: eauk.org/culture/friday-night-theology



Explore this

Need last minute ideas and resources for current Christmas events? Find a downloadable video of the Christmas story at: biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/christmas/ The Alliance resources web page also lists other content eauk.org. Watch out for Lent resources, coming soon.



Whatever your preferred social media channel, be sure to get the latest news from the Evangelical Alliance by following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Just type Evangelical Alliance in the search bar and join the community.



THE EGG THAT SHARES THE EASTER STORY



Original (RRP £3.99)

The 2018 design includes a large 24 page Easter story-activity book, a bag of Swiss Chunky Buttons (25g) and a milk chocolate egg (125g) with a lovely creamy taste. 35% cocoa – Palm Oil free.

Dark (RRP £5.50)

Includes a large 24 page Easter story-activity book, a chocolate egg made from dark Belgian chocolate (165g) and 3 dark chocolate squares (3 x 5g). Delicious, smooth and fruity. 71% cocoa - Palm Oil free.

Special Edition (RRP £9.99)

Inside this specially crafted edition you will find a simple guide to Easter, an olive wood holding cross keyring from the Holy Land, an orange milk chocolate bar (80g), and a luxury milk chocolate egg (200g). 35% cocoa – Palm Oil free.

A chance to share the good news

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. To date, we have sold more than one million eggs with 750,000 of these sent through the post directly to churches and schools.

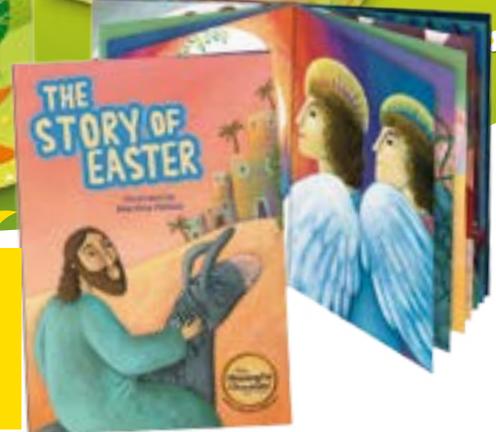
We need your help

To allow us to continue to make The Real Easter Egg, we need people to switch and buy. We need a champion (maybe you) to spread the word, collect orders and buy directly from us.

You can download resources or buy from us today by visiting our website www.realeasteregg.co.uk Don't forget, delivery is free if you spend more than £45 (that's just 12 eggs) and order by 6th March 2018.

New Design Easter Story

A 24 page Easter story-activity book illustrated by Martina Peluso is included in the Original and Dark eggs.



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FREE DELIVERY if ordered by 6th March*

Pay online by card The simplest way to pay is to visit our online shop at: www.realeasteregg.co.uk/shop

Payment by cheque Complete the form below and return to: The Meaningful Chocolate Company, 11a Eagle Brow, Lymm, WA13 0LP. Cheques payable to: 'The Meaningful Chocolate Company Ltd'.

Delivery address:

Postcode: _____

Title: First name: Surname: _____

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	No. of Eggs	Total
Original Real Easter Egg (150g) (£3.99 each must be ordered in multiples of 6) £23.94 		
Special Edition Real Easter Egg (280g) Can be ordered in singles, each egg £9.99 		
Dark Real Easter Egg (180g) (£5.50 each must be ordered in multiples of 6) £33.00 		
Postage & Packaging See terms and conditions below	FREE* or £4.95	
Grand Total		

*FREE DELIVERY on orders over £45 and received by 6th March

Use the resource pack included in this publication or download from: www.realeasteregg.co.uk



Wales – restoring and transforming

Gethin Russell-Jones shares a transforming story from Wales.

Rachel Jones knows a thing or two about the transforming power of Jesus. Speaking at a recent Evangelical Alliance Wales gathering, Rachel told her story. Despite leaving school with 11 GCSEs and a hopeful future, Rachel made a series of choices that lured her into drugs and addiction.

Even though she was married with two children, she drifted in and out of police custody. "I was in an out of trouble like a revolving door until I was imprisoned in 2004. During this time, I met a drug and alcohol worker who was a Christian and he got me onto a residential rehab programme run by Teen Challenge. It turned my life around. The programme helped me kick the habit and brought me into a relationship with Jesus." Rachel worked with Teen Challenge as a support worker until 2010, returning to her home town of Newport developing a crisis intervention drop in centre with Teen Challenge colleague Gareth.

"Between 2010 and 2016 things were going great. I was in full time employment and I was working with a lady called Paula who started Women in Need, a charity for women caught in prostitution and human trafficking. I was going to church and very aware of God's presence in my life" And then it all went wrong. "I took my eyes off God and relapsed into my old way of life." During a few months in 2016, Rachel's life spiralled.

But another amazing transformation was on its way. "I was rock bottom, in a real mess, but because of my work with drug addicts I knew that Victory Outreach ran a brilliant rehab programme for offenders and the chaplain managed to get me on the programme. But first I had to come off my methadone addiction in a very short time. This was very risky – in the past I had suffered many fits – but God was with me all the way and He brought me through. After 10 months on Victory Outreach's rehab programme, I came out prison a clean



Rachel: now a volunteer house manager.

woman, transformed by the grace of God. Since then I've been volunteering as the house manager for Victory's female house and it's amazing seeing God restore women with no faith background or who have wandered away from Him. And it's only His strength and power that gives the victory and I'm looking to Him every day."

Scotland – interns and public leadership

Kieran Turner updates us.

"The Scottish internship programme is an opportunity for two interns to work in the Scottish office and contribute to the work of the Evangelical Alliance in Scotland.

Both interns work on the Scottish Public Leadership programme and are helping to develop a communications strategy," says Kieran. Abi Bull works alongside Fred Drummond on mission and prayer and Nicole Dempster works with Kieran Turner focusing on political and advocacy engagement.

November saw the start of the second year of the Scottish Public Leader programme with eighteen people taking part. "The vision is to invest in emerging leaders and create a network of public leaders across Scotland through events, mentors and visits," says Kieran. The group this year includes film makers, financial advisors, teachers, lawyers and entrepreneurs. "We are excited to explore with them their call to leadership within Scotland," adds Kieran.



Abi Bull.

Northern Ireland – transforming nations

We hear from Peter Lynas at the Northern Ireland office.

"A week is a long time in politics, so it is difficult to be politically topical in a bi-monthly magazine. At the time of writing there is no working Assembly in Northern Ireland and yet 2018 marks twenty years since the Good Friday Agreement.

The journey of transformation has not been an easy one, and it is not over. However, it has been encouraging to see the role of the Church in helping bring peace be acknowledged. At the same time our '100 Project' and 'Be Reconciled' resources continue to champion the role of the gospel and prayer in the transformation process.

Transformed nations requires transformed individuals. The NI office has four interns working with the team this year. Here are Joey Robinson's thoughts on what they have learnt so far: "We've been really challenged by books including Andy Crouch's *Culture Making* and *You Are What You Love* by James K A Smith. We've also been blessed to be in conversation with different public leaders. From Sir Nigel Hamilton, former head of the Civil Service (NI), to Lee Campbell, a local Baptist church minister, we've been encouraged to focus on having authentic values which gives depth and integrity to



Some of the Northern Ireland team.

the work we carry out. Adds Joey: "This has helped spiritually develop and transform us as we aim to become more like Christ and lead lives that would honour and represent him."



European evangelical leaders gather in Prague



European evangelical leaders committed to sharing Jesus across the continent.

More than 90 leaders from 28 countries representing more than 60 ministries met in Prague in October to spend time understanding God's heart for Europe.

The leaders committed to sharing the good news of Jesus in all sectors of society across Europe, showing God's love in practical ways

and addressing the root causes of need, and to moving out of comfort zones in order benefit others.

Rosalee Veloso Ewell – whose theology of transformation you can read in this edition (page 14) – spoke on understanding how Christians in Europe interact with the world,

from the Genesis accounts of Babel and the life of Abraham to Pentecost in Acts. Delegates were challenged to think about their sense of identity, security and their view of the future; to consider how Christians can welcome the stranger, reflecting on God's call to service in the light of the Jonah story.

Krish Kandiah, director of Home for Good here in the UK, reminded the gathering of the hope found in fostering and adoption, setting the lonely in families and addressing some of the society's greatest pressures. Krish also spoke about the unique placing of the Church to help

bring hope into hopeless places.

Steve Clifford, general director of the UK Evangelical Alliance, said: "What an amazing complex and diverse place Europe is. It was great to meet up with leaders from right across the continent, to seek God together and to hear of both the challenges and blessings of the evangelical community, as they seek to make Jesus known."

World Evangelical Alliance marks 500th anniversary of the Reformation

Evangelical leaders have re-affirmed the Bible's role in Christian discipleship on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The gathering of leaders took place in Bad Blankenburg, near Wittenburg and the scene of Luther's instigation of the Reformation. In a statement, the WEA said:

'While only some of our churches trace their heritage back to Luther, we are all bound together by the spirit of Reformation that desired to bring the Church back to the essence of its faith: Solus Christus, Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia and Sola Fide – Christ alone, scripture alone, by grace alone and by faith alone.

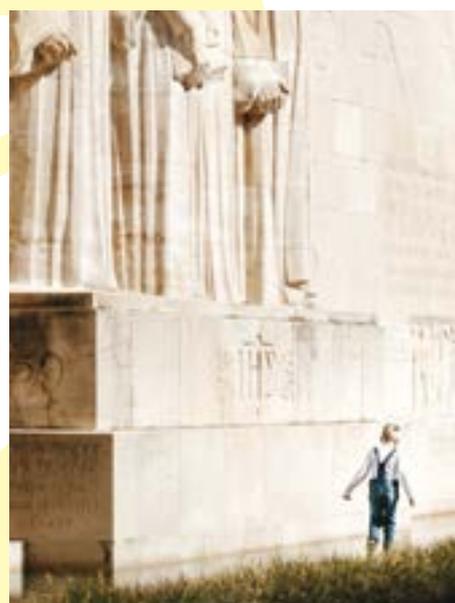
The message of the reformers is as relevant today as it was 500 years ago. Therefore, we commit ourselves to prayer, asking God to continue to guide us by His Holy Spirit that through the study of scripture, we may all be brought together in finding common faith in Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour.'

Affirming the need to call the Church to return to scripture, the WEA named

Dr. Lloyd and Dahl Estrada from the Philippines as international facilitators for Bible engagement. They will work to promote increased and meaningful scripture engagement in churches, with work already having started on facilitating conversations in a number of Asian contexts. It is hoped that national church groups, together with like-minded partners, can develop Bible engagement strategies.

Bishop Efraim Tendero, secretary general of the WEA, commented: "We are thankful to the Reformation, which is an enduring testament to how God powerfully, and in surprising ways, moves in history and through the lives of men and women, who even in immense difficulties faithfully seek to obey His will."

"As we confront challenges in our day, which may be very different from what the Reformers faced, how can we continue to appropriate, in our lives and in our churches, the valuable lessons of the Reformation?" Bishop Tendero added:



Reformation anniversary.

"May we continue the legacy the Reformers handed down to us, especially and above all, to do all things for God's glory alone. Soli Deo Gloria."

Stopping chaos and building a future

Credit: Safe Families



Keith Danby.

With a recent report from the Department of Education (DfE) praising Alliance member *Safe Families for Children* as “one of the most adventurous start-ups in children’s services for some time,” we found out how the charity are providing volunteers to transform the lives of thousands of vulnerable children.

Estimating that the charity’s work with more than 3,000 volunteers

could reduce children going into care by 15 per cent*, the DfE report said the work had: “Potential to support several thousand of England’s neediest children; to greatly reduce the numbers of children in care, and to demonstrably forge a new relationship between public systems and civil society.”

Every family experiences times of crisis, but without help at the right time, crisis can quickly turn into chaos meaning children going into local authority care.

Says Keith Danby, *Safe Families* chief executive: “A lot of families today just don’t have the community support that was around in previous generations. There are so many parents who are single and isolated, suffering ill-health or disability, or just not coping, all of which then affects their mental well-being and ability to care for their children.”

In these situations, *Safe Families* wants to stop struggling families being broken apart. Churches in these families communities want to be a link in supporting them and help make change for the better. The charity trains church volunteers to know how.

Since it was founded by philanthropist Sir Peter Vardy in 2013, *Safe Families* has helped more than 4,600 children through its 3,400 nationwide volunteers.

Case study: “I hated life.”

Leanne was finding it hard to cope with her young boys, one of whom has times of being violent towards her. On medication for bipolar disorder, Leanne says: “I hated life. I hated living. I was in a bad place before *Safe Families* came.”

Lonely, but struggling to trust people after bad experiences in the past, Leanne found it difficult to get beyond shallow small talk and share about what was happening in her life and the difficulties she was facing.

“People told me, ‘you need to learn to trust somebody’, says Leanne, so I let *Safe Families* in.”

“*Safe Families* provide three kinds of volunteers,” says Keith Danby. “Host Families look after a child overnight for a couple of days to a couple of weeks; Family Friends befriend and mentor parents or children through difficult times; and Resource Friends supply a wide range of goods and services the family needs.”

Through a Family Friend volunteer, Leanne started to make positive steps: to make friends, to get out of the house, to learn to do new things, and spend time with her boys.

“[My Family Friend] never lets us down,” she says. “She’s always here when she says. I think that’s the most important thing we’ve learned, that we can trust people. They make me stronger, so I’m a stronger mum.”

Says Keith: “Being someone trustworthy who can look after the children while mum’s having hospital treatment, have a cup of tea with an isolated dad, or give mum a double buggy which enables her to take her children out - that’s how our volunteers show Christ’s calling to love our neighbour and transform the society we live in.”

Leanne and her family are now regulars at their church and the friends and fellowship she has now has, she says, given her confidence and a better future:

Credit: Safe Families

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Credit: Safe Families

“People told me, ‘you need to learn to trust somebody’, so I let Safe Families in.”

Leanne.

“I was so close to putting my kids into care because I didn’t think I could parent them. Our standard of life was not the life I wanted to be living. I look at how far I’ve come and I can do it, and I am doing it. And my kids are happy and they’re healthy and they’re loved. I don’t even want to think what life would be like without Safe Families.”

The charity is contracted with 28 local authorities in the north east of England, Midlands, Greater Manchester, Mersey, and the south coast; all through volunteers from 654 churches.

“Our goal is to keep the family together,” says Keith. “The appalling number of children being ‘looked after’ is now up to 95,862 in the UK and 72,670 in England. He adds: “90 children enter the care system every day. The poor outcomes these children face when they come out of care was really the catalyst for starting Safe Families in the UK.”



Credit: Safe Families

Marina and Ryan, another family helped by Safe Families.



Asked why volunteers and churches should get involved, Keith says: “Once families get to a point of no return the life-long damage is so hard to repair. And it’s so easy to help! It’s just people helping people. So many are open to help and volunteers can see the impact they’re having on parents and children – impact that may well change the entire trajectory of their lives.”

www.safefamiliesforchildren.com

How are you transforming in your place? #EAtransformers

We asked Safe Families why they are a member of the Alliance

‘Safe Families for Children is committed to working with others to give better outcomes for the children and families in our communities. Partnering with hundreds of local churches across the UK, our relationship with the Alliance is a vital aspect of this. We recognise and affirm the Alliance’s vision of a united Church, confident in voice and inspired for mission. Safe Families for Children’s Chief Executive, Keith Danby, served on the Board of the Evangelical Alliance and Council of Reference for over 10 years.

*Ref: Department for Education, Safe Families for Children Evaluation report, Dartington Social Research Unit July 2017



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Making the connection

By Dr Rosalee Velloso Ewell

Can we merge spiritual and social transformation together? *Dr Rosalee Velloso Ewell*, director of the Theological Commission at the World Evangelical Alliance and principal at Redcliffe College tells us how.

Mountains figure prominently in the gospel of Matthew. They are the place of drama, of battles between Jesus and Satan, of appearances and transfigurations; of hungry crowds that have gathered around Jesus with their sick for healing and feeding. Mountains are the setting for famous sermons and we are promised that even with a little faith one can move a huge mountain. Mountains are also places of silence, of recluse and prayer.

If we follow Jesus' ministry in Matthew's narrative, there is a clear pattern to his life of prayer and the ministries of healing the sick, feeding the hungry and challenging the structures of injustice.

Signs of God's reign

His spiritual life was not disjointed or isolated from life in the kingdom of God, which he embodied. Rather, social transformation and spiritual transformation are both signs and ways of God's reign. Mission is the expression of our spiritual life in Christ. The call for social transformation is the call to mission and is the response to the Spirit of God's gracious presence within us. We are not just human activists. God actually sends us and as we are sent, we are partnering with the divine. This is the pattern we see in Jesus' life and ministry in the gospel books.

There has often been a struggle within strands of the evangelical world between how to hold together our missionary zeal – sharing Christ in word, deed and character – together with our convictions about promoting God's justice and peace in the world, and our convictions about personal sanctification – how God's Spirit works in us drawing us closer to Jesus. As evangelicals, our teaching about mission, about social engagement and about sanctification often happen separately, without much consideration of how one strand of our life is connected to one of the other strands.

We don't grow in isolation

Spiritual growth in the biblical narratives does not happen apart from our participation in the life of God and the community. Why? Because as we grow closer to Christ we also grow closer to one another. We don't grow closer to Christ in a vacuum. We need one another for this spiritual growth. Sanctification is not an individualistic or separatist concept, but one which invites the crossing of boundaries.

Jesus calls Peter the fisherman and Matthew the tax collector to be part of the same community, to challenge one another, to learn from one another, to share together and to learn what it means to follow



Dr Rosalee Velloso Ewell.

Jesus in a context where society says tax collectors and fishermen do not belong together. As Peter and Matthew grow closer to Jesus, they grow closer to one another. God's Spirit speaks to them both. Like the disciples and like Jesus himself, we need one another if we are to grow deeper in our faith and share in the transformation of our society.

In our zeal to see social transformation we need to remember that any love we show in the world must be animated by prayer and by the love and grace of God. Evangelicals need to be reminded of that source of our spiritual growth and of the divine energy that animates our mission. The faith that moves mountains is that faith birthed in prayer and in the community of the Church, where together we learn of God's love for all of creation. Through the spiritual life we enter into the life of joy and love of the trinity. We enter into that divine love to become witnesses to it in the world, and as such witnesses we live out the transformation that is made possible by Jesus himself.

“Mission is the expression of our spiritual life in Christ.”



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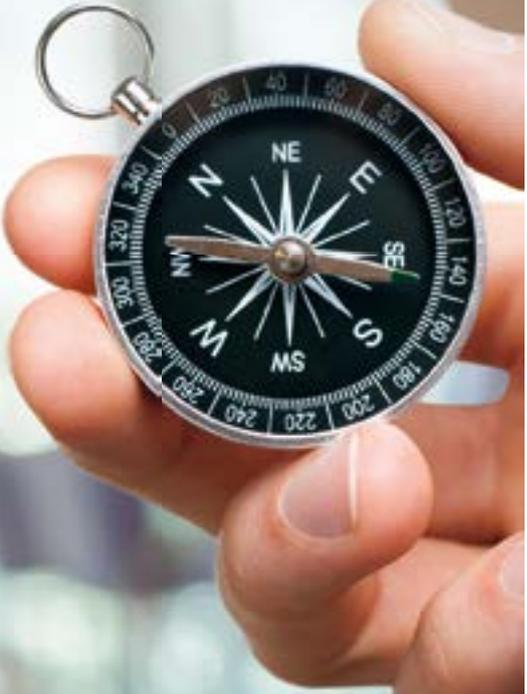
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Transforming through the years

Today, Tearfund works in more than 50 countries and is known as one of the UK's top aid agencies. Born out of the Alliance in the 1960's, Tearfund marks its 50th year in 2018. We celebrate its transforming impact to so many, and talk to chief executive Nigel Harris on Tearfund's legacy and what 2018 will bring.



Founder George Hoffman.

Linked with the Alliance over the years, Tearfund started out literally as a fund – through gifts sent to the Alliance in response to the refugee crisis in the 1960s. As the outpouring of donations continued from Christians across the country, the Alliance employed George Hoffman, a former curate, to help develop the work of the fund. In 1968, he and others met for the first time as The Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund: TEARFUND and in 1973, Tearfund became a registered charity.

Says Nigel: "Tearfund came into existence because evangelical Christians wanted to do something about suffering in the world - and to do it in the name of Jesus. It started with a handful of people sitting around a table at the Evangelical Alliance headquarters in London in 1968. 50 years on

“**50 years on and it has grown beyond all expectations.**”

and it has grown beyond all expectations.”

In the last 10 years alone, the renewing work that Tearfund has achieved is staggering. It has helped more than 45 million people through its relief and development programmes across the world. A key member of the UK government's Disasters Emergency Committee, it continually responds in times of crisis such as the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami and in the 1980's when famine hit Ethiopia. And it's the local church, Nigel believes, that is key to being able to help in the most difficult circumstances:

Church at the heart

“The Church is at the very heart of the work that Tearfund carries out. Tearfund's mission is to see people freed from poverty, living transformed lives and reaching their God-given potential. We do this by partnering with local churches around the world.”

Responding to help people in Thailand hit by the 2004 Tsunami, Tearfund gave practical help to re-build lives and houses as well as developing plans to equip people to prepare

for future disasters. Mr Suwan, a fisherman from Phang Nga, Thailand, had a wife in bad health, a disabled child and absolutely nothing to his name following the disaster. Through local partners, a new house was built and his daughter was able to go to school. “We are filled with joy as we see their love and care for us,” he says. “We are finding new courage and strength.”

International influence

And as well as the practical steps needed to help communities turn situations around, Tearfund has also been able to influence key policy makers nationally and internationally in order that poverty and disaster is tackled.

Says Nigel, “Over 10 years, we have seen more than 300 policies changed at local, national and international level. Contributing hugely to this success is the fact that we have envisioned and mobilised more than 154,000 local churches.”

Recently visiting San Pedro Sula, the second city of Honduras and one of the most violent cities in the world, Nigel saw this community and church partnership in action.

“During my visit there I met Maria. She has lived in the slums, known as the bordos, all her life. Before receiving help from Tearfund's partner Comisión de Acción Social Menonita (CASM), the family had been separated. Maria suffered from severe drug and alcohol addiction – a regular story

Sylvia at work on her land.



in the bordos. But now she is a member of the local church, the family are back together and she runs a pulperia, a tiny grocery store, out of her house.

She is also a respected community leader in the district. The community is educating people on the risks of diseases and how they can be prevented. They're also creating safe places for women to talk about the domestic violence that many of them still face."

So key is the church and its community coming together to respond to their situation to enable any success, that Nigel feels he is reminded time and time again of the powerful role the Church has to play in making change.

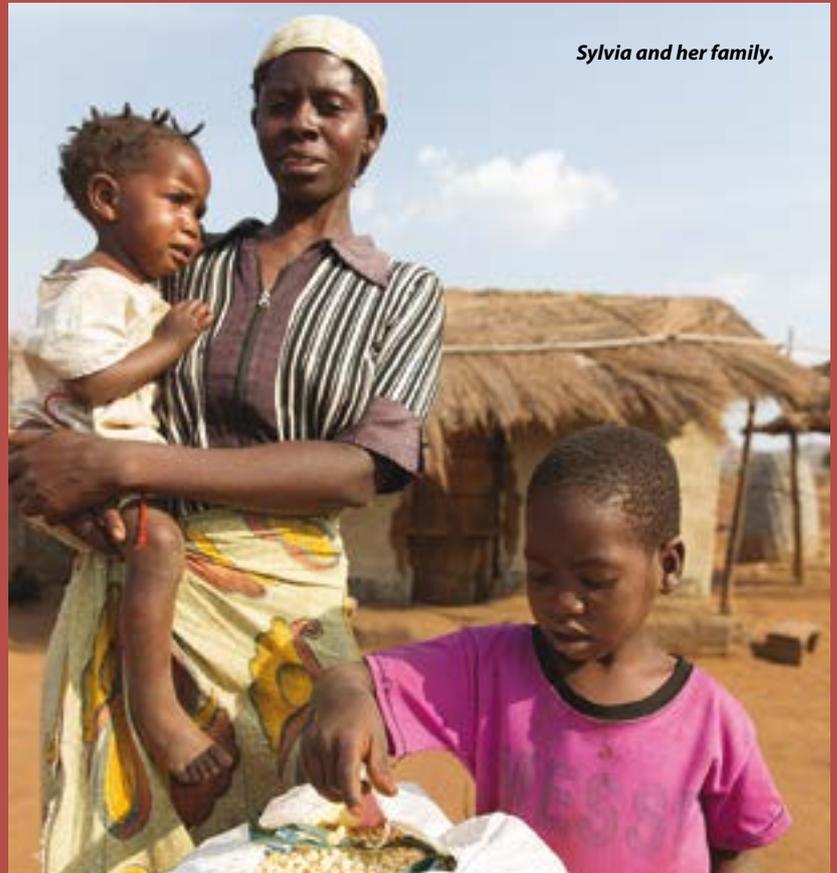
The Church knows

"The Church is the largest civil society organisation, with millions of local churches. They are situated in some of the hardest to reach places. They know the people, they know the problems and so often they can see simple, inexpensive solutions. If every one of those local churches was enabled to bring transformation to its community, our world would be very different," he says.

Asked how we get involved to make a difference and be part of the continuing transforming work in 2018, Nigel is clear:

"As we enter our 50th year, we are more motivated and determined than ever to beat poverty. There will be no holding back, and it's this conviction that's behind our new campaign which will launch in January 2018: *We won't stop until poverty stops.*"

"We have a number of things planned to enable you and your church to pray, act and give to end extreme poverty. Do visit www.tearfund.org/wewontstop for more info."



Sylvia and her family.

Sylvia - Malawi

Like most farmers, Sylvia has stamina. She gets up early and works the land to feed her four young children by growing maize in her village, Chagunda, in Malawi.

But the world is out of balance, the seasons are unstable and the climate is changing making it harder for farmers. This year she harvested four bags of maize, which isn't enough to feed her children for the year.

Hunger gaps aren't new, but rapid climate change is making them worse for families like Sylvia's. More droughts, floods and unreliable rain drastically affect the results from months of hard work farming.

Just an hour away, Polly, aged 24, harvested nine bags. Through Tearfund partner Assemblies of God Care (AG Care) she received expert knowledge on how to farm the dry, barren land. Now Polly has surplus food to buy livestock, set up a small business and plan for the future. 'My children will be educated because AG Care gave me a gift,' says Polly. Sylvia is now also getting that life-saving training giving her back the ability to reach her potential.

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This was Tearfund's old logo when it was called The Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund.



Tearfund through the years

As we are celebrating Tearfund's 50th birthday in this issue I thought I would share some photos from our archive of some of the early Tearfund campaigns.

In the 1960s south India was hit by a number of years of drought and donations made by members of the Evangelical Alliance was enabling Tearfund to supply water boring kits to Indian villages. This was the first time Tearfund had given aid in this way.

Gladys Aylward, the well-known Christian missionary to China whose amazing life story was told in the film *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness*, starring Ingrid Bergman, was also helped by Tearfund in the 1960s.

Gladys is remembered for her heroism when leading 100 children in her care to safety over mountains in China when a Japanese invasion took place in 1938. But her day to day work was less dramatic – looking after orphans, working for prison reform and spreading the gospel whatever she was doing. Tearfund was able to help Gladys' ministry by helping her to fund a new Taiwanese children's home in 1969.

Amazing photos of just some of the ways in which Tearfund has transformed lives over the years. For our feature on Tearfund turn to page 16.



1.5 billion
in spiritual
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The most important example of transformation happened in the resurrection. Joint winner of the under 18's short story competition Hannah Mead, gives us her inspiring adaptation of Mary discovering the tomb and realising the enormity of Jesus rising from the dead. Stirring food for thought for the year ahead.

RESURRECTION OF HOPE

Fog hung over the city like the sorrow that hung over Leah's heart. As she walked through the city gate, she felt the mist run clammy fingers down her neck. She shivered, and pulled her headscarf tighter.

It felt odd to be out of the house. For the past two days she had been shut up in it with all her relatives and friends, trying to celebrate Passover, but failing miserably. They'd gone through the motions of the ceremony, but there was none of the joy that normally accompanied such celebrations. How can there be joy, when the Rabbi is dead? At the thought, Leah felt her throat constrict, and she felt the weight of her hopelessness.

How could it have all gone so wrong? The questions swirled through her mind. Why had he let them kill him? But there were no answers, as she'd found out in the past days. The Rabbi was dead. There was no hope.

Leah's sandals made slapping noises as she increased her pace, climbing up the rocky path. Dawn was approaching, but the sky was overcast and the fog hung over the dripping olive trees that lined the path. She rounded a corner and the path sloped downward into a garden.

Suddenly, through the remnants of the fog, she saw the figures of several women, all dressed in black. Running to catch up with them, she panted out a greeting.

"Child! What are you doing here?" The tallest women, whom Leah knew to be Mary Magdalene, asked her.

"May I come with you?" Leah asked.

"Please?" Mary looked at her companions in silent question. Leah knew them all. Susanna, Mary, and Salome were all family friends, and they formed the main group of women that had followed the Rabbi.

"Yes, come, Leah." Salome replied. "I know that you followed and loved the Rabbi too." Her voice broke, and she went quiet. Leah joined the group, and they all moved through the garden.

Susanna gulped down a sob, and asked "How shall we open the tomb?" No one answered. Leah realized that they didn't know how they would remove the giant stone that blocked the entry to the tomb. Yet they were all carrying jars of burial spices in hopes that somehow they might enter.

"It's over here." Mary Magdalene gestured, and everyone followed her. But when they rounded the corner, they all stopped abruptly. A gasp of shock escaped Leah's lips.

"The stone!" They started forward towards the deserted tomb. The stone was rolled away from the entrance, and a broken seal lay like a scarlet thread at its base. Here and there a scattered spear lay haphazardly, as if its owner had thrown it in great haste.

But none of this even registered in Leah's mind, compared to the most stunning thing of all. A blinding light was pouring out from the tomb. The women looked at each other in confusion. Mary Magdalene finally stepped forward, and stooped down to enter the tomb. The others followed behind her.

What they saw struck them all with fear and amazement. Mary had dropped to her knees in front of a blinding apparition, from which all the light was emanating. As her eyes adjusted, Leah could see it was a man, but no ordinary man! He was dressed in dazzling white, and his face reminded Leah of a lightning bolt in a storm. Then he spoke.

"Do not be afraid." He said gently. "I know you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. But why do you seek the living among the dead? Remember how he told you that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinners, be crucified, and on the third day, rise?" At these words, Leah felt a jolt of emotion course through her. Of course she remembered! How could she have forgotten?

The man continued. "See the place where they laid him?" He gestured at the stone platform, with the burial clothes lying on top. "He has risen, he isn't here." A flood of hope filled Leah's heart. Could it be true? "Now go, tell the disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold he is going before you to Galilee. There you will



see him." The man smiled, and then both he and the light vanished. The tomb was empty, the words of hope echoing in the darkness.

Stunned, the women filed out of the tomb, and then stood silently around the entrance. As if on cue, the sun burst through the fog, shedding the warmth of its rays on the garden. A bird made a hesitant chirp, and soon a whole chorus of birds were singing their hearts out. Can it be true? Is he risen? The questions raced around Leah's head. Her heart felt like it would burst with the warmth of hope. She

looked around at the women, and saw in their eyes that same dawning hope. Finally, Susanna broke the silence.

"Can it be true?" she breathed.

"I don't know." Mary Magdalene haltingly replied. "But, if it is..." Her words trailed off. Leah felt a smile slowly begin to spread across her face.

"No." Salome said. "It cannot be 'if'. It simply must be true." The hope was infectious, and Leah could feel it slowly rising into a torrent of joy.

"Well then..." Leah spoke up for the first

time since leaving the tomb. "What are we waiting for? Let's go tell everyone!" Laughter bubbled through her lips, and she gave a small skip of glee. "Come on!" The women broke out of their stupor, and began to run, dropping their jars of burial spices as they went. Leah watched as they flew through the garden, their robes billowing out behind them. Then she too began to run, following them as fast as she could, her feet pounding over the rocky path and her heart singing with joy. Morning had dawned, the Son was risen, and hope was alive again.



James Catford

Former chief executive of Bible Society (BFBS) and now a consultant, James Catford serves in a number of roles including chair of Renovaré Britain & Ireland. James shows us how he makes quiet time work for his 9-5, and gives us a great idea-list of books helping to create moments of grace that will make a real difference.

Brushing my teeth is a daily ritual. A habit formed decades ago with occasional resistance and a healthy dose of parental supervision.

Now I'd need to work hard to NOT clean my teeth in the morning. I'd need to say 'don't head for the bathroom, don't reach for the toothpaste, don't squeeze it onto the toothbrush'. In the same way, it's perfectly possible to wake up each morning praying.

Forming habits

Habits take no more than three months to form. What is agonising at first can become second nature. It would be harder NOT to do them.

It was Dallas Willard who told me about waking up praying. For Dallas is wasn't about running through the day telling God what he wanted done, like some fat-cat tycoon dictating orders to a diminutive secretary. Rather, Dallas would pray through his day releasing each part to the divine intervention of the Holy Spirit. This gives us the opportunity to relinquish control and press more fully into God.

For me it comes down to admitting that I can't control the traffic on the roads. Or the time keeping skills of a family member getting out to work. Or the various meetings I have planned, and especially the meetings I don't even know about yet.

"I can't make this work" is my most common prayer in the morning, as I turn the day over to God and watch how he walks with me through it.

'Holy habits', as Richard Foster calls them, are a wonderful grace for us. They are not law but practices that Christians down the ages have often found transformative.

Getting into work early can give us a few minutes peace with a cup of coffee. A sacred moment. Simply placing our hands around a mug in an attitude of prayer can be a silent act of relinquishment, of supplication. and of listening.

GK Chesterton said: "you say grace before eating a meal. I say grace before reading the morning paper or opening the door to a friend".

“Holy habits, as Richard Foster calls them, are a wonderful grace for us.”



James Catford.

Take a pause

Taking his idea further we can let the phone ring one more time as we invite God into our conversation. Or we can volunteer to make coffee, or do the photocopying, and practice the habit of pausing by the kettle or Xerox machine to reconnect with God.

While chatting to a younger friend on the street one day I stepped out at a pedestrian crossing. Suddenly he grabbed my arm. Alarmed, I looked at him to find out what was wrong. "Didn't you teach us to slow down and wait for the green man before crossing?" he said.

Point taken. However busy we are and whatever our practice or personality, everyone can find sacred pauses like this. We fold God into our lives or, more accurately, we fold our little kingdoms into God's far greater kingdom.

Moments of grace

A surgeon pulling on rubber gloves, a driver making the most of a traffic jam, a parent holding a sleeping child. Are there not endless moments of grace in any given day, if only we can see them?

Frank Laubach's little book *Letters By a Modern Mystic* (SPCK) tells how he tried to live life more and more connected to Jesus. A modern equivalent is a book by my friend Nathan Foster, *The Diary of An Ordinary Saint* (Lion).

They both had mixed results, but make the point that our focus shouldn't be on perfection, but on progress. We simply want to 'up our average' as we gradually, and slowly, experience a deeper life with God.

Laubach's classic so frustrated me once that I threw it across the room. Why? Because it set out a vision of what my life could become; ever closer to Jesus in every sphere of life. He created a 'game with minutes' in which he actively sought to walk with Jesus consciously through his day.

I like the idea of a game because it takes the pressure off getting it right all the time.

In my career in commercial publishing I know that I often messed up with the decisions I made. So I'd sometimes slip into the empty company board room and pause for a moment.



“However busy we are and whatever our practice or personality, everyone can find sacred pauses like this. We fold God into our lives or, more accurately, we fold our little kingdoms into God’s far greater kingdom.”

There I would sit as chair of the board; the all-powerful boss of my own life. Quietly, I would then move around to the other end of the table and take the lowest place available. There I would surrender trying to run my career, my world, my kingdom. It was hugely liberating.

There’s a version of the Lord’s Prayer that we use at Renovaré which helps as I fall asleep or wake in the night. Written by Dallas Willard, each phrase invites us to examine our day with God.

I especially like the line “forgive us our sins and impositions on you”. That’s because not all the messes I get into are the result of my sin, but they are always impositions on God.

In my own daily game with minutes I still find myself asking God to forgive my many impositions. And, to my constant amazement, He always does.

www.renovarelife.org

How do you connect with God’s presence? #EAtransformers

Dear Father always near us,
 May your name be treasured and loved,
 May your rule be completed in us –
 May your will be done here on earth
 In just the way it is done in heaven
 Give us today the things we need today,
 And forgive us our sins and impositions on you
 As we are forgiving all who in any way
 offend us.
 Please don’t put us through trials,
 But deliver us from everything bad.
 Because you are the one in charge,
 And you have all the power,
 And the glory too is all yours – forever –
 Which is just the way we want it!

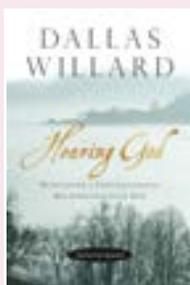
The Divine Conspiracy, HarperCollins

BOOKS TO INSPIRE YOU IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

by James Catford, chair of Renovaré Britain & Ireland.

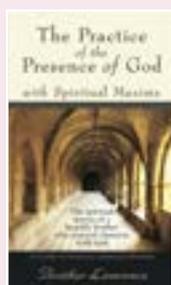
IDEA-LIST

A few years ago I was sent a book called *Crazy Busy* about life in a nine to five, 24/7 world. The trouble was that I didn’t have time to read it. That’s why four of the five books in this list are short. But they still pack a punch and speak directly to life with God in our crazy busy lifestyle.



HEARING GOD
 Dallas Willard, IVP

Originally called *In Search of Guidance*, this is a masterclass in how a relationship with God can become lived reality, even in the most challenging of circumstances. Once a labourer, then a pastor and later a world class philosophy professor, it’s been said of Dallas Willard that people will still be talking about him in 200 years. Absorb this book and you will understand why. Read also *Becoming Dallas Willard* by Gary Moon, to be published in 2018.



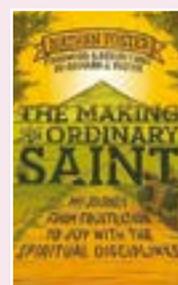
THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD
 Brother Lawrence, various

A 19th century commendation of this book said “the woman at her wash-tub, or the stone-breaker on the road, can carry on the ‘practice’ taught here with as much ease, and as much assurance of success, as the priest at his altar or the missionary in his field of work”. Lawrence resented mending shoes as much as working in the kitchen. But slowly he found God in the everyday. Short, heartwarming and full of grace and wisdom.



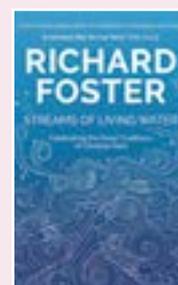
LETTERS BY A MODERN MYSTIC
 Frank Laubach, SPCK

Even shorter than *Practice Of The Presence*, this gem of a classic is about the most challenging book I’ve ever read. Written against a backdrop that was not at all sympathetic to following Christ, Laubach tells how he discovered a “God-intoxicated life” and how “everybody can learn to hold God’s hand and rest”. At the end is his famous *Game With Minutes* designed as much for merchants and bankers as for school teachers and carpenters.



THE MAKING OF AN ORDINARY SAINT
 Nathan Foster, Lion

In *The Making Of An Ordinary Saint*, Nathan Foster tells the story of how he tried to live out the spiritual disciplines outlined in the hugely popular book *Celebration of Discipline*, written by Richard Foster, his dad. Honest but not sensational, Nathan holds little back. The result is a highly practical application of the practice of fasting, study, solitude, meditation, confession, simplicity, service, prayer, guidance, worship and celebration.



STREAMS OF LIVING WATER
 Richard Foster, Hodder

Pete Greig believes this book is “a seminal title for our time” and *Christianity magazine* calls it “utterly, utterly brilliant”. Prophetic when it was first published 20 years ago, I think it is even more relevant today. Of all the many wonderful things it does, it explores the inner life of the public person; the interior journey of the nine-to-five Christian. This is where whole life discipleship always starts, from the inside out.



Credit: MDUK

Joining the movement.

Joining the movement - what next?

With 1,000 people attending October's Movement Day in London, many have been inspired to transform the lives of those around them. We hear from the people seeking change in their places.

Concluding the day Roger Sutton, director of Movement Day UK gave a challenge: "What could your place look like in 15 years' time if we really got our act together? It's all about unity: working together in strategic and coordinated ways. About prayer and need for God's power in the social, cultural and spiritual transformation of your whole city or town."

The Alliance was delighted to be part of planning the event together with other organisations. Movement Day exceeded all expectations, both in the numbers attending and the impact the day has had across the UK; people have been inspired to create change.

Key subjects at the event included the vital importance of building multi-ethnic churches, with Kevin Palau (son of the well-known evangelist Luis) speaking on social change in a pre-dominantly secular environment. Delegates also heard from a Chief Constable of a large police force - a reminder that God wants Christians to be involved across the whole of society, as salt and light.

"Says Roger: "What about you having a Movement Day in your town, in your city? What about gathering the church, Christian organisations, Christians in education, the arts, politics and government together for an event and having a conversation about the future of your place?"

Moving with one heart - Doncaster

Under the banner 'One Heart, One Voice,' Movement Day Doncaster is being held in June 2018 to do just that. Connecting church, business, local government and community leaders in the city, organiser Ian Mayer was inspired by the Movement Day initiative from the start: "The focus on leadership from the Movement Day Team within a place, really connected with the Doncaster story and strategy for transformation."

Meeting since 1998 there are now 80 church leaders in Doncaster who get together weekly and have digital media events to help progress towards positive change in



Credit: Ian Mayer

Doncaster leaders meet regularly.

LOVE IN ACTION

Billy Kennedy who spoke at Movement Day in London talked passionately to delegates about working together to make change. Leader of various church networks, Billy helped form Love Southampton. Together groups from different churches and ethnicities have worked together with the city council to tackle job insecurity and funding cuts. "The process of transformation is a long term one. We've helped more families foster and adopt, provided debt counselling, youth clubs, parent and toddler groups and worked with refugees and asylum seekers. All of these moves the city towards a better future," he says.

John Paul Oddoye, leader of Southampton Pastors Network, notes the success through unified working: "We continue to see a demonstration of unity among church leaders from different denominational background and different ethnicities. It has also brought unity among the churches and the impact on the city has been greater."



the city. Says Ian: "The leadership quarters within a city, are the gateways to influence. If we are to have the biggest impact, we need to ensure that we focus on where the shape of our place is being formed."

Spiritual Sunderland

Deb Fozzard is founder and director of Sunderland Connect Network and works with Sunderland church leaders and organisations bringing change in the city together.

In 2014, after contacting the Alliance, Deb met Roger Sutton and joined *Gather* the organisation behind Movement Day. Sunderland church leaders showed their support quickly and Deb left her full-time role to found Connect Network. Now collaborating with the council on strategy to tackle poverty in the city, they were most recently asked to join them in work on healthy living and financial habits. So what would Deb advise to someone thinking about setting up their own movement?

"Love God and ask for His heart. Be prepared to have your heart broken over what you then see. When you see through God's eyes you don't just do projects, you just want to see lives transformed. Prayer and relationship have been keys and striving for unity; working in partnership with Christians and non-Christians as transformation will come through both."

Prayer for change

Sunderland has a rich spiritual heritage. St Bede began monastic life there, 1907 saw revival, and Smith Wigglesworth began his ministry in the city. Through a visit to Argentina and seeing revival there in the 90's church leaders David



Credit: MDUK

“When you see through God’s eyes you don’t just do projects, you just want to see lives transformed.”

and Florence Brown and Herbert and Mary Harrison inspired prayer for Sunderland to be increased. "This has been a big part of the work," says Deb with leaders praying a lot in the city now and over the last 18 years.

"In the last four years have seen incredible answers to prayer. The group prayed for old unused land to be built up and remarkably much of this has happened in exactly the places they prayed. A new college and a new Wear crossing is being built"

Adds Roger Sutton: "The Movement Day initiative is an incredible thing: it's all

about reaching our cities and enabling the people of God to go out there and make a difference. It's all about unity and doing it together."

All in all, inspiring stories from around the country and what a privilege the Alliance had to be involved in such an historic event. Here's to more changes and transformations in the place where you live in 2018.



Credit: MDUK

Here's what attendees of the October London event said:

Steve Botham, Prayer Leader

"Movement Day was the start. It created a vision of what can be done. The challenge is to be able to invest enough deliberate time to change our cities. I believe that God is already on the case."

Debra Green, Safer Places

"It was an historic moment to bring together such a diverse group of people all with a heart for transformation and the synergy of that has led to a greater depth of understanding and opportunity to see that transformation that we were talking about."

Manoj Raithatha, Cross Cultural Mission

"I'm convinced that when we look back we will find that this was one of the most significant events of our time. Because of its big vision, strategic focus and practical application to see town and city transformation."

Join us at movementday.uk to plan your event in 2018

Be part of the conversation on transformation #EATransformers

Facts and feedback on Movement Day, London

- Over 80 key speakers at the event from the UK and around the world including South Africa, America, Europe, India, Asia and Australia
- 30 organisations partnering with Movement Day UK
- All denominations represented by the Presidents of Churches Together in England
- Many senior christian leaders from business, arts, media, education, politics, local government and health sectors attending
- Millions reached about the event on social media



How can we be true transformers through the gospel?



Alliance staffers Lucy Olofinjana, Gavin Calver and Yemi Adedeji look at how to become all round transformers – sharing our faith alongside practically helping our communities.

“Understanding of the community you are in is vital,” says Yemi Adedeji, director of the Alliance’s One People Commission, a body committed to celebrating ethnicity and unity.

“We need to transform in unity by understanding each other’s situations,” Yemi continues. “Going into each other’s worlds in our gospel sharing work, we need to have a shared heart for all people to meet Jesus.”

And this is exactly what happened at the recent Alliance staff conference, where 20 young children from RCCG Living Faith Connections in Barking, London were on retreat at the same venue. “At their request, they asked us if we could pray with them to

become followers of Jesus,” says Yemi. “By the end, we all went away transformed.”

“Alliance staff members of all ages, ethnicities and classes prayed for these kids and it was a beautiful moment,” adds Gavin Calver, director of mission.

“It was a great time of blessing and a true representation of what the Alliance stands for. Taking part in the Great Commission and striving to represent every age, background and ethnicity.”

Lucy Olofinjana, unity programmes manager

agrees: “This is exactly what we’ve seen through the stories we’ve been sharing at greatcommission.co.uk – Christians and churches loving those around them, pointing people to Jesus as the way, the truth and the life. And as people encounter the love of Jesus and hear his truth from others, we’re seeing lives transformed across the UK.”

Says Gavin: “We truly transform lives through the gospel when we play our part in fulfilling the Great Commission - always the counterpart to the great commandment of loving one another.

“Alliance members of all ages, ethnicities and classes prayed for these kids and it was a beautiful moment.”

Transforming by unity

Says Lucy: “There are countless stories of Christians and churches pointing people to the love of Jesus. Whether its Kwame and his church, Trinity Baptist in London, talking with people about Jesus on their local streets, Christ Church Southport bringing good news to bereaved elderly people, or Blacon Central where families have opened their adjoining homes to local friends, and have seen several baptisms taking place in their shared garden.”

Alex had always suffered from low self-esteem, ending up in children’s homes and then prison as his behavior spiraled out of control. But, through the unified love of his local church in Glasgow, he was introduced to God.

“I had very low self-esteem because of the lifestyle that I was living, and these people [in the church] helped me build my self-esteem back up.

Alex has seen his life change radically: “I’ve changed, I’ve become a much better person, I take pride in my children... and try to guide them with being a right good example... Jesus has brought all that into my life”.



HOW?

Gavin and Yemi share some practical tips for seeing the gospel transform lives in our own communities:

First, get going! In the Great Commission in Matthew 28, the Greek which we translate “therefore go” is a mixture of tenses. It’s past, present and future. Jesus is saying, “Wherever you have been, wherever you are and wherever you are going, make disciples.” But you need to ‘go’! It was as Jesus’s followers fell down in total adoration of him, lost in wonder, love and praise, they were inspired to go on mission. So the first part in transforming lives is to get going.

And says Yemi, it is this passion for the gospel which inspires us to transform: “In working together, we have to feel that faith is contagious and share in the ministry together, from whatever background we are from.”

Second, focus on disciples not decisions - we are called not to make decisions, but to make disciples. An altogether tougher task! The Great Commission is always directed outwards, to the

unreached. Jesus met a downtrodden woman from an unreached Samaritan tribe, who probably worshipped another God. He reached out to her in a conversation that engaged her world, but was also quick to direct the conversation onto her knowing the person of Christ and the transformation that comes by following him. Says Gavin: “Every location is a sharing opportunity – the cinema, the bank, the playground and our workplaces; locations where we live Jesus, show Jesus and help others to walk like Jesus.”

“When this seems hard we must remember that, nothing shall ever rob us of Jesus’ “presence”. He adds, “Matthew gives the assurance that this baby to be born would be Immanuel (God is with us, Matthew 1:23), and closes with the assurance that He is still with us, until the end of time. ‘And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’ (Matthew 28: 20).”



Watch inspiring faith stories, including Alex, Kwame, Christ Church Southport and Blacon Central, at greatcommission.co.uk/watch

Find over 200 resources to inspire sharing your faith as you transform at greatcommission.co.uk/act

“GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS”

Matthew 28:19

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cbneurope.com/donate or call 0300 561 0700



Ruth Awogbade

Ruth Awogbade currently serves as the youngest ever Board member at the Evangelical Alliance. Featured in mainstream national and international press, she is recognised for her work on faith and issues for women of her generation. Under the banner 'Faith-Feminism-Fashion' she runs *Magnify* magazine and regular *Magnify* events. We found out what inspires her transformation work.

You are known as someone who has transformed the way women engage with their faith and the issues they face. How do you feel your work highlighting them has changed people's lives and the way they approach them?

Well firstly I'm very honoured that you would say that and I don't take the vision God has given me lightly or for granted. I think for any demographic of human beings, when you see yourself reflected in the stories told, it inspires you where you are in your own life.

Growing up in the church, often the narrative I saw in the Christian world was predominantly white and male. With *Magnify*, I've always been very intentional in telling and highlighting people from a diverse range of backgrounds and sharing their various life experiences and faith stories. So not just women but men from every culture and race. I feel women seeing women like them in *Magnify* and our aspirational focus has made a lot of women feel they can relate; and feel like they want to explore faith more because they've been able to engage with people who they could relate to even on a human level.

Do you feel using design and brand that is contemporary and speaks to wider audiences has meant more people have been drawn into the debate that might not have engaged previously?

For me, it's never been an intentional effort to use design or branding to engage people. I feel God gives all of us interests, gifts and passions which can be used to reach people. For me, I've always

been passionate about communication and creativity. Naturally that is how I express myself even in everyday life. I definitely feel *Magnify* has been able to challenge the stereotype of what people think a Christian platform or publication should look like. I think it's not just the surface level of the aesthetics but actually the stories and subject matters we discuss; whether it be mental health, bereavement, success and ambition, the arts, relationships. That has meant we've been able to engage with people from across a spectrum.

Has the impact of this changed wider communities? What have you seen that has changed?

What warms my heart is stories of people engaging with *Magnify* and using it to engage those in their spheres of influence and see a culture change. I remember speaking at a church and a guy bought 15 copies for his female colleagues. He emailed later to tell us how in his office, it then led to so many conversations about faith. Equally a lady who was a gynaecologist, spoke about how often she would have young women coming in to her office – often in very difficult situations.

She bought copies of *Magnify* to leave in the reception area and told us such encouraging stories of how rather than reading gossip magazines prior to appointments, women were filled with a sense of hope from reading *Magnify*. Equally, when we hear of churches using *Magnify* as an outreach tool – often when they've previously had difficulty engaging millennial women – it's humbling.



You were part of Movement Day - what would you advise people to do in bringing about their positive aspirations into reality for 2018?

I absolutely loved Movement Day. Specifically I was involved in the Women's Track and it was so inspiring to see so many passionate and confident women in one room. I loved hearing the stories of women who had been able to impact in their sphere of influence and also encourage each other as we shared the challenges of being women in leadership.

My advice to people would be firstly, know that God has called and placed you where you are. Often we can feel unqualified or lack the confidence to know we are where we are for a reason. Secondly, encourage and build up others. It's so important we have humility to know that it takes more than one person to achieve change. And finally, never lose heart. Making change and going against the grain is never easy and can feel exhausting at times but never give up and stay in faith that better days are ahead.

What can people get involved with at Magnify now and in the new year?

The vision of *Magnify* has always been to share the gospel with women and encourage them that they can make a difference in their sphere of influence. Although our focus is evangelistic, we always

My advice to people would be firstly, know that God has called and placed you where you are. Often we can feel unqualified or lack the confidence to know we are where we are for a reason.

hope it encourages women who already share the Christian faith. So firstly, you can get a copy and perhaps think of getting a copy for friends, colleagues or family who don't yet know Jesus at hellomagnify.com. We ship worldwide so wherever you are you can get one!

Next year we'll be kicking off again with our monthly events for those in London.

Finally, we'd love you to pray for us and our work. Running something like *Magnify* is not only costly in terms of time, money and people but also given our vision is to see women's hearts come back to Jesus; serious prayer is needed and always appreciated!

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How can we demonstrate love, free

In November 2018 we will commemorate 100 years since the end of the first world war. On 6 January 1918 the country was called to prayer, the proclamation, issued by the King expressed the hope that: "we may be brought through strife to a lasting peace; and that the world may be united in a firmer fellowship for the promotion of thy glory and the good of all mankind."

As we mark this centenary since the supposed war to end all wars ended, what can we do to build the kind of society that promotes God's glory and is for the good of all humankind? Following on from the publication of the Alliance's *What kind of society?* resource how can we demonstrate God's love, freedom, justice and truth to our communities this year, and what can we do to help people know them as real in their lives?

LOVE

In the last few years politics has moved at a manic pace. From 2014's Scottish referendum, to the 2015 general election, to another referendum, to a further general election, making political predictions for 2018 isn't a productive



episode. We've had unexpected political twists and turns, but one trend has been constant, our trust in politics continues to fall. The latest polling shows only 15 per cent of the public trust politicians to tell the truth, that's down from 21 per cent in 2015.

Why don't we look for opportunities to see how we can rebuild the relationship of trust between public and politicians?

A simple act would be to meet with your local councillors or MP and ask what you can do serve them. It is easy to contact politicians when we are unhappy about something they are doing, or want them to support our cause, but we all have a role to play. We can demonstrate love for our communities and the people who work to represent them by taking the time to ask what we can do to help.



Credit: BWB

Stephanie Biden.

Learning from experts

Want to ensure your organisation or church is alert to the challenges of changing regulation and law? In February 2018, the Alliance is running *Above and Beyond* – a day conference on how. Stephanie Biden, partner at legal firm Bates, Wells and Braithwaite (BWB) is a speaker at the event.

"This is for anyone involved in running or administering a church or Christian charity, says Stephanie. "With input from experts on how to navigate the challenges and hurdle of regulation and law and ensure your organisation can flourish in its mission."

Serving mission well and transparently is key for any Christian charity or church says Stephanie, so we need to be exemplary in our dealings: "We're told to submit to the authorities that govern us because they've been established by God, and St Paul wrote in Corinthians that he was 'taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.'

New changes in law, and in particular on data protection coming in in May next year, make the event a timely one in order to understand the issues.

"The General Data Protection Regulations introduce more stringent standards," says Stephanie. "The changes affect how you handle personal information about your congregation, supporters and people your charity work with. *Above and Beyond* will help you get ready for these changes."

The event will also provide practical tips from experts and useful resources to take away and apply.

Learn about the legal issues

Adds Stephanie: "I'll be talking about how to deal with the Charity Commission if something goes wrong – when, why and how to report serious incidents to the Commission and what to do if the Commission raise concerns about your charity's work. Other colleagues will be covering legal issues including the Equality Act, data protection and safeguarding."



As well as legal updates, there will also be some practical sessions on church finances, communications in crisis and calm, and building resilience. Go to www.eauk.org/aboveandbeyond to find out more and get tickets.

Here's some tips to help you make a start preparing for new data protection regulations.

1. Tell people why you are collecting and storing their details and what you are going to do with them.
2. Keep personal data secure - don't share member lists with your whole membership unless everyone on the list has given express permission for you to do so. Train your staff and volunteers on data security.
3. Make it easy for people to remove their name from your lists. Use unsubscribe links if you send out emails and make sure you act on them promptly.
4. Don't keep personal data for longer than you need to and keep your records up to date.
5. Make use of the free guides published on the Information Commissioner's website <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/> or ring their helpline for advice: 0303 123 1113 (option 4)

For more on data protection, turn to the Connect pages 4-5 or go to eauk.org/idea to find more

Freedom, justice and truth in 2018?

FREEDOM



We have incredible freedom to talk about Jesus in our daily lives and it is vital that throughout this year we use our freedom with grace and wisdom and help other people find the ultimate freedom that comes only through Christ. There may be challenges to Christians living out their faith in society but that should only embolden us to demonstrate the good news to society.

What can you do in 2018 to help people find freedom? Christians down the centuries have stood at the forefront as agents of freedom, and today across the UK it is often Christians who advocate for people struggling with poverty and addiction. Through ministries, charities, and the everyday work of churches, people are finding freedom. This is vital work that we should be giving ourselves to this year.

JUSTICE



At its most straightforward justice is putting things right. At the end of 2018 we will celebrate 70 years since the signing of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and standing for justice remains as important now and across the world as it ever has. People are enslaved, poverty is entrenched, systems are corrupt, and freedom of religion is undermined.

Sometimes it can be difficult when we look at all the calls for support from organisations working for incredible causes to know what to do and which to support. In the UK there are injustices that continue to need tackling but in so many ways we have what others do not. In 2018 why don't you make a commitment, initially for just a year, to support an organisation that is working for justice across the world?

TRUTH



Truth is difficult in a world that challenges everything. When truth becomes relative and easy to reject it is crucial for Christians to stand firm in what they believe. We've seen phenomena of post truth and fake news dominate in recent years, truth has become arbitrary. In some circumstances we are still certain that some things are right and others wrong, and yet in the same breath truth is dismissed as just another opinion.

Where are there untruths spoken and lived in our society that need challenging? When we come across something untrue in the coming year will we have the confidence and the compassion to speak out with care and stand up for truth?

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 CBN EUROPE



Transformed People Transform Society

I love walking into the home of parents and seeing scribbles and scrapes rising up on the wall as they mark the height of their kids as they grow up. Not only do we get to see how big they're getting, but we also get to see their journey into maturity.

In Ephesians 4, Paul is spelling out his dream for a young church, desiring that they: '...all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ... [that] speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the head, that is Christ.' (Ephesians 4: 13 + 15 NIV)

When it comes to His Church, Jesus isn't wanting us to remain at the same scribble on the wall by the kitchen door, living as infants. Instead, it is the intention of Jesus, that we as His body would grow up, becoming more like Him. Yet how does that actually happen?

Just like the first disciples, Christ has spoken the words: "Follow me", over our lives, inviting us to become His apprentices.

As Dallas Willard points out, that just like Rabbis and their students or masters and their apprentices we are invited to: "become like Christ by practicing the types of activities He engaged in, by arranging our whole lives around the practices He Himself practiced."

As we read through the Gospels and see the life of Jesus displayed, we are to see a blueprint for our lives also. We are to reconstruct our lives around His ways and as we practice them time and time again, the character traits of Jesus become etched into the very fabric of our lives so that His way becomes second nature to us.

By 'living the Christ life, in the Christ way' (Eugene Peterson, 'As Kingfishers Catch Fire'), and by walking in step with the Holy Spirit, who is transforming us into Christlikeness with ever increasing glory (2 Corinthians 3:18), we can add another mark on the wall as we grow up into Christ.

At the start of this year, it's significant to remind ourselves that Christ-likeness is the ultimate pursuit of our lives. However, so often we tend to narrow this conversation down to personal piety or our own individual growth, separating our discipleship and our place in the mission of God.

Whenever we consider the invitation to transformation, it's important to step back and consider who we're invited to become more like.

Christ Jesus.

The One who through His lifestyle demonstrated the reality of the Kingdom

Come. The One who turned cities upside down. The One who is making all things new.

If we take our apprenticeship and growth into the likeness of Jesus seriously, that is good news for our towns, our cities and our culture; because societies are transformed through the lifestyles of transformed people.

As we practice the way of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, not only do we experience transformation into His likeness; at exactly the same time we get to offer transformation to those around us.

As we embody Christ Jesus we grow up by seeing His way continue to transform people and places through our everyday lives.

This year, maybe more than any other before, may we listen afresh to the words of our Rabbi:

"I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father." (John 14:12)

Jesus has invited you to become more like Him. He's invited you to join Him as He makes all things new.

This year, as you experience transformation, may you not keep it to yourself.

BOOK REVIEWS

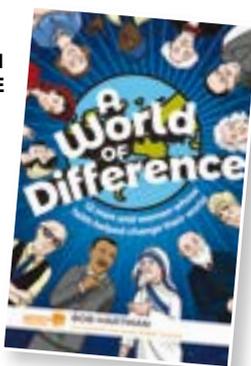
A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE: 12 MEN AND WOMEN WHOSE FAITH HELPED CHANGE THEIR WORLD

By **Bob Hartman**

Speaking Volumes

Children need compelling role models and real-life super heroes to emulate. Hartman's book provides primary school children (Year two and three) with an introduction of Christians from the past 200 years who saw a need and did something about it. The diversity of people Hartman chooses to highlight can inspire all children to realise that, not only does Jesus love them, but that He wants to love the world through them; and that they too can answer Jesus's call wherever they find themselves. Parents and teachers will want to continue the conversation started by this book to encourage youngsters to follow the call of Jesus to live out the transforming truth of the gospel every day.

Emily Mitchell
(Mother of four; former primary school teacher)



LUMINOUS DARK

By **Alain Emerson**

Muddy Pearl

Alain Emerson is a friend, so I make no claim to be objective; but this book is brilliant. It is a personal and ultimately hopeful journey through grief and beyond. While dealing with death, it is also about the loss, disappointment and suffering we all experience. Alain wrestles with the mystery of wounded-ness and the painful journey of being transformed by the love of God through suffering. If you don't want grief to define you forever, read this book.

I love how Alain weaves a moving personal story - about the death of his first wife at the age of 27 - with powerful biblical insights, prayerful reflections and a pastor's heart. Having come through the pain, he incarnates the fresh intrusion of hope that he talks about and wants to give away the love of God he has experienced. Read this book and take the pilgrimage through the luminous darkness.

Peter Lynas



TRANSFORMED TO TRANSFORM

By **Dr Modupe Omideyi**

Life Publications

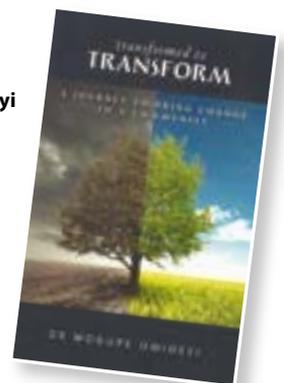
Anyone wanting to be inspired by examples of the social transformation at the coal face read on.

Humbly and simply told, Dr Omideyi gives an honest account of the highs and lows of establishing a church with her husband Tani in a challenging area.

She tells of breaking moulds, not giving up, trusting God to change things - even when they had been that way for so long.

Her story is refreshingly told. It is coupled with demonstrating the guidance of God, of chance meetings and of the vital element of establishing inter-racial church networks in the social landscape of Liverpool.

Rebecca Taylor





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



If for talking to a farmer as part of his support work.

Germinate: ARC @GerminateARC

Great to see this article about @FCNcharity volunteer Ifor Williams in the latest edition of #IDEA



Kerry Jane @KerryEvz

Grab a copy of #SpeakUp from @EAUknews @great_comm and share it around...great start here at #BACM2017

Evangelical Alliance @EAUknews

Founder of @CAPuk @JohnKirkby shares his thoughts on generosity for the new edition of @idea_mag



John Kirkby.

Woodford Baptist Church @WoodfordBaptist

Copies of the magazine by the coffee area

Evangelical Alliance @EAUknews

Replying to @WoodfordBaptist That's what we like to hear!

MUWinchester@presidentwinch

Replying to @EAUknews @CAPuk CAP in Alton is amazing – helping + fun

Evangelical Alliance @EAUknews

"For us at the Evangelical Alliance, Movement Day UK represented an answer to so many prayers and provided us with the fresh challenge of building on what was achieved in our short time together. Movement Day enabled us to learn from one another, to hear the stories of unity movements not just in the UK but across the world." ~ Steve Clifford

YOUTH PRAISE 2 SUCCESS



In our last edition, we put out a request from one of our readers in getting some Youth Praise 2 song books to help in a ministry being run at a local Christian nursing home. We received lots of responses – thank you to all who contacted us and for the encouragement this will bring to all involved.

ChristianBusinessLDS @CIBLeeds? @CIBLeeds

Great to hear #Business panel @movementdayuk in Westminster. Working in Business is more than a mission field. #MDUK17

Above Bar Church @abovebar

Have you seen the article in the @EAUknews blog that our own @JohnRisbridger wrote about mental health? It's here: <https://t.co/QAZsYGgRk4>



Premier Digital @premierdigi

And the winners for Best New or Redesigned website is @great_comm wooooo #PremDAC17

Evangelical Alliance @EAUknews

Congrats to our brilliant @great_comm team for winning the best new/redesigned website award at the @premierdigi awards! #PremDAC17

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

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

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

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Movement Day – What a day!

As I stood in Westminster Central Hall London, together with a thousand Christian leaders at the opening session of Movement Day in October, I found myself quite emotional.

I began to reflect back on a conversation Roger Sutton and I had almost seven years previously. Roger, after 22 years of pastoral ministry at Altringham Baptist Church was sensing God was asking him to respond to a new challenge. In a strange and yet what turned out to be significant conversation, I felt God was asking us to work together.

I can't ever remember having such a conversation before or since, but eventually after much prayer and further discussions, we agreed that Roger would join us at the Alliance to explore what it seemed was a new 'God Movement' across our towns and cities. I'd caught a whiff of it over the previous few months and if it was God at work, I wanted to make sure we as an Alliance were getting behind it. Eventually *Gather* emerged as a means of catalysing and supporting these initiatives and Roger was to become the leader of *Gather*.

Gathering momentum

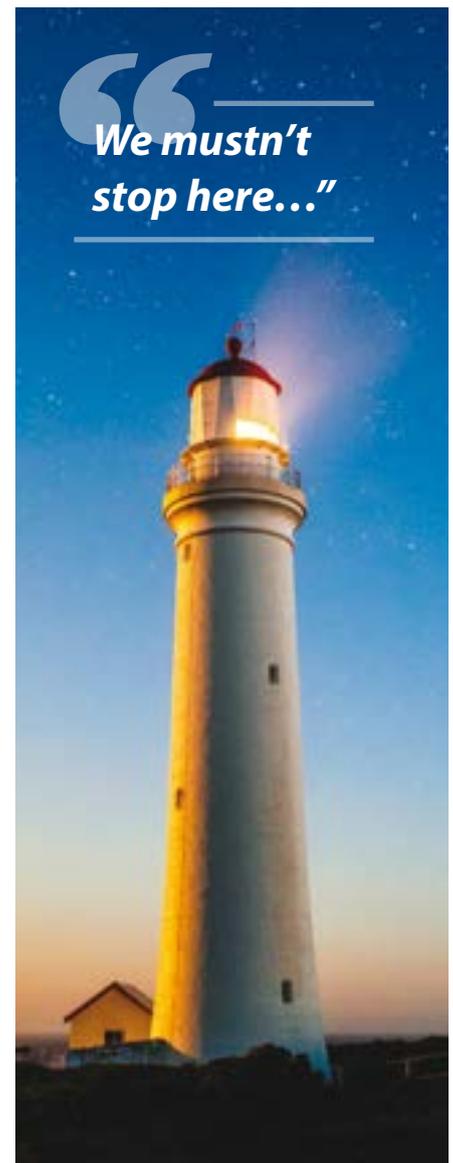
Movement Day, 6-7 October 2017 was the next step in bringing together what we had begun to call, 'Unity Movements' from across the country. In Roger Sutton's book, *A Gathering Momentum* he tells stories of what he discovered as he crossed the UK – God at work in York, Chester, Croydon, Stoke, Liverpool, Plymouth, Southampton and indeed so many more not just in this country, but a significant number of other nations. It turns out that what God is doing in the UK, he was also doing in so many other parts of the world. As we gathered together at Westminster Central Hall, there was a tangible air of anticipation. This was Christian leaders - not just church leaders, but men and women from across a whole range of sectors of influence, involved in business, education, health, arts, the media and the government nationally and locally. All with a passion to see their communities transformed.

As they told their stories, common themes began to emerge – building strong relationships seem to be a key, praying together, hearing from God as to His agenda for their towns and cities. We heard from leaders who had learnt to act, not individually or competitively, but

collaboratively. This was about unity, but not simply unity for unity's sake, but for so much more. The enormous prayer and vision – that in our towns and cities, people will become more Christ Like, the Church will act more like the Body of Christ and the wider community will be more of a reflection of God's will, of His kingdom to outwork on earth. It became obvious as Movement Day progressed that here were people who crossed so many denominations and networks, but the labels seemed to have little significance. It was also significant to hear an important challenge as members of the Alliance's One People Commission both told their stories and brought a prophetic call for a unity which crosses all ethnic expressions.

Only the beginning

As Movement day came to a close, I went away deeply grateful for all I had heard of God at work in towns and cities across the country. Christians initiating cultural, social and spiritual transformation in the places they loved. But, I also recognised this was only the beginning, there is so much more to be done. We mustn't stop here and we must never forget that the greatest transformation gift we can offer to anyone in our community is an encounter with Jesus. So, let me encourage you to get hold of Roger's book and be inspired, encouraged and perhaps a little challenged.



Credit: MDUK

JOIN US

I would love to give you an opportunity to join us and become part of the movement to fulfil the mission of God in towns and cities across the nation. We can only imagine what our communities could be like in 30 years if we truly grasped the power of working together as one. Simply visit our website www.eauk.org/joinus to sign up with a gift of just £3 a month.

As a thank you, I would love to send you some gifts:

- *A Gathering Momentum: Stories of Christian Unity Transforming Our Towns and Cities* by Roger Sutton
- *Unity Workbook: a seven session study guide* by Gavin & Anne Calver
- *Speak Up: a brief guide to the law and your gospel freedoms*

A Gathering Momentum can also be purchased at www.christianbits.co.uk



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