

A BIBLICAL GOSPEL

Ann Holt



Confidence
in the Gospel

As part of the Evangelical Alliance's *Confidence in the Gospel* initiative we are hosting a series of five national consultations to wrestle with significant and timely issues relating to the gospel.

To ensure that as many people as possible can engage with this programme, the talks are being filmed and made available online.

Why not watch some of the videos, and use the questions provided, to explore these vital subjects with your small group or leadership team?

For more information, videos and resources visit eauk.org/confidence

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Synopsis

Jamaica has more churches per square mile than anywhere else in the world and each year has more evangelistic crusades, per person, than any other country. Yet, alongside this apparent success of the gospel there has been a marked increase in crime and violence. Is there something lacking in the gospel being presented in Jamaica? Are we presenting a gospel that is not biblical enough?

To make sense of the biblical gospel we have to pay attention to the narrative – to the story of Jesus – and how he fits into the bigger story of God's creation and what is happening to it. In turn we make sense of our lives by finding a story to tell. In Jesus' day, the Jews, to some extent, knew their place in God's story. The problem in Jamaica is that they have been told a story of sin and salvation without understanding their place in the whole story of the Bible.

The Christian life is about becoming part of the biblical story and we cannot do that unless we know the story. Too often we start our presentation of the gospel too late in the story. For example, we jump in at John 3:16, when we actually need to start at the beginning - God creating us in His image.

No single verse can ever represent the complete gospel message – they are simply shorthand. When we read the Bible we see tailor-made conversations with those in need, not blanket doctrinal statements. It is a personalised gospel based on a universal truth. It demands a deep engagement with a range of these encounters to demonstrate the freshness of the biblical gospel in each generation.

Questions

for small groups

- 1) Have you had experiences where the gospel hasn't had the impact you'd expected it to (like in Jamaica)? How might this be a result of how the gospel was communicated?
- 2) Do you think your life provides people with a window into the Bible and the good news it contains?
- 3) If you had the opportunity to share the gospel message with a friend over a cup of coffee, what would you say to ensure that you provided them with a whole-bible, rather than a one-verse, gospel?

for leadership teams

- 1) Are we helping people, both Christians and seekers, understand how the story of their lives, and the world today, connects to the biblical story? How could we do better at this?
- 2) It is suggested that the way the gospel is often presented in Jamaica is lacking something. Could the same be said about the gospel we present, and what are the consequences?
- 3) In practice, how can we ensure that our gospel presentations aren't based around a few verses, but the whole biblical story?

Now watch

our exclusive interview with NT Wright where he talks about why it's vital for us to talk about Jesus' life, as well as his death, when presenting the gospel.