



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

Vicky Walker

is a writer, speaker and communications consultant. Her book, *Do I have to be good all the time?* is about the meaning of life, love and awkward moments.

Synopsis

Vicky provides a critique of the dissatisfaction that people in their 20s and 30s have of the interplay between the gospel and public life. She suggests changes that need to occur and concludes by saying:

"We need change and we need to represent change... We need to live up to something huge – the actual good news; played out in new ways on macro and micro levels. In what we create, how we represent others, how we tell stories, and how we step aside for others to be heard. A gospel with no owner but many representatives in an age of individual responsibility and collective action. We all get to speak, it is for everyone; we don't get to choose, erect barriers, pass judgement, as has sometimes been the default. We need to personify and explore grace, chose our words carefully. We need to start conversations which challenge expectations, and we need to be challenged and accept that our interpretation may be wrong or our language unhelpful. We need stories which change the way the gospel is seen and heard, enigmatic words and clarity of action.

A pope kissing a nameless man that the world has rejected because of a disease: why is it worldwide news for a spiritual leader to act as we'd expect Jesus to act?

We need to live with these contradictions that will cost us. To be seen as uncompromising in what we sacrifice for a greater cause. We need to be seen as rigid - but in rejecting old hierarchy and the force fed narratives of structural inequality. We need to be seen as un-accepting - but of anything less than radical humility, hospitality and love. We should be known for our positive difference, our creativity, integrity and hope - reflecting an irresistible God, creating, to paraphrase one writer, 'a beautiful alternative'.

The cultural dissonance we feel is not for nothing. It shouldn't be quelled – it should be explored. It is a catalyst for a different way in a society and world that needs change. The red words in the New Testament are an energising call, not a stifling one. And they challenge everything that is presented to us as success. To be different, to make a difference, focus on the have nots, see past the superficial, bring freedom, count the cost, and give up comfort, position, and certainty. Give up everything, motivated by compassion in order to love, to show what the one who loved first is really like. And to find ways to do that in unexpected places, and if I do those things, and we do those things, how can this gospel not just change our society but the whole world?"

Questions

- 1) What specific examples can you think of that illustrate the points that Vicky is making? For example, (a) What has been said and done in the name of the gospel that have caused people in their 20s and 30s to be dissatisfied with it? (b) What contradictions have you noticed in the young adults you know?
- 2) Vicky says: "We should be known for our positive difference – our creativity, integrity, and hope – reflecting an irresistible God, creating to paraphrase one writer, 'a beautiful alternative'." How could we go about creating 'a beautiful alternative' in our context?
- 3) How can we ensure that the dissatisfaction of our young adults (and our own dissatisfaction) becomes fuel for positive change rather than a driving them away from the gospel, church, and/or Jesus?