

EUROPE SPECIAL

EUROPEAN UNION *Leave or remain?*



GOOD QUESTION

Should we stay or go?

WHAT KIND OF EUROPE?

The Alliance explores

EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURS

Do they care if we leave?



THEOLOGY



60 SECONDS



GOOD QUESTION



BIG INTERVIEW



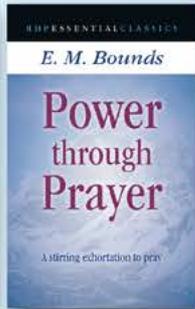
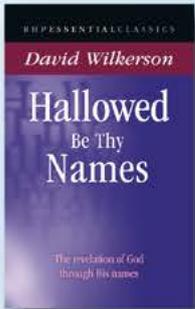
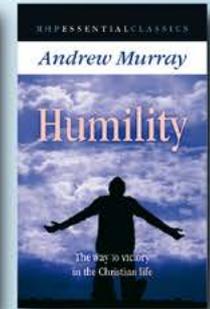
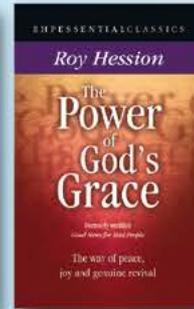
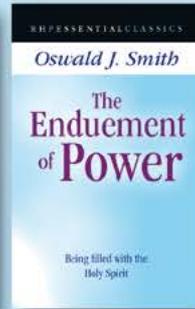
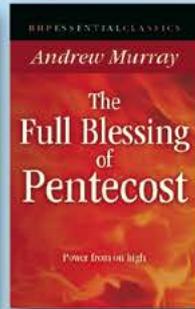
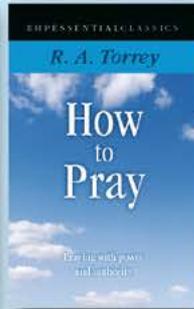
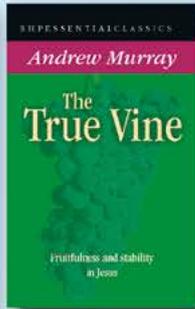
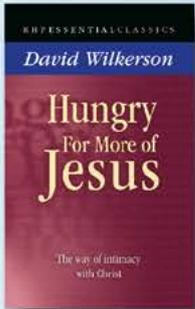
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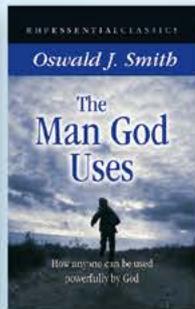
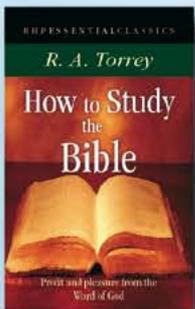
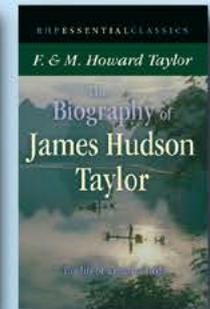
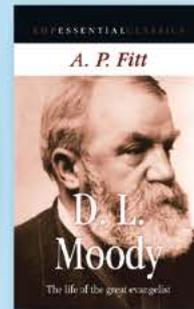
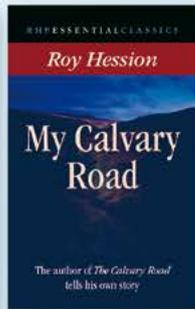
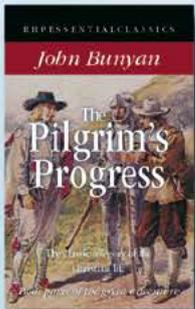
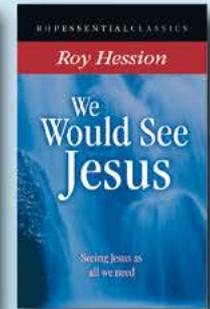
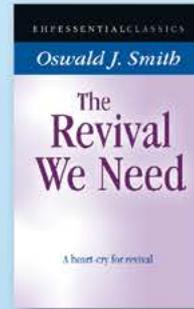
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One Pound Classics

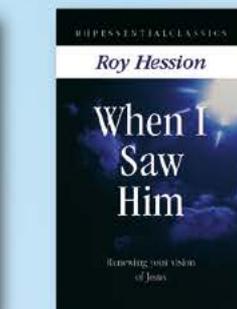
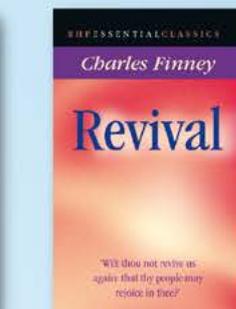
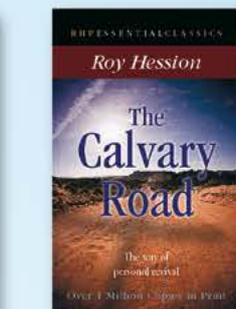
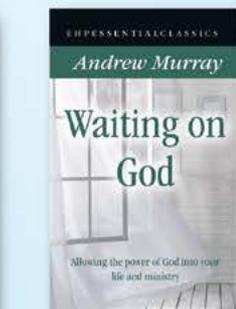
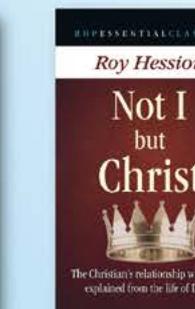
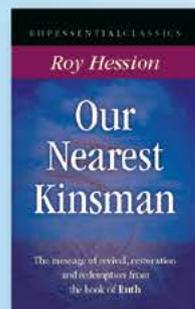
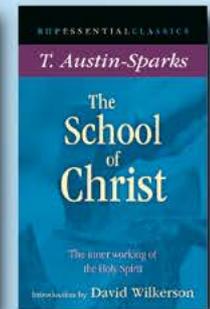
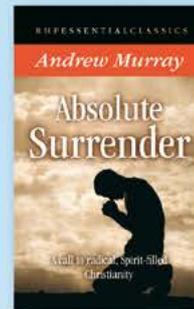
They're back! 25 titles



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Amaris Cole: Something I've been struck by during the process though, is the need for prayer. It seems like everyone I interviewed was asking for this.

idea-torial



I really struggled to write the *idea*-torial for this edition. Do I pretend to know how I'm going to vote, or even that I know the major arguments for and against? Because like most people I talk to, I'm confused. I've heard compelling arguments on both sides, and what I wanted was one place that draws all this together so that I can make up my mind where to place my vote.

We're being bombarded with information by the opposing campaigns, and the *idea* team felt we needed something to cut through all of that, helping us all form our own, informed decision that goes beyond just feelings and fear.

That's why we created this special edition of *idea*. It really was helpful to me, and I hope it will be for you.

Something I've been struck by during the process though, is the need for prayer. It seems like everyone I interviewed was asking for this. Politicians leading the debate, church leaders trying to guide their congregations through this time and charity bosses who are doing amazing work throughout Europe. Imagine what could happen if we wrapped this continent in our prayers.

We've started to do just that at the Alliance.

We also wanted to resource all our members to be able to go out and speak confidently into the debate. Once again, we need to show up and vote. But can our contribution go beyond that? We want Christians to be leading the way.

And what happens after the June vote? Our neighbours will still be our neighbours. We will have to live, work and worship alongside those we may have voted against and argued with. How do we go forward to build a better nation - whatever the results?

These are the kinds of questions we are thinking about. While staying neutral, we're looking for a way to make this referendum graceful and God-filled, and to afterwards continue to be the good news and tell the good news.

We're still working out how.

Join the debate by tweeting @idea_mag, using the hashtag #EAspecial

Amaris Cole

Editor

@AmarisCole

We're on Twitter!
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FIVE THINGS I DIDN'T KNOW UNTIL THIS ISSUE

Leaving the EU could slow the increase of puppy trafficking ...

But could also increase the price of cheese and wine

Recording the audio Bible took David Suchet 250 hours

3,000 refugees arrive in Athens every day

The bishop of Europe is my new favourite bishop!

FEATURES

10 How the EU works

An easy-to-follow guide to how the EU operates

18-19 How I'm voting

Evangelicals give us their views

24-25 Poirot and prayer

David Suchet speaks to *idea*

32-33 The EU neighbours

How do the lives of those living outside the EU differ from ours?



32

We talk to Christians outside the EU.

REGULARS

4-6 Connect

News from across the Alliance

16-17 Good Question

Should we leave the EU?

26-27 In The Thick Of It

We explore the subject of reverse missionaries

30-31 Big Interview

We speak to the World Evangelical Alliance communications director



12

What kind of Europe?



42

Last Word, with Steve Clifford.

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We need you.



What are your thoughts on the Evangelical Alliance: our communications, our fundraising, our style?

We would love to hear your thoughts. They'll enable us to serve you better and make sure we're hitting the spot.

For your time, you could be entered into a prize draw to win a Kindle Fire HD. All you need to do is give us your email address at the end.

The survey should take around 10 minutes.

Visit eauk.org/yourthoughts

Ready, steady, go...!



Tani Omideyi.

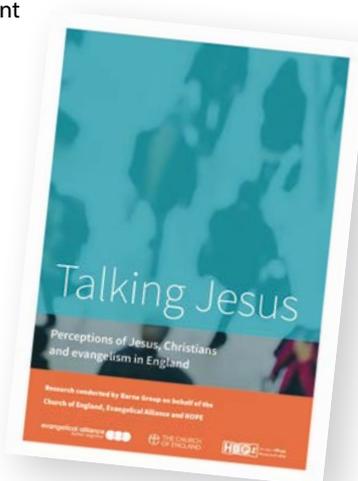
Alliance brings research to Liverpool

Almost 120 leaders gathered together in Liverpool recently to reflect on recent landmark research of the UK population, *Talking Jesus*, which shows that an increasing number of people have little understanding of who Jesus is – with four in 10 not even being sure that Jesus was a real person who lived on earth.

The event was hosted by Mersey's church unity movement Together for the Harvest with the Evangelical Alliance.

Tani Omideyi, the new chair of the Alliance's board, and member of the Together for the Harvest steering group, said: "This event has provoked vitally important conversations about how we might make Jesus known in Mersey, and has also greatly strengthened Together for the Harvest's relationship with churches across our region. Working in collaboration with the Evangelical Alliance to host this event was very significant for us, and I would strongly encourage other unity groups to get in touch with the Evangelical Alliance and find out more about hosting a similar event in their area."

If you would like to discuss hosting a similar event in your area, contact the Alliance at info@eauk.org



Five prayer points for the Alliance

We are so encouraged by your prayers for this work – thank you. Join with us in May and June to pray for these five things:

1. Please pray for wisdom and grace for Christians as they engage and vote in the **EU referendum**, and for the Alliance's advocacy team as they equip and support Christians for this.
2. Join us in praising God for the work of Evangelical alliances across **Europe**, and pray for the varying contexts into which they speak and seek to unite Christians.
3. Pray that our new resource **You're Not Alone** will effectively inform and encourage Christian parents to confidently engage in their children's education.
4. 2016 is the Alliance's **170th anniversary!** Join us in praising God for 170 years of uniting the evangelical Church and speaking out to government and media.
5. Please pray for the elections for the London mayor and for parliaments and assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, for wisdom for Christians as they vote.

Is there hope in dementia?



Through speakers, seminars and break out groups, people heard inspiring stories from carers and were challenged to look at dementia in a fresh light.

More than 60 delegates recently attended a day conference in Llanelli called Hope in Dementia. The event took place in the town's Myrtle House, home to the town's Elim Pentecostal church and was organised by Gweini, the umbrella organisation that coordinates the Christian voluntary sector in Wales. The delegates came from a broad cross-section of Welsh churches, including the Church in Wales, Salvation Army and other denominations.

The conference explored the need to give effective support to people living with dementia, and their carers. The keynote session was led by Professor Bob Woods, professor of Clinical Psychology of Older People and director of the Dementia Services Development Centre Wales, Bangor University. Through other speakers, seminars and break out groups, people heard inspiring stories from carers and were challenged to look at dementia in a fresh light.

Rev Elfed Godding, national director of Evangelical Alliance Wales, introduced the day and later reflected on the conference. "It may sound strange but it was a day packed with inspiration and hope. The repeating theme from virtually all the speakers was that a person with dementia is a person and should be treated with dignity, respect and love. Too often we are only aware of the condition and fail to see a unique person with their needs and hopes.

"It was also encouraging to hear of churches across Wales that are welcoming people with dementia and their carers into their communities and how faith can play a very positive role in times of great challenge and difficulty.

"The day was an inspiration and generated a momentum and appetite for greater understanding of dementia and a resolve for the Church to engage with those who live with dementia with greater compassion and understanding."

Pentecostal churches are good for Wales, says government minister



A Welsh government minister has praised the contribution of Pentecostalism to public life in Wales. Speaking at a special reception at the National Assembly for Wales, the minister for communities and tackling poverty said that Pentecostal churches are so involved in their communities that many people would be deprived without them. Lesley Griffiths AM for Wrexham praised the Pentecostal movement for its relevant message, commitment to social action and for being one of the first Christian groups to ordain women as well as men to Christian ministry.

The minister's remarks came during an event marking the centenary of Elim, Assemblies of God and the Apostolic Church in Wales.



Lesley Griffiths



100: Our story of healing, honour and hope

A special edition magazine, which includes a collection of interviews and articles reflecting 100 years on from the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme, has been released by the Northern Ireland Evangelical Alliance.

Among a wide variety of features, the magazine includes interviews with the first minister Arlene Foster and deputy first minister, Martin McGuinness, the attorney general for Northern Ireland, John Larkin and Ulster rugby player, Ruan Pienaar. Other contributors include the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, former lord mayor of Belfast, Nichola Mallon, and photo essays of the art-works of the Bogside artists and Ross Wilson.

The magazine runs to more than 100 pages and includes an amazing group of contributors. It forms part of a larger movement of prophetic prayer - 100 days of prayer for 100 years of history. The Alliance is very aware that the decade of centenaries has the potential to divide our community, but believes this is a significant moment for the Church to unite and inspire society in response to the historic events that have shaped the story of our land.

Peter Lynas, director of the Northern Ireland Evangelical Alliance, said: "Ultimately we look to the good news of Jesus, the ultimate story of reconciliation which makes all other reconciliation possible.

"Our prayer is that this magazine helps move the conversation forward and, in a small way, contributes to **healing** of the past, **honour** in the present and **hope** for the future."

Copies of the magazine can be purchased at Ground coffee shops and various independent bookshops, coffee shops and retail outlets, to enable free copies to be given to schools and youth groups. More information, a full list of stockists or to order individual copies online visit 100days100years.com. To order bulk copies, please contact info@100days100years.com

What Kind of Church videos and tour



Fred Drummond, national director of Evangelical Alliance Scotland, has released a series of short video clips challenging the Church to engage in mission across the UK. Timed to coincide with the *What Kind of Church?* initiative, these clips have now been viewed more than 10,000 times. The Alliance Scotland is also running a *What Kind of Church?* national tour during May with events in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness. To watch the videos or for more info on events go to eauk.org/scotland

Public Leadership

The Alliance's Scottish Public Leader programme is now recruiting participants ahead of the pilot launch of it in September. The SPL will be an interactive equipping, learning and mentoring experience taking place over a nine-month period for emerging leaders who sense a calling to lead beyond the Church. If you know an emerging public leader aged 25-35 who would benefit from this equipping, mentoring and support contact Kieran Turner for further details k.turner@eauk.org



Scottish election

Evangelical Alliance Scotland have been busy helping the Church engage with the Scottish parliamentary elections taking place on 5 May. Working with colleagues at CARE to facilitate a series of regional hustings events during April, a new resource has also been produced, explaining some of the new powers of the Scottish Parliament and how Christians can engage with them. For a copy of the new resource visit eauk.org/scotland

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AT CINEMAS JUNE 10



European Evangelical Alliance special

In this edition, we are focussing on the European evangelical fellowships.



Lombardy church.

LOMBARDY LAW RESTRICTING WORSHIP PLACES STOPPED BY CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

The Italian region of Lombardy won't be able to severely restrict the opening of new worship places after the constitutional court rejected a proposed regional law. There were concerns that the so-called 'anti-mosque law' could have also affected many evangelical churches. The Italian Evangelical Alliance (AEI) welcomed the decision of the court, which rejected the regional law declaring it discriminatory and illegitimate. The AEI said: "The full accomplishment of religious liberty in Italy still remains a long path, but certainly the verdict of the court today is a step in the right direction."

EUROPEAN RELIGIOUS LIBERTY FORUM CALLS FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM EDUCATION

Christians working on religious freedom in Europe came together again for the European Religious Liberty Forum in February. Hosted by the EEA and Advocates Europe, the annual gathering sought to strengthen relationships and collaboration, to discuss latest developments and opportunities and to work out strategic responses to pressing issues.

The group established specific recommendations on improving religious freedom for refugees, promoting religious freedom understanding among the refugee community, and noted that the refugee crisis and fear of Islamic radicalism is stirring up unrest. The UK Alliance shared about the British government's draft policy to prevent the radicalisation of children where groups teaching for more than six hours per week will be compelled to register with the government.

The group also shared ideas about encouraging politicians to become more effective advocates for religious freedom, and looked at protecting conscientious objection and the right to witness in the workplace.



Migrants making their way through Europe.

TACKLING THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Keep up to date:

The EEA is working hard to resource Christians and churches across Europe to meet the needs of refugees making their way to the region. They say: "We like to say that the EEA manages a large dance floor. In reality this dance floor is a composite of many different dance floors. Each national alliance, from the individual European countries, have their own dance floor on which individuals, churches, ministries, NGOs, etc. carry out their unique refugee ministries." To find out more about what other countries are doing to support refugees, please visit the EEA website where you can also sign up to receive the EEA newsletter and keep up to date with it's work across the region. europeanea.org

Refugee Sunday:

The EEA are encouraging Christians to pray for refugees on either 19 or 26 June, as 20 June is the UN's World Refugee Day. The Refugee Highway Partnership has produced posters and resources that will be available on the Refugee Highway website. Churches are being encouraged to highlight facts, stories and prayer points specific to their own nation, or region.



Migrants travelling by train.



Powerful & Effective



Developing prayer gifts in your church

Even when I am old and grey, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation Ps 71:18

See insert for details

Please join us in a national week of prayer for our nation led by seniors in your church. **13th to 19th June 2016**



CHRISTIANS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

For more information:

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HOW DOES THE EUROPEAN UNION WORK?

28 COUNTRIES



65 YEARS



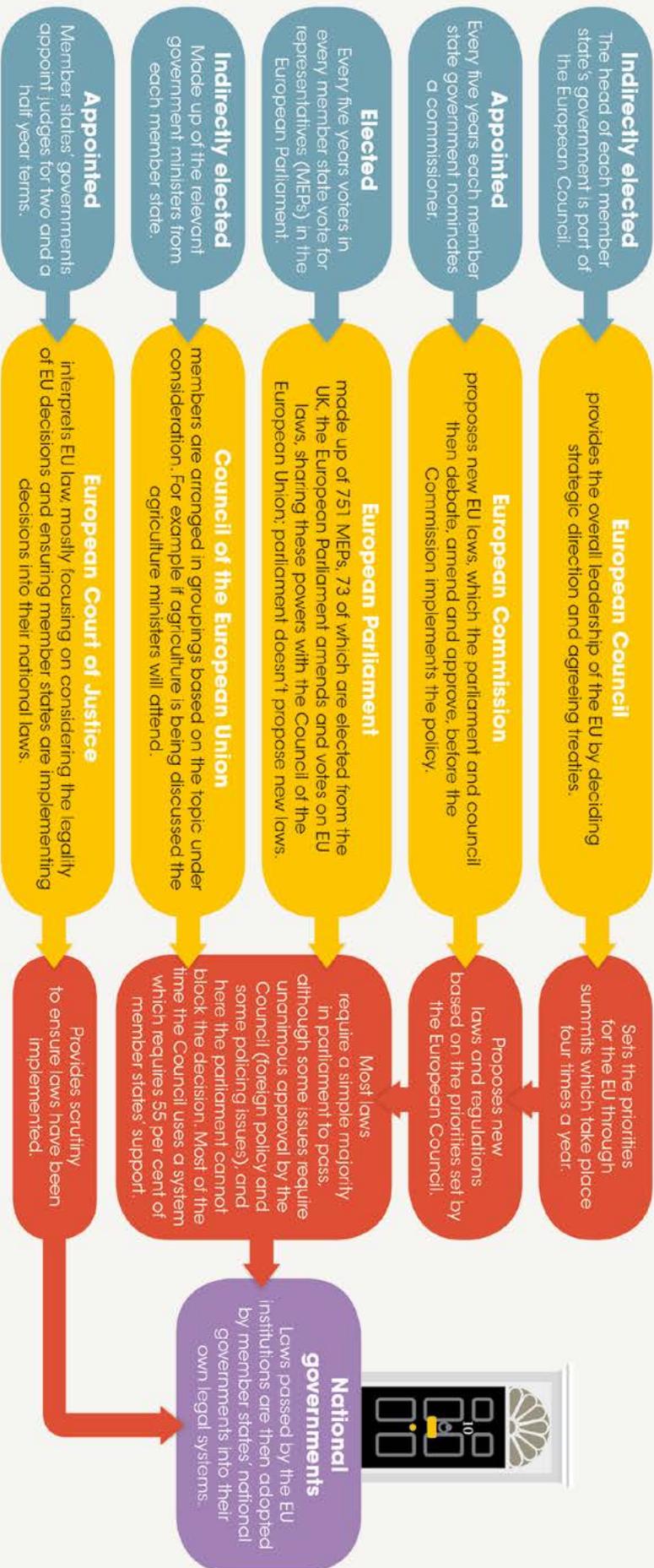
508 MILLION PEOPLE

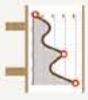


19 COUNTRIES USE THE EURO



5 MAIN INSTITUTIONS

- TRADE 
- AGRICULTURE 
- FISHING 
- TRANSPORT 
- ENVIRONMENT 
- ENERGY 
- SECURITY 
- DEFENCE 
- EMPLOYMENT 
- FOREIGN AFFAIRS 





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What kind of Europe?

by Danny Webster

Regardless of the outcome of the vote, we need to provide a vision for Europe that goes beyond the mechanics of institutions, the newspaper headlines or the economic scales.

For the first time since 1975 voters will have a say on the UK's membership of Europe's political club.

As a result of a Conservative manifesto pledge, the vote on 23 June is a straight decision to either leave the EU or to remain. Whichever side attracts more votes will win, although it will require a further set of negotiations and parliamentary approval for the outcome to take effect.

The European Union has its origins in a 1951 trade agreement for steel and coal between France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. This led to the creation of the European Economic Community in 1957. The membership of this pan-European grouping has expanded over the past 60 years, with the UK part of the first expansion along with Denmark and Ireland. In 1993 the EEC was renamed the EU, and today it has 28 members with Croatia the most recent to join in 2013.

Elsewhere in this special edition of *idea*, we set out how the EU operates, and present cases for and against continued membership. The Alliance takes no position on whether the UK should leave or remain. Our position is only that Christians should engage fully in the debate and vote in the referendum – because the voice of evangelicals matters.

In order to do this we offer these four conversation starters. You might find it helpful to have these conversations with your small group or with friends. We aren't expecting churches to take a position on the referendum, but we do hope that they can find a space to encourage political engagement at this key moment. For more in depth support and information on these topics visit eauk.org/eu

First, who are we?

That might seem like a strange place to start, but where does our identity lie? Are we British, or English/Scottish/Welsh/Irish? Are we European or Yorkshiremen? Are we citizens of earth or of heaven? Where we give our loyalty, and to which institutions and government bodies we accept as having authority over us, is important.

Beyond this, it's also instructive to ask what creates these bonds of community. If we call ourselves Scottish, what makes us Scottish? If we are to think of ourselves as European, what is at the core of that identity? In terms of membership of the EU, one of the core foundation blocks is the freedom of movement across the Union, what difference has that made to how we understand our national identity? Has it weakened it or strengthened it?

As Christians how do these identities relate to our identity in Christ? How has the historic role of Christianity within Europe influenced the identity of the EU and the citizens of its member countries?

Second, how are we free?

The EU operates through a series of institutions, but is primarily built on four pillars of freedom: of movement; of trade; of providing services; and of moving capital. For most people, the freedom to move between countries is the most tangible, but we also benefit from the freedom of trade and services across national boundaries. These freedoms have an impact on many parts of our life, and the role of freedom was a key value at the heart of the development of the EU.

Freedom, however, is always contested, and usually requires a restriction of some form to ensure it. If we are free to cross borders,

others are as well. If we can sell our products abroad to commercial advantage, others can sell in the UK to our disadvantage. What freedoms do we value most highly, and how does membership of the EU affect them? Critically, in what ways does membership of the EU aid or hinder the religious freedoms necessary for proclaiming and living the gospel?

It's important to note that the European Convention on Human Rights, and its court, are not part of the EU and we would continue to be a signatory to this convention if we voted to leave.

Third, who governs?

Every five years we are able to vote for members of the European Parliament. However, in 2014 only 35 per cent voted – which is about average for UK turnout in these elections. The EU Parliament is directly elected and the other institutions that make up the EU are either made up of national government ministers, or appointments made by the national government. It's a complicated picture.

With the low turnout, and the sometimes uncertain lines of authority and accountability, the democracy of the EU is often called into question. So, when considering continued membership of the EU it's worth thinking about who governs. Do we know who has authority over which decisions are taken, and have we considered what affect those decisions have?

Importantly, as Christians how are we applying our worldview to systems of government? Subsidiarity – that decisions are taken at the level closest to the people they affect as possible – is a principle of EU law, but how much is that principle reflected in reality?



Fourth, follow the money

Money is not the answer to all of our problems, but if you've followed the referendum debate with any level of interest you would think it is all that matters to either campaign. Will leaving the EU leave you better off? Will staying mean you can stay in your job? What do we know about the economic impact of leaving or remaining, and what are the opportunities and challenges that are likely to lie ahead in the coming years?

The EU is an institution that says it aims to benefit all its members, but inevitably some will benefit more sometimes. So, what role is there for a Union that provides financial assistance to some countries at the cost of others?

Either way, staying in the EU or leaving will

affect people financially in different ways. However, these are not the central issues at stake, and as the referendum approaches it's worth considering what weight we put on our wallet in making political decisions.

Where next?

If we vote to leave on 23 June we will have to work out what that means for us as a country. If we choose to stay we'll have to get on with being a member of a body many would prefer we weren't part of. The referendum is a valuable opportunity to have a political influence, but more than that, it is an opportunity for us as Christians to think about what kind of Europe we want.

Regardless of the outcome of the vote, we need to provide a vision for Europe that goes beyond the mechanics of institutions, the newspaper headlines or the economic

scales. We can have a voice for that future of Europe through debating and voting in the coming months.

Globally, Christianity has a bright future. Although Europe is often described as somewhat of an exceptional case, the Church is present and active across the continent. So, what is the role of Christianity in the future of Europe given it has played such a vital role in the past, and perhaps more interestingly, what is the role for Europe in the future of Christianity?

The Evangelical Alliance will be providing more information and resources ahead of June's referendum.

Visit eauk.org/eu to see the latest updates.



A day in the life of an MEP

Diane Dodds is a DUP member of the European Parliament, representing her Northern Ireland constituency. She has offices in Brussels, Strasbourg and Lisburn. Here, she tells *idea* what a day in the life of Diane is like in Brussels.

"I wake up between 7 and 7.30am and frequently go for a morning walk through Avenue Louise before starting a long day in the European Parliament. I arrive at my office around 8.30am, where my first item of business is a run through of my agenda for the day with my assistant, Laurie. Breakfast for me normally consists of scrambled eggs, toast and a coffee to start the day.

In the world of an MEP, the saying often goes that no one day is the same. The reality is that the political system we are part of in Brussels and Strasbourg is far-detached from the practices that have become so familiar to us all at Stormont and Westminster. Therefore, while the role presents the normal challenges of working hard for people right across Northern Ireland, it also gives fresh opportunities that don't exist at home.

Much of my work in the European Parliament revolves around the three Fs - farming, fishing and funding. Since 2009, I have been a member of the agriculture and fisheries committees, advocating measures that support local agriculture, help our fishermen and connect rural dwellers. I've also produced a *Signposts to Funding* series of publications to raise awareness of money that exists at an EU level to support local communities. One of the most successful of these guides has been for churches and faith-based organisations.



Diane Dodds.

Although this has been the bread and butter of my work, I have also been able to champion a variety of causes that are very close to my own heart. As a member of the EP's intergroup on freedom of religion or belief and religious tolerance, I've hosted seminars to allow Christians who have been violently persecuted in countries like Nigeria to share their story to a global audience.

Only this week I participated in a conference promoting fundamental rights and freedom of expression in China.

I'm also vice president of the parliamentary working group on human dignity, a role that has given me a platform to speak up for the right of the unborn child and speak against modern slavery and assisted suicide.

These are values that I hold dear. I'm not a politician who believes their beliefs should simply be cast aside when they turn up for work. I don't believe in forgetting the principles that have shaped and guided me. For these reasons I'm thankful each day to have the opportunity to represent our province in Europe.

I usually leave Parliament at around 7pm, and to unwind I like to FaceTime my two-year-old grandson, Henry."

"I'm thankful each day to have the opportunity to represent our province in Europe."



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Should we leave the European Union?

We had to ask, didn't we? However predictable this feature is, the *idea* team decided it would be helpful to hear two Christian politicians debate whether we're better off outside the EU. We put the question to Kate Hoey MP and Sarah Dickson, and then stood well back...

"Britain is a leader in Europe. We can use our leadership to reignite a vision for Europe that goes beyond the economy to one of a vibrant, peaceful and compassionate community."

During Fairtrade Fortnight earlier this year, I was reminded of one of Martin Luther King Junior's thought-provoking sound bites; the sort that stop you in your tracks to make you think a moment.

"Before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you've depended on more than half the world."

Seeing it on a poster on our office kitchen cupboard door every time I made a cuppa, it made me realise the reality of our world in its increasingly interconnected state. As we become more interconnected, we face more international crises from climate change to refugee crises.

Our actions impact the lives of those across the world and people in other nations' actions impact our lives more and more. This compels us to cooperate with our neighbours across national borders.

It's by working together that we can build and maintain peace; that we can stand up and inspire action against global inequalities; and that we can form strong inclusive communities. This is why I want to stay IN.

People within church communities have been trying to live out this outward-looking vision for centuries and the EU referendum on 23 June gives Britain an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to doing so too.

Formed after 1945, the European Union was set up with the aim of building unity and peace between European countries. For the past 70 years, the EU has successfully made European war impossible because leaders have come together to negotiate and cooperate. I've grown up taking peace for granted and Europe is largely to thank.

Through this cooperation, we're able to tackle the climate change that is destroying some of the poorest people's livelihoods and dirtying our air. We are able to stand up for people's rights – protecting maternity and paternity leave, tackling human trafficking and expanding our aid reach to some of the most vulnerable.

For me, Jesus' inclusive, borderless love can be best lived out by shifting our focus globally. Remaining part of Europe gives us an opportunity – amongst others – in which we, in Britain, can expand compassion, social justice and reconciliation to a far further end than the British Isles.

There is no doubt that the EU needs reforms, just like Westminster, but it's by staying at the table that change happens. On the inside, we can be influencers. Britain is a leader in Europe. We can use our leadership to reignite a vision for Europe that goes beyond the economy to one of a vibrant, peaceful and compassionate community. The need for which, as our world is confronted with more and deepening international pressures, is overwhelming.

So, when you're eating your breakfast, mull over the Martin Luther King reminder that the world's structure is one of interrelatedness and it is by working together that we can truly love our neighbours.

By Sarah Dickson, director of the Liberal Democrat Christian Forum



Sarah Dickson.





“I want to make decision making more honest and transparent. I have confidence in the UK and I will be voting to leave.”

We live in a cynical age. Faith in our democratic structures and in the people that we elect to parliament has rarely been lower. People have a desperate sense that our system is rigged to be unfair and can't be changed.

I genuinely feel that our membership of the European Union is a big part of this problem.

It's the sheer remoteness of our institutions that makes them unresponsive to the real needs of people. I do my best to represent more than 70,000 constituents in Vauxhall, and yet our London MEPs represent more than 8,500,000, most of whom don't know their names and would struggle to remove them because of the electoral system. Yet the EU elections are meant to be the democratic part of the institution! In reality, decisions are made by bureaucratic compromise in unsmoked rooms by unelected functionaries with little regard to the wishes of the public. No wonder a disconnect grows.

As it stands, the EU is a centralised structure for the convenience of the governing elite, not least the banks. The austerity that they have forced on the Greek people is horrendous and a reflection of their true priorities. After the EU enforced penury on a people who can't afford to repay the sums increasingly demanded of them there was a huge increase in suicides and a collapse in pensions and employment. This terrible situation doesn't illustrate a "social Europe" of countries collaborating to support one of their members at their weakest – it's more reminiscent of a hyena pack preying on the most vulnerable target.

The EU is an organisation incapable of being reformed. The prime minister took a minimalist agenda for his renegotiation and yet barely achieved it. Previously, whenever countries such as Ireland, France or Denmark rejected treaties in referendums, they were told to try again until they got the answer "right"!

So what kind of country would we be outside of the EU? The beauty of this question is that the answer can be 'whatever we wish to be'. My constituency of Vauxhall has a large diaspora from Africa and the Caribbean, with many old Commonwealth links. How ridiculous that we give trading and freedom of movement preference to EU countries with whom we have little shared history, over old friends and family links. This is made more acute when existing EU policies like the Common Agricultural Policy, specifically discriminate against poor farmers in the developing world, making it harder for them to compete and improve their standard of living.

This referendum campaign is an exciting time. There are many powerful voices in the establishment dedicated to telling us that we cannot possibly change the status quo. On 23 June, everyone of you can have your say. As Christians we never fear the future as we know we are in God's hands. So the scare stories of those who wish to stay in the EU can be ignored. I want to make decision making more honest and transparent. I have confidence in the UK and I will be voting to LEAVE.

By Kate Hoey, Labour MP for Vauxhall

For more information about the European Union from our friends at Christians in Politics, visit christiansinpolitics.org.uk



Kate Hoey.



How I'm voting

Our televisions, social media feeds and newspapers are full of experts trying to convince us to vote one way or the other. But what are you thinking? Have you made up your mind, or are you still undecided? We asked you.



THE WRITER

From my perspective, to withdraw from Europe at this juncture would cause unnecessary ripples through the economic markets just at a time when they are at their most fragile. Something like one in 10 British jobs are linked to remaining in the EU (3.5 million). We need European partnership not just for banks, British

firms and small businesses, but also for the larger foreign companies who house some of their factories here, such as Nissan. We would lose 50 per cent of our exports. We could regain these of course, but renegotiation would take a long time, possibly years. It might ultimately lead to the separation of the United Kingdom, since the SNP want to remain, and if we leave Europe, we may see the slow break-up of our constituent countries. The converse is that when we keep the partnership open, we would continue to benefit through open trade, and European funding for university research.

David Simmons



THE CHILD ADVOCATE

I will be voting to stay in Europe. A lot of the global crises we're facing - global warming, migration, terrorism etc - are best managed as part of the European club, rather than picketing from outside it. Those on the 'Out-side' say that if we leave Europe we'll have more sovereignty. But I don't think that's true - you only need to

look to the American trade treaties such as TTIP that are being negotiated at the moment. These are going to significantly reduce our sovereignty and the sovereignty of others in a dangerous and very unaccountable way. I wouldn't trust this government with more power to further weaken the vulnerable. Their current policies attack the weak; being in the EU protects workers' rights and gives the consumer significant protections. I worry that this government is likely to remove these protections - and more - in the name of 'cutting red tape'.

Mark McDonald



THE HR PROFESSIONAL

I'm voting to remain in the EU because it means more diversity in the workforce and a greater market pool for businesses and charities. It would mean current employees having to go back to their countries of origin. From an HR point of view, this would be a huge issue. Restricting the movement of people limits diversity and talent within the various sectors. It would also change employment law.

Katie Nurse

THE AUTHOR

Leave. Doesn't Almighty God have a view on this most important decision? This is what I believe He has said: "In regard to Europe, come out of her, my dear children, for she will align herself with the Beast and the False Prophet who will arise and appear for just a short while."

Paul Slennett



THE POLITICAL ADVISOR

I'm voting in, because as a woman it's not fear that tells me that the EU fights inequality, protects individual and societal rights, helps protect equal pay, maternity/paternity leave, and gives us a global voice, it's wisdom! The EU helps safeguard the environment, creates jobs and investment and gives us a boost in trade. Universities, scientific research, arts and charities

all benefit from EU funding, and British people are enabled to live and work overseas. The world is global and we cannot simply pull up the drawbridge and expect prosperity as a right. The EU is not perfect and needs reform but it has contributed to peace and stability with no war in Europe for nearly 60 years. As a Christian and for the sake of the generations to come we should strive for unity and not division so for that reason I'm IN.

Heather Staff



THE INTERNET ENTREPRENEUR

I love Europe and count myself a European - my parents came from Hungary - but the EU is bad for Europe and not good for the UK. I was too young to vote in the original 1975 referendum, but would have gone with the majority to stay in. At that time it was an 'economic community' - or so we were told - all about free trade and also counterweight to the Eastern Bloc. Over 40 years

I've seen the EU's "ever closer union" gather momentum, regardless of popular feeling and with no mandate from UK voters. I believe in a free society that makes responsible choices, a society where people can build communities, enterprises and are better without the dead weight of a massive and unproductive bureaucracy. We don't need "blocs" - we need diversity and opportunity. One day the EU will die just as the Roman Empire did, and then we will work out what agreements and structures we need for today's world - not what some people thought we needed when Germany was defeated and Stalin was running the Soviet Union. I believe that some of the bad policies of the EU are creating unemployment, economic stagnation and that is leading to a reaction and revival of fascism and nationalism. That makes it urgent to change.

Jackie Elton

THE CHRISTIAN LEADER

For the economics novice like myself, it's difficult to know who to listen to. But from those who claim neutral expertise, the arguments seem to be finely balanced, thus undermining the doom merchants from either side. To those who bemoan loss of sovereignty or fear of porous borders, it's unlikely that Brexit will give actually the UK more independence in a globalised economy or greater protection from determined assailants. So the issue for me comes down to whether we are an insular culture or an open society that does not fear difference. As someone working throughout Europe, I for one relish Europe's cultural variety, as well as the many kingdom opportunities that EU membership grants. So I would be very sad if the Brexit campaign succeeds.

Mark Meynall



THE RETIRED PROFESSIONAL

I don't have strong views and I don't suppose that there is a single Christian view, and I'm sure that there will be Christians on both sides of the debate.

My inclination is to vote for Britain to leave. I'm concerned that the EU has moved beyond an economic union and become a political union: a united states of Europe.

I dislike the idea that European laws and regulations, however good, take priority over laws and regulations made by our own parliament. Americans have a United States of America, but they chose this course at an early stage in their history. Britain has its own parliamentary traditions, which should be preserved.

Graham Hedges



THE INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE

The decision to leave the EU is full of hope, optimism and joy. It's full of opportunity to see more control given back to our Parliament and through that more ability of us as people, communities and constituencies to push for the Britain we want to see.

Leaving the EU means more Social Justice, not less, it means fiercer protections of our Human

Rights not a weakening. It means we can offer Asylum in a way that can best protect those fleeing wars. I am a Big Englander not a little one. I want to see more immigration from all over the world, not just Europe. I want the most industrious and entrepreneurial individuals in the world to call the UK home. Leaving will give us this chance.

Jo Coleman



THE SALES DIRECTOR

I'll definitely be voting for us to stay in. Trying to negotiate new trade agreements could take ages, I can't see how we would be better off out.

Claire Glennon

Are you a #Remainion or a #Brexit? We asked Twitter.

Mike Tyler @MikeTylerSport

I'm voting to leave. The EU is a failed sociopolitical pipe dream from a bygone era.

Graham Pointer @grahampointer72

Remain. Can I mention that @CiPolitics have a website about EU at christiansinpolitics.org.uk/eufocus/?

Annie Carter @anniecarteruk

Brexit. EU was intended for free trade & travel freedom, never intended to assume increasing political sovereignty.

Jme @madmumatuk

I'll be voting Brexit. But I won't be heartbroken if we stay. I think we give up too much of our sovereignty, and money when our strongest political connections are through the Commonwealth/US

Join the debate by tweeting @idea_mag with the hashtag #EUspecial

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Evi Rodemann

Evi Rodemann is the youth consultant for the European Evangelical Alliance, fulfilling her dream of helping young people live out their faith. Alexandra Davis caught up with Evi for 60 Seconds to learn more.

Tell us about yourself.

I was raised in a Christian home with parents who modelled Christian life in word and deed. When I was 10 years old I made the decision to follow Jesus. It was also then that I felt God call me to serve Him across other cultures. I went to the Netherlands to study missions and for about 10 years I was in full-time ministry, first in a church for two years and then I worked in Africa, India and Hong Kong.

When I finished studying in the Netherlands, I wrote down what I thought might become my life's mission statement, and it was about mobilising a young generation for missional lifestyles through discipleship, events and mentoring. Being now 45 years old, I look back in amazement at how I was able to live my dreams.

How did you get involved with the EEA?

Under the EEA – and the European Evangelical Missionary Association – we have a youth mission network called Mission-Net, which mobilises young people for a missional lifestyle. I was part of founding Mission-Net, and have been the CEO since 2009.

My dream was always to connect churches and ministries – to be a bridge-builder for the wider purpose of the kingdom of God. Through Mission-Net, I was able to bring together countries inside the EEA, bringing alliances across Europe together.

Last September I joined the EEA staff team

as a youth consultant. With six others, we've founded a European youth ministry network, where we try and equip youth leaders and set up national youth networks. We currently have six networks.

What are the most exciting things that you're seeing happen with Christian young people in Europe?

Across Europe we see thousands of young people ready to follow Jesus and eager to cause change. When we believe in them for the better and entrust them with responsibility, they are the ones who put hope into practice, while not caring so much about which church they primarily belong to. Instilling in them the wider body of Christ can release them to engage creatively into society. And seeing them do this gives me one of the greatest joys.

I also see a new commitment to life-long discipleship and the need of younger people for spiritual fathers and mothers. When they do find them, their missional lifestyle reaches a new height. They are innovative; church-planting, addressing local social needs and trying to do what the older generation thinks is impossible.

Young people start prayer movements combined with action, which is awesome to watch.

What are the biggest issues facing Europe at the moment?

For me, the most important crises I see across Europe are not primarily the needs, but that the Church is facing one of the biggest crises on our continent right now. As Europe goes into a survival mode, Christians tend to do the same. It becomes about safeguarding our own churches and denominations instead of thinking bigger – of having hope that together we can make our stand.



Evi Rodemann

As Europe is struggling for its identity, sadly the Church is finding it hard to determine their identity and calling. We often fight more with each other – or at least ignore each other more, rather than seeing the value of cooperation, networking and being a witness to the world. As the body of Christ, we're called to have hope for Europe. We need to raise the next generation in this hopeful spirit that God is not finished yet with our continent. Though we face many crises across Europe, where the Church stands together we see tremendous results. One example is France, where under Le Conseil National des Evangéliques de France – the French alliance – a diverse union has been established through prayer and relationships. Every 10 days a new church is planted in the country.

What kind of Europe and European Church can we expect in the future?

Europe will be extremely colourful, diverse, multi-religious and will fight for freedom on all sites.

A politician from the UK once said: "The Christians might be the only glue keeping Europe together." This strongly resonates with me. We have the task of standing together as Christians to be the light and the salt, transforming our society and communities with all possible means, and to do this in unity – despite being diverse in our theology.

The Church will face many more attacks, opposition and persecution in the near future. But it's not an option to withdraw and leave the world as it is. We must live out the Great Commission. Church will also develop creative tools of reaching the world on our doorstep and opportunities will be seized where the young people will play a critical role in this.



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The EU and the issues that matter to you



We looked at issues evangelicals are concerned about and asked our friends at the Religious Liberty Commission, CARE, the Alliance in Scotland and the Alliance in Northern Ireland for some answers.

Such an awareness is a crucial foundation for accurate policy on this issue.

The EU's main influence in this area is through its diplomatic reach, both internally and externally. Internally, member states – and their citizens – can influence the EU and challenge it to more proactively raise religious freedom in its foreign policy. The EU can, in turn, raise concerns with member states who give little attention to freedom of religion or belief.

Externally, the EU's position as a united trading block and significant global humanitarian donor allows it to gain access to – and set up delegations in – a whole variety of countries.

These delegations – like embassies – enable the EU to observe and report on the human rights situation in many countries. This role is particularly helpful for EU states who want to influence a specific situation but, don't have an in-country embassy through which to do it. Through the delegations, the EU can provide a strong and unified voice, bringing the combined weight of all member states to bear when exerting pressure on situations of human rights abuse. Member states' embassies can also put forward the united EU messaging, meaning that host nations should hear the same line from multiple sources – thereby making a greater impact than if only one country's embassy spoke out alone.

Yet there remains the ongoing question for both the EU and member states of how to balance trade interests and human rights concerns – with trade often getting the upper hand. For instance, both the EU and UK are considerably strengthening relations with Kazakhstan and India without seriously addressing issues of religious persecution. The existence of an EU policy means that advocates for freedom of religion or belief are able to influence policy in both the EU and member states in order to advance religious freedom. This is something that RLC members and individual Christians engage with in both Westminster and Brussels, thanks to the prayers and support of people like you.

Religious Liberty Commission (Evangelical Alliance, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Open Doors UK and Release International).

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is an issue that matters to Christians because we want to see the dignity of every individual respected. Although there are many cases of British people being trafficked and exploited within

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

The European Union declares that "one of the EU's main goals is to promote human rights both internally and around the world." But how does the EU go about specifically promoting and protecting the global right to freedom of religion or belief?

The right to freedom of religion or belief was officially enshrined in the EU's consciousness through the adoption of the EU's guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief. These guidelines were adopted in 2013 after extensive consultation with NGOs, including RLC members. They are non-binding, but all member states agreed to them and

they hold an authoritative position within the EU. They commit to promoting and protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief in the EU's foreign policy (through the European External Action Service – the EU's equivalent to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office). Member states also committed to bringing the guidelines into their own foreign policy.

The guidelines are still relatively new. However, there has been a marked increase in both personal and official awareness of the importance of the right to freedom of religion or belief within the EU corridors.

our own country, human trafficking has a significant international dimension. But what impact the EU had on combatting the traffickers? And how might leaving affect the fight against modern day slavery?

Unquestionably, the EU Human Trafficking Directive of 2011 has helped to shape and influence the fight against human trafficking. This directive provided greater force and emphasis on the need for proactive action to tackle the human traffickers and provide support to victims. This directive helped prompt Lord Morrow to look at ways of tackling human trafficking in Northern Ireland, resulting in the ground-breaking trafficking act passed there in 2015. There are also echoes of the directive in the new legislation passed in Scotland and England and Wales the same year. Having said this, because the new legislation was passed by our own parliaments and assemblies, it's not dependent on EU membership, and would remain in force if we left the EU.

Membership of the EU means member states can easily share advice on best practice in tackling trafficking. It also means we can make use of structures such as Europol, which enable sharing of intelligence and joint operations in specific cases. This co-operation with fellow EU member states and communications plays a vital role in helping us combat human trafficking. However, we also co-operate with countries beyond the EU and there is no reason this broader, international co-operation would cease if we left the EU.

Thirdly and finally, immigration is obviously a key issue in the debate about EU membership. Many of the victims of human trafficking in the UK come from the EU. Because you don't need a visa to enter the UK, this makes it easier for traffickers to entice victims with promises of work only to put them into forced labour or sexual exploitation. Leaving the EU could allow stronger border controls, which could act as a deterrent to the traffickers. On the other hand, we know that other victims are already being brought to the UK from countries outside the EU, sometimes with a valid visa, sometimes without, so there is no guarantee that ending visa-free travel from the EU would prevent trafficking.

Pray that whatever the outcome, God would continue to empower people to make a real Christian difference by standing alongside victims of trafficking and giving them with the support they need.

CARE policy team.

SCOTLAND

The referendum, along with all political issues in Scotland, has to be seen in the context of the ongoing discussions about Scotland's future place in the UK. It's fair to say that while the main party leaders are in favour of staying in the EU and with the Scottish election campaign now in full swing ahead of May's Holyrood elections, there's also not been much of a debate to speak of as yet.

Common wisdom is that Scots are much more favourable to membership of the EU than people in the UK as a whole. This would seem to be backed up by some of the latest polling that puts Scottish voting intentions at around 65 per cent for remain to 35 per cent for leave, rather than a much more even split across the UK as a whole. Certainly the main drivers for the Brexit campaign don't have as much day-to-day impact up here. Nigel Farage and UKIP have had limited impact in Scotland with working class anti-establishment political sentiment focusing on Westminster rather than Europe.

On the specific issues, migration is lower than the rest of the UK and more importantly Scotland is emptier, meaning that immigration doesn't have such negative connotations. In fact, arguably the opposite is the case with Scottish public services needing migration to help stem demographic changes. Concerns about EU powers usurping national sovereignty also have less impact as Scots are used to finding their self-identity as part of the larger UK family. This is not to mention the fact that large areas of Scotland – especially the Highlands and Islands – have also benefited disproportionately well from EU funding subsidies.

There are limited voices for the third of the Scots who favour leaving the EU and this is causing the debate to be stifled somewhat. However figures are now starting to emerge from left and right, and unionist and nationalist perspectives, which is starting to challenge the political consensus that exists.

Finally, there is the ever present reality of Scotland's future and in particular the impact of a Brexit if Scots were to vote to remain. The Scottish government has made no secret of the fact that it would like to use this scenario to push for a second independence referendum and if this were to happen it is possible (though no means certain) that the question 'Scottish, British or European?' could become a significant consideration in Scotland and across the UK.

Evangelical Alliance Scotland public policy team.



NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK to have a land-border with another country in the EU. With so much talk about control of borders, this land border with the Republic of Ireland is critical to the debate yet not talked about much in mainstream UK debate on the referendum.

The other unique thing is the peace process here, which is guaranteed by the Irish and British governments and is contingent on the principle of self-determination. If the UK were to leave the EU there may be implications – constitutional or otherwise – for the peace process. Materially, Northern Ireland has also benefited greatly from specific peace funding from the EU.

Northern Ireland has a large rural economy with many jobs dependant on farming and fishing – perhaps disproportionately so compared to the rest of the UK given the small population. Policies on these issues are largely determined at EU level and so are important here.

On a point of interest, Martin McGuinness has called for a referendum in Northern Ireland on Irish unity if the UK were to leave the EU. This goes right to the heart of the constitution of Northern Ireland as per the Good Friday Agreement. We find ourselves in the strange position here with Sinn Féin agreeing with the constitutional solution proposed by the British prime minister and the DUP disagreeing with him.

Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland public policy team.



Advertisement Feature

Born in a city in Sudan amidst civil war, Dut Agwang is turning thirty this June. His first thirty years have been full of heartbreak, war and grief, but he sees God everywhere in his journey. As a South Sudanese national, Dut is now courageously stepping into a pilot career with MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship), so that he can bring relief to people just like him.

Photos **Luanne Cadd** and **Sue Judge**

Dut's early struggles

Dut was born to Christian parents in Bor, a city that now lies in South Sudan. He remembers his grandfather practised black magic but that 'when he became a Christian, he changed so completely and for the rest of his life he preached the gospel and baptised many people. He died when he was 105 years old.'

Against a backdrop of civil war, Dut's father died leaving his mother to raise six children. 'She was and is the most influential person in my life. She is always supportive in everything I do.'

In 1989, the young family moved eastwards to escape fighting in their city, settling amongst other refugees across the border in Ethiopia. A change in government made the family's fate more insecure and they walked to Kapoeta in South Sudan so that Dut could start school. Attacks at Kapoeta meant the family had to

flee once again, walking on to an area near the border with Uganda. Amidst terrible conditions, Dut's youngest brother died there - probably of cholera - aged just four years old.

Dut's eldest brother had meanwhile become one of the 'lost boys' who had been separated from their families during attacks on their villages. Finally, he was reunited with his family. So the two brothers set off to northern Kenya together where at the Kukuma refugee camp they were able to continue their education. By 2006 Dut had finished secondary studies, working hard to pass all his exams. Given the circumstances, to get this far was something of a miracle.

A chance meeting with MAF pilots

Being financially unable to continue his studies, Dut decided to return to what was still Sudan the following year.

Arriving in the capital, he got an office job and subsequently heard about a pilot training programme in South Africa. He was one of the eleven chosen for training and gained a range of flight qualifications including his private pilots' licence. While at Lanseria Airport near Johannesburg, Dut met two MAF pilots who were also there for training. He recalls that 'this was the first time I had heard of MAF but I believe the meeting was part of God's plan.'

In 2011, he took a job with MAF in Juba as a bookings clerk, then worked in the dispatch team and as a Ground Operations Coordinator. It was becoming clear to his colleagues that Dut was extremely bright and capable and could be well suited to flying with MAF one day as a pilot.

Top left Dut Agwang

Top right Cargo being unloaded for Tearfund in Motot, South Sudan

'On my way to Juba, catching a lift in the back of an army truck I had a vision of an aircraft dropping food and I felt maybe one day I would be the pilot bringing relief to people'

Losing a son, gaining a daughter

While in Juba, Dut met his wife, Grace, a student at Juba University. They married and went on to have a son - Nicholas. At just three years old following a brief and intense bout of cancer late last year, Nicholas died.

After an agonising set of medical appointments and journeys to access the necessary healthcare, Dut remembers, 'I went to get the results and this is when we found out that Nicholas had Burkitt Lymphoma cancer. I returned to Nicholas with the results, and only fifteen minutes later my little boy passed away.'

'The loss of my son Nicholas is too emotional for me. First, because it is just too hard to lose my first born child. Second, it is very hard to see your loved one dying. I wished I could have offered up my own life instead of losing Nicholas, instead of it being him.'

'I told Grace that we should not despair. As Christians, we must always believe that God will care for us even in our losses. And in fact he did – he blessed us with our daughter, Anna. She was born on February 7, 2016. She is a happy, healthy baby except for the fact it is too hot for her in Juba. Grace is doing fine, she calms me down when I am thinking of the tough times, it is still very hard.'

Dut has experienced so much pain in his short thirty years of life. His testimony is one of real hope breaking through great loss.

It's this kind of life that allows

Dut to say 'God will always give each one of us a chance, no matter how desperate your situation is. I believe God doesn't give something in vain.'

Knowing his ability and potential, Dut was recently accepted onto MAF's internship for trainee bush pilots, passing the initial flight assessments with flying colours. It won't be easy though - the costs to train pilots are always high, even in an aviation charity like MAF.

Like most MAF pilots, Dut will be in contact with local communities on the ground. As a South Sudanese national he can help bring a passionate witness of faith to his countrymen. He could also pave the way for further collaborations between MAF and the communities of South Sudan, Uganda and neighbouring areas of east Africa.

Thinking ahead to his time training to be a bush pilot with MAF Dut said, 'This is the just the initial step, I've got a lot ahead of me. It will be a rough ride, but I will persevere and that is when MAF will know what kind of a person they are taking on.'

'I love the purpose and mission of MAF. I am enthusiastic about working for a Christian organisation geared towards serving the lives of desperate people in hard to reach destinations. I have seen the way MAF pilots have devoted their lives to the hardships of living in different countries. I see the way they interact with people of different races and backgrounds and I want to be an MAF pilot. I want to live God's way of life.'



Get behind Dut!

Dut needs financial and prayer support in order to take on this challenge. If you want to support him, please pray and give so that he and other trainees can take on the privilege of serving remote, isolated and war-torn communities in need of MAF's unique services.

Read more and give online at www.maf-uk.org/backdut

Above Dut Agwang



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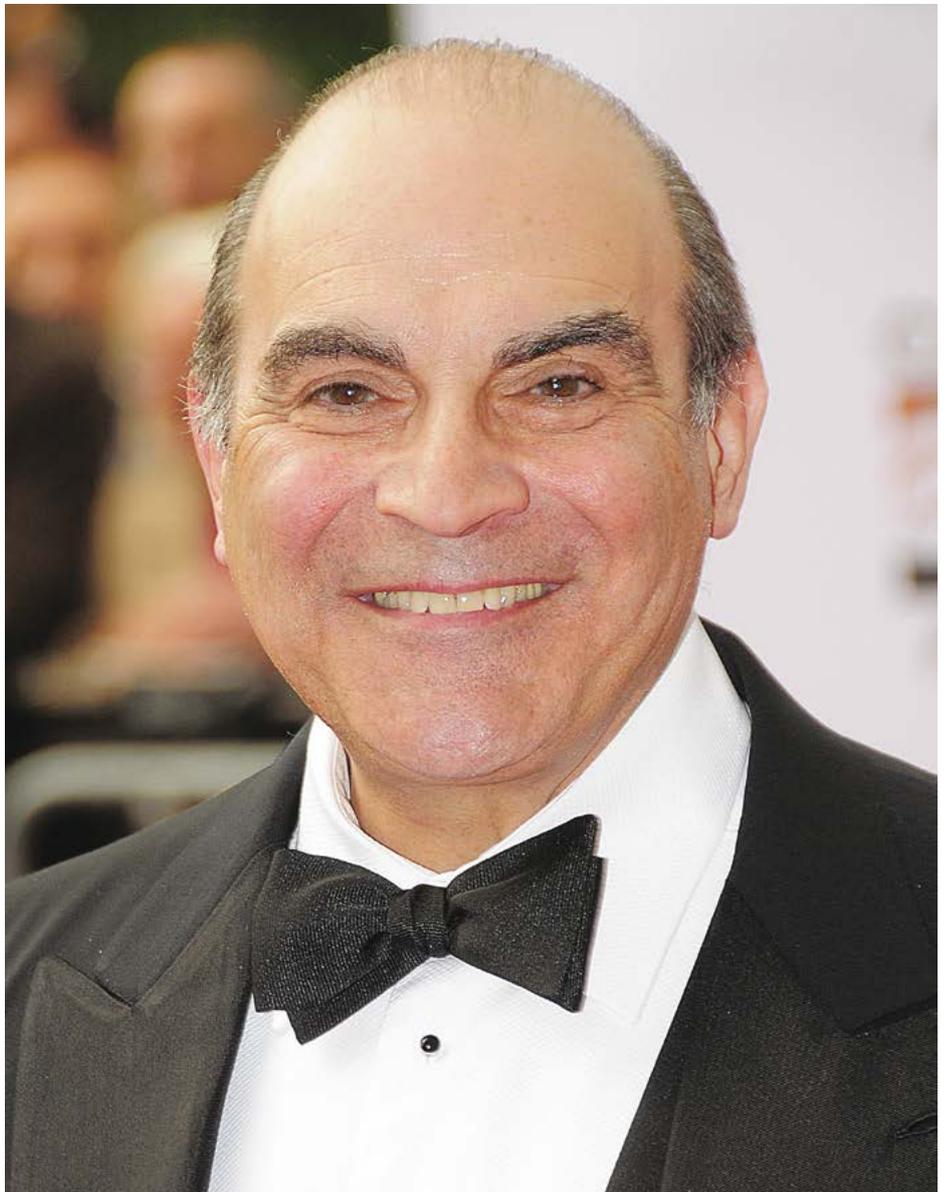
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Poirot, prayer and the faith of David Suchet

Before David Suchet took up the role of Agatha Christie's Poirot in 1989, no one could have guessed the classically-trained actor would complete the entire catalogue of stories about our favourite European detective – the last of which aired in 2013. One of his latest projects was recording the entire NIV Bible, after a lady who had lost her sight thanked him for recording the gospel of John. She had been given a cassette by her friend of the 1990s audio, and cried with joy as she was able to receive God's word for the first time in years. An app has now been released to make the Bible even more accessible, and the actor met *Amaris Cole* to explain how it all began.



"For a long time I did try, but couldn't get it off the ground," David Suchet told me, as we sat down for lunch the week before the six-CD audio Bible was released. "Then all of a sudden, working on the St Paul programme (*In the Footsteps of St Paul*, which aired on the BBC in 2012), I met a producer who made it possible. Suddenly all the doors began to open."

The actor prepared for this like he would any other role. "You can't just read a chapter. You've got to do a Bible study of the whole thing – who wrote it, why, to who, what they were saying, when. The names don't really matter – because nobody's ever quite sure, but who they're speaking to is important – and why."

This research took more than 400 hours. "You've got to look at it theologically, interpretatively. You've got to look at it through the eyes of the Middle East – not the West. It's an eastern book."

David believes this allowed him to go in to the recording studio and go through the whole Bible in 250 hours rather than 600 hours.

How this would sound to listeners was key through the process. "When I started doing this, I realised I was hearing it as my listener was hearing it. I was reading it, but I was hearing it, and if I heard it wrong, rather than read it wrong, I would redo it."

"That was an interesting experience."

So after working through each book in the Bible like this, did he find a favourite? "No, I don't have a favourite book, but my favourite passage is in John's gospel, when Jesus is speaking to his disciples in a very quiet, very intimate way about the Holy Spirit. That's my favourite passage."

"I also enjoyed doing the Psalms. They're emotional. They're railing against God – and I really do that in the recording. As they were written, so I speak it."

And the actor isn't afraid to rail or be open to doubts. "Because that's how it was originally done. The Jewish faith was chewed over and

chewed over and chewed over. The yeshiva bochers spent their whole lives debating, analysing, questioning, and tearing apart.

“We should allow for more debate in the Church.”

I asked David about how he hears from God. Is it through the Bible? “Yes. If you read the Bible with a very open mind, a non-judging mind, God’s word speaks to you.”

“We have to read the Bible quietly, to listen to His word, to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide the word to us, to let the Holy Spirit teach you. The Holy Spirit is there to help, to comfort, to teach, and yes to convict.

“Let it speak to you.”

It wasn’t until the age of 40 that David came to faith, when he picked up a Bible in a hotel room while away filming. After being convicted while reading Romans 8, he was later baptised into the Church of England.

“I think it was difficult because at the age of 40 you quickly think you should know it all, but you realise you are just a baby. I found God in 1986 and it’s now 2016 – so that’s 30 years. I’m 30 years old as a Christian. A new birth is a new birth – I was a baby. You go through all the teething problems and the growth pains when you’re born again.

“Now, at 30, I have a more mature, independent stand, a voice that can be listened to and heard. I wonder how many more years God will give me to mature.”

Research shows only half of UK young people read their Bible more than once a month. David is worried by this. “They’re not hearing God speak to them,” he explains.

“The Bible is God revealing himself. It’s the revelation of how God is revealing Himself through this holy book.”

And the lack of reverence for that book has been lost. “Society has become too familiar with [the Bible]. People died for this book – to get it into our language. We forget that the English Bible, which we can pull off a bookshelf, throw in our bags and walk away – this is a big book for which people gave their lives. It survives everything and God reveals himself through it. It’s unique.

“It’s the only book in the world where Christ appears.”

Our Talking Jesus research shows that 40 per cent of people in the UK think Jesus was a fictional character. “It does matter,” David believes. “The fact we have Bible illiteracy is the fault of lack of teaching – lack of what I call expositional preaching.”

David believes we need better teaching and better preaching in the UK. “The churches that are full and brimming over are those with expositional teaching. The evangelical Church is the only one that’s full and brimming – I wonder why – because people are hungry to learn.”

The NIV Audio Bible is produced by Hodder Faith. You can download the Bible at hodderbible.co.uk, or buy the 6-CD set from online retailers, including eden.co.uk. RRP £39.99.

This year, Hodder launched the first Bible app with full audio and Bible text. The app includes verse-by-verse synchronisation which unlocks a new level of interaction, and is designed for the ‘normal’ user to read and listen to the Bible easily, so that even the less technical user will feel immediately at home.

To purchase the app, go to the app store and search: NIV Audio Bible: read by David Suchet

Reverse missionaries: how the migrant Church is shaping European Christianity

For the past two years, hundreds of South Koreans have come to the UK for a two-week prayer mission, organised by the National Day of Prayer. The Alliance's general director Steve Clifford was among hundreds that joined the group for the evening of prayer and worship at the end of the trip in London.

Pastor Jonathan Oloyede, convenor of the NDOP, said: "This Prayer Mission has created a very powerful prophetic picture of the global Church uniting with the British Church for the reviving of Christianity across these isles. This is not the end for what God wants to do, but the start as the legacy of the Korean visitors is being lived out in the 30 towns and regions they have visited." The South Koreans credited their mission partly to gratitude for the missionaries that went out from the UK in the past, introducing the nation to the gospel.

But when did all this start? It used to be that the United Kingdom sent out missionaries – primarily to Africa and Asia. There is debate today about whether these trips were a force for good or bad, but examples from our own membership show the evangelical commitment to evangelism bore fruit.

The Church Mission Society was founded in 1799 by a group of activist evangelical Christians committed to three great enterprises: abolition of the slave

“Christianity is growing in the two-thirds world, while it’s on the decline in the West – Africans are now leading the largest and fastest growing churches in Europe.”

trade, social reform at home and world evangelisation.

OMF's roots were planted in 1831 when James Hudson Taylor embarked on his first mission to China, dedicating his whole life to bringing the gospel to Asia and encouraging the Church to support the establishing of reproducing communities of believers in East Asia.

And closer to home, France Mission has a long history of planting churches throughout the country, despite its secular

reputation. Today, the Alliance member is still planting churches, training leaders and growing communities.

So when did the tide turn, and the missionaries from countries we previously sent our young men and women to, start sending their own back to us?

Israel Olofinjana, himself a reverse missionary from Nigeria, has researched the subject extensively, writing four books around this phenomenon. While many believe the practice began in the 1940s, he believes it dates as far back as 1906, when Sumner Road Chapel was founded in Peckham, London, by Ghanaian Rev Kwame Brem-Wilson.

The author, who's also director of the Centre for Missionaries from the Majority World, wrote in his book *Reverse in Ministry & Mission*: "Africa is part of the two-thirds world where the expression of Christianity that is growing is Pentecostalism."

He goes on to explain: "Apart from revival another reason for the explosion in growth in these churches has been because Africans are taking initiative, leading fellow Africans and successfully adapting Christianity to African culture and context. This increase in Church growth has led to another shift, which has been recognised by anthropologists, missiologists and religious scholars. This has been the efforts of Africans in reaching out to the western world.

"African ministers and missionaries are on the increase, crossing over to Europe to share the gospel."

Rev Olofinjana believes this is due to these ministers having the conviction that Europe has become too secular and has forgotten its Christian heritage.

The African theologian John Pobee wrote in *African Reformation*: "It's a contemporary mantra of the study of Church history and missiology that the centre of the gravity of world Christianity has shifted from the North Atlantic to the South, with Africa, Asia, Latin American and the Pacific as the new heartland of Christianity."



Members of the One People Commission from the HMS President launch of the OPC research in October 2015.

It doesn't make easy reading for the Church in the West.

Christianity is growing in the two-thirds world, while it's on the decline in the West – Africans are now leading the largest and fastest growing churches in Europe. Because of the increasing secularisation here noted by Rev Olofinjana, many commentators now call it "the dark continent".

Evangelical Alliance member Latin Link established their multi-directional mission in 1999, noticing the trend before many others. The organisation has placed evangelicals from Argentina, Peru and Brazil in mission with UK churches across Britain and Ireland. Latin Americans are also commissioned to go to Switzerland, too.

Member churches such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God are also leading the way in this area. One of Britain's fastest growing churches, the RCCG was founded in Nigeria in 1952, but now exists in more than 100 countries, with more than 700 parishes in the UK alone, and has a clear focus on evangelising the West.

But sometimes, missionaries to the UK are from the West themselves. The Evangelical Alliance Wales runs Missional Links Wales, an initiative to encourage American and Welsh churches to collaborate in mission across each Welsh county and across the nation in long-term relationship. Each summer,



a group of Americans come to Wales to minister in local communities.

Wales has a population of more than three million. For a long time Wales has been known as the land of revivals, but the last was in 1904/5. Since that time, there has been a steady decline in church attendance and closure of churches has been higher than in any other part of the UK.

Alliance research suggests that there are about 60,000 evangelical Christians in Wales – two per cent – though around seven per cent of the population claim to attend some form of church regularly. A large proportion of the churches in Wales are made up of 25 members or less, usually elderly, and many towns and villages have no evangelical witness at all.

In recent years, thanks to the work of many mission organisations, there have been encouraging signs of growth, and churches and church leaders are increasingly having

fellowship across denominational lines, and Missional Links in working to increase that.

Christianity in the UK is undoubtedly being shaped by the migrant Church, yet is our Church unity reflecting that? The Evangelical Alliance's One People Commission constantly challenges the work done throughout the Alliance, and commitments have been made to ensure diversity is represented in everything the Alliance does.

But if the rest of the world sees Europe as the "dark continent" and views the UK as the new mission field, are we doing enough ourselves to share the good news of Jesus here?

If you'd like to find out more about the One People Commission, the Evangelical Alliance's network of national leaders from across denominations, representing the diversity of the evangelical Church in the UK, visit eauk.org/onepeoplecommission

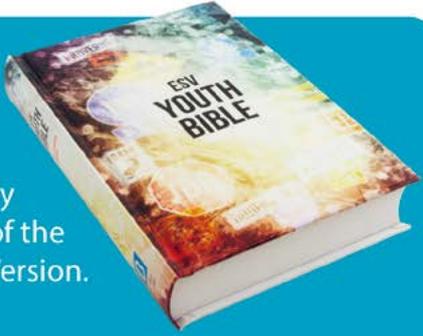


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Russell Rook

The Good Faith Partnership was developed after the last election, when Dr Russell Rook and some colleagues felt the Church and the state were understanding each other less, and so set out to address this concern. Russell Rook, who heads the organisation, told *idea* a little more about their project with refugees.

“We wanted to create a way of improving the conversation between faith and the state. Increasingly MPs are becoming more religiously illiterate and some faith leaders are becoming less politically literate. We felt that the Christian faith has a huge amount to bring – and does bring – to public life, but that sometimes that contribution is missed.”

The first task was create a way for the Church to address the refugee crisis. “We were thinking of starting this new initiative for refugees and then we had a phone call from a senior politician saying we need to get cross-party politicians, NGO leaders and faith leaders together in parliament [to discuss the crisis]. This was in September. I think everyone had gone off on their holidays, were sitting on a beach, and had opened their newspapers and seen people arriving on another beach down the coast.”

Suddenly, a problem that had been around for quite some time seemed to come closer. After this meeting, which Russell and his colleagues pulled together in 24 hours, a group of church leaders just kept expressing their desire for the Church to organise a major response to the crisis.

Russell explained the problems surround this: “Actually, the refugee crisis is by its nature very complex. It’s not as simple as just sending some money. There are all sorts of practical things questions, like how many Syrians will come to the country? Where will they come to? What can we do? How



Russell Rook

can we do something that’s well thought through to avoid making mistakes and damaging people who have already been very damaged?

“We decided to try to get together and do something, which we called The Church for Refugees, or For Refugees for short.”

The Partnership believe that some people in the UK were waiting for these 20,000 Syrians the government have authorised to live here to arrive on mass. “But it won’t happen like that. It will happen over the next five years – only 1,000 have come so far.”

Until these people do arrive, many churches can’t help these new refugees in their local area.

“What people don’t know is there are already more than 50,000 destitute refugees and asylum seekers in the UK right now. We would encourage churches to get in touch with us and find out what they can do.”

For Refugees has been working with the government on a plan to help local churches bring a family into that community and commit to help them. It’s an idea that’s with the home secretary right now, proving a success already in Canada.

Earlier this year, the Archbishop of Canterbury said immigration was a legitimate concern, and said people who expressed these views shouldn’t be labelled as racists. With some people now equating refugees with immigration, does Russell think Christians are right to worry?

“It depends. There are three groups of people, and the lines are quite blurred between them - migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Largely it’s to do with the bureaucrats deciding who belongs to which group.”

He says the Syrian refugees are “not a concern, because the government is not taking migrants from Europe looking to come to the UK. These are people currently in and around refugee camps in places like Lebanon, Jordan and the Syrian border”.

The government has committed to taking 20,000 and the United Nations Refugee Agency will identify who are the most vulnerable. These refugees will be security-checked by the UN and the UK government and taken largely to places where local authorities want to welcome refugees.

“A colleague of mine was in the Isle of Bute last week,” Russell said: “Where they’ve welcomed 50 people. Every time a family arrive there’s a class from the local primary school there to welcome them on the runway. She said it’s remarkable to see how much this community want them to be there.”

The situation across Europe is desperate, with many countries struggling to cope with the sheer number of people fleeing their homes. Some experts are now saying we should be focussing on stabilising those places and reducing the need to flee.

“I’d say absolutely,” Russell replied. “The

challenge is that somewhere like Syria is not going to be stable in the short-term, so what do you do where it's not possible? Of course everything should be done to improve the state of the nation where people are coming from but the challenge is that sometimes the problems are bigger than politicians and diplomacy from the UK can put right.

"From a Christian perspective, we have to think that parts of the Church - some of the oldest parts of the Church - are being wiped out. The number of Christians facing persecution in these countries is huge. The persecution around the refugee camps is deeply, deeply worrying. We should be doing everything we can to help our brothers and sisters in need."

Prayer should of course be a huge part of our response. Russell said: "We should be praying for wars to cease, for conflict to end,

for the terror of groups like IS and Al Qaida to end, because that's where this starts and ends.

"Continue to pray for the Middle East and Africa where we have these terrible regimes and hundreds of thousands of people understandably running away.

"We should also be praying for our government here and in Europe. It's really challenging and we need to pray that politicians and civil servants and diplomats are brave and courageous. Pray that politicians think beyond what might get them elected and focus on their moral responsibilities.

"We also need to pray for our own churches. It's not fair to leave this in the Middle East or to blame the government for not doing enough. We need to take responsibility."

And actually, though it's been called a "crisis", and Europe is struggling under the pressure of the number of people fleeing their home, perhaps we aren't viewing the situation in the right light.

"It's quite clear that God's people are defined by our love for the widow, the orphan, the asylum seeker and the refugee. This is a defining issue for the Church. We need to ask God how we can live up to this title of the people of God. We need to be the family of God, to be a family who don't see these people as a problem to solve, but as part of God's family.

"I think this current refugee crisis is God's gift to the Church, to demonstrate who we are."



Syrian refugees queuing to enter Hungary.

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CHRISTIANS IN SPORT



Spreading the good news of the global Church

Timothy Goropevsek is the director of communications for the World Evangelical Alliance. Before joining the WEA, he was involved in student ministry, church planting and also worked for several years as a reporter for a Christian newspaper. He spoke to Amaris Cole about his role, the importance of living authentically and what we can do to help the global Church.

Can you explain what your role at the WEA involves?

I'm working with a small team in New York and my role includes anything related to spreading information internally and externally, through the website, social media, newsletter, media releases, and so on. And I'm also involved in membership and fundraising.

A lot of my work has to do with writing and putting thoughts, ideas and information into words that the respective audiences can easily understand. This is obviously not always a simple task, as our message should reach and touch people in Brazil, India, Kenya, Korea, the US and the UK in the same way – to just name a few! It's a very interesting and enriching job and I feel privileged to be allowed to serve God and His Kingdom in this way.

In addition to my 'regular' communications work, I'm also part of the executive leadership team, along with our secretary general Bishop Efraim Tendero and five other colleagues.

We try to be 'good news people', but the media and culture in the UK often portrays Christians in a negative light. Do you think the global Church does enough to tell the news of the amazing things Christians are doing?

Media plays a huge role nowadays and this becomes a challenge for us if they seem to turn against anything Christian. What plays into this is that media often like to report on what is sensational and more often than not, the voices that are then quoted in the headlines are extreme, polarizing and not representative of who most Christians are and what they stand for.

At our recent International Leadership Forum in Korea, we had one session on public engagement and what we looked at was how our personal lives are reflected in what we do and say in public. And public doesn't necessarily mean in the media – it could be anything that has to do with others, starting with personal conversations or your behavior at work, at school, etc.

The key passage we focused on was Galatians 5:22-23, the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. If we focus on growing in those and living out these qualities – in private and in public – then people will notice. And their understanding of Christians will likely be influenced by your life more than by what they read in the news. They might



Timothy Goropevsek

say: "Well, the media say that Christians are intolerant, homophobic, old-fashioned and I don't know what else, but my friend who is a Christian is none of these in real life."

We also have to be careful not to become reactionary, frustrated, defensive or even afraid. Yes, times may be challenging, but we just can't help sharing the good news of Jesus Christ!

You must hear some amazing work being done across the world – what's been the most inspiring story recently?

Personally, I'm always touched when I hear how Christians who themselves live in very poor circumstances share the little they have with those in need. That's the message of the gospel lived out authentically. In recent months, the refugee crisis was in the headlines all the time, but what the media don't report is how local churches in Turkey, Greece, and many other countries are serving refugees selflessly.

Christians along the so-called 'Refugee Highway' not only care for the physical needs of refugees, but also the emotional and spiritual needs. There are also many churches within refugee camps led by refugee pastors. In the midst of all the tragic situations that cause people to flee – be it conflict, persecution, or other reasons – there is God who sees and cares and uses His people to heal and restore.

We're concerned about the reports of persecution we're hearing in the media. As someone reporting on the plight of evangelicals around the world, do you think these attacks against our brothers and sisters have been increasing during your time at the WEA?

Persecution around the world is clearly on the rise overall and it takes on many forms. From discrimination to legal restrictions of



worship to criminalising Christianity and outright persecution of Christians. It's also not restricted to one country or even one region, it's a global trend and it's concerning. It's therefore also a major focus of the WEA to raise awareness among Christians and the general public; to advocate for religious liberty – for all, not just for Christians – at the United Nations, in public and private meetings with government leaders, and on other occasions; and also to equip local churches to respond to discrimination and persecution.

Our Religious Liberty Commission does annual training events where they teach the biblical theology of persecution, how to do systematic research and recording of violations, how to do advocacy with government, and more. We recently held a consultation in Africa on 'a Christian response to persecution'. How do you, as pastor, respond if they burn down your church? How do you as a Christian respond if your loved ones are killed because of their faith? These are some very challenging questions.

But again, what stands out is their request to their sisters and brothers in Christ around the world. If you ask them: what can we do for you? Most respond: "Please pray for us!" The International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (idop.org) on the first two Sundays of November is an excellent opportunity to raise this topic as part of a worship service. But it's an issue that should be on our minds and in our prayers always, for "if one suffers, all suffer together" 1 Corinthians 12:26.

The UK is about to vote on whether we should stay in the European Union. It feels like the continent is becoming increasingly secular – as someone from outside Europe, have you noticed this?

Yes, it's noticeable that Europe is becoming more secular and that there is an increasing tendency to move away from the Christian roots and values. But similarly to the question about media, I think it's important not to be defensive or withdraw from public life or to hide our Christian faith. Instead, we should seek God even more in prayer and in the study of His word and live it out each day of our life in public and in private, so that we truly are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We should ask ourselves: does our life reflect the relevance of God's word for us here and now? The challenge is not just secularism in society, but it's secularism coming into the Church that we have to be concerned about. The gospel is very contagious, but only if it is lived out authentically in our personal life.

Is the global Church concerned about Europe?

I do hear sometimes that people are concerned about the secularisation of Europe and the apparent decline of Christianity on the continent where it once was so strong. Some, in other regions,

are concerned this is potentially a preview of what will happen in their own countries one day if their economy develops and people become rich and think they don't need God anymore. But they're also praying that the spiritual hunger that can't be satisfied by the world will bring people back to God who alone can satisfy.

What can the Church in the UK do to help our evangelical global neighbours?

At the WEA, we say we serve some 600 million evangelicals around the world, and this is actually a very conservative estimate, so it's a big family out there! If you consider yourself a child of God and a citizen of this world – not just the United Kingdom – then take some time to think about and pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ around the world.

For example, if you read the news about the refugee crisis, what is it that comes to your mind? Do you think about Mary, your sister in Christ, who had to flee because she's persecuted for her faith and her home was burnt down? How would you respond if Mary was your physical sister? Do you think about your brother in Christ James who was born in a refugee camp 18 years ago and who's home address has always been 'Kakuma Refugee Camp', living alongside 200,000 other refugees? What would you do if James was your physical brother?

I believe that our point of view changes – and our prayer changes – when we put a face to a global issue and when we as Christians forget about nationality for a moment and look at our family from the perspective of our Heavenly Father.

What would you like the UK Church to pray for the World Evangelical Alliance?

Please pray that God continues to use the WEA to bring Christians together across geographical and organisational borders and contribute to unity among evangelicals, so that the world sees a strong witness of love lived out (John 17). We seek to fulfill this by strengthening national Evangelical Alliances like yours in the UK and establish them in countries where they don't yet exist. Pray that the WEA can be a faithful and strong evangelical voice to UN, governments and media – a voice that is invitational to the gospel. And please pray that WEA can equip churches through training and resources to respond to issues like persecution, refugees, human trafficking and others, so that they can truly be salt and light in their neighbourhoods.

To find out more about the World Evangelical Alliance, visit worlddea.org

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What has Brussels got to do with Jerusalem?

The EU referendum battlefield is a dreary and depressing place – and one in which the Christian observer might be forgiven for seeing little of relevance to Christianity. It’s a game of complicated economic calculations, technical denseness, hard to interpret trade predictions and obtuse legal arrangements, sprinkled with an intersecting – though rarely clear cut – concern over immigration. All of which might leave us wondering, to paraphrase Tertullian: “What has Brussels to do with Jerusalem?”

That we are left wondering that is a mark of failure on the part of the EU, but also on behalf of Christians. It’s a failure for the EU because it ought to have far more to say on issues that extend well beyond the economic and technical. It’s a failure by Christians because the original vision for the European project was, in point of fact, a Christian vision – in the words of the academic Scott Thomas the project was “an act of theo-political imagination”.

That might seem a bold claim. The EU has always, after all, had an economic element to it and unquestionably had among its architects a number of socialist thinkers. In more recent times Christians have been perturbed by particular policies – or proposed policies – on gay marriage, abortion and stem cell research.

Nevertheless, today’s EU owes its origins to a radically Christian model. The 1950s European project came about under the direct hegemonic influence of a group of Christian Democrat politicians. Alcide de Gasperi, the Italian prime minister, Konrad Adenauer, the West German chancellor, Robert Schuman, the French foreign minister, Jean Monnet, the ‘Father of the European project’ and a host of other leaders were all Catholic Christian Democrats and utterly convinced of a particular Christian Democrat future for Europe.

The task of Christians today – whether they are in favour of remain or Brexit – is to bring a commitment to values back into the public square.



Photo credit: CC via npl

Together, and with the encouragement of the Pope, they and other representatives of their parties had met throughout the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1950s in the wake of world war and in a position of unprecedented political power they were able to bring forward a vision of a new Europe. This vision was based on the principles of peace, solidarity, subsidiarity, and living and working conditions. All of them added up to an overall commitment to a moral, even spiritual mission.

Peace was an obvious element, but the vision of solidarity and subsidiarity owe much to Catholic social teaching. The very term, subsidiarity, which at its most basic is the idea that political decisions should be taken as locally as possible, unless they require a broader, more international solution, is taken explicitly from a papal encyclical. The commitment to the improvement of living and working conditions was predicated in large part on a Christian conception of human dignity. This aspect owed much to Protestant Christian democrats, particularly in Germany.

The tragedy of Europe is that it has betrayed that original moral vision. As a force for peace, it was impotent as humanitarian disasters unfolded on its doorstep in Bosnia and Kosovo. As a force for solidarity, the response to the Eurozone crisis has been to impose brutal austerity measures on a few countries for the sake of propping up short-term economic performance. Despite a commitment to subsidiarity, there is far too much centrally imposed policy, sometimes in direct defiance of democratic

will. Finally on living and working conditions, despite decades of success in the area, today EU policies have directly contributed towards a situation in which 45 per cent of Greek pensioners live below the poverty line and six member states have youth unemployment in excess of 30 per cent.

In place of the original focus on a moral mission and political goal that in Adenauer’s words “far outstrips the economic goals”, we have allowed a situation to develop in which the market is the undisputed king. All other principles for which Europe stands – or stood – have been made subservient to a particular brand of neoliberal economic orthodoxy. This hollowing out of the original values ultimately weakens the EU. If the whole *raison d’être* is simply economic then it dooms the EU to being nothing more than a fair weather operation – popular only so long as the economy continues to improve. Since economic performance is variable and can decline, this leaves the EU fundamentally vulnerable.

Herein lies the issue on which Christians ought to be speaking up. Behind the technical details and the economic clothing politics, the way we live together is fundamentally about values. Once upon a time Christians recognised that and built a European project that was meant to be the embodiment of a new politics. The task of Christians today – whether they are in favour of remain or Brexit – is to bring that commitment back into the public square. We must speak up for a vision of the world grounded not in economics, but in morality, values, perhaps even spirituality.

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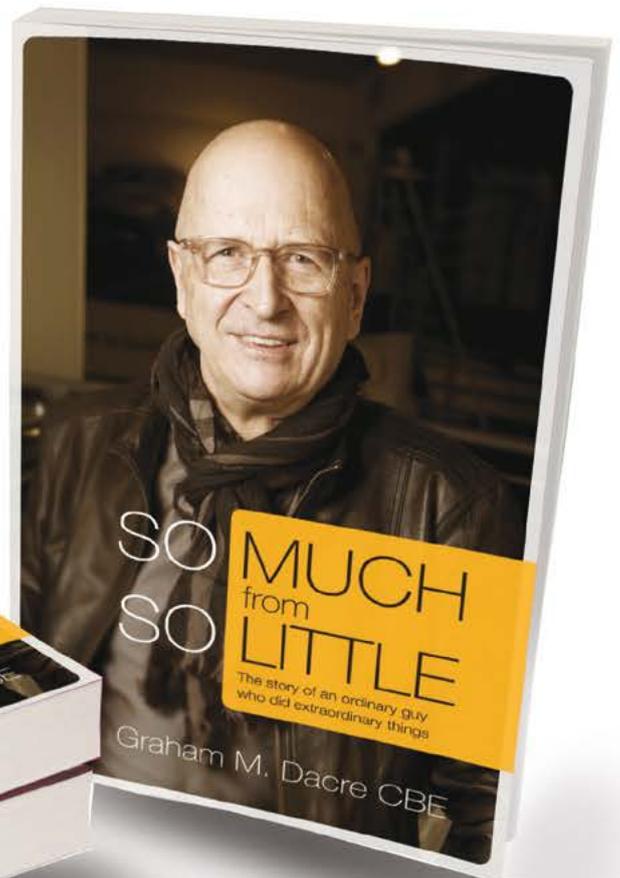
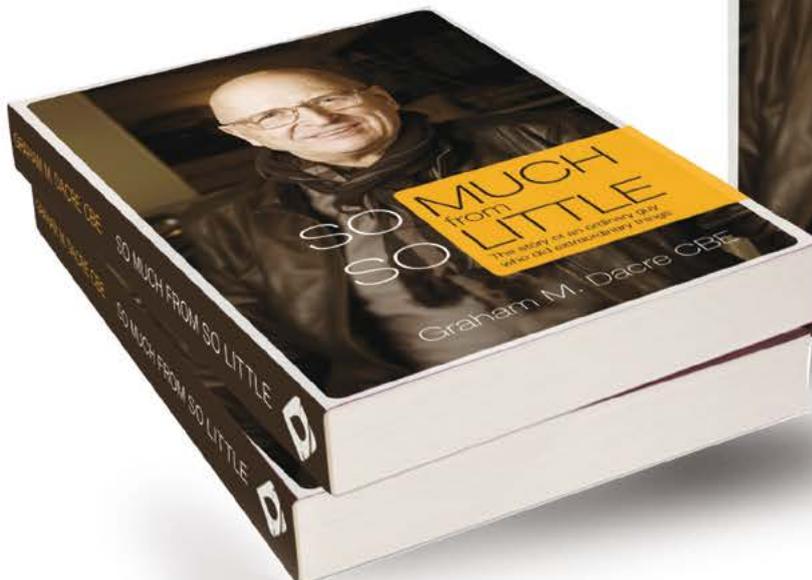
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From the outside looking in...

A poll released before June's referendum was announced shows that 60 per cent of people within the European Union are against Brexit – only 10 per cent think the UK would be better if they left. But what about our neighbours that don't belong to the EU? We asked Christians living outside the EU about their life and views, and it made for very interesting reading.



REVD ELIZABETH BUSSMANN, SWITZERLAND

Switzerland sits at the very heart of Europe. It borders on three language borders - German, French and Italian. In the country there are four official languages - the three mentioned, plus Romansch and of course Swiss German. Many say English is the fifth. This all shows how 'European' the Swiss already are and proud of their unique position. I believe that most Swiss people are not at all worried that they aren't in the EU. I personally believe the benefits of not being in the EU far outweigh those of belonging.

Switzerland has signed a number of agreements with the EU enabling, for example, the Swiss to be involved in many joint ventures and groups. Obviously there are people who would like to see closer ties - mainly those in business. I believe that if the EU had remained a trade union, more Swiss would be in favour of becoming members. However, this isn't the case and the majority of Swiss still feel they would lose not only sovereignty by becoming members, but probably identity as well.

The Swiss pay a substantial sum of money for their 'privileges', but already come under huge pressure from the EU. Two recent events illustrate this. Switzerland is probably the most democratic country in Europe and its citizens are very familiar with referendums and having their say. Recently they passed a vote to limit the number of immigrants coming into the country. Switzerland has always had its fair

share of immigrants and refugees - for many years Switzerland had a higher percentage than many other European countries. With the agreement with the EU on free movement within Europe, the number of people coming from EU countries rose considerably. Although not a member of the EU, Switzerland has not been able to reach a solution with the EU for this problem. Another good example of this was the issue of signing up to the newest country in the EU, Croatia, and allowing its citizens free access to the country. As Switzerland was still trying to resolve the immigration issue, this was understandably put on hold. However, the EU then threatened that if Switzerland did not agree to the Croatia package, they would withdraw Switzerland's rights to belong to certain research groups.

The Anglican Church, as a member of the National Ecumenical Council of Churches in Switzerland, is represented on the Ecumenical Council of Christian Churches in other European countries. Switzerland maintains a special relationship with the EU. The very fact that Switzerland exists at all is due to the fact that its founding members wanted freedom from the Habsburg 'yoke'. This might, to outsiders, appear irrelevant today, but it contributes much to understanding the innate reluctance many Swiss have of being 'swallowed' by the EU. Switzerland is however, very 'European' and participates in many joint ventures.

ICS (Intercontinental Church Society) has had a major impact on ministry in Switzerland. Since 1823 ICS has made known the Christ of the Scriptures to people of any nationality who speak English, planting and

partnering international English-speaking Anglican churches and reaching out to tourists. ICS is Patron to Basle and Vevey permanent chaplaincies and they own, maintain and staff 'The English Churches' in Zermatt and Wengen and work in other Swiss resorts, including Kandersteg with its International Scout Centre.

FLORENTINA KLAFFENBOECK, KOSOVO

I live in a predominantly Muslim country where there are only a few Christians here and there, but not a really big community. Through the years, it has been acceptable to belong to any religion since nationality was the most important and most people identified with being Albanian, rather than their religion. While everyone is allowed to practice their religion freely in Kosovo, recently there have been threats to Christians, mainly by Muslim converts, which are coming with the rise of extreme Islam like in many other European countries.

I think that the EU, like any big institution, has its weak and strong points. It has made trade easier between the European countries and it has helped some countries to develop further, but I do think the EU should have stricter rules about who can join, and especially who can use the Euro. Living in Finland for three years, I found out that lots of Finnish people don't like that their country is part of EU, especially as Finland uses the Euro. Their neighbour Sweden is doing much better economically using their own currency. I think EU is a good



DIOCESE IN EUROPE
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



THE BISHOP OF EUROPE, THE RT REVD ROBERT INNES

The religious scene does vary across Europe. It's sometimes tempting when we are in the UK to believe that the further West you go the more lively the faith is, but that's not necessarily the case.

If you go to eastern Europe to somewhere like Poland or Hungary you find very lively churches

You find in Hungary, for example, that there is a strong commitment to Christian ethics, so they're even reintroducing controls on Sunday trading.

In the West there is increasing secularisation. But in eastern Europe the Church is closely linked to national identity. I don't see a great erosion of religious freedom in Europe. I really haven't seen that. Small religious groups can feel marginalised compared to the larger religious groups, but in the east I don't see the legal battles where it feels as if a secular opinion is pushing back from freedom in public life like there are in the UK.

There are three big issues facing Europe at the moment.

The first is migration – the mass movement of people from east to west and south to north. In amongst those are people looking for work and a better life, and then there are those fleeing their countries from war. How we welcome the stranger and how we look at the biblical injunctions of this are the challenges to us.

I'm praying that Christians will be leaders in showing the way to respond well. That European governments will be able to work together to manage the movement of people in a way that countries can cope with – that the burden doesn't fall on the poorest countries as it currently is.

The second issue is the imbalance of wealth in southern and northern Europe. Youth unemployment in Italy, Spain and worst of all Greece needs to be addressed. We need to pray for the Greek nation to discover and affirm a viable economic future for the advantage of not only Greece, but the whole of Europe.

The third is the anxiety around nationalism and populism. Countries turning in on themselves and wanting to find their identity based on the majority is dangerous. You've only got to look at history to see that - what that has meant for decades in the past.

We can think about the UK and the example of UKIP, but there much bigger nationalist parties in Europe – parties like Front Nationale – who really could form the next government.

As we focus on the European Union I would hope and pray the debates are at a deep and informed level, that there will be reliable data and that Christians will show the way. Perhaps by sponsoring the debate and inviting people to come along. My experience is that people don't really understand what the issues around Europe are.

idea, but it needs a lot of improvement for it to be successful in the future.

I hardly remember that I live in Europe, since I come from a country that doesn't belong to the EU and doesn't have freedom of movement within Europe. When people talk about Europeans I mostly think of western countries and as I have to go through months of getting documents and taking language tests to move to Austria where my husband is from, I feel even less European.

To be honest I don't really care which option Britain chooses. As a person living outside of the EU it will not affect me at all – no matter what Britain decides. If Britain had been in Schengen I would be more concerned, but as it isn't, I'm not.

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The Alliance's long history with Europe

Looking for Europe themed items in the archive has revealed a number of articles from *Crusade* and *idea* magazines as well as a book, *Pro-Europe*, written by a former president of the Alliance, the late Sir Fred Catherwood. Sir Fred was an MEP and in 1989 was elected as a vice president of the European parliament. Fred was a great supporter of the single European currency and I'm sure he would have plenty to say about the forthcoming European referendum.

In 1962, *Crusade* magazine ran a series of very academic articles entitled *Britain in the Common Market*, at the time the UK was considering whether to join the common market. They looked in great detail at economic considerations as well as providing fascinating statistics on the religious make up of member states of the common market in order to suggest that more involvement from non-Roman Catholic countries was needed.



Jumping forward 30 years to 1992, *idea* magazine reports on a fact-finding trip to Brussels that the Alliance had organised for 25 church leaders. The article included a list of suggestions of how Christians could get more involved in Europe. John Earwicker who was leader of the church life team at the Alliance, was quoted as saying: "Whatever our views, we must not sit on the sidelines"

In 1997, *idea* was busy looking for evangelical voices to bring a Christian point of view to the Euro-sceptic and Euro-philite debate that was going on at the time.

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The answers to the questions you were too embarrassed to ask

For this edition, Leaders' Questions is looking a little different. Instead of asking various pastors and priests about a particular topic, *idea* has asked **Danny Webster**, who leads our Public Leadership programme, a few questions we've always wanted to know, but were too embarrassed to ask.

Membership of the European Union is one of the most contested issues in British politics, and in their 2015 general election manifesto the Conservatives included a commitment to hold a referendum on continued membership. Following forming a majority government in May 2015, the Conservative Party pressed ahead with plans that included a process of negotiation within the EU, as well as a law agreeing to a referendum before the end of 2017. After a series of negotiations and agreement by other EU member states the prime minister announced that this vote would take place on 23 June.

Who is on which side?

The government are supporting continued membership of the European Union, however, the Conservative Party are not formally supporting either side, with many MPs from the party backing the Leave campaign. The Labour and Liberal Democrat parties are supporting Remain, while UKIP is backing Leave.

How does the vote work?

The vote is a simple choice between 'Leave' and 'Remain' in answer to the question: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" The result will be based on a simple count of which side, across the whole of the UK, receives the most votes.

Who can vote?

All British, Irish and Commonwealth citizens resident in the UK at the time of the vote are entitled to vote, as well as British citizens who are resident abroad and have been registered to vote in the UK in the past 15 years. Members of other EU countries other than Malta and Cyprus are not permitted to vote, even if they are resident in the



Good news for Eurovision: the UK will still be able to compete. Jade Ewan is the most successful UK contestant of the last 10 years, coming fifth in 2009.

UK. Unlike in general elections members of the House of Lords and Commonwealth citizens in Gibraltar are also entitled to vote.

When will the result be known?

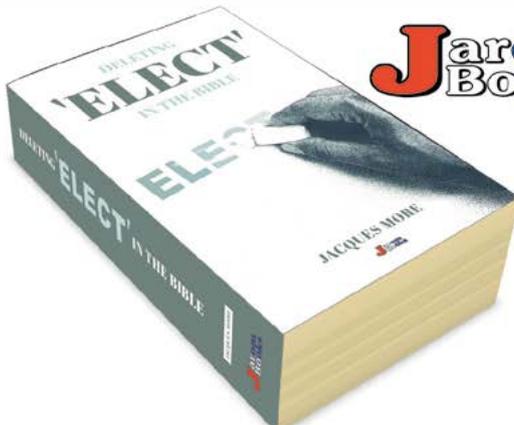
After the polls close at 10pm on 23 June counts will begin in 382 centres across the UK. The results from these counts will be announced as they are completed before they are compiled in 12 regional centres. The final result will be announced in Manchester – expected at lunchtime on 24 June.

What happens next?

The United Kingdom will still be in the European Union on 24 June 2016. That's not a political prediction, or prophetic insight, but regardless of whether we vote to leave or remain our membership will not immediately alter. Just as membership of the EU is only agreed after a period of negotiation and the ascent of all existing member states, leaving the Union also requires negotiation and agreement. This is expected to take at least a couple of years and will also require the final approval of the UK parliament.

If we leave the EU will we be allowed to enter Eurovision?

The good news (for Eurovision fans) is that Eurovision has a somewhat elastic definition of European – which stretched to include Australia in 2015. As one of the principal financial contributors to the European Broadcasting Union (which is independent from the EU) the UK, along with France, Germany, Spain and Italy, is guaranteed entry.



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The Europe Paradox

The headline in a British newspaper when thick mist fell over the English Channel, meaning all crossings had to be cancelled, read: "Europe cut off by fog." It was a ridiculous statement. I'm sure that most Europeans didn't know or care that they could not get to England.

What it did demonstrate was our island-at-the-centre-of-the-universe mentality. In the UK we too often prefer to stay disconnected and unaffected by events in the rest of the world. Europe is considered separate from us - a holiday destination, maybe, rather than a family of nations we belong to. John Donne the poet was right about the human condition when he wrote his famous poem in 1624, but the metaphor works precisely because it is true of nations:

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

As I write, I'm watching as news of another cowardly terror attack in Europe hits the news. My Twitter stream is full of words of sympathy and solidarity with Belgium, just as it was when the Paris attacks took place. Solidarity in the face of terror matters and there was something very moving as a stadium full of football fans stood to sing *La Marseillaise* when soon after the Bataclan



Wembley paid respect to Paris in the friendly football match between England and France, days after the incident.

atrocities Wembley hosted France for a European friendly.

Interestingly, football can help us understand a little of the paradox we live in when it comes to our views on Europe. There is both a camaraderie and a rivalry; a neighbourly inter-dependence and a need to assert independence. We can enjoy the competition, come together in a crisis and yet still fiercely cheer on our own team. On one hand we have a love and affection for our European neighbours, and at the same time there is a widespread dislike for the institutions of Europe.

So what do we do when presented with a referendum that forces us to take a side? How should Christians vote? Personally I have very strong views about the EU, but I know there will be Christians of good conscience on both sides of this debate, so I can't present a single "Christian response" to the referendum.

Neither "Brexit" nor "Project Fear" are particularly helpful nicknames for the campaigns to leave or stay in the EU. Christians are called to participate in something much more powerful. I wonder

if we should call it Project Love. When Jesus was asked to summarise the Old Testament laws - all 613 commandments - he did so by simply asking his followers to love God and love their neighbours. What does looking at the EU referendum through the lens of loving God and loving our neighbor do to our position in the debate? Whichever side we take we need to honestly be able to say that we are choosing the option that allows greater compassion and love to be shown to the needy, the marginalised and the outcast and greater honour to God.

As always when we vote, we should consider what is best not just for us personally, but what is best for our community, our nation, our world. We must look beyond the spin and fear tactics to engage with the real issues. We must listen to the voices of the professionals, not just the propagandists. We must respect the opinions of people on both sides of the debate. We must demonstrate in our politics as well as in our personal relationships the Christian paradoxical love that extends to neighbours and enemies and chooses the unlovely to put them first. We need to be, as John Donne wrote and Jesus demonstrated, "involved in mankind".



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Confessions of a leftie married to a rightie



Frankly, I'm feeling fed up of social media. The self-righteous venom I've seen spouted across it on issues such as Syria has almost been enough to make me hit the 'delete Twitter account' button and huddle into a digitally cut off hole.

It's not the disagreement of views that's bothered me, it's the accusations – and insinuations – of "if you don't agree with me then you're cold/evil/uncompassionate/ungodly/a bad Christian/heartless etc, etc, etc." Labels such as "the right of the Labour party" have emerged in the media to group them in with the "Tory scum" that voted for the air strikes. Threats have been made to de-select Labour party members, and some of those same members have had people surround their houses and offices intimidating them for making a choice they were voted in to make.

I'm not saying people aren't right to be angry when you disagree on such matters. The Syrian conflict, whichever way you look at it, is horrifically unjust. Civil war, mass killing, religious persecution, women passed around as sex slaves, children turned into weapons of war, torture, medieval executions – the list goes on. God wants us to be angry at such injustice, He wants us to moved into action against it.

But when our hate of injustice, and hate of a way others are trying to tackle this injustice, turns to hate and accusations against the people we disagree with, something has gone terribly wrong.

When it comes to politics in our house, it's chalk and cheese. As a voter, I sit to the left of the centre. As an idealist,

I love socialism, and my favourite politician of all time is Tony Benn. My husband, on the other hand, is an ardent Tory. For dates at university, I used to be taken to Port and Policy on a Sunday evening at the Oxford University Conservative Association – who said romance was dead? He even got bitten by a dog for the sake of a Tory win, campaigning during the last election while dropping leaflets through letterboxes.

For the sake of our marriage, we can't watch Question Time together, nor can we talk about the politics of education, the NHS or benefits. We vehemently disagree on many issues, and there are many times I feel like screaming with frustration as I don't understand how he came to have that view.

Having said all that, I believe – and yes, I know I'm biased – that my husband is one of the kindest, godliest, most generous and compassionate people I know, and I respect him more than anyone. He cares deeply about the injustices of this world; he works in parliament two days a week helping an MP to campaign against international abuses of human rights, and insisted in December I tell family to donate to an aid fund for children in the Yemen living in a conflict zone for his Christmas present.

When he speaks in favour of Conservative policies that cut benefits for the poor, it's not because he doesn't care about the poor, but because he thinks there are better ways of supporting those in poverty. When he speaks up for privatisation of parts of the NHS, it's from a place of concern it remains efficient and therefore still accessible for those who

most need free access.

God has individually made us, including with our political preferences: Tory, Labour, Lib Dem, Green – in or out of Europe. Indeed, we have many amazing Christian MPs working against injustice within those parties, such as Fiona Bruce and David Burrowes in the Conservative party, Steven Timms and David Lammy for Labour, and Tim Farron for the Liberal Democrats. We all have different views and experiences to bring to the table, which God has intended we bring together within the body of Christ to work for his kingdom.

Let us therefore work as one body, not cutting off any hope of working together by being personal and dismissive, particularly of someone's faith or heart for God's people. Let us be a witness to the world of what it looks like to do politics well, being able to vehemently disagree with an opinion a person might hold, but still love the person and work with them to bring more of God's light to this very dark world.

We need your help to ensure the "missing generation" is no longer missing. *threads* is reaching out to the missing generation, young adults in their 20s and 30s who are leaving the Church in droves as they see faith as irrelevant, out of touch and side-lined from the very real issues they are facing.

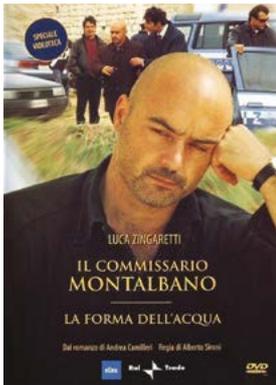
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The European TV you can't miss

What's your favourite series? Tweet us @idea_mag with the hashtag #EUSpecial

Television is having a moment, with many big screen actors switching to the small screen to be a part of new series with a cult following. But it's not just UK, or even US, drama that us Brits are addicted to. Here's *idea* magazine's favourite European series.



Inspector Montalbano

An Italian tale of *Il commissario Montalbano*, this series follows the police chief of Vigata, a fictional Sicilian town beset by crime – think *Midsummer Murders*. Inspired by Andrea Camilleri's best-selling detective novels the show has achieved worldwide acclaim. The series started in 1999 and stars Luca Zingaretti as the taciturn, shaven-headed Inspector. Such is the popularity of the series that a prequel featuring the young Montalbano and called *Il giovane Montalbano* (The Young Montalbano) was first broadcast in 2012. You can still catch both the old and the young Inspector Montalbano on Amazon Prime.

The Returned

The Returned is a French supernatural thriller based on the 2004 film *They Came Back*. Sometimes described as a 'zombie drama', this series, set in a small mountain community, focuses on the apparent return from the dead of several local people. Although first aired in 2012 viewers had to wait until 2015 for series two for answers to cliffhangers such as who – or what – is Lucy? And how did Victor come to be in the middle of the road as Camille's bus rounded the corner? If you need answers to these questions, you can catch up on Channel 4's *All 4* app.



Deutschland 83

Marking the launch of *Walter Presents*, a ground-breaking foreign language drama service from Channel 4, this German-language show, set in Deutschland in 1983 follows the story of 24 year-old East German native Martin Rauch forced to be an undercover spy in West Germany. Saturated in the trappings of 1980s Germany on both sides of the Wall, this show has become the UK's most watched foreign language drama and looks set for series two. You can still see *Deutschland 83* via the *All 4* app.

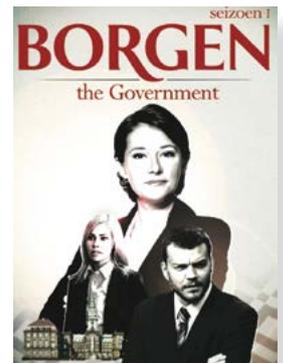
The Killing

Set in Copenhagen, this Danish crime drama focuses on Detective Sarah Lund – and her Fair Isle jumpers. The plot follows the twists and turns of a murder case, each episode following the events of 24 hours and each series exploring one case. The show ran for three seasons and was noted for its dark tone and the inclusion of both the victim's family and the political ramifications of the police investigation. You can still catch *The Killing* on Netflix.



Borgen

Back to Denmark for our final Euro-drama. *Borgen* is the hit political drama of the 21st century, picking up where *The West Wing* left off, but this time with a female head of state. The series opens with a shock win for political outsider Birgitte Nyborg and follows the ramifications of a new and unexpected leadership, both from within the political elite and through the eyes of the accompanying media pack. If, after all this referendum fuss is over, you need a little Euro-politic pick-me-up, head straight for *Borgen*. Catch it now on Amazon Prime.



DIFFERENT: LIVING THE HOLY LIFE

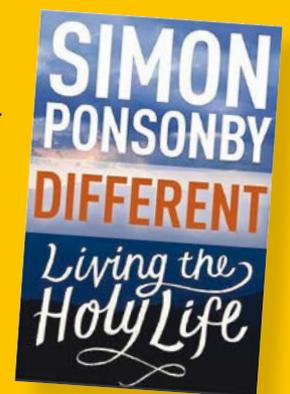
by Simon Ponsonby

Simon Ponsonby has a bee in his bonnet. You can't get through more than a couple of pages of his latest book before that's obvious: "We have allowed our doctrine and our ethics to be eroded, whittled away, and we have conformed to non-Christian norms."

He doesn't let up in the couple of hundred pages that follow. He challenges the reader that the core doctrine that salvation is not earned has sometimes led us into the illusion that we need to make no effort to live as Christians.

Whether it's tackling the lack of impact supposed revivals have had, or where overflows of charismatic worships have taken us, through to the lives and habits of Christians, Ponsonby issues a stark, important and frequently difficult to read challenge to Christians.

Reviewed by Danny Webster



10 words you need to know to understand the EU referendum

We can often be accused of speaking Christianese – using terms and jargon to describe aspects of our faith that are unintelligible to the outside world - but we're not alone. Politicians are just as guilty of speaking their own language, making it even harder to understand what's going on. So here, *idea magazine* is translating the 10 key words you need to know – from the jargon to technical terms, we hope this list will make it a little easier to understand the referendum.

1 – Heads of States and government

The head of state is the highest authority in a state, in the UK this is the queen. The head of government is usually the elected leader of each nation. In some countries, such as the US, one person holds both positions. In EU decision making bodies most countries are represented by their head of government. For example, David Cameron represents the UK, while Germany will be represented by Angela Merkel.

2 – Member states

The 28 countries that currently make up the EU: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. The referendum in June will decide whether the UK remains a member state.

3 – Eurozone

Officially called the euro area. This is the monetary union of 19 of the 28 states of the EU that use the euro as their sole and legal tender. Countries joining the EU are obliged to join the Eurozone once they have met the criteria – the UK and Denmark have been exempted.

4 – Commissioners

Commissioners make up the Commission. There is one commissioner for every member state. These 28 commissioners swear an oath to represent the EU as a whole, rather than their own member state. Turn to page 10 for more information about the European Commission.

5 – EEA

European Economic Area, compiled of Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway. This provides the free movement of people, goods, services and capital with the 28 member states of the EU. Established through the Treaty of Rome.



6 – Single market

This term refers to the EU as one territory without any internal borders or other regulatory obstacles to the free movement of goods and services. This is designed to stimulate competition and trade, improve efficiency, raise quality and help cut prices.

7 – Schengen area

Most EU states – except Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania and the United Kingdom – are part of this area of abolished passport and any other type of border control at their common borders. Bulgaria and Romania are currently in the process of joining the Schengen Area, and Turkey are negotiating inclusion of this in their potential EU membership. Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein have joined the Schengen Area, despite not belonging to the EU.

8 – Subsidiarity

This is the principle that decisions should be made at the level closest to the people they impact and is supposed to help strengthen

the democratic tone of the EU. In theory, decisions that impact on a national level should be taken by the national government, unless the EU can make a more effective decision for all member states.

9 – “Ever closer union”

This term was first used in the founding treaty of the European experiment in 1957. It refers to the intention that the people of Europe would draw closer together both economically and politically. British governments have often resisted the idea, wary of being too tightly connected to the laws, policies and economics of other countries.

10 – Eurosceptic and Europhile

A Eurosceptic is someone who generally wants to withdraw from the EU, usually citing uncertainty about whether the EU is a benefit to the UK. A Europhile is someone who is positive about the EU, considering it to be a good influence in British affairs.



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

RAISING SERIOUS QUESTIONS

Louis Vuitton (March/April, pages 26-27) seems to have a very blinkered view of the fashion industry. The regular introduction of new designs, new styles and new colours at every season of the year only acts as an inducement to people to buy clothes they don't need simply to be up with the latest fashion. In other words this is encouraging the very type of consumerism that your magazine is decrying.

Moreover, the industry tends to design clothes for ridiculously thin models who bear little resemblance to the average human shape. Apart from the fact that such clothes are not really fit for purpose, this practice has caused many vulnerable young people to develop eating disorders and mental health problems in their desire to look like these models and wear these clothes. Neither of these issues was mentioned in the article but raise serious questions for Christians regarding the overall ethics of the fashion industry.

C.J.Sharp

Northolt

Editor's note: The interview mentioned by Mr Sharp featured Simon Ward of the British Fashion Council, not Louis Vuitton the fashion designer.

SUPREME AUTHORITY

Further to Richard Bentley's letter (March/April) expressing concern about an over-emphasis on the doctrine of inerrancy; I refer readers to a recent article by Steve Holmes in the Bible Society's latest magazine (Spring

2016) entitled: *From scrolls to scrolling: How technology has shaped our Bible reading*. In this article Steve explains that it was only with the invention of the printing press in the 15th century that a fixed and stable Bible text came into existence and therefore it was only at that point that anyone could even consider the text to be inerrant. Prior to that point in history the Church was used to handling a text that existed in different forms – not all of which could be, *in the literal sense at least*, inerrant. Steve goes on to explain that ironically, the digital age in which we now find ourselves, is returning us to the age of a fluid text since we have at our fingertips countless electronic versions any one of which can be modified with the latest update!

I share Richard Bentley's view that the doctrine of inerrancy is unnecessary and would add that it doesn't prevent me from holding Scripture in the highest esteem as the "supreme authority... fully trustworthy for faith and conduct". (EA Basis of Faith).

Yours sincerely,

Steve Allen

GETTING THRIFTY

I was disappointed though not surprised to read about the struggles of you and your colleagues to live more ethically. How can it possibly make sense for someone to wait until after they have left home before having breakfast, and thus pay a ridiculous price for something that could be made at home for almost nothing? Why does someone else regularly buy a lunch snack in

HEARD IN TWEETS

Ruth Valerio @ruthvalerio

What a nice surprise to see @gregvalerio in the latest @idea_mag, talking about @Fairtrade_Gold #FairtradeFortnight

Joe Ware @wareisjoe

Powerful report by @AmarisCole about the women of Lake Victoria who have to trade sex for fish bit.ly/1oSRh3Q @idea_mag @EAKNews

Loretta Minghella @LMinghella

Evangelicals: ethical consumers and environmentalists. Interesting data in here: bit.ly/1Qg65Cc via @idea_mag

Gavin Calver @GavCalver

I've been going to @springharvest for 37yrs but I've never felt this excited to go. Heading to Minehead this morning & I can't wait! #SH2016

Cynthia Games @CynthiaGames

@idea_mag Speaking up about #climatechange is not enough. The Church needs to take action, and change our lifestyles to match

a shop when making it at home is far cheaper? You point out that the average office worker spends £10.59 a day on snacks. That's £52.95 per week! Make things at home, save at least two thirds of that money and do something useful with it, like give it away! I could go on.

Much of this behaviour and more is explained away by claiming that apparently we are too busy to have time to think, plan, buy what we need instead of impulse buying, etc. Surely as Christians we should be good stewards of our resources, avoiding offering sacrifices at the altar of the online gods of retail that are killing our high streets and dodging taxes and not allow ourselves to be brainwashed into thinking that we are so busy (thus proving how important we think we are) that we can't take the time for the simplest of tasks, such as making our own breakfast!

Danny Webster makes the point that "not spending money can sometimes leave you feeling like the odd one out". We are supposed to be different – not in a weird "money and possessions are evil" way - but showing what a godly attitude to money and possessions is.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Coode

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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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Thank God for the Church – in all its diversity

With a UK referendum on its future in the European Union now just weeks away, Europe is facing perhaps its greatest crisis since the Second World War. The crisis of the Euro seems to have been dwarfed by events taking place on Europe's south eastern border, as hundreds of thousands of men, women and children cross land and sea in the hope of establishing new homes in Europe. When the photo of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi washed up in a Turkish beach hit the headlines last summer, suddenly the crisis had a face. A humanitarian response was needed. While nation states, NGOs and faith communities have made their response, it all seems inadequate when we're faced with the sheer scale of the problem.

Worldwide, 60 million people are classified as displaced, a large percentage of whom would love to make a home in Berlin, Stockholm or London. The international institutions, most notably the United Nations and the European Union, have proved to be ill-equipped to respond to the crisis.

Few seem willing to grapple with macro-international issues that are being raised. Relatively poor countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are carrying the responsibility for a disproportionate number of refugees, while the long-term future of nations such as Iraq, Syria, Libya and Afghanistan is seriously undermined with so many people, often the professionals, establishing homes elsewhere.

Against this backdrop, late last year, a small event took place organised by the One People Commission of the Evangelical Alliance. Around 160 people gathered on HMS president, moored on the Thames beside the London Embankment. As I looked back on the evening, I realised I had never been at an event with a greater diversity of church backgrounds, age and ethnicity. The evening was amazing, with the focus on the Building Tomorrow's Church report, commissioned by the One People Commission. The report explored the views and experiences of young adults in the UK Church. It was a great evening with wonderful contributions. As I looked around the room, I realised that this was just a small snapshot of the future of the Church here in the UK, a Church of incredible diversity. We estimate 20-25 per cent of the evangelical Church in the UK are from migrant communities. That evening on the boat, alongside white Anglo-Saxons and Celts, were young adults and leaders from Africa, the Caribbean, China, South East Asia, Korea and South America.

A gathering of the Evangelical Alliance in 2010 resulted in the formation of the One People Commission. Bishop Wilton Powell, from the Church of God of Prophecy, and Pastor Agu Irukwu, from the Redeemed Christian Church of God, challenged the Evangelical Alliance Council. If we were serious about 'unity' it had to be a unity that crossed all ethnic divides. At the conclusion of their presentation, the Council knelt in prayerful response and within a few months, conversations were beginning to take place, out of which, the One People Commission was formed. For me, the last five years have seen me personally establish friendships with a wonderful cross-section of leaders from the migrant Church. Pastor Yemi Adedeji, the director of the One People Commission, has guided and at times, challenged me – and also us as an Alliance – as we seek to build relationships and be genuinely shaped and influenced by the Church across all ethnicities. The appointment of Dr Tani Omidoyi as our new chair of Board is yet another statement of the journey God has taken us on.

A few weeks ago, Pastor Yemi and myself attended the annual gathering of the Korean Churches Association. Our purpose was to



"I was again struck by the richness of the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ. We really are family, but with an incredible diversity of styles and cultures."

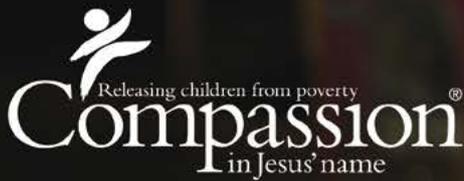
welcome the network into membership, but as we met with Korean leaders from across the UK, I was again struck by the richness of the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ. We really are family, but with an incredible diversity of styles and cultures. This is unity in the midst of extraordinary diversity. There has been so much for me to learn, but I'm enriched by the process. This really is the family of God, we really are brothers and sisters in Christ.

So, let's be aware as we consider and pray for the way that the migrant crisis is playing out across Europe - that some of those men, women and children are also part of our family and indeed all of them share a common humanity with us. And let's pray for good, strong, clear decisions to be made by the international community that will provide both short-term humanitarian care, but also point the way towards long term sustainable solutions.

Home for Good's response to the refugee crisis

"Home for Good works throughout the UK with the aim of seeing every child currently in the care system placed in loving homes. When the UK government said it would bring in vulnerable Syrian refugees to the country, Home for Good saw there would be a need for families to welcome unaccompanied children into their homes. They have been working with local authorities and central government to make sure that as children come into the country there are foster carers to welcome them."

homeforgood.org.uk/get-involved/responding-refugee-crisis



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