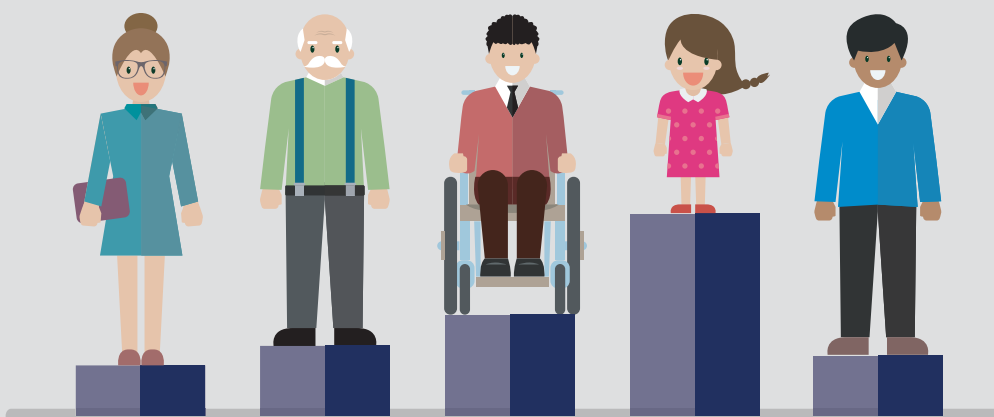


SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2019

THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
**EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE**

# idea



## **GOD IS JUST**

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FOR JUSTICE



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**Membership queries and updates**  
membership@eauk.org

**Advertising**  
Candy O'Donovan  
c.odonovan@eauk.org  
07966 539777

**Design**  
Darren Southworth  
S2 Design & Advertising Ltd  
020 7093 1978

**Evangelical Alliance leadership team**  
Steve Clifford, general director  
Peter Lynas, director of Northern Ireland  
Fred Drummond, director of prayer and Scotland  
Siôn Rees, director of Wales  
Dr David Landrum, director of advocacy  
Gavin Calver, director of mission  
Emrys Jones, director of finance and operations  
Jo Frost, director of communications and membership

**Evangelical Alliance offices**  
**Head office**  
176 Copenhagen Street  
London N1 0ST  
tel 020 7520 3830  
[Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm]  
fax 020 7520 3850  
info@eauk.org

**Northern Ireland**  
First Floor  
Ravenhill House  
105 Ravenhill Road  
Belfast BT6 8DR  
tel 028 9073 9079  
nireland@eauk.org

**Wales**  
20 High Street  
Cardiff CF10 1PT  
tel 029 2022 9822  
wales@eauk.org

**Scotland**  
100 Borron Street  
Blair Court, Suite D  
Glasgow G4 9XE  
tel 0141 353 0150  
scotland@eauk.org

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# WELCOME

## Fired up

**T**his is another one of those editions of *idea* that has got me fired up, as each and every contributor's heart for God's justice leaps off these pages. For they want to see His justice reign on earth as it does in heaven – for the sake of all.

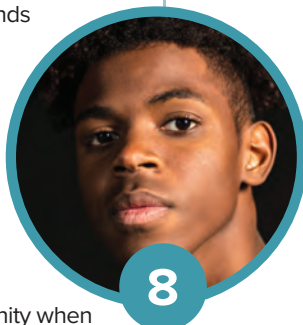
So I'm most pleased that our friends accepted my invitation to share their thoughts, observations, experiences and insight with you. Because how can we not see the compassion and commitment of God when we read about a church in Glasgow doing all it can to help tackle human trafficking (page 24)? Similarly, how can we not see the strength of our unity when we read Rev Les Isaac OBE's response to violent crime (page 8)? More still, when we read about Just Love (page 14) and its efforts to engage Christian young adults in social justice, how can we not punch the air triumphantly, confident that our God means business?

And here, owing to limited space, I've only touched on what three of our 11 brothers and sisters share with all of us in this issue. But all that is enclosed is heartfelt and edifying as each person strives to strengthen the church and minister to a lost world. Therefore, let's be encouraged by what we read and respond to the collective call to draw closer to each other and Jesus in order to see God's kingdom come.

That's the purpose to which the Evangelical Alliance remains faithful, and you can read more about the part we play in bringing together evangelicals so that together we can make Jesus known in our impact report on pages 29 to 32.

Yours truly,

Naomi Osinnowo  
Editor



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We'll bring the justice that God longs for as He empowers us to image Jesus, says **Matthew Knell**, lecturer at London School of Theology.

## Just like my Father

In many embodiments of evangelical Christianity, the theme of justice would seem to be on the periphery rather than in the core understanding of the gospel.

We pray for those in parts of the world who are living under 'unjust regimes', and particularly for those who are persecuted for the faith, but our role in bringing justice both as individuals and congregations is not stressed when there is so much to say about our devotion to the Bible, the need to save the lost, and discussions over content and style of worship.

There has been some change in the last couple of decades in initiatives that seek to impact our society and change the condition of people around us. Foodbanks and organisations like Home for Good spring to mind as examples of Christians engaging actively and deliberately in response to perceived needs. However, even these can feel like extensions out of church rather than the natural role of a church in its context. Do we delegate the task of justice to Christian experts?

When approaching the idea of justice in the Bible and looking for passages where the word appears in our English translations, we need to be aware that there is a single word in Greek that can be translated as justice or righteousness, even fairness, and therefore the sense should not be limited to

*Jesus is the one who lives the life that the people of God are called to live.*

a legal-political sphere apart from religious or moral implications. A study of justice in the Bible should therefore not use a concordance to find uses of 'just' or 'justice', unless the study extends to all references to other translations of the original words.

The biblical building blocks to understand why we are called to work for justice are not complicated, although there are a couple of steps where we seem to stumble. The starting point in theology should always be the nature of God, which for a topic like justice is not overly complicated. As Moses sang: "I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He" (Deuteronomy 32:3-4). Here Moses ties both the being and action of God into justice, a concept that Paul famously uses in Romans 3 where God is described

as being "just and the one who justifies" (Romans 3:26).

Throughout the Old Testament, this is consistently applied to the people of God as a trait and action that should identify them as the representatives of God on earth. The Mosaic Law emphasises this within the community: "Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favouritism to the great, but judge your neighbour fairly" (Leviticus 19:15); and to those outside: "Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge" (Deuteronomy 24:17).

It is a theme that is emphasised during the kingdom period, in the worship and wisdom literature of the Israelites and then in the prophetic works, both those calling the people back to God before exile and those looking forward after the people have been displaced. Here is the first step where it is possible to miss the call of God. Put simply the argument would say: these texts are for those under the Old Covenant; we are members of the New Covenant, therefore the teaching does not apply to us. The problem with this is that the call to justice is not the result of the commands of God, but because it is the nature of God that we are to reflect. This does not change throughout the biblical narratives.

Jesus is the one who lives the life that the people of God are called to live. While

our concentration on Jesus and justification often looks forward to the ultimate just society in the new creation, it was also key to His earthly ministry as was signalled in His mission statement from Isaiah 61 that Jesus read and owned for Himself in Luke 4.

Here is the second potential confusion, that Jesus' role in bringing justice can often be ascribed to His divine identity as if it were possible to divide this from His humanity. Jesus was fully human, conceived by and thus living in the Spirit, and His life and ministry are what we are called to follow, to emulate, to realise ourselves as that same Spirit brings us to life and gives us our identity as children of the Father. In justice, as in other areas, therefore, Jesus does not work so that we do not have to; He does not fulfil the law and the prophets so that we can ignore them. Rather, He becomes the type that we look to in order to understand the lives that we are called to live.

We come to the final stage in the Bible. Seeing that God is just, that His people are called to be just, and that Jesus embodies the justice of God, the church is then called to reflect Jesus and to be agents realising the will of God on earth – including the establishment of justice – as it is done in heaven. Paul praises the Corinthian church for its life in this area: “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done” (2 Corinthians 7:10-11).

Underlying this call to live and work for

*The principles driving the church to work for justice are clear in scripture.*

justice is another aspect where teaching seems to mislead people, and this is the nature of sin and grace. Churches seem to focus these concepts on, and often limit them to, the vertical dimension: sin is against God, and grace is the forgiveness of sins by God. While these are always elements present in scripture, both receive far more examples and teaching in the horizontal dimension.

Sin as being directed against God, in Greek, would be counted as ‘Hubris’, a word rarely used in the Bible. Instead, we find ‘Hamartia’ more present, which is better translated as ‘transgression’ and indicates a person not doing what they ought, not following the straight line of righteousness. The vision is thus in this world, in relationships, in societies, and the effect on our relationship with God is a consequence of the sins we commit. At the root of these sins is a condition of being sinful that Jesus and Paul both talk about that is demonstrated in sinful lives.

Grace responds to sin in all of its forms and in different ways: in mercy, forgiveness, loving acceptance, discipline. While God's grace is the root of all other grace, the expectation is that His people are agents of grace in the world. This was set up at creation with the command to care for

all that had been made, and this role is confirmed for God's people throughout the Old Testament in the commands to love others as themselves. In the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to forgive us as we forgive others, linking the two together rather than separating out the different graces.

Jesus then becomes this model of grace in His life and ministry, led by the Spirit of God, to serve, forgive and love others, seeking to overturn injustice in His condemnation of the practices of the Jewish leaders and through practical action such as the challenge and transformation of Zacchaeus. While only the Christ can die and rise again for the salvation of all, a life in the Spirit is what God's children are called to, doing the works of Christ and even “greater things than these” (John 14:12).

The fulfilment of the law in Christ thus does not absolve us from seeking to be agents for justice and righteousness in society, but rather demands that the church follows His example in pursuing these as instruments of God's grace into the world, overcoming sin and its effects in relationships and more widely in culture and society.

The principles driving the church to work for justice are clear in scripture. God is a righteous God and always seeks justice. God's people are consistently called to realise this identity in seeking to be righteous and to fight injustice. Christ embodies the life and work of a child of God as an example for us to follow. The Spirit of God and Christ then comes to the church to empower us to image Christ as we become agents of God's grace to work against sin and all its effects in the world.

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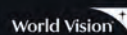
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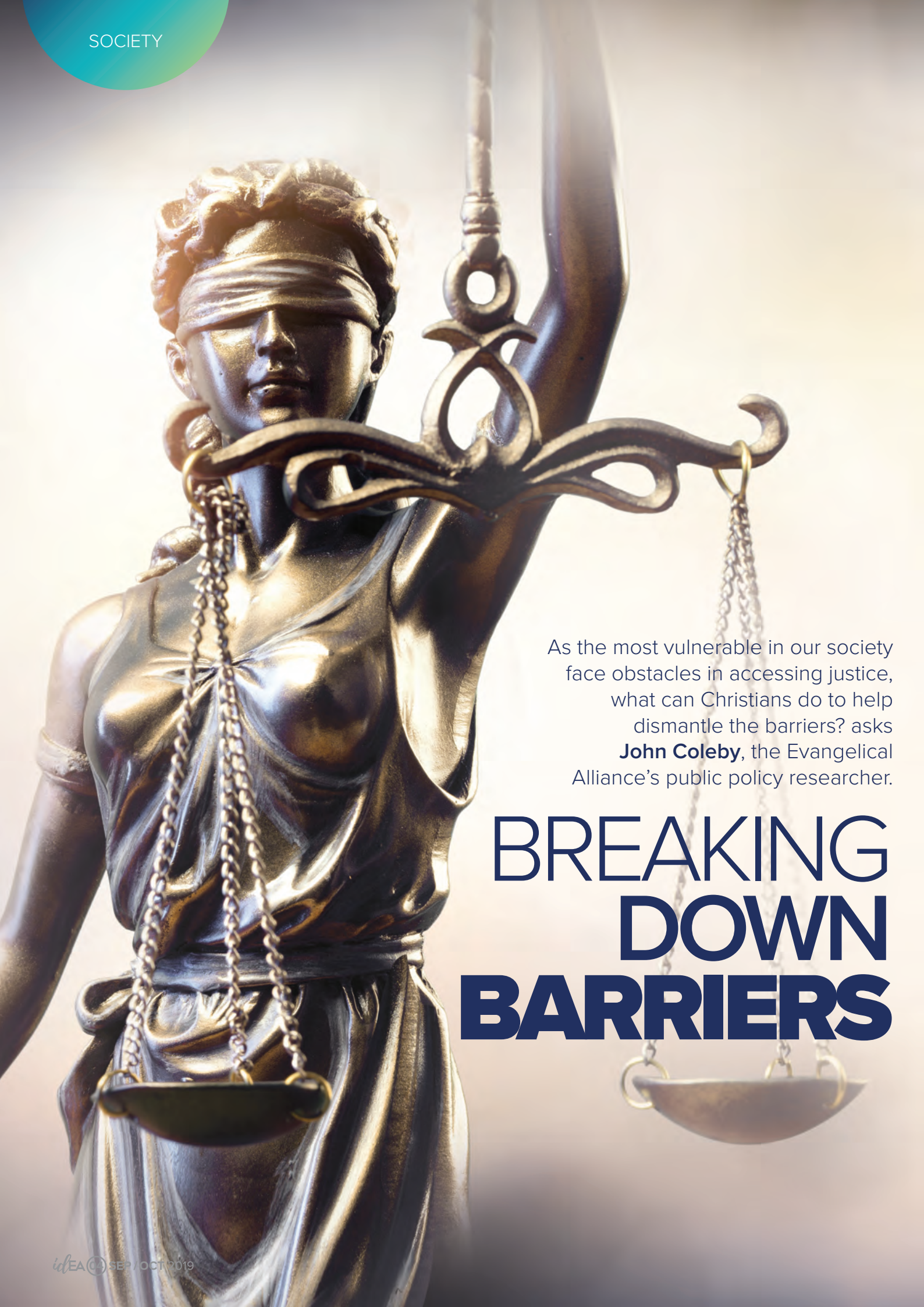
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# Faith *for the* Future

**What We Are Learning About Resilient  
Discipleship from the Connected Generation**







As the most vulnerable in our society face obstacles in accessing justice, what can Christians do to help dismantle the barriers? asks **John Coleby**, the Evangelical Alliance's public policy researcher.

# BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS



**W**hat comes to mind when you think about law and justice? For many, it will be the courts and the decisions they make.

Others may think of the legal advice they have received.

But, what if someone cannot access courts or advice and the protection they may offer? In this case, access to justice becomes as much an issue as the laws themselves. Bearing this in mind, how have Christians, children of a just God, approached this issue of access to justice and the problems people may face? And what can we all do to help bring down the barriers?

In 2015, after changes to the provision of financial assistance with legal issues (legal aid), the report *Speaking Up – Defending and Delivering Access to Justice Today* was published by Theos. It warned that these changes were putting access to justice at risk for the poorest in our society. In a foreword to the report, representatives of several Christian organisations, including the Evangelical Alliance, endorsed its conclusions.

The report's authors, Andrew Caplen, former President of the Law Society of England and Wales, and David McIlroy, a barrister, root their argument around access to justice in the Old Testament, where there is a clear focus on ensuring that the law is accessible to all, regardless of circumstances. In Deuteronomy, Moses appoints judges who can hear disputes effectively (Deuteronomy 1:16). God's people are also to speak out on behalf of those who have no voice of their own (Proverbs 31:8) and judge impartially (Leviticus 19:15). Biblical justice is not simply a matter of writing good laws, but establishing a justice system to which all have equal access.

People need advocates within such a system – those who are able to speak for each party in a case. The report notes that: "Advocacy is a skill. It requires the capacity to assimilate and organise information, to identify which features of a situation are important and which are not, and the ability to be able to tell a coherent story.

"Good advocacy helps a judge to do justice because the advocate can help the judge to see the real issues in the case and so to discern who is in the right and who

*More overt financial barriers to making claims have been overturned by the courts.*

is in the wrong. An advocate represents someone. They present a case in a structured way so that those deciding can get the heart of the problem and can see the wood for the trees."

In the Old Testament itself, this role is often played by the prophets, who often speak out on behalf of the poor and vulnerable in Old Testament Israel. For us today, in a different context, access to justice (including legal advice, institutions and education) must be a key priority for Christians. However, problems have regularly been reported in the allocation of legal aid, in the local availability of legal advice, and in legal literacy in society, which undermine this principle.

### Obstacles to justice

Legal aid as we know it was introduced 70 years ago this year, with the Legal Aid and Advice Act 1949. It sought to ensure that no one was too poor to have their rights protected by the courts. However, in recent decades the demand for legal assistance has grown. Caplen and McIlroy attribute this to several different factors.

These include rising public awareness of legal rights and a growing demand for accountability in the use of power. In addition, the law has become much more complex, as the government provides more

*A whole variety of organisations can produce resources that help build capacity.*

and more services, for example. Social and technological changes, such as a rise in divorce rates or issues around data protection online, have also led to a greater demand for lawyers by rich and poor alike.

As an attempt to reduce the cost of legal aid, in 2012 the government limited the number of people eligible for it, as well as put many legal issues beyond its scope. These issues included most cases concerned with welfare, immigration, education, housing and debt. However, this has meant that the most vulnerable cannot always access legal representation when faced with decisions that will often result in lifelong consequences.

This has become particularly controversial as it relates to people with disabilities, whose benefits are covered under Personal Independence Payments (PIP). A BBC report last year highlighted that those who appealed against negative PIP decisions were subject to long delays, and campaigners noted that 72 per cent of all such refusals were overturned on appeal. (Those in England and Wales do not have access to legal aid for these appeals.)

In other cases, more overt financial barriers to making claims have been overturned by the courts. For example, in 2013 the government introduced fees for bringing employment tribunal claims. When these fees were introduced, there was a 68 per cent decrease in employment tribunal cases being brought. However, in 2017 the issue of employment tribunal fees was brought to the UK Supreme Court, where they were declared unlawful, as they fundamentally interfered with the right of access to justice. One could argue that restrictions on legal aid set up similar obstacles.

In 2017, the Bach Commission on access to justice recommended "a significantly simpler and more generous scheme for legal aid". This call was echoed in 2018 by the Joint Committee on Human Rights, in a wide-ranging inquiry on the extent to which rights could be enforced. The government is currently reviewing the eligibility requirements for legal aid, as part of its Legal Support Action Plan.

Access to legal advice is another area of concern. The bodies that represent solicitors (the Law Society) and barristers (the Bar



Council) in England and Wales have warned against the rise of legal advice ‘deserts’, where there are few or no providers of legal advice. On housing, for example, a Law Society review found that 37 per cent of the population live in local authorities with no legal aid provider on housing issues. Meanwhile, over three quarters (35 million people) have one provider at most, which may be far from where they live. Citizens Advice Bureaux and local law clinics are invaluable in such areas, but they too may struggle to stay open.

A similar problem arises with courts, as it is reported that around half of magistrates’ courts in England and Wales have closed since 2010. This means that people who need to go to court may be forced to travel some distance, which may be difficult or impossible for many by public transport. This increases the risks of injustice, further delays and additional costs. Technological solutions have been proposed to overcome this difficulty, but they have increasingly been found inadequate for disabled people, such as the visually impaired.

The image of a ‘desert’ is well-chosen for this situation. A desert, after all, is not barren because the laws governing how plants grow are suspended for a certain section of the planet’s surface. Under the right conditions, the Sahara Desert would be the Sahara Rainforest. Similarly, it’s not as if people in certain areas of the country don’t have rights when it comes to housing or on other issues. However, the institutions that allow people to access those rights are not there – starved as they are of the necessary resources. Good legislation is not

enough. Thankfully, this is being recognised, as campaigns on this problem has attracted cross-party support from MPs.

### Educate and resource

Recent reviews of access to justice have, commendably, not stopped at resources alone. As in other policy areas, resources often need to go hand in hand with education and a culture change. On education, both the Bach Commission and the Joint Committee on Human Rights raised concerns at a lack of legal knowledge and education in the wider population.

In schools, for example, the rule of law is taught as a fundamental value of modern Britain. However, the rule of law is not simply an abstract value. It is, instead, represented in a concrete set of institutions that promote and administer justice. Knowledge of how those institutions work is surely essential if British values are to be anything more than words on paper.

But legal education does not stop at schools. A whole variety of organisations can produce resources that help build capacity. At the Evangelical Alliance, for example, we have helped to produce guides to the law on free speech (*Speak Up*), employment (*Christianity in the Workplace*), and property (*Firm Foundations*), which aim to give Christians and churches an understanding of the law and how it works.

More broadly still, there’s a point to be made about how our culture sees people who are seeking legal redress. In their 2018 report on enforcing human rights, Parliament’s Joint Committee on Human Rights noted the importance of a culture that

respects rights, raising concern about media misreporting of human rights claims when they came to court.

The same may be said about legal aid, which tends to hit the headlines when provided to someone the media believe to be undeserving. When reading such stories, we should remember that the most vulnerable may often need to seek legal solutions, may require assistance when doing so, and may be vulnerable to misrepresentation. In such circumstances, we should pray for the eyes of Christ with which to view their situation.

### What can we do?

Access to justice is not just a matter for lawyers, and there are several things we can all be doing to promote it:

- 1) Pray for all those in need of legal assistance, for lawyers who work with them, and for government ministers currently working on reforming the system.
- 2) Speak out if issues of access to justice are important to you. You can get in contact with your MP and ask what they and their party will do for the most vulnerable in society who need legal representation.
- 3) Volunteer with organisations that help people who need legal advice, such as Citizens Advice Bureau or a local law centre. Christian organisations or local churches may also have their own projects. If you know of a good example, please do get in touch with us at [info@eauk.org](mailto:info@eauk.org), as we continue to highlight work on this vital issue.

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# LET'S STAND TOGETHER

If we work together, we can bring about a reduction in the violent crime that's affecting young people, families and communities across this country, says **Rev Les Isaac OBE**, chief executive officer of Ascension Trust.

Over the past 25 years, there has been an explosion of different faith congregations, denominations and expressions of church across the city of London.

This may be partly due to the influx of Christians from Eastern Europe, Africa, South America, Asia and other parts of the world, many of whom, on arrival in London, have been successful in assembling people from their villages, cities and countries of origin.

With this burgeoning of the city's faith communities, the past 25 years has also seen many groups, particularly our evangelical churches, becoming more involved in social action and justice causes. While this is a highly desirable and welcome observation, there has been evidence of a lack of collaboration, joined-up thinking and synergy among them.

Certainly, we have seen the church doing some fantastic things together, such

*"The church is more than adequately equipped to tackle in a holistic way this issue of violent crime."*

as foodbanks, the Street Pastors initiative and Christians Against Poverty. However, there is so much more that we could do together, to ensure that we are effective, dynamic and relevant as we reach out to and engage with this generation, and share the gospel of our Lord Jesus with them.

We have all been aware of a major shift over the last 20 years in the challenges that many young people have been facing, particularly in our urban centres. These changes and challenges are evident not only in London but they are also impacting

towns and cities the whole length and breadth of our country.

I have been greatly encouraged, particularly over these last three years, as I have been privileged to meet with church leaders, pastors and ministers, as well as leaders and representatives from a vast array of different organisations who are working in a variety of ways with young people. As I have gained insights into their various efforts and initiatives, and caught a sense of the deep commitment that these churches and groups have towards young people, I have sensed a deepening conviction that the church must – absolutely must – pursue partnership and collaboration across the denominations.

The challenges that we face in the country are many, challenges that are too vast for any single denomination or organisation to tackle effectively on its own. But with collaboration and cooperation, there is hope that more can be achieved.



As it says in the book of Ecclesiastes (4:9): “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.” And so, as I see it, there is a need for greater emphasis on synergy as the church goes forward.

I was also deeply encouraged late last year when the Evangelical Alliance, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, London City Mission, and Ascension Trust collaborated to hold a rally in Trafalgar Square to declare to London that the God of compassion cries out for those who have been killed on our streets, for those who have been killed as a result of domestic violence, for those who are suffering from a sense of injustice because their sons and their daughters have been killed on the streets of the city.

The event was truly a demonstration of the magnitude of the impact that can result when we begin to embrace the ethos of coming together to fly the same flag on the same parade of social action, justice and change, as we wrestle together against this wave of violent crime that is sweeping our city and country.

And as I travel around the country and work with various denominations, it is evident that there is a wealth of skills and ministries in the churches. Can you imagine if all those ministries, all those talents, all those resources, were harnessed together and applied to respond to the challenges that we are currently facing with our young people today? Can you imagine the impact and the transformation that could bring? I see pockets of that happening as I continue to travel around the country and my spirit is greatly heartened.

Especially given the expansion in the church's presence in the fabric of London

“  
*While prayer is good, we cannot afford to just pray; we must get involved.*  
”

over the past 25 years, I believe that as a body – a cohesive, integrated, cooperative, well-coordinated body – the church is more than adequately equipped to tackle in a holistic way this issue of violent crime that is affecting young people, families and communities across this country. Working together in this way, we can cover more ground, see more positive outcomes, and access greater opportunities to share the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

We are called to be a praying church, because we know that what is happening is not just a natural occurrence; we are actually in the midst of a fierce spiritual battle. And we know that the enemy is here and has come to steal, to kill and to destroy. But Jesus is equally here and has come that this generation may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.

Even as I am heartened to see effective efforts in some areas, I am under no illusions that this is an easy battle to win. Within my own community, I am aware of the many underlying factors that are fuelling the involvement of young black boys in violent crimes. We must all be concerned about the large number of young black boys who have been, and are still being, groomed and steered into involvement in gang warfare and who are killing and being killed themselves on our streets.

We need to address factors like the high rates of exclusion from school among these boys. Linked with this is the resulting lack of education and under achievement among them. We also need to address poverty, as that is one of the main drivers for young people from all backgrounds and with it comes the temptation to make quick money. We need to address the lack of parental involvement in the lives of our black boys, particularly the father figure. I cannot stress how pressing and urgent an issue that is. Lack of self-esteem, mental health and trauma are also issues that are coming more onto the agenda in recent times. And the list goes on.

The reality for all of us as Christians today is that any one of us could become a victim of a violent crime on account of the prevalence of violence that is ravaging our communities. I am convinced that we have to confront this blight and treat it as a national emergency. And while prayer is good, we cannot afford to just pray; we must get involved. We must be prepared to get our hands dirty because isn't that what Jesus did in interfacing with the crowds? As we collaborate with the Saviour and with each other, we will increasingly begin to see ourselves as part of the solution as a corporate church.

These challenges could be with us for the next 10 or 15 years. However, as church leaders and organisations working with young people have been coming together in recent times and have been dialoguing with each other, praying with each other and asking, “what can we do together?”, I am optimistic that we are on the way to dismantling this scourge that is threatening to ruin an entire generation and several generations to come.

# ADVANCE 2020

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How do we stop the pangs of injustice from dragging us down? asks **Ali Davis**, projects and digital content lead, Evangelical Alliance.

BUT IT'S NOT

**FAIR**



**A**s with all godly qualities, justice starts at home, within us – in each of us, at the very core of who we are as human beings and children of God.

Life, in contrast to God's character, can often be unjust. We have all been hurt by people – sometimes intentionally, sometimes accidentally. We have all been treated in a way which is unkind, unfair, disrespectful. We have all been disillusioned, with a job, a relationship, a leader or ourselves.

All of us have experienced disappointment or upset at the hands of other people, and likewise we, too, have inflicted pain, hurt and upset on people we care about and strangers alike. Some of us will feel that God Himself has let us down.

We have all said at one time or another, "that's not fair". And we'd be right: life isn't fair. Finding a way to respond to life's unfairness without saying "that's not fair" is hopefully something we learnt during our childhood. Or maybe we just graduated to the language of justice: "that's so unjust".

Injustice is painful. It can make us bitter, defensive, sad, unkind or unfeeling. Many of us will have sympathised with Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, when trauma and grief caused her to say, "Don't call me Naomi... Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter." (Ruth 1:20)

It can be easy to sink into a bottomless pit of injustice-induced misery. But Christians should not do so. For the fruit of the Spirit isn't bitterness, anger and despair; it's love,

—“

*It can be easy, and understandable, to sink into a bottomless pit of injustice-induced misery.*

—”

joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

So, as we grow into the fullness of Jesus, how can we put off our sense of injustice and bear the fruit of the Spirit?

### Lean in to the Holy Spirit

A few years ago, I tried to work on developing the fruit of the Spirit in my own life. I read a lot about them, studied them in my quiet time, talked about them with others. Eventually I realised that you will not get better at producing the fruit of the Spirit without... the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is God's gift to us – His presence dwelling inside of us, to help us. The Holy Spirit is literally called a 'counsellor'. Each day, ask the Spirit to help you bear His fruit. The Spirit is good; He will help you.

### Talk about it

We need to process our thoughts and feelings. Even if you don't talk much, find the right moment and the right person to share your sense of injustice with. You could do this alongside an activity – walking,

gardening, painting, dancing, singing, woodwork – whatever you need to help you process your thoughts and feelings.

### Forgive

The perfect, spotless, sinless Lamb of God died for our sins and forgave us, even though we didn't deserve it. As recipients of God's mercy, we too are to forgive others. In forgiveness, there is freedom. Whether it's a person you need to forgive, a situation with which you need to make peace, or even if you need to extend some grace to yourself, forgiveness releases the shackles of hurt, bitterness, fear and hatred that bind us when we sit in the trauma and the pain.

As we continue in our lifetime of discipleship, let's strive to put off the hindrances that a sense of injustice will place on us and, instead, put on that which God calls us to. In Colossians 3:12-15, Paul paints a picture of what it looks like to follow Jesus: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful."

Let's do our best to be those chosen people, holy and dearly loved.

# enemies no more

The love of God, made manifest in Christ, has made it possible for enemies to become family, says **David Smyth**, public policy lead, Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland.

**O**n 18 April 2019 Lyra McKee, a 29-year-old journalist, was shot dead while reporting alongside police at a disturbance involving dissident republicans in Derry.

This was just a few days before traditional republican commemorations which take place every year to commemorate the Easter Rising. Public outcry following her death was swift and sincere, contrasting with the hollowness of the ‘apology’ from the IRA which “claimed responsibility” for the killing. They explained that she was “tragically killed while standing beside enemy forces” and went on to conclude that they had instructed their

“*At the cross, victims and perpetrators, justice and mercy can meet.*”

volunteers “to take the utmost care in future, when engaging the enemy”. Essentially wrong place, wrong time, not really our fault. Oh, and we will keep shooting at the police because they are legitimate targets.

People in Northern Ireland were shocked, hurt and angry. Fr Martin Magill,

a friend of mine, seemed to catch the public sentiment in comments he made at the funeral which went viral: “I commend our political leaders for standing together in Creggan on Good Friday. I am, however, left with a question: ‘Why in God’s name does it take the death of a 29-year-old woman with her whole life in front of her to get us to this point?’”

The third commandment instructs us not to use the Lord’s name in vain, and the invocation of God’s name into this moment was not a casual thing. It was perhaps the strongest possible language a priest could use to challenge the politicians and community leaders in the room. The weight of it hung in the air long after people



sat down from their impromptu standing ovation. This one killing, even in the hours and days afterwards, pointed to a bigger story of purpose and justice in the world.

I know many atheists who were not content to leave the story of Lyra's death as a random cosmic accident, about which the universe was cold and indifferent. For those who knew and loved her, her death meant something beyond sad feelings caused by neurons and chemicals in their brains. So much so that some of her friends confronted some dissident republicans by painting red, 'bloody' handprints on the wall of their 'political' headquarters. There was a strong sense that Lyra's death required justice and should not be in vain.

Take this one killing and multiply it by more than three thousand to get to the number of people who lost their lives in the Troubles. Senseless, random, bloody violence. Now imagine the family members and work colleagues, the childhood friends and emergency responders. The clear injustice of the Troubles touched countless lives here in a small country you can drive across in two hours and with a population of Tyneside.

## Impossible without God

It has always fascinated me that the language around reconciliation is deeply biblical. It's almost as if reconciliation is the core story of the Bible and there's just no other or better truth or words to wrap around the concept. Forgiveness, mercy, repentance, redemption, truth, restorative justice, good relations. Go to any conflict zone and you will find blessed peacemakers speaking and working out the biblical language of reconciliation.

In fact, in an interview we did a few years ago with the Northern Irish Attorney General, John Larkin, about dealing with the past, he said: "Reconciliation is virtually impossible save in theological terms. I don't think reconciliation is possible unless the divine command to forgive is acknowledged." What surprising and profoundly encouraging words for the highest legal figure in Northern Ireland to offer.

So, what does justice look like for the wrongful taking of one human life? What if someone planted a bomb and took 20 lives all at once – would the taking of their one

*It has always fascinated me that the language around reconciliation is deeply biblical.*

life in any way be justice enough? Reading scripture through the lens of Jesus and His one-time death penalty sacrifice for sin, I'm convinced that no further life should be taken.

Yes, we have the criminal justice system and, as a former lawyer, I absolutely believe it has a role to play in the good governance of our society. But, in the most awful cases, even when justice has been administered, why does it always seem to fall short? Fundamentally, I agree with the Attorney General: I don't think true justice can be achieved in this life purely by human efforts, because it lies beyond human horizons.

It's a good thing, then, that the God of justice is not limited by His human creation. In fact, He chooses to use us frail, broken vessels to pour out His mercy, hope and love to bless the nations. These sentiments were echoed recently at a conference I attended, which was organised by Thrive Ireland, a charity that has drawn some helpful lessons on how the state and church responded to the genocide in Rwanda that Northern Ireland could learn from.

One of the Rwandan pastors at the conference shared how reconciliation was often impossible in particular situations because the perpetrator had died or could not be found, or because the victim's families refused to forgive the perpetrator seeking redemption. Humanly speaking, there was no potential for forgiveness or justice. His programme taught that both the

*This is the closest thing I've seen on earth to how I understand justice is in heaven.*

victim and perpetrator find hope and rest in the cross of Christ. Their burdens can be laid down and redemption is possible. Even if they never meet in this life, perpetrators can find the hope of forgiveness through Christ and victims can find the hope of justice one day. At the cross, victims and perpetrators, justice and mercy can meet.

This all sounds very theological and it is. But it is also incredibly earthy and difficult and practical. Even more so when victims and perpetrators in Rwanda, now freed from these labels, are given a cow to share together when they leave the programme. The 'cows for peace project' was started to help former enemies become neighbours and friends. Both families share a dairy cow. They share its care and welfare, milking and mucking out. They can drink its milk, sell or process any extra for profit, and share any offspring. As they drink and eat and work together daily, the families flourish in so much as their shared cow does.

As a former farmer, I love this even more than my 'lawyer-love' of the legal system. This is the closest thing I've seen on earth to how I understand justice is in heaven. Where former enemies dwell together in peace, seeking the welfare of the other. In fact, the image of former enemies living as neighbours is taken even further in scripture.

When we come to the Father through Jesus, He no longer calls us enemies but family. Just so we truly understand the language of family, we are called children and are somehow born again and adopted into His family. From enemies to family. This is part of the big story of scripture and the reason why anything less than this falls short of the forgiveness, justice and redemption we crave.

As I reflect again on the Northern Ireland situation and the death of Lyra McKee and thousands of others, I acknowledge that there are no quick or easy routes to justice. The journey from enemies to family seems too difficult, too great to imagine. Yet, it is already happening and is the testimony of many within the church, who now find themselves as family, brothers or sisters in Christ, with those who caused their greatest pain. Both find their hope and redemption in the gospel, which bridges the limited horizons of this world with the possibilities of the kingdom come.



# A *just* GENERATION

Students around the country are catching God's vision for a just UK, says **Tom Christmas**, founder of Just Love.

In 2012, at the end of my first year of university, I went on a trip to Durban in South Africa.

I was part of a team working with children who lived on the streets. At that time, the police used to drive around the city, beat the kids, throw them in the back of vans, and take them to the middle of nowhere, to clean up the streets for western tourists. These kids were at the mercy of gangs, they were involved with drugs, and they had often fled difficult family environments. As an unskilled 20 year old, I'm not sure how much I was able to offer them, but the trip had a deep impact on me.

One day, while looking for a girl who had gone missing, we came to an abandoned old railway where many people were sleeping rough. I began talking to one of the rough sleepers and he said that they were all hooked on a new drug called whoonga. So addictive was the drug, that when he awoke in the morning, he didn't think to eat or wash his face; all he could think about was the drug, even though the drug was ruining his health and he thought he would die in a few months.

But he thought we could still save his girlfriend. The intensity of the conversation grew as he begged us to take her away with us. Suddenly, we were interrupted by

*"I began to feel a deep conviction around giving my life to the pursuit of justice."*

a sleek, black BMW with tinted windows that began to crawl past. We didn't expect to see a car like that in this part of the city. Our new friend signalled that it was nothing out of the ordinary: "They are the ones who sell us the whoonga," he said. The people in front of me were suffering and dying so that the people in the car behind me could get rich. That day, I began to feel a deep conviction around giving my life to the pursuit of justice.

My friend Josh, who returned to the UK to start university in Durham, was on the trip with me. Surrounded by many Christians his own age, he got into a rhythm of reading his Bible. This was great, but left Josh feeling increasingly uncomfortable. He was struck by the sheer prominence of social justice, as

he read about a God who is just, who acts justly, who took on Himself all the injustice of the world, and who consistently calls His people to live justly in the world. He couldn't avoid the fact that it didn't seem like justice was an optional extra in discipleship. And yet, in the Christian student culture he was a part of, justice was barely discussed, never mind practiced.

Captivated by the Jesus he encountered in the gospels, Josh began to get to know some of the homeless community in Durham. This really began to bring home the depth of injustice that existed on his doorstep. Something seemed wrong: how could Christian students claim to be 'Bible-believing' if there were vast chunks of the Bible that we were conveniently choosing to ignore? How could we claim to believe in a gospel that is good news to the poor, if Christian students were happily living in a privileged student bubble disconnected from the needs of the community around them?

We knew that injustice went far beyond the people Josh and I had met in Durham and South Africa: there were more than one billion people living on less than £1 a day, over 30 million victims of modern-day slavery, and hundreds of people sleeping rough on the cold streets of Oxford where



I was studying. Each one of these individuals made in the image of God, the God who said that true worship was to loose the chains of injustice, who said that we should love our neighbour as ourselves, who said that whatever we did for the least of our brothers and sisters, we did for Him.

While at university in Oxford, I met a few other Christians who shared my interests. We all could have gone off individually and volunteered somewhere, but we believed we could do so much more if we tried to shift Christian culture together. What if every Christian student shared our passion for social justice and did something about it? What would it say to our university if all Christians were known for their radical, sacrificial love for those on the margins? What sort of a difference would it make to our city if hundreds of Christian students started volunteering, fundraising, campaigning, praying? What sort of an impact could we have on the world if this movement grew and thousands of Christian students graduated across the country having been equipped to lead and enabled to pursue Jesus and justice over a lifetime, consuming ethically, giving generously, and transforming the industries in which they worked?

## A movement born

That's why we set up Just Love – to inspire and release every Christian student to pursue the biblical call to social justice. We want to raise up a generation of leaders who engage in a whole-life, lifelong pursuit of Jesus and justice. Since launching in Oxford in 2013, Just Love, which is a member of the Evangelical Alliance, has grown to more than 20 cities, with thousands of students becoming involved.

In each of the cities in which we work, we have committees of student leaders who deliver projects on local transformation, global transformation and personal transformation. Local transformation often involves working with homeless people, elderly people or young people in the community who are struggling, sometimes joining in with current church or charity projects and sometimes starting our own if there's a gap.

Global projects might be campaigning or fundraising or raising awareness around issues such as modern-day slavery, global

*“It is a great joy to see God working so powerfully through young leaders like Alastair.”*



poverty, the persecuted church or climate change. Personal transformation is about working with people as they develop their heart for justice day-to-day, challenging students to think about how they pray, what they buy, and how much they give. Our mission is to release students so that they can have an impact now, and to help them to think about how they can help to tackle these issues for the rest of their lives.

All we do is undergirded by theology around why and how we do justice – thinking about how we engage with these issues well – and a vision for how we can go on to make a difference through our careers, giving, lifestyle and communities. After graduating, students can join our alumni network, where we will continue to enable and equip them for a lifelong pursuit of justice.

We believe that raising up the next generation of the church into a lifelong

pursuit of justice really matters – so we want to do it well. We want our university groups to understand the theology of what they do and live that out. We want them to really understand the issues they work on, not getting involved with any project that seems nice, but making sure they use good development practice so they can give the very best help to people who need it. We want them to know how to communicate in a compelling way, sharing a vision that people can't help but want to be a part of. We want them to be good at developing leaders, ensuring that there are always new people coming through who can take the Just Love vision to the next level in that city. We want them to build community well, understand good team dynamics, and nurture strong relationships. We want them to be creative, organised and strategic. And so we try to provide the best one-to-one coaching, resources, and training around those issues so that our Just Love groups can inspire and release every Christian student to pursue the biblical call to social justice in their city.

## Demonstrating God's justice

Alastair came to Durham with a passion for Jesus and a passion for fighting homelessness. In his first year, Alastair began to befriend some of the homeless community in Durham and realised that there was no emergency accommodation anywhere in the city when the nights got dangerously cold. This was the winter of the 'Beast from the East' – the temperature dropped to about -15°C some nights – making sleeping rough life-threatening.

It was clear to Alastair that Christians in the city could not claim with any integrity to follow a God of love and pass by on the other side while this was going on. But Alastair, a fresher at university, was also wise enough to know that he couldn't set up a night shelter alone – and that it could cause problems if it was done badly.

So, as he took on the role of local coordinator of the Just Love Durham committee, Alastair began building relationships with the local charities and services that already existed: he listened to them, learned from them, and found out what they thought would work. Then, with a lot of hard work and patience, he put together a leadership team, built a

partnership of 14 churches across the city, and developed a strategy to pilot a scheme where local churches would host a night shelter whenever the temperature dropped below zero. He mobilised and trained 73 volunteers – a mixture of students and locals – and got the backing of the local council.

The shelter opened 24 times last winter, serving 33 different guests, giving them a safe place to spend those nights and signposting them to services that could provide long-term support. Just Love Durham mobilised 36 student volunteers, who gave more than 1,200 hours of their time.

We have seen Alastair grow over the last two years, both as a disciple of Jesus and as a leader. It is a great joy to see God working so powerfully through young leaders like Alastair, with Just Love giving him the training, mentoring and community that has allowed him to transpose passion into action. Alastair is in his final year at



*“These are women and men who believe that the gospel utterly transforms how we live, not just what we believe.”*

university – Just Love is excited about what he’s doing now, but the team is even more excited about who he is becoming.

And what excites us most is that Alastair is not alone. Although we are seeing students making a tangible difference in their communities right now as they join in with God as He transforms lives and reconciles relationships, we trust that the real impact of Just Love will be in the long-term. We want to inspire and release a whole generation of leaders who will follow

Jesus and seek God’s justice for the rest of their lives, with every bit of their lives.

We are already seeing the first fruits of this in the North East, where more and more Just Love alumni each year are choosing to follow Jesus in courageous and self-giving ways. They are working with prisoners and ex-offenders. They are studying to create the technologies which will enable a future with sustainable energy. They are teaching and setting up summer schools for young people who would otherwise fall behind over the holidays. They are moving into missional communities in the most economically deprived areas of their cities. They are running foodbanks, training as social workers, lawyers and policy experts, and they’re pioneering fresh expressions of church in rural communities.

These are women and men who believe that the gospel utterly transforms how we live, not just what we believe.

To find out more about Just Love, visit [justloveuk.com](http://justloveuk.com)



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With your help, we're changing the course of life for mums and babies in Togo, says **Justin Dowds**, CEO of Compassion UK.

# THE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL



© Compassion

**A**cross the world, roughly four million children die each year in the first year of life. In many cases, sadly, most of these deaths are the result of easily preventable causes.

One country that's struggling to reduce this mortality rate is Togo, where 1 in 20 babies die before their first birthday, a shocking statistic when you consider the comparative UK figure is 1 in 250 babies. In this West African nation, where more than half of people live on less than £1.50 a day, pregnancy and childbirth can be high-risk, too, with 1 in 58 women dying.

Whilst complications in pregnancy and childbirth, disease and malnutrition are all factors, the root of the problem is poverty. Hundreds of thousands of families simply can't afford the basic healthcare and nutritional support that could save their lives and give them the best start in life. Here at Evangelical Alliance member organisation Compassion, we think this is an injustice and we are devoting ourselves to tackling it.

No one is more aware of the immediate threat to children, and the complexity of the issues than Dr Viwatin Amedegnato, who heads up Compassion's Child Survival Intervention in Togo: "Poverty has had an impact on the mindset of women and most think that when you are pregnant it is a luxury to go to hospital. There is a need to raise awareness to help them understand that it's important to go to the hospital, to save both their life and that of their baby."

Viwatin explains: "One of the principles of child survival is to start early and finish well. The first 1,000 days of a child's life are the most crucial in their development. So, the positive input we have at this stage will

*As the church, we are obligated to make a personal response to God's call to serve the poor.*

have a defining impact on their future."

Compassion's child survival projects aim to reach the most vulnerable children even before they have been born. In partnership with the local church, we take a personal approach to protecting women during pregnancy. This includes providing antenatal care, ensuring babies are vaccinated against diseases, and teaching mums the skills they need to earn a living. The projects offer life-saving assistance including basic healthcare, hygiene, nutritious food and safe water, as well as mentoring and spiritual guidance for families.

We have been partnering with local churches in Togo for over a decade and are currently supporting 778 babies and 775 caregivers annually. However, there are still thousands of vulnerable mums and babies who need our support.

Isaiah 1:17 encourages us to "learn to do good; seek justice; correct oppression". As the church, we are obligated to make a personal response to God's call to serve the poor. Or as evangelist John Wesley strongly put it: "Do you not know that God entrusted you with that money (all above what buys necessities for your families) to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to help the stranger, the widow, the fatherless; and, indeed, as far as it will go,

to relieve the wants of all mankind?"

It is with this powerful call from God in mind that, earlier this year, we launched a three-month Different Path appeal with the aim of funding new child survival projects across Togo, giving families a new hope for the future.

One family that has already grasped this hope is that of 35-year-old Ama, whose sixth child Luke was born last November. Ama was registered into the child survival project by her local church. Whilst in previous pregnancies, prenatal check-ups were simply not affordable on the family's income, being part of this project meant Ama has received more support and the anxiety of her previous pregnancies was gone.

Just weeks after Luke's birth, Ama admitted she was more hopeful about the future of her youngest son. Now aged seven months Luke is growing well, in part due to the hygiene and food kits Ama receives monthly. Ama has also taken part in a business training course run by Compassion and, with her new skills, has started her own business in her community.

Donations from the UK public to the Different Path Appeal, which closed in June, were matched by the UK government, enabling Compassion to help even more families in Togo. We hope to be able to fund a further 50 child survival projects in Togo, which will help more than 3,500 mums and babies over the next three years. We're grateful for this support which will ensure that many more families like Ama's are no longer focused on survival but instead can be on a different path.

We support similar projects in 25 countries. You can find out more and help change the lives of more mums and babies by visiting [compassionuk.org/differentpath](http://compassionuk.org/differentpath)

# How can Halloween be helpful?



## Childhood memories leave a lasting impression

BY BEVERLEY JARVIS-PEARSON

**W**hat were your childhood memories? Is it only me, or has your memory edited them too? Do you just remember those that stand out? Well for me, the good memories that stand out are not even the big or incredible things but just the simple treats. Time spent picking strawberries. Doing handstands in the garden. Disappearing all day on a bike ride. And visiting grandparents who bought sweets and had all day to play.

Maybe you're a parent, grandparent, Aunt or Uncle – one of the people adding memories to the special children in your life. I have a granddaughter, Aurora who's four and a half. And I hope I'm adding to her simple childhood memories too. When I visit, I always take her a comic, which comes with pages of stickers and a 'toy'. And of course, I always take a few sweets too. **Simple treats.**

So, imagine my delight last year when Aurora told me that her favourite treat was a story book I had given her - **Patch the Pumpkin and The Lost Little Girl** from **World Vision's Pumpkin Heroes** pack. She told me all about the story and heart-warmingly said it's important that we care about other children who live in 'poor' countries.

### Help your children have a meaningful Halloween

Your church or school may have heard about or used **Pumpkin Heroes** before - a *Christian* alternative for Halloween. And you might be one of the many who are telling us that it's important for you to have a fun but meaningful solution for your children at Halloween. And that it's a great time to include a teaching element too.

*"We've been having a glow in the dark disco 'GLOW' for the last 6 years - UV face paints, UV Nail Varnish, UV Tattoos and Glow Torches - the kids dance and Glow up in the dark (light up the world) - and we've been working last year and this year to move this more to an event that has a teaching element to it too. This year (2018) we introduced Patch the Pumpkin in a small way, with the aim of him taking over next year!"*

**Karen - Compass Church, Wellingborough**

We all want to help our children and grandchildren become global citizens – and it's our prayer that the **FREE Pumpkin Heroes pack** will really help you with this. Together we can encourage **children aged 4-10** to shine light into this time of year. Helping them to be courageous advocates for change in their local, national and global communities.

- **NEW Patch the Pumpkin storybook – Patch the Pumpkin and the Peace Club**
- **NEW Patch the Pumpkin cartoon film**
- Handy Guide for the grown-ups - **packed with crafts, games, recipes and much more**
- **Patch-tivity sheet**, with a word search, maze and colouring page
- **Pumpkin Heroes Hunt** – shine light into the darkness
- **Pumpkin Heroes sing-along song** – Shine Real Bright
- **Posters, stickers and invitations for your event**





PHOTO LEFT: A Pumpkin Heroes party at High Wycombe, UK. © 2018 Alex Whittlen/World Vision

PHOTO BELOW: Read Patch the Pumpkin and the Peace Club book or watch the film with your children. © 2017 Alexander Whittle/World Vision



PHOTO LEFT: Refugees will receive your Buddy Bracelets as a symbol of friendship. © 2018 Jon Warren/World Vision

This year the theme of **Peace and Friendship** also gives your children the chance to make and send **Buddy Bracelets** to children living in refugee camps where **World Vision** works. And later, **World Vision** will let you know where the bracelets went and share photos of the children receiving them too.

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# medics ON A MISSION

We are a network of Christian doctors and nurses that is committed to serving God effectively in the mission fields of the NHS and beyond, Christian Medical Fellowship chief executive officer **Dr Mark Pickering** tells Naomi Osinnowo.

**D**r Mark Pickering assumed his role as chief executive officer of the Christian Medical Fellowship (CMF) in March this year, after God made it clear to him that he was to relocate from Yorkshire to London to strengthen the vital network of Christian medical professionals who serve vulnerable populations in the UK and overseas.

In many ways, and despite logistical challenges, this opening couldn't have come at a more perfect time for him and the growing evangelical healthcare community. No stranger to the Evangelical Alliance member organisation, Mark joined CMF over two decades ago in the mid-1990s, when he was a London-based medical student, and went on to be involved in its ministry at all levels while working as a prison GP.

Now, as CMF celebrates its 70th birthday, and Mark continues to set in place the building blocks that will underpin the next season of this Christian medical ministry, Mark shares his heart's desire to see the network grow and become more robust so that Jesus can work through His people to expose and overcome injustice.

“UK society is rapidly abandoning the Christian values that have underpinned it for many years.”

### How did you come to work in prisons and for marginalised and vulnerable groups?

My wife Rachael and I grew up in Yorkshire, coming to London for medical school and then GP training. As GPs we both found opportunities to work in secure environments – Rachael in police stations and me in a secure psychiatric hospital. These eventually led us both into prison medicine. I spent seven years working as a GP in various prisons in Yorkshire, whilst Rachael started a medical non-governmental organisation called Integritas Healthcare, specialising in offender healthcare in resource-poor countries such as the Philippines.

As Christians we are called to service, and that will look different for each person.

For many of us, the challenge is to go beyond the daily grind of the usual career pathways, to look around us and to simply ask God what He might be asking us to do within the context He's already put us.

### Was becoming the CEO of CMF the natural next step in your journey?

In many ways yes, but it certainly wasn't what I was expecting to do at this point in life. I've been involved as a member of CMF for 25 years, I've headed up its ministry to medical students from 2002-09, and I've been on the Board of Trustees, so I have a long history with CMF and I love what it does.

Coming back on staff was something I had considered doing at some point. But when the CEO position became vacant last year, I couldn't see how it could possibly fit my family's domestic circumstances, and I had just been promoted to a regional prison GP role in Yorkshire, so I wasn't looking for a new challenge.

I prayed that dangerous prayer: “Lord, if this is what you want me to do, you're going to have to make it really clear to me.” After a few months the barriers that had seemed



insuperable had melted away and I was heading to London for the final interview.

It's been a real journey of faith for our family, and God's hand has been clearly in evidence at each step of the way. I have been hugely excited about coming back to work with a great and talented staff team, many of whom I already knew and had worked with over the years. So, in many ways it feels like coming home.

### **Why is it important that Christian doctors and nurses are mobilised and supported to live and speak for Jesus at work?**

Doctors and nurses meet people in great need; they deal with issues of life and death including ethical issues that go to the heart of who we are as human beings. They have opportunities to share the love of Jesus in word and deed with people who may never go to church, and their professions open doors for them to work in mission situations all over the world. They are a really strategic group of believers, but also have unique stresses and strains, often in ways that mean most church leaders find it hard to resource and support them adequately.

It's vital that Christian doctors and nurses are networked together for mutual support and resourced to deal with the unique ethical and workplace challenges they face, in order to serve God effectively in the mission fields of the NHS and beyond. CMF has been doing that for 70 years amongst doctors and medical students. Our ministry with nurses and midwives has been growing steadily for several years now and is hugely exciting.

### **How can Christian healthcare workers share Jesus without getting in trouble?**

The NHS recognises the value of spiritual support for patients through its chaplaincy networks, and many patients value appropriate discussion of spiritual issues. Within CMF we know the value of the gospel in bringing forgiveness and hope, and also how many of the problems that are present in a healthcare setting have spiritual aspects.

Yet we need to remember that healthcare professionals must maintain appropriate boundaries and bear in mind the power imbalance with patients,

*The transition from prison to the community often adds further instability to lives that can be chaotic...*

especially vulnerable ones. Both the medical and nursing regulators have guidance forbidding the inappropriate sharing of personal beliefs, such as religious ones. However, that leaves room for appropriate discussion of faith in some situations.

CMF provides training called Saline Solution, which teaches how to raise spiritual issues sensitively and appropriately, often with simple questions such as "do you have a faith that helps you at a time like this?" Referring on to chaplaincy provision is another option that can be very useful.

Problems can occasionally arise, sometimes through overstepping boundaries, and sometimes through misunderstanding or militant secular opposition. When necessary we have been hugely grateful for the support of our Christian legal partner organisations.

### **How can Christian medical professionals influence the NHS and wider society?**

We are called to be both salt and light in society (Matthew 5:13-16). This involves both preserving against decay and shining the light of God's truth into dark places. We encourage our members to be involved in leadership within local NHS structures and national medical organisations. We also respond to many consultations from government and other agencies that contribute to law and professional guidance in relevant areas.

### **CMF also seeks to promote Christian values in bioethics and healthcare. What does this look like in practical terms?**

UK society is rapidly abandoning the Christian values that have underpinned it for many years. We are seeing multiple areas where the value of vulnerable individual human beings is being eroded, where God-ordained boundaries are being intentionally

blurred, and where personal autonomy has become the new religion.

This comes out clearly in moves to make abortion available on demand for any reason, in pressure to introduce assisted suicide, in moves to see gender as something fluid and subjective, and in the erosion of marriage between one man and one woman.

There is a dilemma here: Christians involved in these key pressure areas of bioethics can often be defined in terms of what they oppose and what they are against. In reality we want to speak out for God's values in society, to champion a better way, but this is difficult when media outlets often want to spin Christian values as negative or bigoted. Wisdom and courage are needed in equal measure!

We work with parliamentarians, produce written resources, respond to government submissions, speak in the media, and work alongside numerous other partner organisations. Christians need to think deeply in order to present the timeless truths of our Creator in secular language that non-Christians can understand and relate to.

### **What are the biggest justice issues facing the UK? And how should we respond?**

Within UK prisons there are huge problems of overcrowding, addiction, bullying and violence, mental health, self-harm and suicide. Many dedicated people work tirelessly to support prisoners, to improve conditions and to promote rehabilitation, but it is a huge ongoing challenge.

For those in prison, the challenges don't end once they are released. The transition from prison to the community often adds further instability to lives that can be chaotic to begin with. Problems accessing accommodation, healthcare, benefits and community support often lead to homelessness and simply perpetuating the cycle of crime and addiction.

Churches and individual Christians can do a huge amount, visiting and supporting prisoners through chaplaincy teams, supporting ex-offender community projects, and helping to integrate ex-offenders into church life. The gospel message of hope and forgiveness is incredibly relevant to those struggling to rehabilitate both during and after time in prison.

## Are there any challenges that CMF sees on the horizon and how is the CMF likely to respond?

Of our 6,000 members, hundreds are already engaged in working overseas in lower income countries, either long term or short term. Many others are engaged in serving vulnerable populations in the UK such as the homeless, refugees and asylum seekers, prisoners, and those with mental health and addiction problems. We are very conscious of the need to support, resource and network those who are already engaged in these vital but challenging areas, and to encourage others to consider getting involved.

With this in mind, we are developing a project called Biblical Justice. It's essentially social justice within a biblical framework – responding to the God of justice who calls us to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with Him (Micah 6:8). I'm really excited about the possibilities as we start to formulate what that will look like.

## How does CMF partner with other Christian organisations and individuals who don't work in the NHS?

CMF works in partnership with many other organisations. Often our role is to bring specific medical expertise to support their more focused activities. We often work as part of wider networks, such as the Care Not Killing Alliance, opposing assisted suicide and promoting palliative care.

Globally we are part of the International Christian Medical and Dental Association (ICMDA), a network of 84 national member movements like CMF, as well as many others that are working towards membership. CMF helps support the growth of other smaller, younger movements with our resources and experience, through conferences and other means.

CMF's previous CEO, Peter Saunders, is now CEO of ICMDA, so we maintain very strong links with them. We are also part of NCFI, the Nurses Christian Fellowship International, that similarly links together

more than 30 national Christian nursing fellowships.

## What can members of the Evangelical Alliance do to support the CMF's work?

For those in healthcare, join up! Those working or studying in medicine, nursing and midwifery can become members. Others can become associate members – see [www.cmf.org.uk/join](http://www.cmf.org.uk/join). If you have friends or family members who could join, please spread the word.

Others who are interested in our work can become a 'Friend of CMF' free of charge and receive regular updates – see [cmf.org.uk/friends](http://cmf.org.uk/friends). We have a wealth of resources on issues at the interface of Christianity and healthcare at [cmf.org.uk/resources](http://cmf.org.uk/resources) – these are especially relevant to church leaders, giving biblical responses to the bewildering array of health-related issues in the news, many of which affect church members pastorally.

## 'Still bearing fruit and flourishing in older age.'

Psalms 92:14

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**The Bible describes older people as especially precious and worthy of respect. The Bible is also clear that limitation and loss are part of growing old, but not at the expense of service and God instilled purpose.**

For life to have meaning and to be fruitful it must have purpose. Jesus was clear about this. He said that our purpose is to love the Lord our God with every molecule of our being (Mark 22:37), and then to love others as much as we do ourselves (Mark 22:37, Mark 12:30-31). This purpose is not limited by our age or other factors and our purpose is not defined by what we can do but how we love God in response to his love for us.

In our residential care homes our staff and Christian volunteers support and encourage people to live as fully as they can. They can be the most powerful prayer warriors, bringing the Kingdom of God close and blessing us and fellow residents with their faith and experiences of God, even when living with dementia.

If you or your church are challenged by some of these issues, come and listen to a talk by Louise entitled "How to really tackle loneliness and bring the Kingdom of God into our communities" at CRE (Sandown Park) on Wednesday 17 October 11:00 to 11:45.

Free tickets available from our website: [www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/CRE2019](http://www.pilgrimsfriend.org.uk/CRE2019)

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# Justice

## — IT'S ALL IN THE WORD

Let's get stuck in our Bibles to see God's vision of justice and restoration, says **Jack Wakefield**, UK campaigns associate at Tearfund.

“**T**he risen Jesus expects that His community of disciples, which is preaching the good news among the nations, is also striving at Christian unity, is sharing its resources with the poor and needy, is engaged in costly initiatives of peacemaking, and is hungering and thirsting after God's justice.”

Theologian Vinoth Ramachandra's powerful statement is found in session two of *Live Justly*, a 10-part Bible study used across six continents, and it's inspiring Christians to be good news to their communities – bringing justice, restoration and hope.

But what does it mean to be people of justice in the world today? In many ways, we have reason to celebrate. Since 1990, extreme poverty has halved. Life expectancy is increasing. Diseases such as malaria and measles are retreating. More children are in school than ever before. Millions of businesses have started. And an ever-increasing number of people can fulfil their God-given potential.

Yet, despite this progress, we're increasingly aware that the way our global economy works is not sustainable. The growth of foodbanks countrywide is a poignant reminder of the growing gap between rich and poor. And the story is the same – if not more extreme – around the world. As well as inequality, the effects of climate change on the world's poorest people are becoming even more severe. Since 2016, world hunger has been increasing due to climate breakdown and conflict. In the past few months, we've seen

“**—**  
*We've seen churches come alive with God's invitation to be good news to their communities.*  
**—**”

record cyclones hit Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, and the hottest temperature ever recorded in India during a severe drought.

If we want to see an end to extreme poverty, we must respond to these pressing challenges. And we, God's people, are perfectly positioned to do just that. At Evangelical Alliance member Tearfund we passionately believe that the local church is the hope of the world. We are God's people, positioned in almost every community in the world – the biggest grassroots network on the planet, which knows the living, present and active God.

As we've supported communities to look at what the Bible has to say about their situation, we've seen churches come alive with God's invitation to be good news to their communities and bring about incredible spiritual and material transformation as a result.

One example of this is *Live Justly*, which has helped Christians to engage with issues such as inequality and climate breakdown. The book, a series of group studies, starts with what the Bible says about justice, and goes on to explore the role of prayer, community, advocacy, generosity and charity in living a life of justice, before ending with the vision of 'jubilee', where all people

and all creation flourish as God intends.

In northern Nigeria, a group of young people studied *Live Justly* and were inspired to start transforming their community.

They raised money to buy tree seedlings, which they planted along the main street in Yola, before asking local banks to adopt and look after the trees. By learning about advocacy, they've also campaigned to local government to support their efforts of greening and cleaning up Yola, and have continued to grow their impact. People have been amazed by the transformation in their lives and the fire they have for God's kingdom to come in Yola.

Home groups in the UK have also worked through the *Live Justly* series and have begun unifying local churches, while student groups passionate for justice have found fresh rooting in the scriptures, and some churches have even converted it to a preaching series.

Of course, this isn't about the Bible studies themselves; this is about God's people engaging with the scriptures and catching a vision of a life of worship, that incorporates all we do and every decision we make, and places it all within a vision of justice and restoration.

We face some huge challenges in the next decade, but the church is well-positioned to lead this transformation and to do it by being faithful to the good news of Jesus and modelling a different way forward based on God's vision of a just world.

To find out more about *Live Justly*, you can download the sessions for free or order a copy of the book at [tearfund.org/livejustly](http://tearfund.org/livejustly) or email [campaigns@tearfund.org](mailto:campaigns@tearfund.org).



# SEEING THE UNSEEN

Human trafficking is happening in our communities and we have to do something about it, says **Joy Andrew**, co-founder of Restore Glasgow and board member at Parkhead Nazarene Church, Glasgow.

“I didn't know there was any other way; everyone I knew did heroin,” says David.

At Parkhead Nazarene Church in Glasgow's east end, we know what the effects of injustice look like. It looks like high unemployment, brokenness, trauma, addiction. It looks like people like David who see no alternative to hard drugs when they are growing up. The effects of injustice are not hard to find in our community.

We're also learning about a more hidden form of injustice: human trafficking is happening on the streets where we live, work and worship. Adults and children are trafficked into and around Glasgow

“.....  
*We don't go into the dark places in pursuit of justice – but of God.*  
.....”

for domestic servitude, labour exploitation and sexual exploitation. They can end up in brothels, private homes, cannabis farms, nail bars or car washes. Statistics produced by the National Crime Agency indicate that in 2018 there were 228 reported potential victims of modern slavery in Scotland from

countries including Vietnam, China, Sudan and Romania.

Human trafficking is fueled by greed – there's big money to be made from the buying and selling of people, and in many ways it's easier to traffic people than it is guns or drugs. Then there's our desire as consumers to get things such as garden landscaping, car washes, or manicures for bargain prices. Poverty, vulnerability and lack of choices can leave people susceptible to being trafficked. It can hide in plain sight if we don't know what to look out for; the traffickers rely on our ignorance.

In September 2018, 10 women were rescued from brothels in a series of raids from eight addresses in Glasgow and



Edinburgh. Some of the rescues were from addresses in Parkhead – close to our church – as were the two people convicted.

In March 2018, four men were convicted for a total of 29 years at the High Court in Glasgow for crimes relating to modern slavery. Their eight victims worked long hours and suffered violence and abuse for little or no pay. The news reports about the case make for grim and disturbing reading.

## Church in action

In Isaiah 1:17, God tells the Israelites:

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”

We’re called to be followers of Christ – that surely includes following Him into some of the darkest areas and situations in our world. It means asking Him to open our eyes to whatever injustices are happening in our communities, being open to being broken by what we see, and then asking Him what we need to do in response.

As Christians we long to know God, and I think when we choose to identify with those who are broken, with those who have suffered addiction or who have been trafficked, we can know God in deeper ways. He walks with those who are broken. We don’t go into the dark places in pursuit of justice – but of God.

My faith increases because of what God is doing in our community in Parkhead. And I am falling more in love with Him as I see the beautiful work of restoration that He is doing in the lives of people in our church.

At Parkhead Nazarene Church, which is a member of the Evangelical Alliance, we know that injustice doesn’t need to have the last word. Join us at any Sunday service and you will feel the force of a church full of people who have been set free from addictions and who know the deep truth of the worship song ‘Our God saves’. New chapters of the story of Parkhead are being written. We know what justice looks like.

We formed Restore Glasgow in June 2018. We are a group of Christians from local churches who are raising awareness about human trafficking in our city and finding ways to serve those agencies already engaged in this area. We are affiliated to International Justice Mission (IJM) in the UK.

“ *It brought home to us how local the issue of human trafficking is.* ”

We have been meeting since June 2018. We started with a group of nine people from Parkhead Nazarene and Adelaide Place Baptist Church and at the time of writing we have 16 people in our group from across Glasgow representing four churches and four denominations.

We meet monthly with eight or nine attending each meeting. As part of IJM’s Restore programme, for the first six months we focused on prayer and on learning about trafficking in Scotland and around the world. We also started meeting with groups and organisations such as Police Scotland’s National Human Trafficking Unit and Migrant Help, to learn more about trafficking in Scotland and what we could do as a group to help.

Our aim is to raise awareness about human trafficking in Glasgow so that more people know what signs to look out for and how to report concerns. Our prayer is that this will lead to more rescues. We want to be a blessing to those who are already working in anti-trafficking. And we want them to see that this is an issue Christians care about and that churches in Glasgow have a valid role to play. Our prayer in all of this is that God would be glorified.

We pray asking God what He would have us do. We pray in faith, knowing we pray to a God who can set the captives free – because we have seen Him set people free from addiction. We pray asking that God would use us as answers to our prayers.

As well as praying, we have collected handbags filled with toiletries for women rescued from sex trafficking, and we’ve collected around 300 toiletry items for

“ *We pray asking God what He would have us do.* ”

Migrant Help to put into welcome packs for men and women rescued from trafficking. We hope that these simple actions will let those who receive the toiletries see that there are people in Glasgow who care about them.

We held our first Spot the Signs event in January, in a former pub that Parkhead Nazarene bought a couple of years ago and now runs as a church plant. IJM led the event and around 50 people came along and heard more about human trafficking, how to spot the signs and how to report concerns.

Our next event will be in the autumn and will raise awareness that some nail bars are staffed by women who have been trafficked. It will let people to know what signs to look for and how to report concerns. In January we hope to be involved in a pilot project aimed at equipping teachers to teach about modern slavery and its signs as part of the curriculum. If successful, this could be rolled out across Scotland.

As we celebrated our first birthday in June, it was encouraging to look back and see God’s leading and perfect timing. We didn’t know what we were doing when we started the group; we just knew we needed to do something. And we still don’t know what we’re doing! But we are trusting God to continue to lead us. It is exciting to see the diverse skills, gifts and experience which the members of our group bring. We have teachers, care workers, actors, writers, people with law and theology degrees, an accountant and students. IJM talks about asking God to use what’s in our hands, so that’s what we are doing.

The raids mentioned above happened on our doorsteps, about three months after we started meeting and praying. The women were rescued from streets our group members walk every day. It brought home to us how local the issue of human trafficking is. We can’t know the effect of our prayers on those raids. We know we need to keep praying for rescue – because justice looks like a slave-free Glasgow.

If you are concerned about a situation of trafficking in your community phone the Modern Slavery Helpline on 08000 121 700 or visit their website: [unseenuk.org](http://unseenuk.org). You can learn more about IJM at [ijmuk.org](http://ijmuk.org)

Some names have been changed.

WHERE'S THE

catch?

© Mercy Ships

Will you follow Jesus' lead and bring justice to the vulnerable and oppressed? asks **Darren Richards**, senior church and community partnership manager at Mercy Ships UK.

**C**hristians have always made history, by following the model of Jesus.

The church has led the way for centuries, caring for the poor, helping the sick, speaking up for the voiceless, and exposing injustice for the vulnerable and oppressed. William Wilberforce, Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale and John Wesley, to name a few, spring to mind.

But why doesn't God simply get rid of the injustice and suffering in our world? This is a question we've heard and, perhaps, asked ourselves. I was thinking about this recently, when climbing with Caleb, my seven-year-old son. Far from an avid climber, I will dabble when the rock-face is made of plastic and, ideally, decorated to look like a solar system. When the chance came for this intrepid dad to demonstrate his climbing prowess, I adorned a harness that was designed for maximum ignominy and reached for the dayglow planets.

Like his namesake, Caleb was bold and strong. He ascended with fearless agility, at rocket speed I clambered, slowly, towards the moulded sun, hoping the endeavour would mould my own son, watching below. My bravery was bolstered by a safety rope system above my head, which is designed to take the strain and then lower you gently

*The early church never preached good news without tending to people's physical and material needs.*

down to the ground. The safety rope saved me from certain death – well, injury at least – and it teaches us about injustice.

When we think of injustice, it's easy to start with someone else. Perhaps someone 'bad', who causes others to suffer. Truth be told, we all play our part in the problem of evil, since "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". Thankfully, God's grace catches us in love and lowers us gently into His forgiveness. We have a safety rope in Christ. God has saved every believer from Eden's fall. His "amazing grace...saves a wretch like me" and every other wretch out there. So, clearly, God cannot simply remove the 'bad people' who contribute to injustice, without also relieving this world of every person alive today.

Injustice always begins with sin. Persecution and poverty emanate from sin, like poisonous fumes from a dump. Perhaps it's why Jesus said: "The poor

you will always have with you". Today, our lives can be insulated from the suffering of impoverished people around the world, or even nearby. It is more likely to be headlines about the poor that we "always have with us" on our phones. They remind us that all is not yet as it should be. Selfishness and greed cause the most vulnerable to suffer.

More people are trapped in slavery in 2019 than were ever forced onto wooden ships during the 1800s. More than 40 million people worldwide are in slavery today. Innocent people are suffering miscarriages of justice, undergoing beatings, imprisonment and even facing execution. And, we have not yet eradicated armed conflicts that cause starvation and misery. I remember seeing one distraught mother scoop up her lifeless child. Her agony embodies the reality of injustice.

The Father's heart breaks with that of every mourning mother and bereaved father. Our Bibles are crammed with verses about bringing justice to the poor. Prophets were sent by God in response to nations' injustice. My favourite is Micah, who told rich oppressors: "The Lord has told us what is right and what He demands: see that justice is done, let mercy be your first concern."

When we hear the word 'rich', we naturally imagine billionaires with luxurious mansions and yachts. But you may be rich,



in global terms. If you earn £25,000+ a year, you're among the one per cent of highest earners in the world. Even on minimum wage, you will be in the top five per cent. A quarter of the world doesn't even have a toilet.

So, you actually woke up in paradise this morning, from the perspective of someone living in extreme poverty. You turn on the tap and drink clean water, you have a flushing toilet, and you probably ate breakfast. The 'safety ropes' you depend on are not in place for everyone.

Confronted with such injustice, it's natural to feel overwhelmed. So, what would Jesus do? Jesus modelled compassion for the poor. He began by declaring: "Good news to the poor", and He spent time with the destitute, blind and lame. He even turned the tables of injustice physically, when He confronted rich money-changers who were exploiting the poor.

Jesus taught when we feed the hungry and visit the sick, we are serving Him. Christians are called to bring hope to the poor and healing for the sick; when we do, we find Jesus in the faces of those we serve. The early church never preached good news without tending to people's physical and material needs. The Acts 2 church gave "to anyone who had need".

Progress has been made in the fight against injustice, as churches support movements and charities that empower the poor. Extreme poverty has more than halved in the last 25 years. Last year, five of the fastest growing economies in the world were African. But, there remains a chasm of disparity. In sub-Saharan Africa 7 out of 10 people still live on less than £2 a day. Poverty is caused by several factors, but when it

comes down to it, it's a simple equation: our world is not fair because people don't share.

There is an abundance of resources in our world so, as my son would say, "That's not fair; sharing is caring." Take healthcare: we don't worry whether we'll be able to afford a doctor or a life-saving operation, because in Western Europe, less than three per cent of people don't have access to medical treatment. In sub-Saharan Africa, nine out of 10 people are living without access to medical care and surgery. When they fall there's no safety rope to catch them.

Children are the most at risk: 80 per cent of children living in poverty need surgery before they're 15. Every child is a precious life, such as Gamai. Gamai fell when she was one year old, but there was no 'safety rope'. She pulled a pan of boiling water over herself, but her mother could only afford a tube of ointment. Gamai's burns were left untreated, so they contracted. Her fingers tightened and her arms fused at the elbow. They stayed like that for four years.

## Hope and healing

Moved by the plight of children like Gamai, Don and Deyon Stephens followed the model of Jesus. Today, the organisation they founded, Mercy Ships, operates the largest charity hospital ship in the world. The Evangelical Alliance member partners with African governments to provide more than 2,000 free surgeries a year, and we train up surgeons and renovate hospitals.

Mercy Ships is crewed by volunteers, who heal cleft lips so babies survive, straighten bowed legs so children can walk, and repair cataracts so the blind can see. Driven by our values of loving God, loving others, and

acting with integrity, we pray with patients and worship on the wards. For Gamai, Mercy Ships met her needs free of charge: surgery, pain relief and physiotherapy. Today, she plays with her friends and can stretch out her fingers and lift her arms.

## Get involved

The gospel requires that each of us play our part in bringing about justice. You can:

**1. Pray:** Stand with the needy in prayer.

Stay informed and seek out news about inequality and poverty.

**2. Volunteer:** Many Christian organisations, like Mercy Ships, offer opportunities for volunteers. From a few hours a month in the UK, up to a few months onboard a hospital ship, where only half the roles are medical. Visit our website to find out about our roles: [mercyships.org.uk/serve-onboard/volunteer](http://mercyships.org.uk/serve-onboard/volunteer)

**3. Give and fundraise:** Find a cause or charity that's overcoming an injustice and partner with them financially. Regular monthly donations are best, to help organisations plan.

**4. Share:** Social networking makes it easy to share videos and articles. You can also invite a speaker to your church or discuss injustices with friends.

God is bringing justice to our world, but there is a catch: He uses us, His church, to do it. We are God's safety rope for those who suffer injustices. Take some time today to pray and reflect on how you can follow God's call to bring justice. Like Caleb, you could scale heights you never dreamed possible and change the lives of people like Gamai. (You can watch Gamai's story video at: [mercyships.org.uk/church](http://mercyships.org.uk/church))

**2 out of 3** people cannot access safe, affordable surgery

Mercy Ships help the Church provide free surgery for the poor

[mercyships.org.uk/church](http://mercyships.org.uk/church)



The blind see  
The lame walk  
Outcasts  
regain dignity



Amid the trouble that we're bound to encounter in the world, let us remember that we find our security in God, says **Steve Clifford**, general director, Evangelical Alliance.

# In GOD let us TRUST

**A** few months ago, I was leaving our London resource centre after a full day at the Evangelical Alliance.

As I walked down the road towards Kings Cross, I was reflecting on living in London and thought that I felt very safe in our capital city, despite the statistics on gun and knife crime.

Suddenly, without warning, there was a screech of brakes and a black car lost control and ploughed into some traffic lights just meters from where I was walking. In that moment everything changed. Three or four young men jumped out of the car and scattered down the street. Within seconds the police arrived and took up chase. As I looked at the car, my initial thought was "thank goodness nobody was hit". But then I realised someone had been, and they were under the car. In fact, they were tragically and mortally wounded.

As I stood on the roadside waiting to give a statement to the police, I realised that if I had left the building just 10 or 15 seconds earlier, I could have been under the car as well. As I've reflected over the last few weeks on those moments I looked death in the face (not my own but an innocent passer-by), I have wondered, where do I find my security? Amid the uncertainties of life, where do I put my trust?

For some, the question of security and safety is a daily reality. Some in our churches

*“Our security finds its focus not in any human institution, nor in our own abilities to make things ‘right’.”*

have lost loved ones as a result of violent crime. For others, the issues revolve around their health or financial debt, relational breakdown, loss of employment, or a deep sense of uncertainty about their future owing to climate change, fear of terrorist attack or uncertainties associated with Brexit.

Governments in the west are finding it increasingly difficult to deliver a prosperous, stable and peaceful society for all of its citizens. In fact, the state in some nations has become increasingly antagonistic to the historically biblically Orthodox views which evangelical Christians feel are important.

Of course, as a Christian community, we should not be surprised. In fact, insecurity and uncertainty is our default position. Jesus said: "In this world you will have trouble" (John 16:33); He never promised us a comfortable, safe life. In fact, He promised us trouble (this is not a verse we tend to find in Christian greeting cards or in a 'promise box').

So, what's our response when trouble comes? Where do we find our security? The message of scripture is clear: whatever comes our way in this life, we are never on our own. King David, surrounded by his enemies, his life in danger, declares in Psalm 56: "When I'm afraid, I put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid."

We might be facing up to our fears, but are we choosing to trust the one who is thoroughly trustworthy? Our security finds its focus not in any human institution, nor in our own abilities to make things 'right'. We have a hope, yes, a hope which sustains us in the troubles which come our way, knowing that God is with us. But, also, a hope in an age which is yet to come – when evil will be eradicated, God's judgment will take place, and God's perfect rule will be established within His creation.

I was recently chatting with a friend of mine who was a senior church leader in one of Eastern Europe's former communist bloc countries. He was telling me how he now regularly meets up for morning coffee with former members of the secret police in his city. They tell stories of how he was kept under surveillance, but they explained, "We knew deep down we could never overcome you or your faith." Thirty years on, the Berlin Wall is no more, the great promises of communism have faded, but the church of Jesus Christ continues, and His people remain strong in their faith.



# 2018–2019 Annual Report

## This has been one of the busiest and most fruitful years in recent Evangelical Alliance history.

Across the UK it has been our privilege to cheer on and champion the good works of the local church, and respond to requests for help, support and resource, all the while advocating on your behalf in government, the media and society at large. We've spoken up on difficult issues, helping Christians find their own voice and modelling transformative communications. All that we do and all that we are is driven by our core passion to make Jesus' name heard and known.

I will never forget the overwhelming joy I felt as I worshipped with more than 350 people who originate from all over the world, in different languages and different traditional attire, but all praising the same name – Jesus. The celebration marked the fifth anniversary of our One People Commission, which is dedicated to connecting and serving the ethnic diversity and Christian expression in the evangelical community.

Similarly, I have been so encouraged by our campaigns and initiatives that inspire and equip the church in mission and evangelism. I have loved hearing of the renewed confidence of church-based toddler groups as they proactively demonstrate their distinctly Christian foundation and share Jesus with the families they are connected to through our Great Commission work and the work of so many of our members.

This year we have seen remarkable growth in membership. Each month we have celebrated

churches, organisations and individuals that have joined us from all over the UK and from across the evangelical community. Sharing our values of being Christ-like, relational, trustworthy and prayerful, we can cheer each other on, celebrate the work of the gospel in our towns, cities and places, and in all things make Jesus known. I am humbled to be serving you all, and I pray that we continue to faithfully serve you and the wider church for years to come.

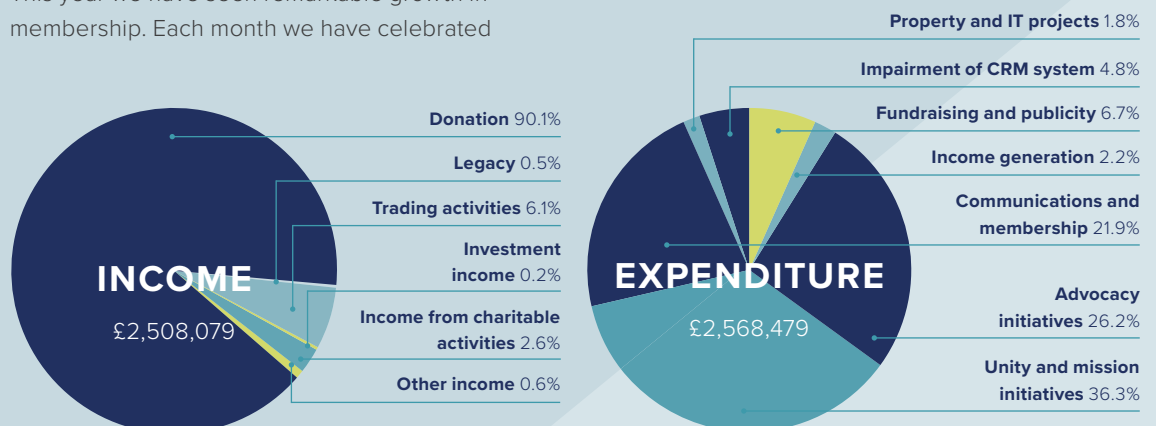
Our full annual report is available online and as a hard copy on request. But so much of our work can never be fully recognised in reports like these. The faithful women and men who work around the UK for the Evangelical Alliance, serving the church and transforming our society through their dedication and talent, never cease to move and inspire me. We have more than 50 members of staff, plus a large team of interns, volunteers and friends who generously gift their time, talents and resources to the Evangelical Alliance. Thank you for all you do.

This has been my tenth year as general director of the Evangelical Alliance, and I recently announced that I will be stepping down later this year. I can honestly say that I have never felt prouder to be associated with such a crucial organisation that is dedicated to serving the UK church, and I am utterly confident in our future as Gavin Calver takes on the leadership mantle as CEO.

God bless,

**Steve Clifford, general director**

## FINANCIALS



# Serving our members

# Serving the church

## GREAT COMMISSION

“I was about to give up on our local toddler group, having been discouraged and challenged with a number of obstacles. The Great Commission’s toddler video popped up on my feed, and after watching it, I felt convicted and inspired to keep going; nothing is more important than sharing Jesus with those families.”

Debbie Constable, Edinburgh



## TRANSFORMED

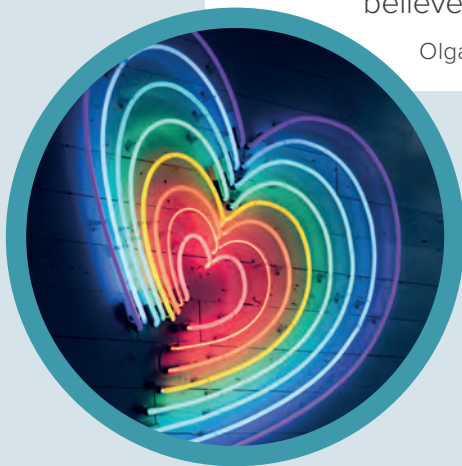
“Transformed has greatly benefited our local church in expanding our hearts to understand the challenges faced by those in the transgender community, while equipping us to extend care in a way we believe Jesus would.”

Olga Mullarkey, Green Pastures Church

## PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

“Public Leader: Scotland has been one of the best experiences I have ever had, and I am just so grateful to God for His timing in it all. I feel like I’m going back to work tomorrow with increased faith for what God is going to do next.”

Shona, Glasgow



## BOTH LIVES MATTER

“The abortion debate can be so polarised, making people reluctant to get involved. Both Lives Matter captures a hopeful tone so well, encouraging others to take a stand.”

Jude, midwife

## OPC

“Being part of the OPC Young Adults Forum has been a wonderful way to build friendships with, and learn from, brothers and sisters from different ethnic and church backgrounds. It’s amazing to see God’s diverse church coming together as one.”

Caroline Millar, London City Mission

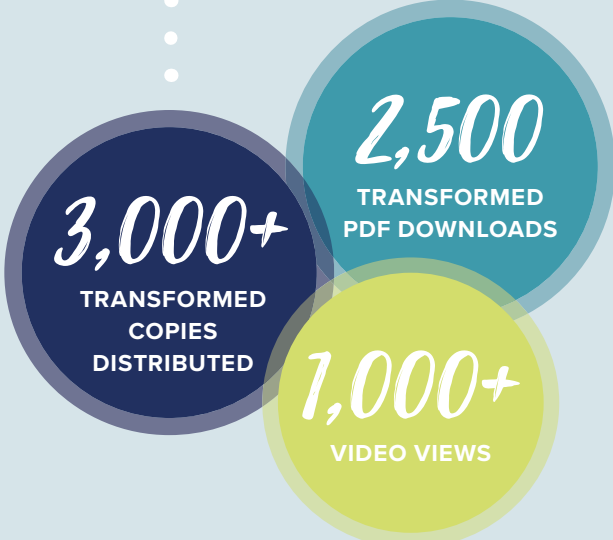






**YOUNG ADULTS**

**TRANSFORMED**



**MEMBERSHIP**



**COMMUNICATIONS**



For our full report visit [eauk.org/annual-report](http://eauk.org/annual-report)

LET US **RUN**

*with* ▼

**ENDURANCE**

*the* **RACE** MARKED  
OUT

• **FOR**  
• **US**

FIXING OUR EYES ON

**JESUS**

THE  
PIONEER  
AND  
PERFECTER  
OF FAITH.

*Hebrews 12:1b-2*



*thank you  
for your continuing support*



# NoBible Sunday



What do you think it cahelet tena  
dehacon alute cerire vitin kani?

**It's frustrating when you can't read something.**

**NoBibleSunday** is a nationwide event calling on Churches to raise awareness of the urgent need for Bible translation in countries where people don't have access to a Bible in their own language.

**Join with churches across the UK – host a NoBibleSunday event and help change lives.**

**Sign up for your NoBibleSunday pack today**

[wycliffe.org.uk/nobiblesunday](http://wycliffe.org.uk/nobiblesunday)

**Wycliffe  
Bible  
Translators**



**#nobiblesunday**





YOUR LEGACY.  
THEIR GIFT OF

Life

Your legacy could be the gift of life for those  
where the need is greatest.

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**'...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.'**  
(John 10:10)

Tearfund is a humanitarian and relief agency with more than 50 years' experience; passionate about seeing all people freed from poverty, living transformed lives and reaching their God-given potential.

**We won't stop until poverty stops.**

To speak to someone about leaving a legacy to Tearfund, call **020 3906 3906**. Alternatively, you can order a free pack by calling the number above, emailing [legacies@tearfund.org](mailto:legacies@tearfund.org) or by visiting [www.tearfund.org/legacies](http://www.tearfund.org/legacies)

**tearfund**