

THE MAGAZINE OF THE MESSAGE

the message

flow

WITH TEACHING
FROM
ANDY'S
NEW BOOK

LIFT UP A SHOUT

Celebrating the festival atmosphere as thousands find faith in Jesus

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE THE MESSAGE TURNS 30 | GENERATION RISING

'Join with us as we step up in prayer'

Dear friends,

Wow, what an outstanding season we have just been through! With the help of the Luis Palau Association, many churches and ministries across the region and with the financial support and prayer from you all, we somehow pulled off Festival Manchester and to be honest, it was incredible. We saw over 65,000 people come through the park with nearly 3,500 responses to the gospel as well as thousands more in the build-up events we put on.

Following the festival, I headed off on sabbatical for the first time in 30 years. It's been such a special season of rest and reflection, and a great chance to spend quality time with my wife Michele.

Whilst on sabbatical, the number one thing I felt God stirring my heart about was prayer. I do believe that it's all there with The Message Trust – great initiatives, special people delivering them and massive need. All we need now is God to breathe on this thing to see it go to the next level, but we all know that only happens when his people turn to him in prayer. I hope you're also excited and will join with us as we step up in step up in prayer as we go again into this next season.



Thanks so much to those of you who are standing with us at a time like this.

Much love and appreciation,

Andy Hawthorne
 Founder & CEO
 The Message Trust

P.S. As you will discover with this issue of Flow, we are launching a special campaign to see as many supporters as possible who can give £30 each month (or whatever you can afford) to help us to achieve all the beautiful things you will read about. If you could support us in this way, it would mean such a lot. Just go to message.org.uk/donate

flow

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29 Generation rising

Young people step out in faith



OUR COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

The paper used for Flow is manufactured using pulp sourced from sustainable sources from within Europe. It is 100% TCF (Totally Chlorine Free) and is manufactured to ISO14001 standards.

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Andy Hawthorne explores the heavenly wisdom of 1 Corinthians

3,472 respond

Over 65,000 people gathered in Wythenshawe Park for Festival Manchester as the church stepped out in word and action. 3,472 responded to the gospel in the park alone, plus thousands more at build-up events and in schools. Read more on [page 15](#).





SING LIKE NEVER BEFORE, O MY SOUL
I'LL WORSHIP YOUR HOLY NAME



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@messagetrust



01

ENTERPRISE

‘I’m part of a family’

ACROSS the UK and South Africa, we’re helping ex-offenders and those at risk of offending turn their lives around by offering training and discipleship through our enterprise programme. In London, Neal Street Espresso, our speciality coffee shop, is busier than ever, but has always been about more than just being a place where customers can get great coffee.

Darren was the first team member to join us as Neal Street Espresso. There he found a place where he could get the training, work experience, life skills and Christian discipleship he was looking for after spending many years in and out of prison. Now, two years on, Darren has

graduated from the programme and is currently a shift supervisor at the coffee shop.

A few years ago, Darren was staying in a hostel and there he met Jon. As they got to know each other, Darren invited Jon along to King’s Cross Church (KXC) with him. Jon loved the services and learning more about Jesus but was recalled to prison. Whilst there, he got to know the outreach team from KXC and heard more about the love and forgiveness Jesus offers him. He was so impacted by the gospel that he decided to leave his old life behind, accept Jesus, and he even got baptised. After his release, Jon heard about Neal Street Espresso and applied to join the team.



02

01 The team serve speciality coffee and share the gospel at Neal Street Espresso

02 Jon prepares a customer's coffee having been trained as a barista

‘Not only have I had the opportunity to train with some of the best baristas in London, but I’m growing in my faith too’

Looking at his life now, Jon can hardly believe it. ‘If you’d told me a year ago that I’d not only be a barista, but have found somewhere where I can get the support I’d been looking for, I wouldn’t have believed you! Not only have I had the opportunity to train with some of the best baristas in London, but I’m growing in my faith too. I’ve got people here who will pray for me and give me the support I need whilst also helping to disciple me.

‘This place has given me the opportunity that nowhere else would and is a second chance for me. I feel like I’m part of a family and am so thankful to God for that.’

.....
Keep up to date with the latest news and stories of what’s happening through our enterprise work at message.org.uk/enterprise

EVENT

A Burning Heart

DISCOVER what it means to have a burning heart for Jesus and mission in a world that desperately needs to hear about him as The Message Conference makes its comeback this November!

How can we become people that shine God's love to everyone around us? And how can we use our lives and conversations to naturally share the gospel with our friends and neighbours?

Join us on Saturday 19 November 2022 at Audacious Church in Manchester as we're challenged and equipped to do just this by Dr Amy Orr-Ewing, Andy Hawthorne, Sam Ward, Ben Jack plus other special guests. It's not to be missed.

And as we're equipped, we'll also be celebrating 30 years of The Message and all that God's done, whilst also looking to the future.

Get your tickets today at
message.org.uk/conference



RESOURCES

Challenge your church



WE LOVE nothing more than getting the church excited for mission and reaching their community with the good news of Jesus. So we have a team of speakers right across the UK ready to inspire and challenge your church, event or festival with powerful stories of how God is moving in schools, prisons and some of our nation's toughest communities, as well as with powerful truth from the Bible.

Why not book one of them today?

Find out more and book at
message.org.uk/book-a-speaker

GET INVOLVED

Change lives by doing what you love!

WHETHER you love to run, cycle, bake or knit, did you know you could do this whilst also helping us raise vital funds to keep mission happening at The Message?

Every year our fundraising heroes make a huge difference the lives of young people and communities across our nation. As we kick mission to the next level, we need more people to join them. So, whether you can hold a bake sale, run a half marathon or are looking to take on the challenge of a lifetime, why not help raise money for The Message and change lives?

Get involved at message.org.uk/fundraise



SAVE THE DATE

RISK/REWARD: the Advance UK Summit



JOIN us on Saturday 18 March 2023 at !Audacious Church, Manchester, for RISK/REWARD.

Be encouraged and equipped to reach the UK with the good news of Jesus as we explore opportunities and challenges around evangelism in this current time. We'll unpack the risk and reward of the gospel, the role we have as Christians to share it, and how evangelists can bless the local church. All alongside powerful worship and prayer for the nation.

Come along to hear and engage with speakers from The Message Trust, the Luis Palau Association, Alpha, the Evangelical Alliance and more.

Tickets are on sale now. Head to advancegroups.org



MESSAGE BUS

Out on the road

FROM Aberdeen to Glasgow hundreds of young people have been stepping on board the Scotland Message Bus and hearing how much Jesus loves them.

For six weeks, the bus spent every Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening in the east end of Glasgow as we partnered with three local churches to run a 10:10 project. Each night, young people dashed to the bus to play on the games consoles, scale the climbing wall and hang out with their friends. As they did, they got to know our team as well as members of the local church.

No bus night runs without a gospel talk where everyone there gets to hear the good news of Jesus. On the last night of each 10:10 project, the local church ran a Youth Alpha session on the bus before inviting each young person to the rest of the course they'd start running in the churches the very next week.

The bus then headed north to Aberdeen to be part of a mission week being run by King's Church Aberdeen. 'Being part of Love Aberdeen and partnering with what the church is doing was special,' said Phil, one of the Scotland bus team. 'The excitement of young people as the bus pulls into their community is brilliant. They're desperate for us to open the doors and see what's inside. As we run the activities, it's amazing how God opens up opportunities for us to chat about him and the hope he offers. One of the things I love the most is when you see the face of a young person light up as they realise how much Jesus loves them. The fact that we run each bus mission in partnership with a local church means that straight away we can connect each person to somewhere they can find out more about faith and be discipled. There really is nothing better.'

.....
Find out more about what the Message Buses have been up to at message.org.uk/bus

GENETIK

The power to forgive

CONNECTING with young people through music and creativity has been part of what we do since day one and remains at our core today. Each week, we run Genetik Sessions where kids and teens get to develop their music and dance skills, whilst also hearing the gospel.

When Rosie saw the Message Bus in her local park she got talking to the team who told her about Genetik. Having always wanted to learn to play the guitar she quickly signed up and started coming along.

Whilst she was excited about the lessons, it was clear that she struggled with her self-esteem. As Mark and Clarissa (pictured below) continued teaching her, Rosie started opening up about how she was being badly bullied at school. As they spoke God's truth into her, undoing the lies that the bullies had told her about herself, and told her how much they believed in her too, you could see a change starting to happen.

After hearing the gospel a few times, she decided to give her life to Jesus! Since then she's been a new person. Wanting to go to church each week, she started dragging her mum along and was able to lead her to Jesus too.

For Rosie, one big thing remained. Knowing how much Jesus had forgiven her, she knew she had to forgive her bullies. She's now praying every day for them and goes into each day knowing her identity is fully found in Jesus.

.....
 Read more stories of lives impacted by creative mission at message.org.uk/stories



Reaching the nations

Catch up with the latest Message news from our international hubs

ADVANCE

87 nations and counting

IN UKRAINE, Guinea, Haiti and Tanzania evangelists are being equipped to tell others about Jesus in their native language as Advance continues to grow around the globe. As God is moving, lives are being changed. Be encouraged by what's happening at advancegroups.org/stories

GERMANY

Ramping up mision

MISSION continues to ramp up across Germany. As Eden Chemnitz build relationships with their community, doors into schools are opening and mission team OTC are heading to Chemnitz to run a week of schools mission.



CANADA

Eden Downtown Eastside is five!

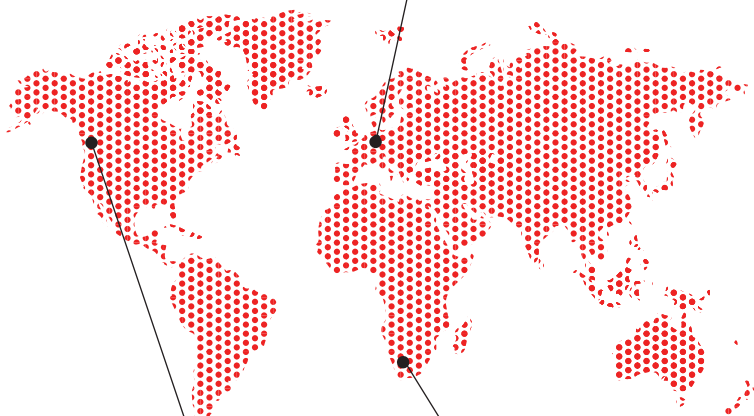
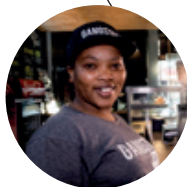
EDEN Downtown Eastside (Vancouver) is celebrating their fifth birthday. As Fari, Angela and the team do life with their community and serve them from the church's Eden Café, they're seeing their neighbours respond to the gospel and those battling addiction being set free. 'Eden is a beacon for our neighbourhood' is how one of their neighbours described the team. And this is just the start. Eden is growing in Canada with plans to launch a new team in Prince George (British Columbia) soon.



SOUTH AFRICA

Reaching out

IT'S a busy time for Message South Africa. As Respect ME and Higher Tours head into schools, they're getting to tell young people about how much Jesus loves them. At the same time, the lives of ex-offenders continue to be transformed as they receive discipleship and barista training in the three Gangstar cafés across Cape Town.



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message.org.uk/news



45,000

Young people heard the gospel in schools through the Festival Manchester schools tour



157,709

Hours of social action ran as part of Festival Manchester



100,000+

People heard about the love and hope of Jesus through Festival Manchester



Going full circle

10 YEARS on from being a Message Academy student himself, passionate evangelist Joe Barrett is helping raise up the next generation as the new course leader.

Mates on a mission

Celebrating the remarkable people with us on the journey



Marie-Louise Aitken

Part of the Alpha UK team, Marie was key in helping coordinate the Festival Manchester follow-up so that everyone who responded to the gospel was quickly linked to a partner church.



Tania Bright

CEO of Home for Good Tania helped get churches on board with fostering and adoption through Festival Manchester.



MTS

Production specialists MTS helped make the technical side of the Festival Manchester schools tour happen, and continue to support us with schools mission and gigs.

EDEN

What a year!



A YEAR on from moving to Bradford to become the new Eden West Bowling team leader, we caught up with Luke Owens to hear about what he's been up to and how he's thrown himself into community life.

Tell us a bit about your first year on Eden.

What a year it's been! I've loved getting stuck into life in West Bowling. It's been a year of building relationships, making partnerships and finding ways we can help people both practically and spiritually. We've led sessions in local schools, helped disciple people in their faith and seen young leaders rise up through the PrimeTime course. The year has not been without its challenges including break-ins, fires and disappointments, but I see God working through all the team and in West Bowling.

Describe what's been happening this summer.

In the run up to summer we had five sessions with the Message Bus on our estate. We had lots of fun, great conversations and gave out 100 copies of Mark's gospel. At the end of the bus visits, we had 20 gospels left. One girl asked if she could take them all as she wanted to give them out to her class – imagine the impact this could have! After the bus, we carried on with weekly sessions in a local park. It's so much fun and we're always being asked when the bus is coming back. Since then, the warm weather has meant we've been able to hold outdoor sessions a few days each week, helping us to connect with loads of new families. We took the opportunity to hold family events and youth volunteering days in areas of West Bowling that are often forgotten. We also held a Holiday at Home week with our youth group and local children, many of whom wouldn't get away this summer. We took trips to the National Media Museum and Xscape and ran a forest school day. OTC

also came and performed an incredible gig – they were definitely a highlight of the week.

What impact has this had?

Whilst a lot of what we do is practical, it's all about pointing people to Jesus. Seeing people grow in their faith or wanting to know more about Jesus has been one of our greatest highlights. I loved that we got to take nearly 40 people along to Festival Manchester. Eden West Bowling is about long-haul, incarnational living so I'm really excited to see what God's got in store next. **1**

Discover more about being part of an Eden team at joineden.org





LIFT UP A SHOUT

What a phenomenal time of mission as the church united sharing the good news of Jesus with over 100,000 people through Festival Manchester

'All glory to God for an unforgettable party where the church blessed th



the city, the city blessed the church, and heaven blessed earth!

– Anthony Delaney, Ivy Church Leader and Festival Manchester Co-Chair







FOOD FACTORY CHIPS

BREMENBURGERN • JUNOS • CHICKEN BURGERS

SLUSH

P EOPLE hearing about Jesus' love is what Festival Manchester was all about. From students in schools, forgotten communities and prisoners to business leaders, the homeless and women working in the sex industry, we wanted everyone no matter where they spend their days to hear.

As we prayed and reached out, what an impact God had!

Charlotte is one of the 45,000 pupils who saw the Festival Manchester schools team. When she heard about the gig taking place near her house that Friday, she decided to go along with her friends. As she enjoyed music from OTC, LZ7, SoulBox and Saintz, Charlotte also heard about how Jesus loved her so much that he died on the cross for her, so that she can have hope and a future. Immediately struck by what she'd heard, Charlotte responded to

the gospel and has been getting involved in the church youth group and follow-up ever since. Knowing that others need to hear about Jesus, she decided to volunteer at the festival weekend in Wythenshawe Park.

One evening, she went running up to James from OTC, who she'd met in school, and excitedly told him that she'd just told someone about Jesus and got to pray with them as they gave their life to him. From hearing about Jesus in a lesson, Charlotte is now leading others to faith!

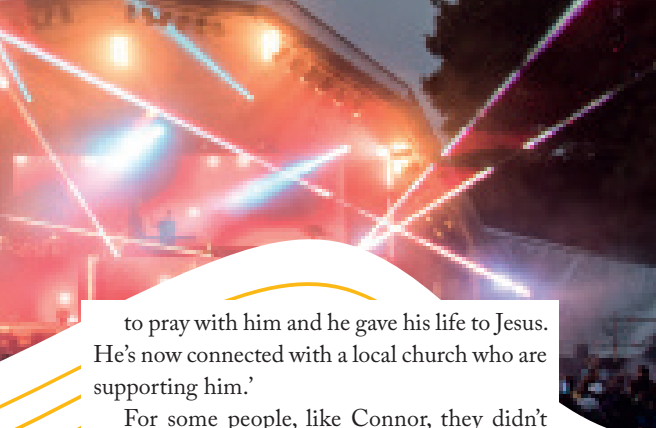
Another day, Wesley and Luiz were sharing about the power of prayer from the Festival Manchester stage and how Wesley had been so ill with Covid that his family were told to expect the worst. However, as people across the globe prayed, God fully healed him! As they came off the stage, they were approached by a guy who said he'd like to talk to them.

'As we went somewhere quieter, and we got chatting, he pulled a bag of drugs out of his pocket,' Luiz shared. 'He said he'd been using drugs for years and had had enough. He'd bought the drugs and headed to Wythenshawe Park with a plan to end his life, but had come across Festival Manchester and for some reason been drawn to seeing what was happening.'

'What he said next blew me away. "I don't want to end my life anymore, I want to follow Jesus instead."

'I got to tell him about Jesus and how much he loved him. And that even when times are tough, he's never alone. There and then we got





to pray with him and he gave his life to Jesus. He's now connected with a local church who are supporting him.'

For some people, like Connor, they didn't respond during the festival, but God's been moving in their lives since.

Connor's plan was to disrupt what was going on at Festival Manchester. However, God had another plan! Whilst he was in the park, he spent some time in the gaming lobby and heard about a church youth group that was taking place the next night. So, with nothing better to do on a Monday evening, he decided to go with his friend, Keegan.

That night, Nick Shahlavi was talking and got chatting with the lads. As they spoke, Nick felt that God gave him something that he needed to share with them. As he did this both Connor and Keegan were blown away by what Nick said as it was spot on, without him knowing anything about them. They then listened closely as Nick shared his story of how God had saved him from his > old life where he was involved in drugs and

'I DON'T WANT TO END MY LIFE ANYMORE, I WANT TO FOLLOW JESUS INSTEAD.'






in trouble with the police. What Nick said hit home with Connor, and he gave his life to Jesus.

Later in the evening, Connor and Keegan were telling Nick that they were into writing music and showed him some of their tracks. Whilst the lyrics were explicit, Nick could see the gift they had and offered to help them with their music, inviting them to join him in the studio the next day.

At 10am, Connor and Keegan turned up with new lyrics they'd been up until 3am writing

all about Jesus and how they could feel their lives being changed by him! Since then, Connor and his mate have been at church and in the studio every week, as well as getting involved in the follow-up that's happening as part of Festival Manchester.

These are just some of the stories we've heard already of God transforming lives through Festival Manchester. We believe there will be countless others. And Festival Manchester is just the start of us ramping up mission even further as we reach our nation and beyond with the good news of Jesus. 



READ MORE STORIES AT

message.org.uk/festivalmanchester

30

YEARS *of mission!*

For three decades, we've been in schools, communities and prisons sharing the good news of Jesus in word and action with the hardest-to-reach people and places. As we look back on 30 years of mission and lives transformed by God, there's so much to be thankful for. Here are just some of the highlights >

30
years



HEADING INTO SCHOOLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

1992

Andy Hawthorne and Mark Pennells launch Message to Schools with a week of mission in Cheadle Hulme High School. As they take over lessons, assemblies, lunch clubs, and hold a Friday night concert, they boldly share the gospel.



JUMPING IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

1995

One of the World Wide Message Tribe's best-known songs becomes an international hit telling young people across the globe about Jesus.

EDEN IS BORN

Eden launches as a team of youth workers choose to become downwardly mobile and move into one of the UK's most deprived neighbourhoods, seeing the lives of their neighbours changed as they discover Jesus.

1997



MISSION GOES INTERNATIONAL

Doors to share the gospel beyond the UK open and The Message's first international hub is launched in South Africa with Canada and Germany soon following on.

FESTIVAL MANCHESTER 2003

5,500 volunteers roll up their sleeves again to get involved in hundreds of community projects and 65,000 people hear the gospel preached as Festival Manchester 2003 takes over Heaton Park.

SOUL SURVIVOR THE MESSAGE 2000

2000

11,000 young volunteers are part of 400 community projects and 10 days of evangelistic gigs at Manchester's largest-ever youth outreach. Stories of how people first heard about Jesus here still pour in.

ENTERPRISE BEGINS

2012

Desperate to help ex-offenders break free of the cycle of re-offending and see them grow in their faith the Message Enterprise Centre is launched offering team members jobs, training, support and discipleship.

RESPECT ME LAUNCHES

2011

Making sure young people hear about their true value and identity in God, Respect ME starts heading into schools.



2014



2004

BEHIND THE PRISON GATES

Desperate to make sure all young people hear how loved they are, Message in Prisons is launched and immediately heads into young offenders institutes.

2007

SHARING JESUS THROUGH MUSIC

Creative mission bands passionate about sharing the gospel continue to be launched.

2015

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

Passionate about making sure the gospel is boldly shared, Andy Hawthorne starts meeting with fellow evangelists so that they can sharpen and equip each other in their evangelism. Soon they start groups of their own and the Advance movement is born, now reaching over 87 nations!

2020


KEEPING FAMILIES FED

As families find it harder than ever to put food on the table, Message Community Grocery launches in Wythenshawe and quickly roll out across the UK, sharing the good news of Jesus with members as they shop and attend support courses.



2022

FESTIVAL MANCHESTER 2022

Coming out of the pandemic people need to hear the hope Jesus offers so Festival Manchester 2022 does just that in word and action, with people from all walks of life. What starts in Manchester, is just the beginning! 

2018

BUS MINISTRY GROWS

Message Buses have taken the gospel to young people since 2000. As the sixth bus hits the road, thousands more young people the length and breadth of the UK get to hear the good news of Jesus as they step on board.




RIGHT ACROSS THE UK AND BEYOND, GOD CONTINUES TO USE THE MESSAGE TO TRANSFORM LIVES EVERY DAY. HERE'S TO THE NEXT 30 YEARS.



Much more *than* food

We're all being impacted by the cost of living crisis but for the poorest, life is harder than it's ever been. In Community Groceries not only are members getting the food they desperately need but finding hope too



THE impact Community Groceries are having on members' lives goes far beyond helping them put food on the table. As they come into the stores our teams get to know them and use every opportunity to share the gospel. As they do this, God's turning lives around.

Sarah met Ciara when she came into the Telford grocery during its opening week. When we first met Ciara you could tell that she was weighed down with the concerns of life. As the team explained how the grocery worked and what was on offer in terms of affordable food, as well as wrap-around support, she became very defensive and abruptly left the store saying that she wouldn't be back.

'We knew it wasn't anything we'd done that had upset Ciara, and felt that she needed to know she wasn't alone. So, we decided to send her some flowers. This must have meant a lot to her as Ciara soon came back into the grocery. As we talked, she started sharing about the struggles she was having with her mental health and how this was causing her a lot of anxiety. We immediately understood what a huge step even coming into the grocery that first time had been. >



'I now realise I'm worth something'

'As we talked, Ciara surprised us all by asking if she could become one of our grocery volunteers!

'We jumped at the chance – not only because volunteers are desperately needed to keep each store running – but because we knew what a big step this was for Ciara. Days later, she was in store helping members pack their bags and labelling products to go on the shelves. As Ciara got more involved, we got to tell her how loved and valued she was by Jesus and invite her to church. Initially, she wasn't interested but over time started to warm to the idea of coming along. So, when we invited her to a carol service at the grocery's partner church,

she said yes! There she heard the gospel again and was impacted by Jesus' love for her and responded to it!

'Since then, Ciara's been going from strength to strength, coming along to an Alpha course being run at the grocery, as well as a faith discovery course. As she's discovered how loved she is, the change in her has been astounding. She's like a new person! Just the other day she told me that she'd been to the doctor and he'd said that he'd barely recognised her because her appearance and attitude had completely changed.'

'I now realise I'm worth something, I only ever got dressed up to go the pub,' Ciara said. 'I've even found the strength to stop self-harming, as I know I'm not on my own and have the strength to battle the negative thoughts by praying and putting on worship music.'

Ciara's just got baptised and is so excited to keep growing in her relationship with Jesus, whilst also being a familiar face in the grocery. **1**

This is just one of many stories pouring out of the groceries. As demand grows rapidly, our need for food is escalating. If you know any food suppliers, or can stand with us as we keep families fed, get in touch at hello@communitygrocery.org.uk



READ MORE AND GET INVOLVED AT
message.org.uk/communitygrocery

GENERATION RISING

Young people from across the UK spent a week in London as part of Advance: The Scattering this summer. As they were encouraged and equipped for evangelism they saw God use them in amazing ways.



From prayer walking and litter picking to serving at local food banks and running community events the young people got stuck in with mission using every opportunity to share about Jesus in word and action. As they did this they prayed for over 400 people and saw many come to know Jesus.

Ishaani was in the park using the gym equipment when one of the teams met her. As they got chatting, Ishaani opened up about her Hindu faith and how she was struggling with this. The team shared their own stories about their faith in Jesus and left the conversation there. Little did they know that Ishaani >

actually bumped into another team later that day. As she talked with the second team, she mentioned she'd been in a car accident and had had pain in her back since. They prayed for her and when they'd finished, Ishaani said the pain had gone. The team then grabbed the chance to tell her how much God loved her, and explain the gospel. Ishaani was so impacted that she gave her life to Jesus.

Whilst out prayer walking, another team met Aydin and shared the gospel with him. Just like Ishaani, Aydin was so moved by how much Jesus loves him that he accepted God into his life there and then. After praying together, the team invited him along to church. He was so excited, and said, 'My daughter's been trying to get me to go to church with her but I kept saying no. She's going to be so happy when we can go together!'

And it wasn't just on the streets where people were impacted by the gospel. At the end of The Scattering, some young people in Edmonton (North London) ran a community FIFA tournament that over 60 people came along to.

MY DAUGHTER WILL BE SO HAPPY WE CAN GO TO CHURCH TOGETHER

The aim of the week was to encourage young people to boldly step out for Jesus, so it was amazing to see them grow in their confidence as the days went on.

Tia, one of the girls taking part in The Scattering, had never done anything like this before because she struggled with anxiety which meant that she barely left her house. Even though she wasn't sure she'd stay for the whole week, she joined The Scattering team in sharing the gospel with people. As she did, Tia felt God prompt her to share an encouragement with the person they were chatting to. When she shared, she grew in boldness. What's more, the guy she was chatting to accepted Jesus into his life and is now getting involved in his local church. **1**



YOUR BEST YEAR YET

In his new book, *A Burning Heart*, which digs into 1 Corinthians, **Andy Hawthorne** explores how Paul's letter could be a game-changer for each of us



BELIEVE God wants you to have your best year yet.

It may not necessarily be your easiest year yet, but your best yet.

Practically a how-to-guide to live our best life, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is a game-changer for each of us in our walk with Jesus. It's an absolute must-read, packed full of heavenly wisdom.

I'm definitely not saying that if we obey it, our lives will suddenly get easier. But what I am saying is that if we do God's work God's way – if we care for the poor, keep Jesus at the centre of our lives and love his Word and take it seriously – I believe our lives will be defined much more by heavenly intervention; that we'll see God in the big and the small things and have a heavenly perspective and awareness.

Don't you want to live that kind of life? One walking in step with the Spirit and full of God's presence? It's the best life possible, especially at a time in history like this when so many people are struggling, overwhelmed and hopeless.

So as I've dug deeper into the themes in 1 Corinthians and the context that it was >

'Powerful, challenging and encouraging. I love the way that Andy unpacks the rich teaching of 1 Corinthians and applies it powerfully to our context. Be inspired to play your part today.'

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written into, I've realised again and again how utterly relevant it is for the world we're living in and the days we're experiencing around the world.

Corinth was a cosmopolitan city and famously debauched. Imagine Magaluf, Amsterdam and Vegas combined. It was a dodgy, immoral city full of rootless people following human desires and disregarding all the good that comes from the Scriptures.

It was into that context Paul planted a church, and in many ways, it's also the kind of world we're living in today.

It's clear that despite seeing remarkable fruit in his ministry, Paul was thrown by the Corinthians at first and describes in 1 Corinthians 2:3 being 'full of much fear and trembling' as he contemplated planting a church there. And yet he learned that the love of Jesus could take root in any culture, anywhere – no matter how much the culture is against the gospel. He knew that nothing is impossible with God, and that he can break in anywhere and bring transformation through Jesus' love. So, he trusted God and started a new baby church in the heart of Corinth.

When Paul left Corinth after 18 months with that new church thriving, I'm sure he left thinking, 'If it can take root here, it can take root anywhere', so it's no wonder he writes so strongly and passionately to the Christians there when things start to go wrong.

The reason Paul writes the letter of 1 Corinthians is, we find out, because pretty soon after he left, strange and slightly dodgy teaching started filtering into the church and began to divide it. And rather than being the fiery, world-changing, non-conforming church Paul had planted, they started to compromise, becoming wishy-washy, and following the priorities of the world.

So, Paul's letter is a call to live as God's people in an overwhelmingly non-Christian culture. Again, so relevant for us today when we can see culture moving away from the Word of God.



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Taking the beautiful teaching and wisdom from this letter, we learn how we too can be people who can stand strong and firm on the truth of the gospel, and step out in Jesus' love serving our communities, feeding the poor, praying for our neighbourhoods, loving people who are struggling, filling the gaps. And to do this, we need the Word of God to be our strong foundation. We'll only grow stronger as an individual, as a church, and as a nation with

LET'S BE A PEOPLE DOING BEAUTIFUL THINGS IN JESUS' NAME

the Word of God at the centre. I can't tell people how to live, but the Bible can.

We can't afford to compromise to our culture. We can't be people who are swimming down a road that's leading to destruction, confusion, and fear. We're called to be a countercultural people – we're the salmon swimming against the current doing beautiful things in Jesus' name. Let's allow God to shape our lives around him and him alone, and to work in us and through us as we do his work his way. Let's keep his living Word front and centre, and we'll be sure to experience the very best in life that God in his kindness has to offer. 📌

This teaching is taken from Andy's new book, A Burning Heart, which you can order now at message.org.uk/shop

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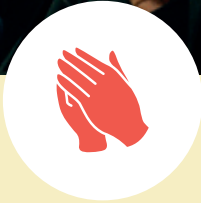
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