



The Power of Partnership

PHIL KNOX

Phil Knox from the Evangelical Alliance shares why partnership needs to be at the heart of the church

There's a video clip that went viral a few years ago featuring the band Coldplay whilst performing a stadium gig in Munich. Chris Martin, Coldplay's band leader, sits at his piano about to launch into another number of his vast repertoire when he spots a handwritten banner in the crowd, held aloft by an eager fan. Inscribed in black ink on a white piece of A2 card is an offer to play the song 'Everglow'. Astonishingly, the artist addresses the wannabe and clarifies the proposal,

'Are you for real? Do you really want to come on stage and play with me? People have paid a lot of money.'

At his beckoning, a young man begins to make his way through the crowd, is lifted over the barriers and takes off his hoodie and coat. The crowd are lapping it up, a sea of smartphones capturing the moment. Chris asks again, 'Are you sure you want to do this young man?'

Introduced as Ferdinand, the young German takes his seat at the stage piano as thousands hold their breath and wonder whether he can actually play or whether he is a musically illiterate fraud. As he opens with a pitch perfect chord they wonder no more, and he is so good that Chris threatens to leave the stage and leave the guy to perform on his own. Returning he says, 'OK, let's try it man ... this is a German, British union ... let's go.'

When I first saw the clip, I was blown away by the moment, but also profoundly reminded of the power of partnership.

Partnership needs to be at the heart of the church because it is at the heart of mission.

Partnership needs to be at the heart of the church because it is at the heart of mission. Just as Coldplay could perform perfectly well without Ferdinand, so God could act in the world without us. But in his generosity

and grace, for our benefit and his glory, he invites us and involves us in being good news people in a bad news world, drawing people to himself, feeding the hungry, befriending the lonely, restoring the broken and bringing hope to a world so desperately in need.

One of the great joys as disciples of Jesus is partnering with God in his divine activity in the world. But we also get to partner together. The task of reaching the UK is too great to be accomplished alone. But together, with God and with each other, we can make a significant impact.

We, as the Evangelical Alliance, have existed since 1846 to unite the estimated 2 million evangelicals in the UK to reach the lost and give the church a clear, effective and united voice into the corridors of power.

Unity matters to us because it helps us all together make Jesus known. Jesus' prayer for his church in John 17 is that we would be one 'so that the world might know.' This is not for our own sakes, but to point people to Jesus. This unity should be so noticeable, observable and tangible that those outside of the Church would notice it and be drawn towards it.

What does this look like in practice? First, we facilitate relationship between evangelicals locally, gathering, introducing, championing and blessing local unity. Second, we conduct research into how people are coming to faith, listening to where God is at work, reporting findings and telling stories to inspire and shape fruitful mission. Third, we create resources to help faithful gospel proclamation and effective cultural engagement.

But unity also matters as it means we can speak loudly with a collective voice. In uncertain times, much of the public square is a contended space, but by uniting we are stronger and clearer on issues that matter. Our advocacy teams speak up on behalf of all of us, telling the story of the impact of the church in communities to the highest levels of government and speaking out on contentious issues, especially around our gospel freedoms.

The Evangelical Alliance is a membership organisation made up of hundreds of organisations, thousands of churches and tens of thousands of individuals. The strength of our voice depends on the size of our membership and we are regularly asked how many members we have. If you are not yet a personal member, would you consider joining today to help us speak more loudly with greater representation?

Our world is reeling from painful fractures. Over half of people in the UK say that we are the most divided we have ever been as a nation. What an opportunity we

have as the church to tell a different story! In Luke 5, as tired and discouraged disciples let their nets down into deep waters at Jesus' command, the nets begin to break with the size of the catch. Simon Peter signals to their partners to come and help. What a beautiful prophetic picture of the church uniting to reach the lost. The task of mission and evangelism in the UK today is too big and the stakes too high for us to go it alone. Our encouragement is to love your postcode deeply but be more widely connected locally and nationally.

Back at the Munich concert, in an amusing interlude Coldplay's temporary band member takes his phone out to presumably record the moment or take a selfie. Chris laughs and tells him he doesn't need to film it, 'Everybody's filming you!' Herein is the profound truth of partnership: when we unite, people notice. May we be the answer to the John 17 prayer of our Saviour. May a watching world notice and be drawn to Jesus. May we

rally around the gospel and build Kingdom friendships in a lonely world. And may we each hold up our own banner in the crowd to stand up and play our part as we seek together to make Jesus known.

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Phil Knox is an evangelist and missiologist at the Evangelical Alliance. He is passionate about making Jesus known and the power of friendship. His work in the UK is studying how people come to faith in Jesus and helping the church maximise those pathways.

evangelical alliance
together making Jesus known



PRAYER FOCUS

THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE: A greater response and uptake of churches within local areas to partner with EA in reaching out with the love of Christ to more people; unity amongst evangelical churches in local areas; working and praying in partnership together and seeking God for his agenda in churches and communities across the country. (1Corinthians 3:8-9; John 15:4-5).

FOCUS ON THE CHURCH

Local Churches: For every member and attendee of the church to have a desire to read and study the Bible and to understand the importance of prayer; to seek the power of the Holy Spirit; to seek God's agenda for each individual church in how to engage in mission and outreach. (Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Hope: For people across the Connexion to keep their hope fixed on Jesus in these dark and difficult days; to reach out and grasp his assurance and keep hold of the promises in Scripture and let his light guide us in the darkness of all that is happening in our nation and the world. (Romans 15:13; Hebrews 10:23).

Prayer Focus is compiled by Roz Addington. If you would like to contact Roz feel free to email: prayer@metrevive.uk

FOCUS ON NATIONAL ISSUES

Revival: A recognition across the country of the need for God, and an awareness only he holds answers to our needs; for the Holy Spirit to convict people of corporate selfishness, pride, greed, arrogance, self-righteousness, and egotism. (1 John 1:5-10; Psalm 86:4-7).

Government: The Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, and all Members of Parliament; a return of integrity and trust amongst all politicians; for openness and honesty in all dealings and decisions; Christian MP's – courage to stand firm on Christian principles and for their integrity to shine out; a return to the Christian roots on which our land was built. (Deuteronomy 28:1-2; Philippians 2:1-5).

FOCUS ON WORLD ISSUES

America: Pray for the Christians within President Trump's Administration to have a large influence on his policies, both within America and across the world; for President Trump to move from head knowledge to having a 'heart' encounter with God and the Holy Spirit, transforming his whole outlook on the situations he faces. (James 3:17; Isaiah 55:6-8).

Europe: Response to America's withdrawal of military aid to Ukraine; wisdom for future security; unity across the continent; God's solution to the situation. (Psalm 22:28; 1 Chronicles 16:11).