



The London Project



TOGETHER FOR LONDON

Together for London



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us, to him be glory in the church
and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
for ever and ever. Amen.

able to do
far more abundantly than all
that we ask or think, according to the power at work within
Now to him who is

Ephesians
3:20-21

London surely is the greatest city on earth. Earlier this year a study of 209,000 people from over 190 countries revealed that more people wish to work in London than any other city on earth. Covid has taken its toll on urban living but London remains a magnet for the peoples of the world.

As the church, we have particular reasons to love our city. God has done amazing things. It was here in May 1738 that John Wesley felt his heart strangely warmed and here around the same time George Whitefield began preaching to thousands of people in the open air. Here, in 1785, William Wilberforce was encouraged to stay in Parliament by John Newton, when he pondered going into ministry. Here that Charles Spurgeon the ‘prince of preachers’ saw thousands of people converted in the 19th century and Martyn Lloyd-Jones filled Westminster Chapel for much of the 20th. As we look to the future we do so with confidence because the Lord continues to be at work in remarkable ways. London remains the only major city in Europe where the church has grown over the past 10 years and where there has been significant church multiplication. The Spirit of God is at work.

And yet who would not ask God to do more? We see the great needs, the stubborn realities and say there is so much more to be done.

Given the many who are working for the Lord across London why the London Project? Why another thing? Here’s how a friend of mine puts it ‘The London Project does not exist to start new fires, but to bring fuel to existing fires.’ Our vision is to serve the church in London, not by starting a new thing but by strengthening existing things. Asking, where is God at work in the city and can we help by bringing some more fuel for the fire?

We will work to facilitate healthy collaboration between churches and agencies so that we can learn from one another and find answers together for our city’s greatest challenges. We will support churches and planters in their desire to multiply congregations and reach new communities. We endeavour to resource Christians who wish to make a greater impact across London in faith and work initiatives, social justice projects and the creative arts. Above all, we will seek spiritual renewal in the church which energises and



Neil Powell

Executive Director, The London Project

May 2021

mobilises the church as we rejoice together in all that Christ has done for us in and through the gospel.

As we launch The London Project this short publication is a celebration of what is currently happening.

- Eight snapshots from different boroughs of the city give a sense of how specifically to pray for them.
- We meet a number of London leaders who tell of what God has put on their hearts for this city.
- We set out in a number of articles something of the vision and values of The London Project and the ways in which we aim to serve our great city.

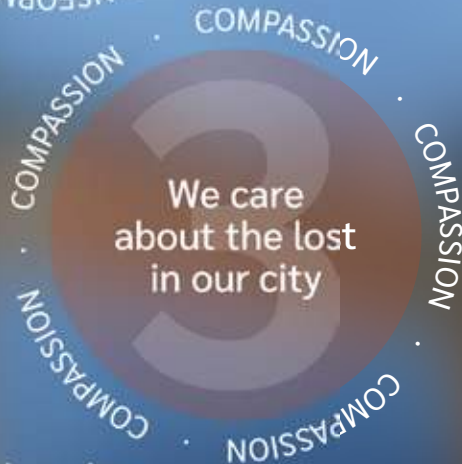
We hope that it will inspire you. We ask that as you look at London you might join with others around the world in praying for this city. We invite you to partner with what God is doing now and in the future.

thelondonproject.co.uk

What makes it possible for very different churches and organisations across a city to work together for Christ?

We believe that finding a shared theological vision or gospel-dna can both define who we are and also energise all that we do. More than simply a strategy, these eight values, rooted as they are in the gospel, provide a focus and a foundation for our partnership in The London Project.





THE LONDON PROJECT DNA

HOW THE LONDON PROJECT WORKS

We wish to see a movement of the gospel through which many more are reached for Christ and our city impacted by the gospel. To help catalyse such a movement we will facilitate collaboration between churches and networks across London as well as providing a range of training and coaching opportunities for leaders and future leaders. We will also catalyse and support initiatives that bless and serve the city to which God has called us.

Creative, multiplying and contextualised church planting, replanting and revitalisation

Multiple healthy models of collaborative efforts of individuals, churches, agencies and organisations

CITY
IMPACT

**CHURCH
MULTIPLICATION**

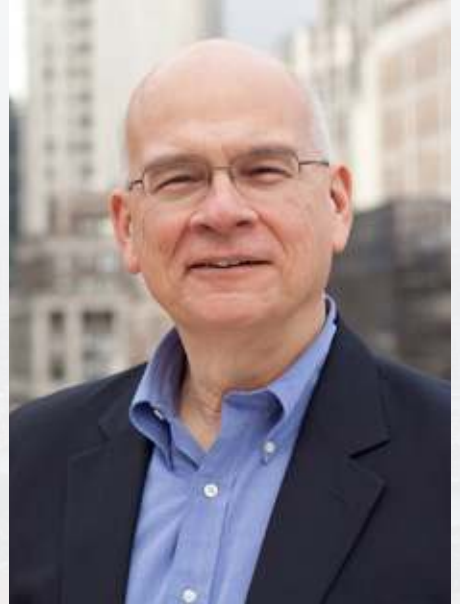
Trans-denominational,
collaborative,
multi-network
coalition of leaders

**CITY WIDE
COLLABORATIVE**

**GOSPEL
RENEWAL**

Renewal that
empowers city
movement

My heart for London



Tim Keller
*Chairman and Co-Founder,
Redeemer City to City*

As I reflect on the ways God has worked and continues to work in great cities of the world I feel tremendous excitement at what He might choose to do through the launch of the London Project.

City to City is committed to seeing movements of the gospel in the cities of the world. But it is also with a sense of personal pride that in my role as Chairman and Co-Founder of Redeemer City to City I have a chance to offer both my support and a little of my time to further gospel work in the city of London.

Having visited London many times over the years, and having made many friends, I'm eager to support the work of the gospel here. London is a city I love. But I also feel I owe an enormous debt

to British evangelicalism. If you were to ask me what I have learned in particular, I would suggest two things.

First, the riches of good gospel theology. From about 1930 to 1950 or so, if you were a college-educated Christian in the US and you wanted to read really good scholarly exposition of evangelical doctrine and theology, you had to read an English author. When I became a Christian in the late 1960s, I read I. Howard Marshall, JI Packer, CS Lewis, Martyn Lloyd-Jones and John Stott. My theological formation was all British.

Second, I am thankful to London-based preachers and their ministry for shaping my own ministry at Redeemer Presbyterian Church. New York City in the late 1980s was more like mid-century London than anywhere else in the U.S., so I began listening to recordings of sermons by Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Westminster Chapel) and Dick Lucas (St. Helen's Bishopsgate), who had a midweek lunchtime service that included many non-Christians. Their evangelistic ministry was expository, and their edifying ministry was gospel-centered. To these two men I owe a debt I can never repay.

Recognising how profoundly British theology has shaped my ministry is one of the reasons I have enjoyed visiting the UK on so many occasions. The chance now to partner in gospel work in a new way excites me.

But what energises me most is that we are seeing God doing a new thing in London. He is both bringing the nations to the city and renewing the church through vigorous church planting. London alone, of all European capital cities, has seen growth in the number of people attending church over the past ten years. There is now evident energy and momentum, a gospel movement

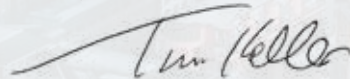
dynamic, that suggests now is a moment when the church can move forward in mission.

Within and among the cities of the world there is also greater collaboration in the body of Christ than in previous generations. Different tribes and networks are aware of their need for partnership and beginning to form bonds of trust. My prayer is that The London Project might play a part in what God is doing to reach and renew this city. As churches engage with the unique resources of their neighbourhoods, and as growing numbers of leaders embrace long-term vision of life and ministry in the city, we can be optimistic that more can still be done.

The first few years of The London Project will be a strategic time of doing all we can to accelerate the gospel movement here. Churches and leaders coming together around a gospel-rich DNA is essential to this strategy and, by God's grace, great work has been done and inroads made already. It was the vision of a tipping point of renewal that launched The New York Project, and I trust and pray that God may give the same growth to London.

There is still much we can and do need to learn. We are ever mindful—and ever grateful—that it is the Holy Spirit alone that breathes life into a movement in ways beyond our control. And that is why we cannot underestimate the importance of prayer in this vision. As friends and partners in this gospel mission, will you please join me in praying for growing gospel movements in London?

In Him,



SNAPSHOT SNAPSHOT SNAPSHOT

Camden

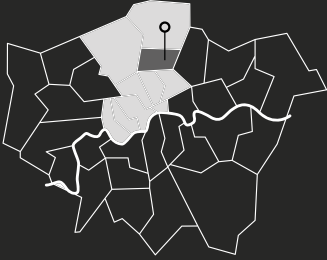
Using the tube, you will arrive at **Kings Cross - St Pancras** which connects 6 tube lines, various cities in the UK and internationally - even Hogwarts on platform 9 3/4! A few steps from there is **The British Library**, whose archive contains more than 170 million items, including rare manuscripts and sound recordings. But nothing compared to God's infinite wisdom, praise Him! Right behind it is the **Francis Crick Institute**, a partnership between many organisations, with scientists at the forefront of the Covid-19 response. Nearby are the **Google HQ** and **YouTube space** and **Granary Square**, a beautiful spot near the canal in an area with creatives from universities, and **The Courtauld**, Vernon Square - KCBC's neighbour! In this busy area some people try to find peace in places like the **London Ikeda Peace Centre**, a Buddhist meditation centre. Pray for them to find true peace in God. We praise God for the **Ethiopian Christian Fellowship Church UK**. Preaching in London means preaching to the nations! Pray that God will send more workers! A couple of places to pray for gospel opportunities are the intriguing **Housmans Bookshop**, a not-for-profit bookshop since 1959, specialising in feminism, black politics, LGBTQIA+, environment, anarchism; and the **Peel Community Centre**, a hub for the community where we occasionally have the opportunity to serve, especially among the elderly. To experience a hipster, vibrant environment, you can head north, to **Camden Market**, which has over 1000 shops and stalls, a very popular area among tourists, youth, and punks; or east to the **Angel area**, known for its many cafes, restaurants, pubs and stand-up comedy clubs. Pray for those who seek relief for their souls in entertainment to find it in Christ.



& Islington



Wood Green



♀ North | Haringey

By Revd Engin Yıldırım

*Priest and Team Vicar for St Michael at Bowes
(part of St Michael's Wood Green parish)*

At **Wood Green Underground Station** you'll see a diversity of people. Around 30% are white British, 40% are from black or ethnic minority groups, and 25% from other parts of Europe. There are many **Turkish restaurants!** The shops are busy. Pray for the success of regeneration programmes, including Blue House Yard, which is bringing creativity. The historic **Alexandra Palace**, birthplace of TV, now hosts events, and **Bruce Castle Museum** gives space to walk and pray. The new **Tottenham Hotspur Stadium** is the third largest in England, seating over 60k. Pray for those reaching out to the football community. Haringey borough has one of the highest **crime rates** in London. Particularly pray for those involved in gangs and knife crime. **St Michael at Bowes** church is closely linked to the school. Pray for good relationships with the community.





Bruce Castle Museum



International Grocery



Alexandra Palace



Earth Tap Cafe



Blue House Yard



REVD ENGIN YILDIRIM

Revd Engin Yildirim is Team Vicar and priest at
St Michael at Bowes for the Parish of St Michael's Wood Green

How long have you been in London?

Since 2017. Before that I was a pastor in Istanbul for 25 years, and planted an Anglican Church in Istanbul. I came to London to reach out to the Turkish speaking community. It took about two years to pray and make the final decision to come.

Which part of London do you currently call home?

Wood Green Parish in North London, about half an hour from the centre. It is an area predominantly inhabited by a lot of immigrants. I have been told that Turkish speaking people are the largest minority group in the area.

What's your London secret?

My wife and I both love all the parks in London, especially St James' Park. And I consider myself a keen cyclist, so I like to go further north a bit outside of London. If I have a longer day with my wife, we probably would go to somewhere like Hampstead Heath.

What is your prayer for London?

That's a very good question! London has become a place where the whole world lives. I would like to see that there is room and an opportunity for everyone speaking any language or living in any culture to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. One of my observations is that cultures in London sort of co-exist without interacting. There are Brazilian, Turkish, Ethiopian networks, and if your church is predominantly say, Brazilian, then the white Brits would not tend to go there, or if you have, Polish people, then the Turks won't go there. I would like to see that challenged in a healthy way, and healthy interactions between cultures.

What is your hope for the church in London?

I'm part of the Anglican Diocese of London, and there is concern, particularly among smaller congregations, about whether we will still have a congregation post Covid. But I think also God may surprise the church by actually sending more people. I pray that the church would respond positively and be prepared. Also in Istanbul we had wonderful ecumenical working relationships. I was hoping it would be the same here, but there is a strong sense of territorialism, maybe due to the

parish structure. If we want to reach out to people living in London, we need each other. We need to have a holistic vision to work together for the common good. We have to trust God, and if I help you, God will help me. I think that's the heart of the approach.

What three words would you use to describe London?

Diverse: politically it's like a Mars Hill in Athens. Tolerance: many countries are increasingly polarised, but in London at least people live peacefully. Opportunity: there are lots, but we need to find how we can actually equalise those opportunities.

What are the challenges of ministry in London?

Obviously it is a bit biased, but usually the immigrant communities are more open at least to hear the good news. Then there's those who are very kind (they would maybe listen) but actually are extremely biased against Christianity. Most people are well off, obviously there is the social welfare system, so people are not struggling for tomorrow, and I don't think that they're asking those big questions. How can we find a way to reach out to those who say they have no faith? I find that interesting, because I don't believe that human beings have no faith, I think that's not possible. They have a faith of some kind but not the kind of faith that we describe, perhaps.

What does gospel partnership mean to you?

We believe that we are brothers and sisters in Christ. And, yes, we do have some differences - the way we do church, culture, liturgy - but I think when Jesus looks at the church, he looks at the church as one. When we read the letter written to the churches in Revelation, he writes to all Christians. We have to have that holistic understanding: what does God say to the churches in London? If the church grows, and if we actually do what we are supposed to do, you know, to preach the good news of Jesus Christ in words and deed, then I think all other things will come together. I'm not saying that we will be the same church, or we will worship the same way, but the differences are not the reason why we are here. We are here because God called us to be a witness to the risen Christ.

B E C O

ONE CHURCH FOR LONDON

M I N G

By Girma Bishaw

C I T Y

C O N S C

I O U S



City defined

How do you define a city? Can we compare the cities in the New Testament time with cities in the 21st century? These are the questions that come to mind when we try to comprehend how churches in the New Testament cities have managed to provide a citywide connection while having a local identity. We may conclude that it was possible for them because of the city's size and population. However, when we look closely at what constitutes a city, we discover that fundamentally, cities that are different in area or population sizes have similar composition and nature. There are several sociological definitions of a city, focused on size, density and close interaction, but they fall short of capturing the full picture. Tim Keller's description of a city might be helpful here. He said, 'A city is a walkable, shared, mixed-use, diverse area. It is a place of commerce, residence, culture, and politics.' When we apply the city identifiers included in Keller's definition, we recognise them in both the contemporary and cities mentioned in the New Testament. The mechanism or strategy of how the citywide connection materialises might be different, but the case that necessitates citywide collaboration and connectedness maintaining local presence remains the same.

City Consciousness

'There is no reference in the New Testament to church that is smaller than a city.' (Swanson and Williams)

City consciousness is about recognition and awareness of our connectedness as the church of Jesus Christ in the city. It is a proactive awareness of what God is doing and saying to His church in the city and our city's nature, culture, and state. It is loving the city and seeking its shalom. It is about local engagement from a citywide perspective. It is an acknowledging that it takes all to reach all. It is about equipping the disciples to be an instrument of the gospel transformation of the city.

Girma Bishaw

City Catalyst for The London Project, Director and Founder of Gratitude Initiative

Why City Consciousness?

1 The convergence of the local and the whole city.

The local unavoidably converges with the city in the congregation's life, necessitating the minister to have city consciousness. You can adequately or appropriately serve your locality when your concern for the local embraces the city. We are ministering to the people who work, study and entertain in the city. The disciples we are raising, at some point, will ask the question, 'How can I be an effective witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and how can I impact society with the values of the kingdom through the sphere that I am serving in?' (Swanson and Williams) The local minister's job then becomes equipping, mobilising and helping the disciple transform the domains of society where they work and live. This is where the local converges with the city. Therefore, the more we know our city's culture and what the Lord says to His church in the city, the more relevant our ministry becomes to our congregants.

2 Because cities are underserved places for gospel ministry.

Due to their complexity and magnitude, cities' gospel needs could only be served by a collaborative effort of churches, networks, ministries, and denominations. Where that is lacking, the gospel needs of the city remain untouched or only scratched. No one church, institution, denomination or network could serve the needs of the city. The recognition of our need for others to reach the city comes from recognising the vastness of the need and corporate call to reach the city. What happened in Nehemiah's time and the project to build a wall explains what we are trying to point out here. Nehemiah urged the city people to solve the problem by engaging in their locality. The wall they were building in front of their house becomes significant when it is seen in connection with the wall the others are building around the city. City consciousness then encourages people to engage locally, understanding the importance of their work for the city.

3 Urbanisation is where the world is heading.

In 2018 United Nations identified that today, more than half of the global population live in urban areas, while the urban share worldwide is rising from around one third in 1950 to about two thirds in 2050. These changes have huge implications on the way we understand and do mission. 'God has localized the Great Commission by bringing the nations to the cities of the world.' (Swanson and Williams). Due to its unique position within a nation, the city's mindset, obstacles and opportunities represent the nation. Therefore, our city conscious theological reflection will help us influence and shape the culture of our cities and effectively serve God's purposes.

4 It helps us grasp God's perspective of churches in a particular city and how He relates to them.

As evident in the New Testament, churches in a specific city were treated as one church. When God spoke, He spoke to His church in the city. We see this clearly in the Epistles and Jesus' message to the seven churches in the book of Revelation. Paul writes his letters to the churches in a city, not just to one particular church. As if at that particular time and space, God's message, challenge, rebuke, and exhortation were the same to all of them. His prayers were directed for the churches in that city. Again, in Paul's mind, the churches in a particular city encounter the same challenge, face the same problem, need the same encouragement and required the same truth highlighted or taught to them. Therefore, we can say that Paul was city-conscious in his dealings with churches. It also means that God was speaking the same message to the churches in the city.

A city consciousness, therefore, has important implications.

- It helps us comprehend God's message to His church in the city.
- It helps us share God's perspective of seeing churches in a particular city as churches with the same mandate to reach the city with the gospel. This makes collaboration for the city not a luxury that we can do without but a necessity.
- God has put the resources necessary to reach the city within churches in the city. Therefore, it is through collaboration that we can access and benefit from what is entrusted to us.



- We might be working in a particular locality of the city, but we all are involved, figuratively speaking, building the same wall surrounding the city.
- We may miss what God is saying and doing in the city if we are entangled in our locality without city-consciousness.

City-consciousness not without a problem but despite the problem

In the New Testament, churches in a particular city were different from each other in many respects. We see how they struggled to respond to their call to unity and collaborative front to reach the city due to these differences. Whenever they encounter divisive doctrinal, ethical or cultural issues, they were challenged to embrace gospel centred principles and instructions to continue in unity to be faithful witnesses of Christ in the city. These principles and teachings are fundamental to us today to overcome nonessential doctrinal differences and tribal and traditional boundaries to cultivate citywide connection. The following are some of Paul's principles and instructions to the churches in Rome and Corinth to tackle division and ethical problems.

- Their primary concern must be the other/the church's wellbeing, not themselves, as Christ was concerned for us, not for Himself. The strong do not just follow their conscience but take careful account of the weak's needs and vulnerability.
- There are bound to be different emphases on a particular truth within the local church or between churches; therefore, they should understand selectivity. Selectivity is acceptable as long as we do

not become absorbed with one aspect of the truth, to the extent of excluding the whole truth as it is in Christ. When that happens, it becomes a cause for division and strife. Instead, we need to understand that each has an important emphasis and should feel free to bring it fully into the Christian community's life. Such mutual recognition, giving each person/church the freedom to express their convictions and insights, would lead to a restoration of true unity in the same mind and the same judgment.

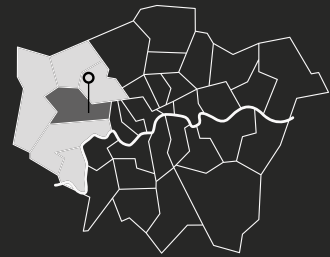
- Focus on the wholeness of Christ: is Christ divided? The answer is no; Christ is not divided; that is why unity in Christ is possible.
- Focus on the Cross of Christ: was Paul crucified for you? Jesus is the only one who can unite men and women, and He does so through His cross because we can come to God only via the cross of Christ all are equal at the cross. We never move from the cross. When we do, we move from the place of reconciliation with God and with others.
- Focus on the Lordship of Christ: were you baptised in the name of Paul? To be baptised in the name of someone means to come under his authority. They have come under the Lordship of Christ through baptism, and they all now only belong to him.

This consideration is significant when we do ministry in our locality with city consciousness; knowing what we do either promotes or prevents the spread of the gospel in our city.

References at www.thelondonproject.co.uk/references



SNAPSHOT SNAPSHOT SNAPSHOT



♀ West | Ealing

By Pete Cornford

Pete Cornford has been leading London churches for more than 20 years, and planted Redeemer Church in Ealing in 2012

Ealing

Praise God for the **churches that work together** on projects like Ealing Foodbank, The Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter, CAP, Street Pastors, Prayer on the Streets! Pray for those who are **homeless**. Ealing recorded 493 rough sleepers in 2019/20. Pray for the **police**. **Ealing Film Studios** are the oldest working studios in the world. Pray for creativity looking forward. Ealing has 82,000 **children** - pray for their learning after the impact of Covid during the last year. **University of West London** has 47,000 students across all their sites. Pray for **Redeemer Church** that meets at their Ealing campus. **The abortion clinic** in Mattock Lane, the first in the country which banned praying in the road outside, is where over 7,000 babies were aborted in one year. The

first Amazon store in the country recently opened in Ealing. Pray for **business** and the future. People love eating out and going for coffee in Ealing, and it has the first Nandos in the country. Although the houses can look impressive, there are 45,000 people living with long term health issues. Please pray for those sick and tired. Ealing is looking to build 124 tower blocks in 5 years - a possible growth of 105,000 people. Pray for many to come to know Jesus. Hanwell is home to the **Hanwell Hootie** and became the largest free music festival in London. There are 100 green spaces in the borough (nicknamed Leafy Ealing) including the popular Lammas Park and Walpole Park. Ealing has the beer festival, Opera in the Park, Comedy in the Park and many festivals in the summer.

The London Project



Amazon Fresh



Forester
(Hanwell Hootie festival)



Abortion clinic



New developments

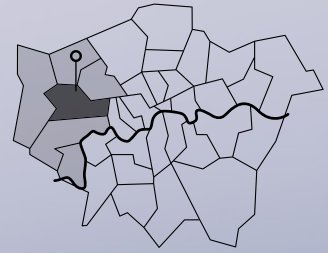


Ealing Film Studios



University

Southall



By **Chrishanthy Sathiyaraj**

As I look and pray over Southall, these are some of the areas I pray for:

Kings Centre, part of St John's church, which has been closed while temples have been open. **Southall Station** is one of the few stations in England to have bilingual signage, and the **market** is a destination for good deals. **Freedom Worship Centre** has a third generation of minority people serving Southall.

Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha is the largest gurdwara organisation outside of India. **Bhagwan Valmik Mandir Buddhist** temples are side by side, and **Ambedkar Centre** is the Buddhist meditation centre. A new mosque has been built near the school area, **Darus Salaam Mosque (Ahmadiyya)**. Please pray for God to work in **Southall Baptist Church**, and in the new local building developments.

Pastor Chrishanthy Sathiyaraj is the founder of the The Life organisation and leads Bethany Church in Southall

♀ West | Ealing





Kings Centre



Southall Station



Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha



Southall Market



Freedom Worship Centre



Darus Salaam Mosque



PASTOR CHRISHANTHY SATHIYARAJ

Pastor Chrisanthy Sathiyaraj is the founder of the The Life organisation which reaches out to the disadvantaged and has a passion for gospel

Which part of London do you currently call home?
Southall in West London.

What's your London secret?
Harrods. Did you know that in Harrods they sell pens, and also they sell helicopters? One member of our church used to work in Harrods. There are 29 restaurants there. One time a Sheikh came to eat there and he tipped our church member £1000!

Favourite places to rest and play in London?
I love walking by the river Thames and enjoy a day out at Kew Gardens.

What is your prayer for London (or your area)?
I pray for peace, unity and the advancement of the gospel.

What would you do if you were Mayor of London for the day?
I will legislate a law that allows every Londoner to get a chance to be a Mayor in a rotation so that I may get another chance.

What is your hope for the church in London?
For multiplication and that we may go beyond our church walls to reach our community by building bridges to make that possible.

What three words would you use to describe London?
Busy, unique, diverse.

What are the challenges of ministry in London?
Space and time. There is a shortage of buildings for church plants or holding services. Although people are willing to be involved in ministry, finding the time to be trained is a great challenge. These are problems that might push us to be creative in our church planting and training approach.

What does gospel partnership mean to you?
Everything! Gospel partnership should be pursued as a priority. There are reasons for that. We are better, stronger and achieve more together than on our own. We are working for one Kingdom; therefore, we are not in competition but complement one another. So, working in partnership means everything to me, and it should be a priority to each of us.

Why it takes everyone to be right

By Neil Powell

Imagine a large jar of jellybeans. My question is, 'how many jelly beans do you think are in the jar?' What's your best guess?

Oxford Professor Marcus du Sautoy asked 160 office-workers the same question. Answers ranged from 400 to 50,000, and only 4 got even close to the actual answer of 4510. But strikingly, when averaged out, their answers came to the unbelievably accurate answer of 4,515. As he put it, " 'nobody guessed correctly and yet everybody got it right'.

So what does Du Sautoy suggest we can learn from the experiment? 'As individuals the guesses are just that, guesses. But when you take them collectively they become something else entirely. The accuracy of the group is far greater than the individual. We call this the wisdom of the crowd.'

When the group is big enough, errors in our thinking can be overcome, as they are canceled out by the crowd. A collective mind is better at solving difficult questions. Perhaps it really is possible for everyone to be wrong and yet together to be right.

A second question and this one for the church: which is easier, to count the number of jellybeans in a jar or to find ways to reach cities like London or Moscow or Madrid with the gospel?

We instinctively know that some questions are just too big, too difficult to tackle on our own. And our default option is therefore to leave them well alone. But reaching a city for Christ is not just big it's also important, and urgent!

What if we applied du Sautoy's wisdom to the church in a city, what might be done? If complex problem solving requires a complex strategy, maybe we need the collected wisdom of the church. Your perspective along with mine will give us all better answers.

And cities really do require the wisdom of the crowd. For cities epitomise our world of complexity. Growing global cities belong to a category of what are called *complex* systems.

If complex problem solving requires a complex strategy, maybe we need the collected wisdom of the church.

It takes the wisdom of the church

TOGETHER

Take a Swiss watch: pricey, beautifully crafted, 200 parts all working together, but ultimately a simple system; a machine that is purposefully both accurate, and, like the stars in the sky, totally predictable. Cities, however, are not simple systems like the stars. They are dynamic, changing constantly. Like a watch they are full of interconnected parts, but they evolve, often unpredictably. A city has a life and mind of its own.

David Batty of University College London comments, 'Cities are more like organisms than like machines. In this sense, they are the product of countless individual and group decisions that do not conform to any grand plan.' One of the great challenges for the church is how to minister the never-changing gospel of Christ in a city where the pace of change leaves us breathless as we try to keep up. To meet the challenge of complexity we need the wisdom of the church. And it starts by recognising that we need one another to serve our city. No one individual nor any one tribe or denomination has all that is needed to love a city.

How do we meet the challenge of rising inequality, climate change, racial injustice, violent crime in our communities? How do we speak the words of the gospel in to ever more diverse cities where secularism and religions go toe to toe?

Knowing how to lead a church in a city can feel a bit like guessing the number of jellybeans in a jar. Because our perspective is inevitably incomplete it results in, at best, partial answers and at worse conflicting solutions. But join the crowd, put your best answers together, and the wisdom of the whole really is greater than the sum of the parts.

The Apostle Paul wrote to a church divided along party lines, where each had their favoured apostle and yet all served the same city, Corinth. His challenge to them? *You are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.* Sadly, we often do what the Corinthians did and choose to work only with those leaders who see the city as we do but sticking with our own tribe only reinforces our limited perspective and cuts us off from the collective wisdom of the church.

To love and reach our city we need to do it together. The London Project exists to serve the church by facilitating collaboration between churches and agencies. We call it a city movement; a system within the system. With a city consciousness, driven by a desire for better answers, we want to help bring the crowd together. We intentionally seek out the wisdom offered by the greatest possible diversity of gospel churches, so that we not merely recognise different perspectives but





actually enjoy them. The London Project wants to catalyse these interactions through initiatives such as City Labs, Church-planter Incubators, Church leader Accelerators and City Impact initiatives.

Even as we value our tribe, with a city to reach, we can and must make time to discover the wisdom needed to complete our task. Movements play a part precisely because they are uniquely placed to respond and even thrive in a world of complexity.

Some of the wisdom we seek is available to us almost immediately; someone shares a great idea with you at a City Lab, shows you how you might do it for yourself and new opportunities for ministry in your church open up. But sometimes meaningful answers only emerge over time and through relationship. Who knows, maybe a leader in London you've yet to meet might prove to be the unlikely, unexpected source of answers you are looking for to best reach your community. The London Project wants to foster these relationships and at the same time give quieter voices the opportunity to be heard.

It takes the wisdom of the church *together* to address the problems of the city.

I'm excited to think what God might do, through a church that comes together to seek his wisdom. I'm expectant of new perspectives. If the gospel is the hope for the world then movements of the gospel in the cities of the world must be part of the answer. For there, together, we find the very best ways for the gospel to reach those without hope and without Christ in this world.

References at www.thelondonproject.co.uk/references

**to address the problems
of the city.**

How long have you been in London?

It's been a couple of decades, at least. I feel very much called to serve my city. I've lived in other cities, but I love London. I'm on the border in Rainham.

What's your London secret?

Sitting on a London train: I always get pen and paper ready because I know I'm going to have a burst of revelation or clarity from the comings and goings. Also I love the river meandering along. You see the buildings, the historical roots. London is very majestic. When you think of all London has gone through, the fires, and you look at the columns of London Bridge, it's saying I'm still standing! There's something very resilient about London that I love.

What is your prayer for London?

Peace on our streets, and people connected. It's rare to see people smile at each other. There can be an absence of joy, and that breaks my heart. I used to live on the Northern [tube] line, which had many suicides, which made me pray for the people who got on the same train as me. I grieve for individuals, and pray they would know the comforting presence, the abiding presence, the very present presence of God that takes away misery. I pray for hope.

What is your hope for the church in London?

Like a great Christian brother, E.M. Bounds, wrote: "The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men."

What three words would you use to describe London?

Dynamic, Cultural, and also it's at boiling points, like a cauldron, a hot mix of things waiting to burst.

What are the challenges of ministry in London?

We have a lot of churches, but we're local physically, not local incarnationally. I'm going to speak from an African church perspective. We tend to import solutions that don't fit the narrative that we find, because we have not connected with the people we're supposed to be serving. People described Jesus as eating with this one and hanging out with that one. But they only see us as the people that sing and preach, or maybe giving out tracts that don't identify with what the community needs. We

need to build steps of trust. Also we need to share intelligence, share knowledge, between churches. If, say, I'm church planting in an area, I need to sit with those who have been there years to avoid the mistakes they make. If I step on your head then I may have 1000 members, but I don't think I will be regarded as excellent because I sabotage something of the kingdom in getting there.

What does gospel partnership mean to you?

First it is relating with one another beyond work, beyond functionality. Relating as brothers. When I was growing up as a Christian, everybody was brother so and so, sister so and so, even the pastor! It's a culture and a practice that has left the church. Today we are more interested in our titles, but maybe we ought to start calling each other brother and sister again. When I was younger, you didn't ask people what church you went to, you asked what fellowship you belong to. Today we attend a titled church, we don't fellowship with one another. My prayer for London might be restored fellowship. We are happy that there are many people coming online, but one of the challenges throughout Covid is loneliness. Who do I share my burdens with? Who's holding my hands in the simple things, right? Sometimes I don't want to attend another webinar. I just want to crack bread and have breakfast with my brother. So for me gospel partnership is first of all relationships, and comes out of the birthing of genuine friendships, liking people, talking to each other, not just over the work. I noticed that Jesus spent a lot of time doing life with people. Why don't we do life together? When Paul writes to the Philippian church it talks about their partnering with him. He prayed for them. There was a connection. He had letters. You had a sense it wasn't just about the money, it was about believing in one another, caring for one another. And what follows that caring is material support. If a pastor failed where I had a church on the same route, I would feel a failure too. Gospel partnerships come from building intentional relationships and asking God to help us like one another, not just adapting, then there's an overflow out of that. You have a commonality that you share. There's a connectivity for us to appreciate.



REV. CELIA APEAGYEI-COLLINS

Rev. Celia Apegyei-Collins is founder and president of The Rehoboth Foundation, on the steering committee for the National Church Leader's Forum, and sits on national and global boards.

London in numbers

**Among world cities,
London has been
ranked...**

Cultural vibrancy

Visitor demand

Talent base
and appeal

1st

5th

Unemployment and labour
market participation
(pre-Covid)

Safety and security

Most highly regarded city

6th

all-round affordability

commuting and
congestion

30th

Neighbourhood child
safety

36th

Happiness and wellbeing

In global surveys,
including of 209k people
in March 2021, London is
consistently voted the most
desirable city to work in

A tipping point of 10% of London's population following Christ would require significant church planting

The London Project seeks to start, serve and strengthen 400 disciple-making, church-planting, gospel-centred churches across London. After decades of decline, London's population has grown sharply since the early 1990s and is projected to increase by an additional two million by 2050.

9,039,390
Population in 2020

721,500
(8.8%) Attend church

1 million:
The increase of those saying
they have 'no religion'
in the last decade

**2,000 more
churches planted**
Needed to represent
10% of the population
(based on average congregation of 130)

London has significant inequalities, exacerbated by Covid

London has more billionaires than any other global city and a higher proportion in poverty than anywhere in the UK.

At the start of 2021

a quarter of Londoners would be unable to borrow or meet an unexpected expense of £500.



In London the wealthiest 10% of the population own 61% of the wealth (compared with 40% in the rest of GB)

The poorest 50% own just 5% of the wealth (compared to 10% in the rest of GB)



29%

Live in poverty (compared to 22% in UK)

43%

London children live in poverty (compared to 33% in England)

56%

Average net income spent on housing (compared to 37% in England)

74%

of adult Londoners in poverty are in working families



3 in 5

White British Londoners are homeowners

compared to only



1 in 3

Londoners from other ethnic groups

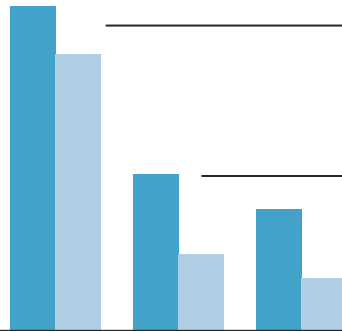
7.2%

Londoners unemployed at the start of 2021, the highest since May 2014

£886

Monthly spare room rent average in SW1 at the end of 2020 (23% less than a year before)

London has a higher proportion of people of faith than other cities in the UK



62% of Londoners identify as religious (53% in Great Britain)

30% of Christian Londoners attend services and pray regularly (13% in GB)

38% of Christians in London attend a service at least once a month (17% in GB)

98.5k

Londoners joined church from 2005-2012, a **16% increase**

8.7%

Population attend church in Inner London, compared to 4.9% in the rest of the country

61%

London churches in 2012 were evangelical, compared to 38% in England

Christians are active in their community, and the reputation of the church is improving

A recent Theos report on the integrated relationships between social action, discipleship and church growth found that, particularly in more deprived communities, the long-term presence of the church contrasts starkly with the approach of statutory organisations and charities, which may only work in the area for a short time then leave when the initiative's funding changes. Church volunteering time has been 'measured' by the National Churches Trust as worth £850 million.

63%

of religious Londoners volunteer (compared to 21% Londoners in a normal year)

25%

Non Christians agree that churches are making a positive difference.

Up from 19% a few years ago.

74%

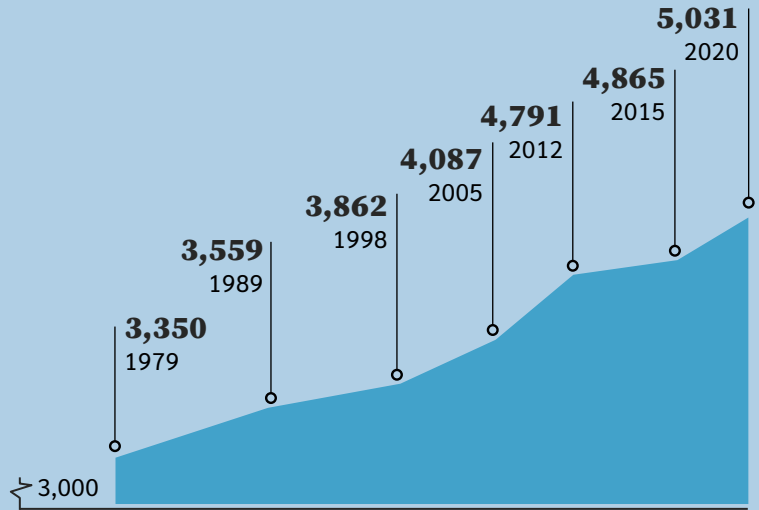
of Londoners in April 2020 agreed

'faith leaders have a role to play in providing moral guidance and spiritual leadership during times of national crisis'

The number of churches in London is growing

Church planting is happening in many forms, resourced by networks, colleges and organisations, often across denominational boundaries. There are fewer faith buildings in London than there are churches, although many buildings are used by more than one congregation. The 2021 census will give a clearer picture of those who identify themselves as Christian.

The London Church Census in 2012 found that after 5 years nearly half of church plants (45%) had doubled in number, and 75% were financially self-supporting. Of those attending, 2 in 5 were new to church.



17%

Increase of Londoners attending church from 1998 to 2012
(from 617k to 721.5k)

70%

Growth in adult membership in the Diocese of London 1990-2010

117,000

Worship in London's churches on days other than Sunday

87

New Diocese of London worshipping communities since 2018

Change in churchgoing post Covid still unknown

4.5% of Londoners or 416,000 people in 2020 said they would move out of the city within the next 12 months

26% UK adults watched or listened to online worship in the last year, of whom a fifth have never been to church

4% UK adults have joined church since lockdown

London is ethnically diverse - and black and ethnic diaspora churches are growing fastest

41%

Londoners are black or ethnic minority
(37% born outside UK)

14%

London's church services are not in English

1 in 5

black Londoners go to church each week

56%

churchgoers are Black in Inner London



Half of the UK's Pentecostal Christians live in London

RCCG has more than 200 churches in London

18%

Londoners are in their 20s

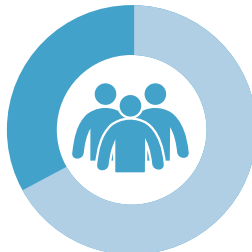
London is a young city – and its Church is a young church



1/2 of under-35s say that throughout the later lockdown they regularly engaged in online faith-related activity

64%

of London churchgoers are in their 20s



1/3 of those in their 20s who attend church, attend in London

In the next 30 years, London's population has been projected to grow by 22% – about two million more people

The church is younger than the rest of the country – of Church of England dioceses, London has the highest percentage of those aged 18 to 69 in the country: 61%
The peak age for leaving London is 31



NOAH & DANIELLE CHAMBERLAIN

The Chamberlains are a missionary family in Isle of Dogs, Tower Hamlets. Danielle provides support and care for people in vulnerable situations, particularly teenage girls, through the church-connected charity The Canaan Project.



What brought you to London?

Noah and I moved to London from Canada in October 2009. I (Danielle) was recruited as a social worker, and we initially thought we would work and travel for two years before returning home. God had other (greater) plans.

Which part of London do you currently call home?

We live on the Isle of Dogs, an area in Tower Hamlets and the East End. We have lived here for 11 years, and the people and places here are key in helping us feel at home.

What's your London secret?

Geocaching: a great way to see the city on foot while treasure hunting!

Favourite places to rest and play in London?

Lesnes Abbey, Epping Forest, and our kids love finding old World War 2 pill boxes along the River Thames to explore.

What is your prayer for London (or your area)?

That revival would again come to this great city.

What would you do if you were Mayor of London for the day?

Start walking tours of the derelict London Underground railways, invest in public water parks/paddling pools for children, and declare the last Friday of July National Picnic Day.

What is your hope for the Church in London?

We pray that God's Church would be a blessing and reflection of God's kingdom to the city, and, as Tim Keller said in his sermon 'Eating with Jesus', be a 'city within a city...a city on a hill'. We are grateful that God placed us in Tower Hamlets Community Church where the pastors and elders have endeavoured to lead with that vision to be a multicultural, multigenerational church family that works alongside other churches and serve them.

What three words would you use to describe London?

Intriguing, dynamic and bustling.

What are the challenges of ministry in London?

The population is very transient- people come and go quite often, so sustained, long-term ministry like discipleship can be challenging.

What does gospel partnership mean to you?

Gospel partnership means working together across denominations to share the Good News of peace with God through the perfect life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to a world in need of His salvation.

We pray that God's Church would be a blessing and reflection of God's kingdom to the city



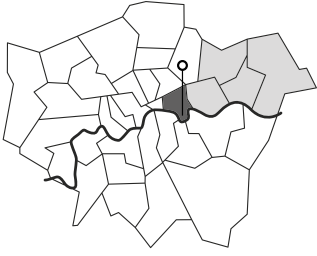
SNAPSHOT SNAPSHOT SNAPSHOT

Welcome to the Isle of Dogs, an area more populated with pigeons than dogs. Please read along our prayer points for our community, we hope they will paint a word picture more accurate than the name of this beautiful “island”.

The Isle of Dogs has a vibrant Chinese community. We want to be ready to welcome **Hong Kong migrants** coming to London.

Canary Wharf has great economic importance and needs the Gospel. Pray for churches there like **St Peter’s Barge**. London City Mission have a community hub on the Isle of Dogs, **Cafe Forever**, with outreach activities for all ages, services, and youth outreach to teenage girls. We pray there monthly with local ministers. Please pray for the **church ministers** to have a vibrant vision for co-labouring for our community, and for Christian youth organisations working together. We pray for the local **George Green School**, and thank God for the beautiful **Mudchute Farm**, 32 acres of farm with animals, and a wonderful place to remember the God of all creation.

The River Thames surrounds the Isle of Dogs. Walking or cycling the Thames path is a great way to enjoy something quite rare in London: uninterrupted views for several hundred metres! We are aware of the complex history of trade which came through the docks, most regrettably the Slave Trade. **The Docklands Museum** nearby, teaches the local shipping history. The area



By Noah & Danielle Chamberlain

♀ East | Tower Hamlets

has people from many cultural backgrounds, and we are blessed to have opportunity to share life with many **Bangladeshi and Muslim neighbours**, especially in lockdown. We host the **Bengali Christian Fellowship** monthly service. Please pray for relationships and more opportunities to share Jesus. Whilst Canary Wharf is a place of great wealth, we pray for the deprived areas in the shadow of its tall buildings. **The Samuda Estate** is one of those most economically deprived estates in the East End. We have lived here for almost four years, and whilst we have enjoyed vibrant and generous interactions with neighbours, we have witnessed antisocial behaviour, poverty and more serious crime. Pray for opportunities to share the Gospel with our neighbours, for revival to transform the community, and for God to rescue those who use drugs to escape their pain. Rapid development has driven up the cost of living. Pray for **community cohesion** and that the Church of the Isle of Dogs can transcend the culture to be a home and a harbour for Christ to anchor those called to the city.



Hong Kong migrants



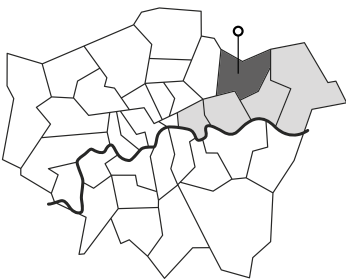
Youth outreach



Mudchute Farm

Isle of Dogs

Barkingside & Clayhall



By Rickey Raja

♀ East | Redbridge

Rickey Raja leads a new church plant, All Nations Church Barkingside and Clayhall, and is a mission partner with Co-Mission

Fullwell Cross Library is our new church venue, a real community hub with high footfall, which we hope to launch Sundays @ 4pm. **Church House** where we live and hope to do lots of hospitality outdoors and host various meetings. We thank God for his provision. **Clayhall Park** with views of the City of London and

Canary Wharf is a real community hub in the summer for sport and has been a great way to connect with young families this past year. You'll notice from shops on **Barkingside High Street** just how diverse this area is, with eastern European coffee shops, South Asian shops and East Asian salons, British pubs and cafes.

We hope to host a mid-week Thursday lunchtime ministry to city workers as part of a 'Faith and Work' initiative. The area boasts some of the best schools in London like **Ilford County High School**, with a big reach and catchment area. Pray for local engagement with students through schools work and assemblies. On **Clayhall Avenue** you'd notice the houses are very Asian with extensions, loft conversions and multiple expensive cars. Pray please for reaching them through door knocking and relationship building through community groups as Christians in our team move into the area. The church is serving **Tiptree Estate** (social housing) through food banks, and a CAP money course. **Valentines Park** hosted a number of socially distanced walks, and we're hoping to have more outdoor socials and community events in the future as restrictions lift. We partner with **Clayhall Baptist Church** and do a parent and toddlers' group. As we see **Redbridge Islamic Centre** we pray there may be future opportunities to hold a Christianity/Islam Big Questions Forum with London City Mission. **Charlie Brown Roundabout** gives accessibility into/out of London. **Gants Hill Station** is 25 mins into Liverpool Street and Bank via the Tube with excellent bus connections. Professionals and young families commute into London for work from here.



Spurgeon – the man who changed a city

By Neil Powell

God has done it before

To see a city impacted by the gospel requires nothing less than four things: first, a church, alive to God, experiencing the life-giving **renewal of the gospel**. Secondly, the extension of gospel churches across a city through **church multiplication**. No less important, God's people expressing a radical commitment to love and serve the city (whether or not the city loves us in return) through **city impact**, and finally, a united church committed to working together through healthy **collaborative partnerships**.

Could it happen here in London? The life and ministry of CH Spurgeon offers us a compelling answer.

God has done it before.





**‘We are a large church,
and should be doing
more for the Lord in
this great city.’**

Spurgeon

Charles Spurgeon led the largest non-conformist church in the world when he pastored the Metropolitan Tabernacle in South London between the years of 1861 and his death in 1892. Thousands came to hear the prince of preachers. And his ministry spread across the world. John Piper notes:

His sermons sold about 20,000 copies a week being translated into 20 languages. The collected sermons fill 63 volumes equivalent to the 27 volume ninth edition of Encyclopedia Britannica, and stands as the largest set of books by a single author in the history of Christianity.

And yet far from content with filling a church with 5,000 people every Sunday through his powerful and unique preaching, Spurgeon had his heart set on a city renewed by the gospel.



Metropolitan Tabernacle

Church Multiplication

When the Metropolitan Tabernacle was built Spurgeon said:

I look on the Tabernacle as only the beginning; within the last six months, we have started two churches—one in Wandsworth and the other Greenwich—and the Lord has prospered them; the pool of baptism has often been stirred with converts. And what we have done in two places, I am about to do in a third, and we will do it, not for the third or the fourth, but for the hundredth time, God being our Helper. I am sure I may make my strongest appeal to

my brethren, because we do not mean to build this Tabernacle as our nest, and then to be idle. We must go from strength to strength, and be a missionary church, and never rest until, not only this neighbourhood, but our country, of which it is said that some parts are as dark as India, shall have been enlightened with the Gospel.

In total Spurgeon was responsible for 187 new churches during his 38 years of ministry in London. Through his famous Pastor's College, he oversaw the ministerial training of no less than 900 men. Many took up pastorates in established churches, but a larger number were sent out as church planters and missionaries all over England and around the world.



City Impact

The nineteenth century saw a huge growth in the population not just of the nation but London in particular. The capital's population grew from 1 million people at the start of the century to a staggering 6.5 million by the end as the industrial revolution led to a rapid urbanisation. A few individuals made their fortunes, but for most industrialisation was a brutal experience. London has gone through a period of not dissimilar social transformation over the past 30 years, and we experience some of the same challenges such as low wages, high levels of unemployment, growing crime and homelessness.

Spurgeon believed that a life touched by the gospel would be one, like its master, filled with compassion:

Christ was not only the bread from Heaven, but the Giver of the bread of life to the poor and needy. He fed thousands of the fainting with the loaves and fishes. If all other hands be fast closed, the hand of the Christian man should be always open to relieve human necessity. Being a man, the believer is brother to all men – rich and poor, sick and healthy – and he should seek their good in every possible way, aiming still at the highest good – namely, the saving of their souls.

He understood, as Aaron Weaver puts it, that the gospel 'carried with it duties and obligations owed to individuals in British

society... Time and time again, Spurgeon directed his congregation to be the "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" to their neighbours.' What Spurgeon undertook was nothing less than social reform at every level and in every part of society. Alex Di Prima writes:

Spurgeon was an outspoken advocate for the oppressed, the poor and the disenfranchised of almost every conceivable variety in 19th century Britain. By 1884, Spurgeon had pioneered 66 benevolent ministries through his local church, the Metropolitan Tabernacle, located in the heart of south London. These ministries included, among others, a pastor's training college, two orphanages, a ministry to needy widows, a clothing bank, a ministry to policemen, an outreach to prostitutes, a ministry to the blind and a host of children's ministries.

Spurgeon's ministry illuminates how the love of Christ moves a believer to both hold out the gospel of eternal life even as we meet practical needs, alleviate suffering and defend the cause of the marginalised, for all who bear the image of God. In a sermon on Christian sympathy he said:

To me, a follower of Jesus means a friend of man. A Christian is a philanthropist by profession, and generous by force of grace; wide as the reign of sorrow is the stretch of his love, and where he cannot help he pities still.

Gospel Renewal

Tim Keller echoes Paul's prayer for the Ephesians when he writes *'all Christians - even committed ones - need the Spirit to bring the gospel home to their hearts for deepened experiences of Christ's love and power.'* When the gospel is experienced in a vital way, and when a whole body of believers experiences this renewal together, a remarkable joy in the Lord fills our hearts and animates our lives. What flows is a new energy and desire to love and serve Christ.

Spurgeon longed to see lives changed in this way and prayed and preached for such gospel transformation. His high view of God's sovereignty gave him boldness and his wonder at God's grace resulted in an earnestness. His devoted wife, Susannah, knew full well that 'his first aim was that of bringing glory to Christ.' John Piper writes:

Spurgeon stands as a witness to what happens when love for God-centered, Christ-exalting, Bible-saturated truth feeds the flame of love for people—people who will perish without that truth—that God, that Christ. An explosion of zeal and energy and creativity for in the church. All of it aiming to glorify God and bring sinners into the fullness of joy in Him.

By God's grace, gospel renewal became something of a reality in London during Spurgeon's ministry. He owed it all to God and wrote:

The times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord have at last dawned upon our land. Everywhere there are signs of aroused activity and increased earnestness. A spirit of prayer is visiting our churches ... whilst on rising evangelists the tongues of fire have evidently descended.

Collaboration

Despite his extraordinary gifting and remarkable capacity, Spurgeon was involved in many trans-denominational partnerships. In forming the Pastor's College he appointed a

congregationalist, George Roberts, as Principal despite their differing view on baptism.

Lord Shaftesbury, a committed Anglican, shared Spurgeon's passion for social reform. In fact, Shaftesbury was without doubt the greatest social reformer of his age. They formed a close friendship and working partnership. Shaftesbury even presided over his 50th birthday celebrations. Speaking of Spurgeon's achievements, Shaftesbury listed all 66 different organisations that he had founded during his time in London remarking of how they,

"instituted by [Spurgeon's] genius, and superintended by his care, were more than enough to occupy the minds and hearts of fifty ordinary men."

Spurgeon expressed his admiration for Shaftesbury when preaching the Sunday after his death exclaimed:

The church of God, and the world at large, have sustained a very serious loss ... he lived for the oppressed; he lived for London; he lived for the nation; he lived still more for God.

Finally, when it came to establishing new churches, Spurgeon was keen to give away his best in a statement of gospel generosity. In an April 1865 sermon:

We have never sought to hinder the uprising of other churches from our midst or in our neighbourhood. It is with cheerfulness that we dismiss our twelves, our twenties, our fifties, to form other churches. We encourage our members to leave us to found other churches; nay, we seek to persuade them to do it. We ask them to scatter throughout the land to become the goodly seed which God shall bless. I believe that so long as we do this we shall prosper.

God has done it before. He can do it again. His mercy is sure. We can but pray that it might please the Lord to bring renewal to the church and revival in our land through the faithful service of a new generation of leaders who will strive together for his glory.



LISA HUTT

Lisa Hutt is Director of Prayer Ministry for the Neighbourhood Prayer Network

What brought you to London?

I came to London for a prayer assignment, the annual Neighbourhood Prayer Network 'London Loop' prayer walk, believing that as we prayed there would be an impact, a ripple, from the outside of London into the heart of the capital. We started this in 2018, and now have a monthly daytime and evening London Prayer Loop Zoom call.

Which part of London do you currently call home?

Although I don't live in London, whenever I arrive in London it feels like I am coming home. It's my spiritual home! Years ago at a prayer meeting I believe I heard

God say "I want you in London". I thought it meant a physical move but so far it has been a call to be on the land for God's purposes.

What's your London secret?

I love the cafe at Friends House near Euston Station. My dad's parents both went out to Russia in the early 1920s with the Society of Friends to help with famine relief. In 2019 I found my grandmother's photograph album from this time in the library there. It was something I didn't know existed, a window to the past.

Favourite places to rest and play?

I love green spaces. Bushy Park and Hyde Park are particular

favourites. We have fond family memories of Docklands Light Railway trips (I'm married to a Londoner), and I am interested in history so I like visiting the museums. I am often moved to pray as I learn more about the past and make a connection with the present.

What is your hope for the church in London?

I have a picture to answer this question. I see a revolving door of people coming in and going out of London. My hope and prayer is that all these God connections will revive the church and revive the nation.

What three words would you use to describe London?

Important: London is the capital of the UK.

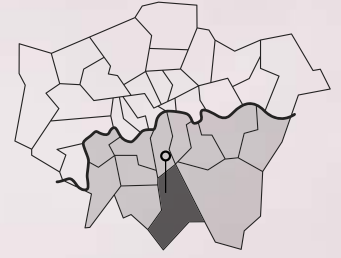
Influential: What happens in London impacts the streets across the UK and beyond.

Battleground: A place to intercede for to bring breakthrough.

What does gospel partnership mean to you?

Preferring others (Romans 12:10). Listening and learning from each other. Going where the Holy Spirit leads you to serve with others. Being in relational networks of Christians, churches, prayer groups and ministries waiting on God and going out in His name. Using the acronym REVIVE: Releasing (recognising and releasing people in their giftings); Encouraging (each other); Valuing (ourselves and others); Interceding (praying together); Vision (as you pray receiving vision); Engagement (with communities with the vision God has given you.)

SNAPSHOT SNAPSHOT SNAPSHOT



By **Gina Somerton**

*Operations Director at Redeemer
Croydon*

♀ South | Croydon

Croydon



Boxpark



Croydon College



Street Art



Field Way Estate

Please pray for Croydon. Huge numbers of people travel into and through **East Croydon Station** daily, which makes it a conducive place for gospel witness. However, there's an enormous piece of street art next to the station, visible to all who travel past, and large amounts of other street art around the centre, all of which appear beautiful but are riddled with unbiblical images. Croydon's getting taller and more companies are moving here bringing wealth, but there is a growing spiritual void. **No.1 Croydon** is known locally as the 50p building and **Boxpark** is set around the new upmarket apartment blocks, growing population and an increasingly vibrant social setting. Many come from across London to study at **Croydon College** daily. We want to pray for the young people! Croydon is a marvellous,

multicultural melting pot. **Surrey Street Market** is one area you can see that, bustling with people of many nations. However, there's significant homelessness (we hear it was 7th highest of UK authorities), drug taking and dealing around **Queen's Park Gardens** at night, prostitution, slavery and trafficking, often unseen. Knife crime and gangs are prevalent. Pre-lockdown Redeemer Croydon had a door-to-door ministry in the central poverty-ridden estate, called Friendship Fridays. Praise God Jesus' name was proclaimed to an area where few know Him! We used to witness in the busy **North End Street** (the "high street" area), but it's become known for other religions, extreme preachers, or politically-motivated people pushing their views on people. Redeemer Croydon became homeless during 2020 as our centrally-located venue shut its doors permanently, but by God's grace were able to keep meeting at **Archbishop Tenison's School**. At **Lloyd Park** we're thankful that many gospel conversations, pastoral walks and church family fellowship take place in green space! Please also pray for **New Addington**, especially for more gospel witness in the massive council estate along Field Way.

South Bank



By Jonty Allcock

*Pastor at the Globe Church in
Central London*

♀ South | Southwark





As we pray we think of: **London Bridge Station** - over 70 million people pass through this station every year. The sheer density of people in this area is overwhelming and is a cause to call out to God who knows each individual.

Tate Modern - The Southbank is a cultural hub in central London. The Tate Modern is the second most visited attraction in London. Pray for those who work in the arts and creative industries.

Ever since 1835 the **London City Mission** has worked with the poorest and least reached in London. They have their head quarters just by Tower Bridge. Pray for this vital work.

King's College University - There are thousands of students who live and study in this area. They desperately need to hear the life changing message of Jesus.

The Shard - Europe's tallest building, 95 floors, 310 metres, housing 5,000 office workers. Pray for all those commuting into this area of London for work. For integrity and justice in business. For employers to seek the flourishing of their workers. And for the gospel to provide eternal hope that money can't buy.

Borough Market: Buzzing with energy and life, packed with tourists from all over the world. Pray for the nations who come to London.



London Fire Brigade HQ (on Union Street): Over 100 fire stations across the capital, nearly 6,000 staff, who face extremely challenging and demanding situations on a daily basis.

Although Southwark is an area renowned for tourism, you only have to go back a few streets from the river and there are many **people living in hard conditions**. Endless flats, locked doors, hard to reach. Pray for openings.

Borough Academy - A brand new secondary school just opened. Pray for good relationships with the community and for the next generation of Londoners.

Guy's Hospital - This area has huge hospitals. They are treating patients, training future NHS workers and researching new medical advances. Pray for all those working in the NHS.

Baitul Aziz Islamic Cultural Centre - Over a million Muslims are living in London. Pray for peaceful and helpful engagements between churches and mosques and for the glory of Jesus to be seen.





STEPHEN OSEI-MENSAH

Stephen Osei-Mensah is Work Forum Director for the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity (LICC)

How long have you been in London?

I was born in East Ham, but spent my first 14 years in Ghana and Kenya before coming to London as a History student at University College London. Most of my roles in business have been based in and around London albeit with a number of international postings. My wife and I now live in Kent but I do fly as a private pilot from a “London” airport (Biggin Hill). I am a regular commuter (by train that is)!

What’s your London secret?

You can get a pretty good view over East London and the city landing or taking off from the North facing runway at Biggin Hill. On a sunny day it’s a view over London like no other. Sadly, single engine flights are not permitted over the city, but the view from 15-20 miles away is still superb!

Favourite places to rest and play in London?

Gauchos on the South Bank serve a mean steak (responsively sourced) and it’s hard to beat the OXO tower for a sunset view over London. I love the Thames path along the south of the river over the Blade at St Paul’s – fabulous!

What is your prayer for London?

Especially post pandemic that there would be an awakening of the churches to the opportunities for the gospel across our great city and a desire to reach out to so many whose lives and mental health have been deeply affected by the last 18 months or so. That the church would affirm and recognise so many Christian’s aiming to be “whole life disciples” in their workplaces, a critical mission field for the UK and internationally.

What would you do if you were Mayor of London for the day?

Hold a massive street party. We will need one to celebrate post lock down. Socially distanced of course!

What is your hope for the church in London?

The church in London is vibrant and so diverse with churches in so many cultures and languages – it would be great to see more cooperation and compassion across the range of churches. Churches stepping up to show Londoners what a difference Christ makes in everyday life.

What three words would you use to describe London?

Multi-cultural, vibrant, uniquely cool.

What are the challenges of ministry in London?

Well, it used to be the commuting lifestyle which meant we were always so busy rushing around, perhaps now it’s figuring what the new normal will be, how to value relationships and build lasting communities.

What does gospel partnership mean to you?

Jesus Christ the word from the outset created diversity and glorious complexity. He is Lord of all so as His body whether gathered in church or scattered in society we should look to partner with sisters and brothers to live out the gospel effectively: knowing the story we are in; modelling Godly character; making good work; ministering grace and love; moulding culture; being mouthpieces for truth and justice and messengers of the gospel. The lives we lead, the love we show and the words we say should all commend the good news. No one group, church or agency has it all, but in partnership we can better evidence the gifts we have been given to love and serve Christ in the contexts He has put us in.

... in partnership we can better evidence the gifts we have been given to love and serve Christ

By Jo Frost

The gospel for London



I always hated the idea of living in London. It seemed to me to be a place full of strangers.

I love the experience of being known. Of walking down the street and stopping every few steps for a smile or a catch up. Of walking into a pub, and my order ready on the bar before I have even crossed the hearth. I grew up in rural Dorset, I had only ever known what it was to be recognised and part of a community.

Even when I moved away to Liverpool, I discovered that through the communities of students and of the church, even a city (as long as it was a small one) could be a place where you are known.

But London was different. London and loneliness seemed irrevocably linked. So, when I was praying about where I would go after I finished my studies,

my prayer was simple, 'Lord, send me anywhere, just don't send me to London.'

I have lived in London for the last 18 years. The lonely city, full of strangers has become my home. I have come to realise that community is something that can be created, it is intentional, it is built and nurtured. There is so much joy and vitality in this city, the streets pulsate with strange languages, bizarre foods, exotic clothes and vibrant art. Everywhere there are people sharing life and caring for their neighbours. But this is also a city full of brokenness, people hurting others and being hurt in return. The injustice of the world is encapsulated within the M25, the rich get richer, whilst the poor go hungry. Young people are stabbed on the streets and women are murdered as they simply walk home.



This city is my community, I am part of it, I am responsible for it, and it is in desperate need of some good news.

But the good news is that Good News is here!

Once upon a time the most beautiful, benevolent, powerful, and gracious Being danced across eternity. Three persons united in an infinite relationship of love, sacrifice and generosity. Everywhere the Deity went, life spilled out. Creation overflowed like a fountain unable to contain its abundance. Intentionality, exuberance, and sheer unbridled joy brought all things into existence. The centrepiece of this epic symphony was humanity, infused with the very breath of Life itself. Made in the image of God, man and woman stood at the heart of creation and all was as it should be. Creative, dynamic, powerful

creatures - humanity shared in the character of God - able to bless and steward and nurture the world around them. There was peace and it was good.

But all great stories have a twist - a crisis - the moment where a choice is made and cannot be undone. And this is the greatest story, so our twist is the most terrible.

A choice was made that ripped humanity from the dance of Life: no longer was it possible for us to live at peace, in perfect harmonious order and relationship with creation, others and God. We were left impregnated with longing, yet impotent to change. Yearning to be known, yet never able to comprehend what had been lost. Pain, alienation, destruction, brokenness, and cruelty became our reality. This is the terrible curse on humanity passed

on from generation to generation.

Sin has infused our story, it deforms us, disorders our relationships, and ultimately destroys the world. We are both responsible for it and enslaved by it. Sin is all that is wrong in the world. It is darkness, injustice and evil. It is everywhere and all-consuming.

As our story unfolds, retold in the pages of the Bible, each chapter reveals the yearning heart of God to restore creation back to its true state and for Him to be reconciled with His beloved children. Through a family, a people, then a nation, God built a community of people dedicated to Him and covenanted in relationship. Though they remained in sin, God kept demonstrating His mercy, His compassion, and His desire to restore humanity back to Himself whilst at the same time showing how incapable they were to do it for themselves.

Their story *is* our story, and though our story is twisted by a choice, it turns on a person. At the epicentre of this epic tale is Jesus. The arrival of the Nazarene into occupied 1st century Palestine changes everything. Life Himself entered human history, born of flesh and blood. Yet God's beloved Son, Jesus, heralds a new order, a new reality, a new kingdom. Through His life, His teaching, His actions, and ultimately through His death, resurrection and return to God the Father, Jesus is the gospel - the Good News that we are not forever lost, that hope wins. Through the with-us God, sin is dealt with, enmity with God is overcome and our culpability exchanged for friendship. Peace is possible and love can flourish, in the lives of individuals, in churches, in communities, and in a city where God's people live.

At the cross, Jesus completed the fall from God. There is no greater depth of depravity. All is death. Life Himself died. But death could not hold Him. Bursting forth - a new creation erupts in the midst of this one. At the very beginning it was through Him that creation began, and once again it is by His sacrifice that this new creation is birthed, and it is with Him that God's kingdom will advance. The God-man has done what we could not. In Him we can be reformed, remade, reborn. Eternity with Him starts the moment you accept His story as your own.



Jo Frost is director of communications and engagement at the Evangelical Alliance and teaches on communications, conflict, whole-life discipleship, mission and leadership

The Good News of Jesus is that we are all invited to one day find ourselves at the end of our story in that great city, where humanity has joined the dance of Life again, revealed as the bride of her magnificent Creator. We can be reunited with our King, the abundance of Life flows again and the longing in the heart of each of us can be quenched.

London is a great city. But there is a city which is greater. A city where Life flows like a river, where healing grows on a tree, where tears are wiped away, where people can enter freely to be with their God who is also their friend. A city where everyone is truly known. That is good news for me, good news for you, good news for London, it is good news for the whole world.



RICHARD PERKINS

Richard Perkins is Director of Church Planting for Co-Mission and Lead Planter at Bridge Church Peckham

How long have you been in London?

Since 1996 when I came to join Dunonald Church in Wimbledon and studied at the Cornhill Training Course.

Which part of London do you currently call home?

We've been in Streatham since 2002. Our family has grown up there, but we've just moved to Penge so I guess South London feels like home.

What's your London secret?

Tooting Bec Lido (where we can swim outdoors).

Favourite places to rest and play in London?

I love different places for different reasons. I love Richmond Park, because when it's empty it's glorious, and it's just amazing that it's not been built on! I love the sports grounds: Selhurst Park (Crystal Palace), the Oval (Surrey Cricket Club), and the Stoop (Harlequins). I love the varied architecture of the city. I love the river west of the city.

What is your prayer for London?

That people would come to hear, know, love, and serve Christ.

What would you do if you were Mayor of London for the day?

Introduce Holland-style cycling infrastructure everywhere inside the M25! Only the gospel will truly satisfy us but we'd all be a lot happier if we rode bikes more!

What is your hope for the church in London?

That we'd collaborate together to start and strengthen gospel-centred churches to reach all who call London their home with the great news of Jesus Christ.

What three words would you use to describe London?

Crowded, Cosmopolitan, Confused.

What are the challenges of ministry in London?

The cost of living which means church planting is just so expensive. The difficulty of working together across ethnic, socio-economic, and cultural differences. The apparent hostility of mainstream media and culture to the Christian faith.

What does gospel partnership mean to you?

Allies. Colleagues. Encouragers. Companions.



REV. ISRAEL OLOFINJANA

Rev. Israel Olofinjana is the Director of the One People Commission for Evangelical Alliance, and previously was pastor at Woolwich Baptist Church.

How long have you been in London for? (What brought you to London?)

Since 2004. I came as a reverse missionary, with the intention of mission in the British culture, sent by my Pentecostal Church in Nigeria. A part of that was also to further my master's degree in theology.

Which part of London do you currently call home?

Woolwich, which is in the Borough of Greenwich, southeast London. It's a very diverse borough. I mean, London is very diverse! London has a lot of

energy, and Greenwich is very historic, GMT and all that, a lot of the Hollywood movies are filmed in Greenwich. So it's an exciting place to be.

What's your London secret?

So there is a place, General Gordon Square in Woolwich. I go and sit down there. You see the whole nation pass before you. I do prayer walks there. In 2014 we had South Korean student missionaries come to the UK, and they commented on seeing different shades of colour, different people, different

skill, status and background. It's just an amazing place just to sit and observe.

Favourite places to rest and play in London?

I used to like to go into Canary Wharf, which is the financial district of London. Yeah. With the river and the water it's just so beautiful with the buildings in the background, and with the DLR [Docklands Light Railway] criss-crossing out of it, there's just something about it, so I like to go in there just to chill and relax, eat out and just walk around.

What is your prayer for London?

My prayer for London is that it will be and continue to be a place where we can actually meaningfully interact with the diversity that we see. There is a difference between just being diverse and actually people integrating and interacting. My prayer is that we will engage more rather than being polarised (like the Brazilian community here, the South Asian community there) but actually interact more and engage rather than being suspicious. And I'm not saying that it's not happening. At times, especially when you sit on the train, sometimes there's people who are still sceptical of each other. There is the need for mutual interaction.

What would you do if you were Mayor of London for the day?

Good question. If I was the Mayor of London, I will try and see if we can make London a safe space for women. Also to make it a welcome place, and a safe space for minorities. And again, that could be women, it could be people with disability. Make it a safe space and making sure that our voices are heard. Also, see how we can reduce the use of our energy in terms of the climate pollution, plant more trees, make it more green, sustainable, reduce our energy using renewable energy, sustainable energy.

What is your hope for the church in London?

I think it's encapsulated in Luke chapter 4:18, called the Nazareth Manifesto. Jesus read a scroll, Isaiah, in the synagogue and had this to say: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' This is my vision for the churches in London. Nazareth was a city kind of similar to London. Here was Jesus' vision

for the urban context, to talk about issues of poverty. And one can look at that in terms of actual poverty and spiritual poverty. It talks about the release from prison, and there are all sorts of prisons, including in our minds. Jesus talks about liberation, he talks about liberty, he talks about proclaiming the year of the Lord's favour, which would be Jubilee in the Old Testament, about people's debts being cancelled, about justice. So I think my vision is for a just society that is able to articulate this Jesus Nazareth Manifesto. If Jesus was a politician, that would be his political Manifesto. But we cannot do all those things, we need the Spirit of the Lord. Without the Spirit of God we can't do it. Our mere strength, it will fail us. We need the dynamism of the Holy Spirit, to help us to listen, to pray, and to move out to execute this holistic mission.

What three words would you use to describe London?

Oh, wow! London is energetic, diverse, and highly populated. And those three can highlight all sorts of issues.

What are the challenges of ministry in London?

As well as just pastoring, homelessness is a massive issue in London, and the problem is growing. Pollution in terms of climate change.

What does gospel partnership mean to you?

Gospel partnership means everything to me, because I believe in the African philosophy of Ubuntu, which speaks about our interdependence: "I am because you are". As a Christian, and understanding the fact that Christianity is a very communal faith, God does not want us to work in isolation. In the Old Testament, the twelve tribes worked together to share that Israelite identity. In the New Testament, the apostles worked together. But in Luke 5, before they became disciples they were fishermen in partnership. Our humanity is not complete until it is in relationship with others and my community. So I think gospel partnership is very, very essential for our interdependence so that we don't become individualistic again. In London, when we model gospel partnership it will help us to be counter intuitive to the London culture of individualism. We can have a shared space and work together. So it means everything. It's about God's kingdom. In going back to the Nazareth Manifesto, we need to execute that together.

WHAT CAN WE DO TOGETHER?

The London Project seeks to identify gifts, skills and resources already in the city and make them available for the use of the wider body of Christ in the spirit of gospel generosity. To this end we will also facilitate platforms to incubate relationships between leaders that would lead to trust and collaboration. We also wish to remind and reinforce our corporate call to reach the city.

- City to City Incubator
- Culture and Contextualisation
- Next Generation Leader Development

- City Labs
- Learning Cohorts
- Prayer Movements

CITY WIDE COLLABORATIVE

CHURCH MULTIPLICATION

CITY IMPACT

GOSPEL RENEWAL

- Faith and Work
- Social Justice
- Public Theology
- Creative Arts

- Preaching for Gospel Renewal
- Leadership Accelerators
- Gospel Coaching



The London Project can be found at thelondonproject.co.uk and on social media.
Join in the conversation.

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**DOING MORE TOGETHER
THAN WE COULD DO ON OUR OWN**



**The
London Project**