

The whole Church, for the whole Nation, for the whole year

An evaluation of HOPE08

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acknowledgements

Some of the people who helped make HOPE08 happen:

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preamble

HOPE08 was an initiative of the churches across the UK which aimed to demonstrate Christian faith in action and to explain the meaning of that faith in villages, towns and cities.

This report by Theos, the public theology think tank, evaluating HOPE08, was commissioned by the HOPE Board in June 2008.

The aim of the report is to record the extent and nature of HOPE generated activity across the UK during 2008, and to identify successes and areas for improvement, in order to support individuals and organisations in their planning of future initiatives.

The report has been funded by the Epworth Fund of the Methodist Church in partnership with HOPE. The lead researcher and principal writer of the report is Stephen Backhouse.

Theos would like to express its appreciation to all who participated in this research project, especially the HOPE Board and Leadership Team, HOPE Champions, field researchers and interviewees, and all who gave their comments on all or part of the manuscript.

We hope that the research undertaken, and the report itself, will be a significant resource, supporting present and future generations to Do More, Do It Together, and Do it in Word and Action.

Paul Woolley

Director of Theos

March 2009

Steve Clifford writes...

thank you!

We had no idea what was going to happen in 2008. As the 2007 countdown flew by, we could only hope that the 'word and action' vision was out there. The first few months of 2008 were a revelation – we'd dreamed of five hundred locations getting involved in holistic mission. It turned out that about three times that many signed up to work together to make Jesus known.

The passion and drive of the church in the UK is amazing, and we saw involvement from a huge variety of denominations and church streams. Thousands and thousands of churches took the 'do more, do it together and do it in word and action' challenge of HOPE08 and made it their own. We never saw this coming – so many communities have been reached by the gospel that we are humbled and often overwhelmed.

For us there has been a sense of being caught up in something much bigger than we could have predicted. Standing in Number 10 Downing Street listening to Gordon Brown extol the virtues of HOPE08, or getting the chance to introduce Prince Charles to local HOPE08 champions at his home in Clarence House, were times when we realised that this was never our thing to control!

This evaluation illustrates how HOPE08 happened, what worked, what didn't, what was learnt and what's still being dreamt up. It also shows how many people were involved in making HOPE08 a success. We can't take the credit for any of these statistics, but we can get excited about them!

God has been so gracious with us, and:

The people who really need to be thanked are our HOPE08 Champions:

"We're so grateful to God for all the amazing things that he has been doing in the churches and communities throughout the country. It has been a blessing and a privilege to play even a small part in what God is doing through HOPE08."

Mike Pilavachi

"HOPE08 just would not have been possible without the vision, determination and hard work of the HOPE Champions all over the UK - they've been the people who have taken this thing to their churches and have made it happen."

Andy Hawthorne

We also want to thank all the Associate Groups. Over 150 organisations stood with us and lent us their support, resources and encouragement. Their contribution was invaluable and we're so grateful to every single one of these groups.

To everyone else, to every single person who was involved on a grassroots level, thank you too. The creativity of local churches, and the new models of mission that they pioneered, made HOPE08 the exciting movement that it continues to be.

HOPE08 was a great year, and it's not over yet. The overwhelming majority (99%) of people we've asked have said they'll be carrying on with their word and action projects into 2009 and beyond. Here's some of the feedback that came in to the office:

"HOPE08 was always a grassroots movement. I think that the timing and sense of God's spirit caused a fantastic mobilisation of ordinary people to do extraordinary exploits in their own communities. Thank you for being a part of such a nationwide initiative to see our communities transformed."

Roy Crowne

"Thank the Lord projects are continuing – HOPE08 has been the best thing that has happened across the country since I can't remember when!"

Marion Barker, Knutsford, Cheshire

"We've found that through engaging with HOPE08 initiatives across our county, local churches - both big and small - can easily join in and can have a major impact in our towns and villages. After this year, our intention is to continue..."

Revd Simon Taylor, Devon

"I am a member of St. James' church in Thrapston and we have had an incredible year. We all needed something like HOPE08 to give us a 'passport' to do what many of us were longing to do - that is to reach out to one another and to the wider community. We have BIG plans for 09!"

Ann Warboys, Thrapston

"We plan to carry on working together and strengthening the relationships between the churches under the HOPE banner and make HOPE Bracknell an ongoing thing."

Fay Philp

Finally, we'd like to thank Theos for this research. They took on a mammoth task when they agreed to put this together, and we're so grateful for all their patience and skill.

Our prayer is that this evaluation is useful to churches for years to come, that we don't forget what we've learnt and that we all keep dreaming.

Yours,

Steve Clifford, on behalf of the HOPE08 Board and Leadership Team

executive summary

HOPE08 sought to catalyse, encourage and support churches across the UK as, through words and actions, they worked together and with public bodies such as government, police and the media in service to their communities. HOPE was **grassroots** - supporting local churches in their commitment to neighbourhoods. HOPE was **collaborative** – always seeking ways to connect different groups, churches and agencies. HOPE aimed to **resource** participants through a range of materials and the expertise of associate groups. Overall, the vision of HOPE08 was to help Christians **raise their game** impacting individuals and communities in **word** and **action**. HOPE partners worked to meet the immediate needs in their neighbourhoods, but they also worked with an eye to the long-term legacy of living out the Gospel in villages, towns and cities across the UK. HOPE enjoyed extraordinary success in achieving its aims and the country continues to experience the fruits of its vision.

This vision was summed up by HOPE's strap line *Do More. Do It Together. Do it in Word and Action.*

1. features of HOPE

HOPE08 aimed to

- Encourage as much participation as possible while remaining non-prescriptive
- Give away its logo and allow use of the HOPE08 brand free of charge
- Run with a small support staff and on a modest budget
- Empower local churches rather than control resources
- Limit itself to one year so as to resist institutionalisation

HOPE activities were registered in **1478** locations throughout the UK. This number far exceeds the original 500 locations identified by HOPE as ideal places for a HOPE presence.

A network of over 150 volunteer **HOPE Champions** dedicated themselves to promoting HOPE in their areas. As well as overseeing events, liaising with workers and beneficiaries of HOPE projects and representing HOPE to their local churches and communities, the HOPE Champions were also valuable sources of information and feedback about HOPE activities on the ground.

- **82%** of those surveyed report that that HOPE08 has inspired their congregations
- **83%** thought HOPE08 has made a tangible difference
- **94%** indicate that they are enthusiastic about the goals and visions of HOPE for the future

2. the year of HOPE

The planning team identified five **High Points** which roughly corresponded to the traditional Church calendar and which provided some structure to the year.

- **Fresh HOPE:** In the New Year season groups were encouraged to offer services for local people wanting to make a fresh start. Fresh HOPE events might also mark the launch of HOPE08 projects in individual churches for the coming year
 - **70%** of HOPE Champions polled participated in this
 - This high take-up is notable, since this was the first High Point of the year and for many congregations their first real exposure to HOPE
- **The Big HOPE:** Churches working together were encouraged to express Easter in ways that were imaginative and inviting to the whole community.
 - **73%** participated in this
 - Amongst many creative ideas **Blood Donor Drives** constituted one Big HOPE activity. The National Blood Service calculates that HOPE-related contributions have resulted in **"360 lives saved to date"**
- **HOPE on the Streets:** During May HOPE partners were encouraged to reach a target of a million hours of kindness, by working together to deliver social action projects. Events for children and young people were a focus here, as were the hosting of family fun-days
 - The highest take up at **78%**
 - **325,602** Hours of Kindness logged, and an additional **137,288** pledged with many more acts left unreported
 - Many groups running a **Fun-Day** relate that this marked the high point of their HOPE year

- **HOPE Explored:** In the autumn, churches could offer an explanation for their actions by inviting people to take part in courses providing an introduction to the Christian faith
 - **67%** of those polled linked their church's seeker courses to HOPE in some way, many pooling their resources with other groups to make a bigger impression than ever before
- **The Gift of HOPE:** Christmas was an excellent opportunity to make the gospel accessible to the community, and to celebrate all that happened during the year of HOPE
 - **67.6%** participated in a Gift of HOPE event
 - **45.8%** agreed that HOPE had changed the way that their church normally does Christmas
 - Of those that participated, **75%** reported that theirs was a joint-venture involving more than one church

3. doing more

The number, variety and scope of HOPE08 projects taking place across the country were unparalleled compared to any other Christian initiative in the UK.

- **86%** of those polled indicated that their church is doing more as a result of HOPE08. **No one** reported doing less in 2008 than in previous years

Groups Reached

- When Champions were asked to indicate people reached by their HOPE activities, secondary school aged children and families each attracted **85.7%** of the responses. This was followed by primary school children (**74.3%**) and young people (**62.9%**). Besides parents of children, the main focus on adults was on singles (**54.3%**) and retired people (**57.1%**). Some HOPE projects were aimed at school leavers (**14.3%**) and university students (**22.9%**).

Words and Actions

- More than half of those polled - **57.6%** - reported an increase in their church's engagement in **evangelism by words**. **No one** thought engagement had gone down
- **91.2%** of those polled reported an increase in **evangelism by action**
- **67.7%** indicated an increase in levels of volunteering in their church. **60%** reported that their church's attitude toward poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups has improved

- Close to half - **45.7%** - of respondents reported that their churches are praying more than before as a result of their engagement with HOPE08. **No one** thought participation in prayer went down during the year of HOPE. HOPE08 was **publicly launched** at a Trumpet Call prayer event in Birmingham in 2006 in front of an audience of 3000-4000 people. Prayer triplets and groups formed to pray for HOPE08 continue to meet.

4. doing it together

Churches

- **88.2%** report that as a result of HOPE08 their church's attitude towards other Christian groups and denominations has improved. In areas where inter-church partnerships were already in place, **71%** thought that these working relationships were strengthened. **No one** thought attitudes had got worse as a result of HOPE08.
- **91.7%** of those polled indicated working with **Baptists** of various affiliations, **88.9%** worked with the **Church of England** and **77.8%** saw **Methodist** involvement. Other denominations and the response rate they attracted include **Roman Catholic** (58.3%), **Salvation Army** (55.6%), **United Reform** (50.0%), **Assemblies of God** (41.7%), **New Frontiers** (41.7%) and **Elim Pentecostal** (38.9%). 'New' and 'Independent' Churches were significant partners in HOPE projects, registering 47.2%. Amongst others this category included **Brethren**, **Vineyard**, **Community** and **House** churches.

Associate Groups

- The Church denominations and para-church agencies which accepted the invitation to partner with HOPE were known collectively as **Associate Groups**.
- **155** of these organisations registered with HOPE
- **100%** of Associates surveyed agreed that HOPE was a good fit for their organisation. **100%** think that the continued association with HOPE08 was a good one. **None** of the Associates polled thought that HOPE had a negative effect on their organisation's work.
- Prominent partners include **Soul Survivor**, the **Message Trust** and **Youth For Christ**, each of which donated generously and released Mike Pilavachi, Andy Hawthorne, Roy Crowne and other staff to do the work of HOPE.

- Other organisations also released key personnel to be on the HOPE Board and Leadership team: **Bible Society** (Rob Cotton); **Cell UK** (Laurence Singlehurst); **Make It Happen** (Matt Bird); **The Church of England** (Paul Bayes); **Street Pastors** (Eustace Constance); **World Prayer Centre** (Jane Holloway) and **Pioneer** (Steve Clifford)
- Other collaborations at the national level include: **ABA Design**, **Associated Bus Ministries**, **Authentic Publishing**, **Christian Enquiry Agency**, **CPO**, **Evangelical Alliance**, **Urban Saints**, **MEMO**, **New Life Publishing**, **Scripture Union**, **RUN**, **Kingsway Communications**, **Fresh Expressions** and **Vivid Broadcast**
- **Alpha**, **Ignite**, **Book of HOPE**, **CARE**, **Compassion**, **Spring Harvest**, **the Methodist Church**, **Saltmine**, **UCB**, **Elim Church** and **New Wine** were amongst organisations who dedicated significant resources to HOPE and to the promotion of HOPE throughout the year.
- The **Girls** and **Boys Brigade** gave their summer camp a strong Acts of Kindness dimension in partnership with the HOPE on the Streets High Point.

Young People

- HOPE Champions report that the **majority of people reached by their HOPE activities were under 20 years of age.**
- Throughout the UK, young people also took active roles in leading HOPE events
- **HOPE Revolution** was the official youth arm of HOPE08, and choose not to use the '08' in its logo

Government, Police and Media

- In June 2008 **Prince Charles** hosted a reception at Clarence House for the organisers and volunteers of HOPE. In December 2008, **Prime Minister Gordon Brown** honoured HOPE workers at a reception at 10 Downing Street
- HOPE08 gained the early support of stakeholders such as the **Association of Chief Police Officers** (ACPO), the office of the **Metropolitan Police Commissioner** and the **Department for Communities and Local Government** (DCLG)
- Many **MPs** gave their public support during the early promotion of HOPE

- A number of regional police forces officially included HOPE in their community strategy documents
- **61.8%** of HOPE Champions agreed that their church's relationship to secular institutions overall has improved. **No one** reported having a worse relationship with these groups as a result of HOPE08
- **68%** saw specific improvement in working relations with **local government**
- **67%** agreed that relationships with the **police** had got better
- **59%** found that their church's relationship with the **local media** had improved as a result of HOPE08

Strong partnerships were forged with **Christian media**.

- 16 publications agreed to devote regular space to HOPE stories
- A number of national publications published HOPE stories on a case-by-case basis
- HOPE's Communication Officer wrote articles for Christian publications as well as denominational literature including calendars, prayer leaflets and promotional literature.

5. HOPE materials and resources

HOPE produced a high quality promotional **DVD** featuring stories, ideas and words of endorsement from leaders of denominations and organisations across the country

- **22,800** copies of this DVD were given away
- **100%** of HOPE Champions polled reported finding this resource 'Useful' or 'Very Useful'

There were three main parts to the HOPE family of **websites**

- **www.HOPEnews.co.uk** provided a platform for broadcast reports, E-news stories and user-generated content
- **www.HOPEinfo.co.uk** (created and maintained by Christian Enquiry Agency) was designed to be the public face of HOPE08. The site won the 2008 Christian Web and Blog Award for Best Christian Social Action Website

- **www.HOPE08.com** was the inward-facing website, intended primarily for participants and organisers of HOPE08 activities
- The websites attracted a combined 'Useful' or 'Very Useful' mark of **94%**, while **88%** found the E-News service to be of use to their projects

The **Resource Book** was the major material production to come out of HOPE08. It was published by Authentic in 2007 and it featured extensive resources and ideas, with chapters devoted to every key feature of the HOPE Year.

- **91%** of HOPE Champions polled found the Resource Book 'Useful' or 'Very Useful'
- By the close of 2008, **29,420** copies had been sold
- A follow-up 'HOPE Great Ideas Book 2' is planned for summer 2009.

6. recommendations and reflections for future projects

- *A new model of mission seems to have emerged across the UK in recent years combining words and actions, being good news as well as proclaiming good news. HOPE08 has been an important champion of this change.*
- *Grass roots collaboration between local churches served by national agencies allows the empowerment of Christians to serve their communities in ways which are appropriate to their situations.*
- *Non-prescriptive models of mission allow a flexibility of approach within a national vision. A give away 'brand' creates an expression of unity in the midst of a diversity of activities.*
- *The small scale relatively low cost administrative base provided limitations to the support of the HOPE initiatives. An earlier employment of a key administrator and a detailed, planned database would have helped both communication and evaluation.*
- *Black Majority Churches represent a vibrant and growing part of the UK church scene. An earlier consultation and opportunities to shape the vision might have resulted in an even greater buy in from this part of the church.*
- *HOPE's use of new technology (web/email/text-messaging) assisted communication in ways unthinkable previously. It is anticipated that future initiatives will further benefit from technological change.*

- *Target setting for initiatives such as HOPE has always proved challenging. Certain targets, such as the number of locations adopting HOPE, were outperformed by a factor of 3:1, while other targets proved more difficult to either achieve or monitor.*
- *Large 'successful' churches sometimes find it difficult to see the benefits of an association with national initiatives such as HOPE. Future planning should consider articulating the vision of large churches serving smaller churches as an expression of their commitment to the wider body of Christ.*
- *The HOPE high points provided a helpful model for church's to plan their diaries, reflecting on both the church's calendar and the rhythm of everyday lives.*
- *The HOPE08 Resource Book provided an invaluable resource, enabling churches to access creative ideas and resources with which to deliver their HOPE initiatives. A number of networks and denominations invested in the book as an expression of their commitment to HOPE and desire to resource local churches. A new HOPE Resource Book will be available in July 2009, drawing on the lessons learnt from 2008 and providing fresh, practical materials to move the vision forward in coming years.*
- *Engagement with local councils and police has many positive advantages. Early approaches are both appreciated and will result in greater opportunities for joined up activities. Mutual understanding of the different cultural environments between the church and state agencies takes time to develop.*
- *The intentional use of villages as the first part of the HOPE strap line, 'HOPE in our villages towns and cities' was clearly appreciated, but much more could have been done. There is a need for increased understanding of rural church life when nationwide initiatives are being planned.*
- *There are a tremendous number of excellent resources widely available to help churches engage more effectively in their communities. The challenge for everyone is to remain aware of these and make good use of them.*

7. conclusion

Considering the deliberately scaled down model and the 'giveaway' nature of the HOPE initiative, the success that HOPE08 enjoyed across the country is all the more remarkable. The amount of churches and regions which signed on, the new community projects that began and which look set to continue, and the strong partnerships that HOPE participants made with each other, with local government and with the police is testament to the strength of the vision guiding HOPE08. HOPE08 has undoubtedly left the UK in a better state than it found it, by doing more, by doing it together and by doing it in word and action.

introduction

One month in 2008, when Spalding vicar Vaughan Pollard prepared to attend the regular Churches Together meeting, he expected to see the usual fifteen or so faces. What he met instead was close to 50 people, eager to cooperate and excited to act on a series of new projects. Never in the past ten years of such meetings had Pollard or his colleagues seen so many people agree to so many proposals in so short a time.

The churches forged a relationship with the District Council who included the group as part of its Community Cohesion Strategy, a level of involvement not seen in 25 years. They hosted a family fun-day festival. They took part in a parade. A film - later to be nominated for an award - was made by a team of young people and posted online. Volunteers offered acts of kindness in service to their neighbourhoods. Cars were washed, cakes were baked, and banners were flown outside each church. But the group knew they could do more.

Working together, the congregations decided to adopt the local train station. Friendly smiles met station staff and commuters. Volunteers, working in partnership with the local transport forum, picked litter, binned rubbish and swept floors. They tended the grounds, installing new flower beds and hanging baskets. Impressed, the chair of the Peterborough Transport Forum hung a couple of their banners in his station. This breach of protocol alarmed the regional manager and he demanded that the offending signs be taken down. Yet when he visited Spalding to see the station for himself, he asked for the banners to be put straight back up. Shortly after, the Alpha course began its national advertisement campaign. Pointing to a poster, the chair of the Peterborough Transport Forum asked one of the volunteers if there was a connection between their group and Alpha. The relationship was explained, and the manager asked if he could attend the next course.

This was HOPE08. And, just as in Spalding, the mix of sharing the gospel in word and deed, of churches partnering together, of council services being supported, of associated organisations aiding each other's work, and of ordinary Christians leaving their communities better than they found them was repeated across the UK during the year of HOPE.

foundations of HOPE08

HOPE08 was an initiative of churches across the UK which aimed to demonstrate Christian faith in action and to explain the meaning of that faith in villages, towns and cities throughout the UK.

In 2005, three leaders with strong backgrounds in evangelism, outreach, and community engagement met to discuss where their experiences might be leading them. Mike Pilavachi, Andy Hawthorne and Roy Crowne had already seen the success of initiatives such as the Message 2000 in Manchester and SOULINTHECITY in London. These in turn had built on groundwork laid by other organisations, such as Soul Survivor and movements like March for Jesus. It was clear that God's Spirit was at work in the country. But the big question was where next?

The initial discussion over morning coffee led the men to wonder: "Why do one thing, for one week in one city when the whole church could rise to the challenge of reaching the whole nation for a whole year and beyond?" It was from this idea that HOPE was born – a national initiative that would grow to include more churches, more groups and more people partnering together to serve their communities in word and deed than had ever been seen before.

Steve Clifford was brought on board early on in the process. At this stage, the vision did not even have a name. 2008 was chosen as the target year and the team set about testing the water. The concept was attractive – mission, grass roots, words and action, service and evangelism. But they needed to know: was God in this or not? The team produced a series of positional papers exploring what could happen with the idea. They visited heads of the major denominations, and pursued relationships with leaders in all the different streams and cultures of Christian life in the UK. They received enthusiastic support. Clifford emphasises "this 2005 exercise was not a token exercise. Different people were surprisingly enthusiastic about the project. This was part of discerning where God was leading."

After some discussion as to what to name the new initiative, the group settled on 'HOPE'. A beautiful word with theological depth, it was also a positive term that resonated with people inside and outside the church. Ian Chisnall was recruited as National Co-ordinator, and a Board of Reference, and a wider Advocacy and Advisory Board was set up. The main Leadership Team, chaired by Steve Clifford was also established. The members of this

volunteer team were also leaders of other Christian ministries around the country – many were released by their organisations to work with HOPE, and all served sacrificially, laying aside their own projects. Around this time Ian Chisnall, based in Brighton, began to build a small, dedicated support team. The Communications Officer Fritha Washington (née Wheeler), who came on board in October 2006, was joined in February 2008 by a full-time Administrator, Richard Jago.

“A challenge for HOPE was that we only had three years to make it happen and had to hit the ground running!”

- Ian Chisnall

values and vision

HOPE08 aimed to work with as many different types of people as would work with them.

“The message was HOPE was open to all who could commit themselves to the vision.”

- Steve Clifford

The vision was summed up by HOPE's strap line: Do More. Do It Together. Do it in Word and Action.

The phrase neatly encapsulates the core values driving HOPE. The initiative sought to **catalyse, encourage and support** churches in the UK as they worked together and with public bodies such as government, police and the media in service to their communities. In this way HOPE was a national movement played out at the local level.

- HOPE was **grassroots** - supporting local churches in their commitment to neighbourhoods
- HOPE was **collaborative** – always seeking ways to join up different groups, churches and agencies
- HOPE aimed to **resource** participants through a range of materials and the expertise of associate groups, and they lent assistance whenever possible

Other features of HOPE's values and structure are worth noting:

- It was built into the HOPE model that local groups would be inspired to participate without the need to sign on to a prescriptive programme
- Groups who agreed with HOPE's vision were welcome to use the logo and language of HOPE free of charge. They were not required to register or report to a central office, but they were encouraged to send in their stories

- HOPE08 was deliberately set up to run on a small support staff and on a relatively modest budget
- HOPE's organisers made an early decision to focus on resourcing Christians and the work of the Church, rather than primarily seeking to engage with non-Christians or secular organisations
- HOPE was always intended as a catalytic initiative. Rather than emphasising high profile people or events, or centralising control they expected to release resources to local communities and other organisations
- HOPE resisted institutionalisation by purposely limiting its activity to one year. This sent out a clear signal to all potential partners and churches that HOPE was not a rival for people or resources, nor was it setting out to do work already being done by others. From the start it was clear that HOPE08 aimed only to empower churches, inspire volunteers and support already-existing groups.

plans and goals

HOPE was ambitious in its goals. Before going on to assess the activities and events of 2008, it is worth considering some aspects of what the team hoped to achieve and what they expected might happen during the Year of HOPE.

high points

The idea of 'A Year of HOPE' helped to give some shape to the many possibilities afforded by HOPE. Steve Clifford recalls how they wanted to provide a guiding principle to the events and activities as they unfolded. "We tried to get to the heart of what the year could look like. This led to the idea of 'High Points'... A sort of church calendar that shapes the structure of what the year could look like without imposing anything on any one church."

The suggested **High Points** and their accompanying activities were as follows:

- **Fresh HOPE:** In the New Year season churches could offer courses for local people wanting to make a fresh start. Fresh HOPE events might also mark the launch of HOPE08 projects in individual churches for the coming year
- **The Big HOPE:** Churches working together were encouraged to express Easter in ways that were imaginative and inviting to the whole community. Projects might include Passion Plays in city centres, giving out free hot cross buns or acts of service to the neighbourhood

- **HOPE on the Streets:** During May HOPE partners were encouraged to reach a target of a million hours of kindness, by working together to deliver social action projects of various types. Events for children and young people were a focus here, as were the hosting of family fun-days
- **HOPE Explored:** In the autumn, churches could offer an explanation for their actions by inviting people to take part in courses that explain Christianity. In addition, HOPE churches joining together could launch their respective 'seeker courses' in partnership, in order to pool their resources and raise their profile
- **The Gift of HOPE:** Christmas is already a fixture on the calendar of most churches. This was an excellent opportunity to make the gospel accessible to the community, and to celebrate all that happened during the year of HOPE

words and actions

For the leadership team of HOPE08 **words and actions** were inseparable when it came to the church's mission for evangelism. Roy Crowne was especially happy with this aspect of HOPE. "Because the vision was so strong and clear our ability to communicate was helped. The message has always embraced words and actions."

A problem that any Christian initiative faces is that traditional models of proclamation are not always welcomed today. Laurence Singlehurst was on the Leadership team, and he helped to shape HOPE's approach to evangelism. He agrees that many traditional words and metaphors no longer resonate with our largely un-churched population. Yet he saw this as an opportunity for HOPE and for the Church. A loss of confidence in proclamation-style evangelisation is not the same as having lost confidence in the Gospel! Singlehurst saw HOPE08 as playing its part in this new wave of evangelisation.

"A lot of churches try the 'come' approach, but HOPE is trying to encourage 'go!'"

- Laurence Singlehurst

prayer

Jane Holloway is the National Prayer Director for the World Prayer Centre and was also a member of the HOPE Leadership team. She came to the team with the idea for making prayer central by instituting 2007 as a Year of Prayer, inviting all those who took part in HOPE08 to make prayer a part of all the planning and action and by providing a number of central prayer resources. For example the Friday Focus digest gave weekly prayer themes, helping people to unite together to pray about their friends and communities as well as including key national themes. This prayer initiative continued through 2007, 2008 and on into 2009. Holloway notes "prayer helped to communicate the vision of HOPE08.

People who prayed invited other churches to pray with them." This helped to spread the word about HOPE across different church cultural barriers, providing "an awesome sense of God doing something bigger than we had thought." For Holloway, it is significant that the initiative was officially launched at the Trumpet Call prayer event in Birmingham in 2006, rather than at a press conference.

"We wanted to create that foundation of prayer for HOPE08 from the start"

- Jane Holloway

youth

Gavin Calver is the Director of Church and Schools Resource at Youth For Christ, and he also heads up HOPE Revolution, the official youth arm of HOPE08. Calver says he jumped at the chance when first told about the venture – "It was too good an opportunity to miss."

Before the summer festival season in 2007, Calver gathered eight other youth organisations to talk about what a youth HOPE movement would look like. The leaders had all had experience working with gap year programmes that were 'self' centred. They agreed that too many short-term mission projects end up effectively being all about the individual teenager, rather than serving others. To widen everyone's horizons, Calver tells how his team took the three HOPE values as a given, but came up with another youth focussed strap line: Change Me, Change My Friends, Change My Community, Change My World.

associate groups

Roy Crowne emphasises that having different Christian organisations work together was an early feature of the vision for HOPE. "We dreamt that this could happen from the start." Historically, disparate groups and initiatives have not always worked in a joined up fashion. Yet it was hoped that the evidence of three established Christian ministries (Youth For Christ [Crowne], Soul Survivor [Pilavachi] and the Message Trust [Hawthorne]) working together would serve as a model for the kind of thing HOPE wanted to achieve. "We were successful and did not need the others, and yet we worked together. We put aside our ministries under the HOPE brand."

HOPE was not intended to rival other organisations. Instead, it sought to empower, resource or encourage already existing groups as they endeavoured to 'do more' of what they were already doing. Christian organisations and denominations were invited to officially partner with HOPE as **Associate Groups**. The initial stages of HOPE saw the team communicating the message and attracting as much associate group support as possible.

“We knew that HOPE would only work if sufficient organisations joined in. The early stages were exciting but scary. It could have gone badly wrong!”

- Ian Chisnall

HOPE champions

The HOPE model would only work if committed volunteers took it on at the local level, advocating HOPE in their churches and communities. The leadership team worked with their partner organisations to identify potential **HOPE Champions** who could fulfil this role. A network of over 150 Champions was developed, made up of people dedicated to promoting HOPE in their areas. As well as overseeing events, liaising with project workers and discovering potential community needs, HOPE Champions would represent HOPE to their local churches and communities. In turn, HOPE Champions were valuable sources of information and feedback about HOPE activities on the ground.

method of this report

This report attempts to provide an overview of HOPE08. Research was undertaken by Theos, the public theology think tank and was funded by the Methodist Church in partnership with HOPE08.

It is impossible to account for everything that happened under the HOPE banner – indeed, the very fact that more went on than any one person knows about is the first indication of the success of HOPE’s founding vision. However, it is possible (1) to indicate the types of activities that occurred and give an account of the types of groups that did them, (2) to record the reflections of the participants, partners and organisers of HOPE, and (3) to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of the HOPE model as it played out on the ground. This material is of benefit to anyone who took part in HOPE during the year, but it should also prove useful for denominations or groups looking to initiate or engage with a similar venture in the future. The report used the following methods:

quantitative research

- In consultation with HOPE08, Theos designed two extensive online surveys. The first closed questionnaire targeted **HOPE Champions**.¹ The second survey targeted **Associate Group** representatives²
- Theos also analysed the data provided by the three separate databases used by HOPE08 to track interested individuals, church/group registrants and locations in the UK

1. Of the 150 targeted HOPE Champions, 37 completed the extensive online questionnaire, resulting in a 25% response rate.

2. After consultation with HOPE08, Theos invited 12 Associate Group representatives to participate in an online survey. The survey attracted 8 respondents, which was a 67% response rate.

qualitative research

- Theos had access to a large number of **stories and accounts** from a cross-section of HOPE projects. Focus group conversations, archival documents, published material and online resources also provided valuable sources of information
- A series of one-to-one **interviews** were conducted with **selected stakeholders and partner agencies** of HOPE08, including government representatives, police officers, church leaders and organisation heads. Further interviews were conducted with **local HOPE volunteers** and participants in HOPE projects. In addition, Theos sought out people who chose not to engage with HOPE08. The **Leadership team** and the **Support Staff** also made themselves available to Theos for interview
- A team of ten **field researchers** were selected to cover key geographical areas identified by HOPE08. The volunteers were trained by Theos and were provided with interview templates. Each researcher investigated four representative projects in their area and reported their interviews and findings back to Theos

Case Studies appear throughout the following report. In the majority of instances, these studies have been drawn from the field researchers' reports. Unless otherwise indicated, the sample **quotations** running throughout are taken from comments made in the surveys of HOPE Champions and Associate Group representatives. **Tables and graphs** are derived from the database material provided by HOPE but analysed by Theos.

the HOPE year - high points

The HOPE Champions were asked about their church's engagement with the **High Points** throughout the year.

fresh HOPE (January 2008)

- 70% participated in this
- This high take-up is notable, as this was the first High Point of the year and for many congregations their first real exposure to HOPE
- Many **Launch** events happened at this time. Other notable Fresh HOPE activities included **New Year's Eve Prayer** events using a downloadable New Year meditation featuring the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams, and Methodist President Rev. Dr. Martyn Atkins amongst others. 3,100 meditations were downloaded over the Christmas and New Year period. 8,525 had been downloaded by February 2009.

the big HOPE (Easter)

- Attracted 73% of HOPE participants
- Many creative events took place, with churches rising to the challenge of turning Easter outwards and encouraging their local community. Highlights included passion plays, concerts, walks of witness and, in Loughborough, the unveiling of the largest paint-by-numbers artwork in the world - a 460sqm mural depicting the Easter story.
- Another notable activity was the participation in **Blood Donor Drives** in partnership with the National Blood Service. The NBS calculates that HOPE-related contributions have resulted in "**360 lives saved** to date"

Re:Act

Re:Act is a community fun-day programme now operating under the auspices of Urban Saints and directed by Phil Hulks. Re:Act and its partners aim to help local churches provide families and young people with an event that goes beyond what congregations working on their own could normally hope to host. HOPE08 figured prominently in Re:Act's promotional literature, with the HOPE logo acting as Re:Act's most successful tool for attracting cross-denominational interest. In addition, the HOPE leadership team gave much appreciated advice, however Hulks is quick to note "HOPE were never prescriptive... We never had HOPE trying to lead us a certain way." Re:Act was in existence for twelve years before the HOPE08 initiative. In 2006 they hosted six fun-days, their highest number at the time. In 2007 there were none. **In 2008 Re:Act ran 41 events in 39 locations.** 298 people took part on these teams (over 50% of whom were between the ages of 14 and 25) and the total number of people attending Re:Act events is estimated to be between 35,000 and 40,000, with an average of between 800-1200 people partaking in each fun-day. Hulks is clear: "We were waiting for HOPE to come."

HOPE explored (autumn seeker courses)

- 67% of those surveyed linked their church's seeker courses to HOPE in some way
- The slightly lower take-up of HOPE Explored compared to other High Points is explained by the fact that seeker courses are already a firm fixture on the calendars of many churches. This was not a surprise to HOPE08, who deliberately positioned this High Point to coincide with the regular Autumn launches of courses such as Alpha and Christianity Explored

HOPE Explored Case Study (Bradford)

In September 2008 HOPE Bradford hired the banqueting suite of Bradford City Football Club. More than 30 churches invited just short of 600 people to enjoy live music, a two-course buffet meal and hear from City's coach Wayne Jacobs and comic evangelist Mark Greenwood. The evening was hosted by a partnership of congregations launching their respective Alpha, Christianity Explored and Nooma inquiry courses. They intentionally aimed to provide a venue that would appeal to people who would not normally set foot inside a church. The organisers feel that one of the successes of the evening was that it enabled smaller churches to be involved with something on a scale bigger than they could achieve on their own. Another positive aspect was the way that the HOPE banner allowed different church cultures to unite under a common theme. According to Rev. Andy Bowerman, Bradford City Chaplain: "I felt the event went unbelievably well... There was a sense that we had a big number of not-yet Christians there and it was great to have a great spectrum of churches there. The buzz as we got started was great."

gift of HOPE (Christmas 2008)

- **67.6%** participated in a **Gift of HOPE** event
- Of those that participated, **75%** reported that theirs was a joint-venture involving more than one congregation, while only **20.8%** involved only one church or group
- Almost half of the participants polled (**45.8%**) agreed that HOPE had changed the way that their church normally does Christmas

Appendix II contains a list of the kind of things that happened under the Gift of HOPE banner.

HOPE08's vision was to help people and churches "Do More". What did this look like in 2008?

"HOPE08 has transformed the imagination of the local churches of what God can do through us working in unity."

- 86% of participants polled agreed with the statement "Because of HOPE08 we are doing more than in 2007." No one reported doing less in 2008 than in previous years
- 79% report that HOPE08 changed what they were planning to do in the year

"[The year] has been harder & more demanding but the 'fruits of our labours' have been worth it."

- No one thought that HOPE08 was a drain on their church resources. 68% agreed that HOPE08 revitalised the way that their churches usually work

"HOPE08 has given many churches a framework for building a culture of invitation and a sustainable approach to locally focussed mission. It is changing the way they engage creatively with the church calendar and the way budgets are structured to be mission focussed for future years."

words and action

The number, variety and scope of HOPE08 projects taking place across the country were unparalleled compared to any other Christian initiative in the UK. Some of the projects explicitly had **proclamation** as their goal, while others sought to undertake **social activity** or **community service**. It is ultimately impossible to separate 'words' and 'deeds' as the core message behind HOPE implies. In all cases, what inspired these projects was a desire to embody and communicate the Christian gospel.

- More than half of those polled - **57.6%** - reported an increase in their church's engagement in **evangelism by words** (including proclamation, conversations, public speaking events, etc.) compared to the year before. **No one** thought engagement had gone down.

Words and Action Case Study 1 – The Jesus Deck at ‘HOPE08 in the Streets’ (Colchester)

A three-person team of evangelists set up their ‘Jesus Deck’ stall in a busy shopping thoroughfare. Using bold and colourful pictures, banners and advertising, as well as postcards explaining what was happening, the team invited people to engage with the Jesus Deck – a set of cards which open the way to telling the gospel story in a novel way. The team found it very easy to get into conversation using the cards as a starting point. After assuring the person that this was not Tarot or fortune telling, each of the conversations took a different course as people chose cards to talk about. The Deck made it easy to tell the gospel to people unfamiliar with the New Testament, and to connect the stories to events in their lives. “We were conscious not only of the need to be clear in our sharing of the Jesus story, but also conscious that the Holy Spirit was able to prompt us with words about that person’s circumstances that we didn’t know.” One person responded with a serious desire to follow Christ, free literature was given out, and everyone was handed a HOPE08 leaflet containing details of participating churches. The team is enthusiastic about repeating the activity. For future projects they emphasise how important it is to have some training in evangelism and listening. They also suggest that a four-person team would allow for more flexibility, and that during busy times it would be good to have two tables running at the same time, as at times they experienced queues of people waiting to participate.

- **91.2%** of those polled reported an increase in **evangelism by action** (outreach, public services, social actions etc.). Only **5.9%** thought participation levels had remained about the same in their church

Words and Action Case Study 2 – Service Weekend (Warrington)

This was a joint event between two independent churches. The HOPE team had no overt ‘evangelistic’ goal for the weekend; the aim was simply to offer acts of kindness in service to the community. On the Friday of Pentecost weekend one church became an information shop with the Police, Citizens Advice and Disability Awareness offering free legal advice. Saturday was devoted to hours of kindness, working on gardens, litter picking, a soccer school, car washing, pamper room and an ironing service. Sunday saw a special joint-service to which the local junior school was invited.

The events were low cost, but they took months to prepare. Apart from some publicity issues and volunteer-overload (twice as many children as expected turned up to the soccer school!) the weekend was counted a success. 40 people attended the information sessions, 70 cars were washed, 8 gardens spruced up, and around 50 children came to football. In all about 200-300 non-churchgoers were reached. The organisers report that doors were opened to a community scheme linking voluntary groups with businesses, as well as to the local school and the local council.

Significantly, HOPE volunteers whose primary purpose was service activity often reported opportunities to talk about why they were there.

“It’s generally easier to talk about HOPE08, and then move on to talk about the Church, and then move on to talk about Jesus.”

See Appendix II for some more examples of ‘words and actions’ events that took place during the Year of HOPE.

volunteering

What did volunteering look like during the year of HOPE?

- A substantial number of HOPE Champions - **67.7%** - report an increase in levels of volunteering
- This result demonstrates HOPE08’s success at helping to set the stage for further local church projects. Many participants report being optimistic about future involvement

“New initiatives have created new opportunities and empowered new people in many areas.”

- A minority of local organisers (**29.4%**) report no change or only a temporary rise in volunteer levels during the year. Of this group, many remain confident that they can build on HOPE08’s success to establish a stronger culture of volunteerism in their churches

“[Volunteering was] higher during the project. Currently the levels are the same as previous but we are exploring future projects.”

Volunteer Case Study - New Year Fun Day (Crewe)

The event in the town centre involved about 10 churches, the Police and Fire Service and attracted local media interest. About 70 churchgoing families came, and it was estimated that 100-150 non-churchgoers and their children attended. The event led towards the council hosting a civic launch for HOPE08 in the city. The organisers advise anyone hosting similar projects in the future to ensure enough volunteer support well in advance of the event, as it was a challenge to get people already busy with church projects to come onboard. They also recommend preparing volunteers well in advance in key areas such as Childcare and Health and Safety regulations.

the poor, vulnerable and marginalised

HOPE08 sought to aid churches as they served vulnerable members of their wider community.

- **60%** of HOPE participants report that their church's attitude toward these groups has improved
- Some projects carried out under the HOPE banner include: outreach to **migrant workers**; **homeless** projects; outreach to **vulnerable pensioners**; work with **substance abuse** and people affected by **sexually transmitted infections**; support to **youth involved in gang culture**

Street Pastors

Street Pastors is an initiative that trains and equips teams of volunteers who wish to be a positive presence in their cities. Street Pastors seek to be there for anyone who is on the streets at night, and as a result have a primary care for vulnerable and marginalised members of society. The project has proved itself to be a significant avenue for expression of HOPE08 across the nation. Many Street Pastor initiatives have been born from church partnership formed during the year of HOPE. From late 2007 and through 2008 **Street Pastors grew by 45%**. There are now over 100 Street Pastor projects in the UK, working in partnership with the police, town councils, the Home Office and local churches.

Eustace Constance is the Operations Manager for Street Pastors, and was on the Leadership Team of HOPE08. He thinks two aspects of Street Pastors made it particularly open to the HOPE vision. **One** is that Street Pastors belongs to all the churches and does not only belong to the original personalities who set it up. The **second** is the inter-denominational aspect. Before Street Pastors will help set up a project, they require that at least four churches must be working together in the area. **Constance knows of no Street Pastor churches that did not also buy into HOPE.** The structures were in place, the cross-church support was there, 'words and deed' evangelism was already in play: "HOPE was an easy sell."

prayer

"In the last 12 months the number of Christians uniting for prayer has increased tenfold."

More than perhaps anything else on the HOPE agenda, HOPE's effect on the church's participation in prayer is subjective and difficult to measure. Prayer suffused the entire

operation, and there are numerous stories of breakthroughs that occurred after concerted times of prayer, or after prayerful listening and decision making.

HOPE aimed to encourage and resource the prayer activity in its partner churches.

- Close to half - **45.7%** - of respondents report that their churches are praying more than before as a result of their engagement with HOPE08. **54.3%** think prayer has remained the same. **No one** thinks participation in prayer went down during the year of HOPE

“A lot of this is still developing. Getting the churches to change their attitude is a long process, but we are very encouraged by how things are improving.”

Resources and events included:

- **Friday Focus HOPE08 prayer guide.** Produced each quarter for 2007 and 2008, and made available in print and online. 15,000 copies on average were posted to people interested in praying regularly for HOPE. The guides encouraged Christians to pray for their communities to be impacted by HOPE08 and made weekly suggestions for practical action.
- Encouraging the setting up of **‘prayer triplets’** around the country
- In partnership with The World Prayer Centre, instituting 2007 as the **Year of Prayer for HOPE.** This continued into 2008 and 2009
- Significant time in national **Trumpet Call** prayer meetings dedicated to HOPE
- HOPE08 being **publicly launched** at a Trumpet Call prayer event in Birmingham in 2006 in front of an audience of 3000-4000 people

Prayer Case Study - ‘The Great Plant Giveaway’ (Driffield)

After destructive summer floods in the North of England, the Driffield Churches Together group realised that with over 140,000 homes affected, many gardens would also have been destroyed. The plan was to get many people growing seeds and cuttings from January onwards, with a view to being able to give plants away in the spring. Angela Train, coordinator of the project, emphasises the role that listening prayer played: “When the Lord said my lawn would be covered in plants I had a hard time believing and sat there pleading, ‘Lord, don’t let me be ashamed’. But every time I got discouraged, He sent more plants until there was no more room! In obedience I ordered 4000 plant labels and of course we needed them all!” In all, five churches were involved in the Giveaway and the

objectives of the project were more than achieved. "People's lives were touched with the love of Jesus shown through his church. It was brilliant that churches in one area were able to work together and then serve the churches in another area as they sought to bless their community." Train concludes: "There is a growing hunger among God's people to see more and know more of the Lord at the weekly prayer meeting. I am finding folk don't want to go home and we are praying for about two hours, which is almost unheard of. I've seen the Lord change the spiritual temperature of this town. It's fantastic!"

doing it together

There has been a significant increase in churches collaborating together during the course of 2008. This is suggested by the overwhelming amount of stories coming from field researchers, interviews and surveys of HOPE participants.

- **88.2%** of HOPE Champions reported that as a result of HOPE08 their church's attitude towards other Christian groups and denominations improved

After HOPE08 "the churches in Crowthorne are fast becoming The Church in Crowthorne".

- In areas where inter-church partnerships were already in place, **71%** thought that these working relationships were strengthened by the activities of HOPE08

"Some of these churches have worked together before but never on this scale"

- **No one** thought that their church's attitude towards other Christians became worse as a result of their involvement in HOPE08

Participants were asked to indicate, to their knowledge, all the types of congregations that had worked together in their area as part of HOPE08:

- **91.7%** of those polled indicated working with **Baptists** of various affiliations
- **88.9%** worked with the **Church of England**
- **77.8%** saw **Methodist** involvement
- Other denominations and the response rate they attracted include:

Roman Catholic	58.3%
Salvation Army	55.6%
United Reform	50.0%
Assemblies of God	41.7%
New Frontiers	41.7%
Elim Pentecostal	38.9%

- ‘New’ and ‘Independent’ Churches were significant partners in HOPE projects, registering **47.2%**. Amongst others this category included **Brethren, Vineyard, Community** and **House** churches

See Appendix I for further information on denominations who registered with HOPE08, as well as more details about the spread of HOPE08 across the UK.

Working Together Case Study (Bradford)

Over eighty churches participated in some way in HOPE activities in Bradford. The churches pooled their resources to fund a dedicated HOPE worker, money that was matched by the Anglican diocese. Marianne Clough worked hard to include as many churches as possible and reports that there are now churches on HOPE Bradford’s list that have never participated in joint-ventures before. Not every group signed on to HOPE08. Some churches opted-out claiming that it was not the right time for them to be involved in the initiative; others wondered if they had the resources. Clough notes that some churches that were not directly involved in HOPE have been inspired by HOPE nonetheless. “A little chapel in a poor area has started a Friday afternoon drop-in. Now they are starting a drug drop-in centre!” Different denominations and cultures, varying from theologically conservative to liberal, partnered together for HOPE08. Despite some differences of opinion and style, the inter-church partnerships persisted. “A lot of the problems we had were teething problems,” explains a senior member of the Bradford team, “they would not even have arisen if the different churches had not tried to work together in the first place.”

further issues

HOPE08 was extraordinarily successful in attracting a wide range of partners and there are examples of “buy-in” spanning every denomination, church or group in the UK. During the course of research on the year of HOPE, four areas posing particular challenges or opportunities for future engagement came to light.

1. A number of **Black Majority Churches** registered with HOPE, and anecdotal evidence suggests that that more were involved even if they did not sign-up online or log any Hours of Kindness. Comparing HOPE to other national projects he has worked on, Andy Hawthorne thinks “we have worked better here than ever before.” During the planning stage of HOPE in 2005, steps were taken to develop good working relationships with BMC leaders. Following the recommendation of Joel Edwards of the Evangelical Alliance (EA) and Katei Kirby of the African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance (ACEA), Eustace Constance was brought onto the HOPE Leadership team. Furthermore, in 2006 a series of

meetings was held with senior BMC pastors and leaders. Some attendees wondered whether the meetings could have been held earlier in the planning process, but everyone recalls the warm, encouraging and prayerful tone of the gatherings. It was here that a desire to participate in HOPE08 was indicated. It is evident that HOPE did attract much goodwill, yet it remains the case that buy-in was not as high as the HOPE leadership team would have wanted. Constance is confident that a lot of churches that did not buy-in to HOPE would have if approached earlier. He also thinks that building relationships is key, but he emphasises that relationships are a two-way road. For Steve Clifford “our success with black majority churches depends on the relationships on the ground at a local level. There is still a lot of work to be done to get black and white leaders to be seen to work together.” HOPE08 was a key part of this work and it marks a positive step taken in the ongoing process of developing partnerships between all Christians in the UK.

2. Overall, churches in the **Church of England** accounted for a quarter of all congregations that got behind HOPE08, and they form the largest single denominational group of registered participants.

Some areas relating to HOPE’s work and the Anglican Church are worth highlighting:

- Individual Anglican churches and parishes were often some of the most generous of HOPE’s **financial** supporters. Paul Bayes was on the HOPE leadership team, and he is also the National Mission and Evangelism Adviser to the Archbishops' Council. On this matter of financial support, Bayes regrets that the Church of England does not have a central fund to support things like HOPE. “Because of the way we are structured we were unable to give enough resources.” He confessed to being frankly embarrassed that the Anglican Church as a national organisation “punched below its weight.”
- The Church of England also comprises a high number of **rural parishes**. The feedback received from village congregations was that the HOPE resources seemed to assume a critical mass that rural areas simply do not have. Another reason that much of the language of HOPE08 might not resonate with rural congregations was because many village churches are already a central and accepted player in community life. They occupy a different place in the minds of the surrounding community, and thus face a different set of challenges to those of their city counterparts.
- It should be pointed out that rural Anglican churches often feel their particular situation has been missed by national initiatives, and so **this was not a unique problem on HOPE’s part**. Bayes is generally positive about HOPE in the villages, and he suggests that it made a good start that can be developed in the future, perhaps with a stream of resources dedicated to rural church work.

3. Research for this report revealed a tendency in some areas of the UK for **well-resourced evangelical churches** with thriving congregations not to get fully involved with HOPE08. A common theme was that churches that already financially supported community service projects, had strong youth groups or engaged in missions sometimes did not think HOPE offered them anything they needed. This caused frustration for the volunteers in these churches trying to promote HOPE's full vision of partnership and empowerment. As the UK Development Director of Alpha, Bonnie Yule-Kuehne is used to working with well-resourced evangelical churches. She suggests that often what seems a lifeline to a small church might appear somewhat parasitical to a large one. One way around this problem is to get big churches to see their participation in inter-church initiatives as part of their service to smaller churches. Another issue is that of time. Interviews and field reports brought to light 'cash-rich but time poor' churches which did not accept the invitation to join HOPE. One pastor of a thriving independent church relates how although he personally was keen on HOPE08, his congregation as a whole decided against participating "mainly because of the feeling of initiative overload." Clearly this is not a problem with HOPE's theology, vision or values, but it is an area worth considering for future ventures wanting to engage the whole church.

"It is hard to get people to do anything socially in this church; they will pay for things, but not do things!"

4. Only one evangelical church network made the specific decision **not to buy-in at an organisational level**. The leader of this network explained his decision to the Theos research team, beginning by applauding the people behind the initiative, as well as the mission focus of HOPE08: "The more activity that can be encouraged to reach out with the good news the better. Great!"

"However... HOPE encourages churches to 'do more' without also asking the fundamental questions of systemic change regarding structure, values and leadership. This is not to say that it is wrong but rather of limited value. What is good about it is that it is getting the church relating and working together. But there are other ways of doing this as well, which would take less time and other resources. From our perspective, it would have meant changing our programme in some big ways to accommodate this. We therefore gave freedom for local involvement but did not feel inclined to national partnership on this occasion."

Anecdotal evidence and survey research indicated that a number of churches from this network did indeed participate in HOPE at the local level.

associate groups

“These organisations have put their money and reputations behind us. It’s humbling.”

- Steve Clifford

For HOPE ‘working together’ very much included working with as many Christian organisations and groups as possible. The Church denominations and para-church agencies which accepted the invitation to partner with HOPE were known collectively as Associate Groups.

- 155 of these organisations registered with HOPE
- 100% of Associates surveyed agreed that HOPE was a good fit for their organisation
- 100% recall being initially excited at the prospect of being associated with HOPE
- 100% think that the continued association with HOPE08 was a good one
- **None** of the Associates polled thought that HOPE had a negative effect on their organisation’s work, either at the initial stages of the partnership or as the relationship continued through the year

“HOPE has been one of the most significant works for God. The most marvellous thing one can imagine.”

The level of goodwill coming from a wide variety of Christian ministries spanning across denominational, theological and cultural lines is significant. Paul Bayes relates that he never once received a negative phone call about HOPE08. He emphasises that this lack of institutional backlash is rare, especially when compared to past partnerships with other initiatives and organisations. Jane Holloway too, as National Prayer Director at the World Prayer Centre, is no stranger to large para-church partnerships. She relates her experience of talking to different Christian leaders about HOPE08 and inviting them to share the vision. She was delighted, but also surprised, when almost no one said no. “This is unprecedented!”

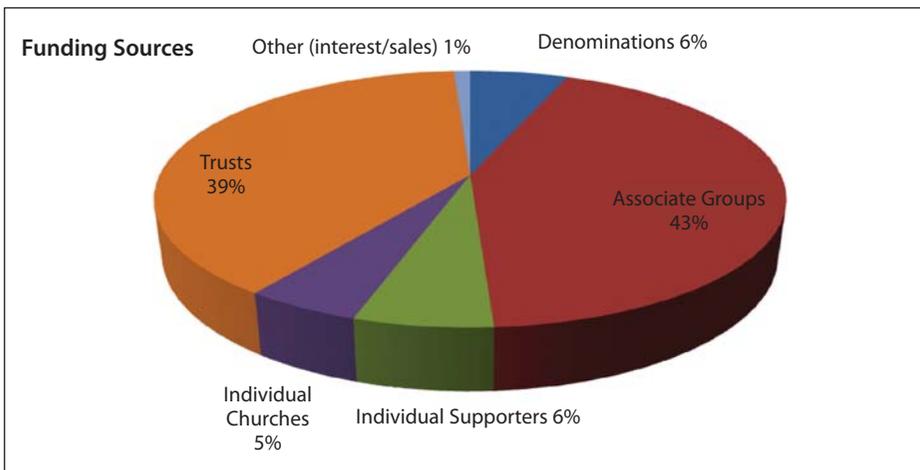
- Prominent partners include **Soul Survivor**, the **Message Trust** and **Youth For Christ**, each of which donated generously and released Mike Pilavachi, Andy Hawthorne, Roy Crowne and other staff to do the work of HOPE.

- Other organisations also released key personnel to be on the HOPE Board and Leadership team: **Bible Society** (Rob Cotton); **Cell UK** (Laurence Singlehurst); **Make It Happen** (Matt Bird); **The Church of England** (Paul Bayes); **Street Pastors** (Eustace Constance); **World Prayer Centre** (Jane Holloway) and **Pioneer** (Steve Clifford)
- Other collaborations at the national level include: **ABA Design**, **Associated Bus Ministries**, **Authentic Publishing**, **Christian Enquiry Agency**, **CPO**, **Evangelical Alliance**, **Urban Saints**, **MEMO**, **New Life Publishing**, **Scripture Union**, **RUN**, **Kingsway Communications**, **Fresh Expressions** and **Vivid Broadcast**.
- **Alpha**, **Ignite**, **Book on HOPE**, **CARE**, **Compassion**, **Spring Harvest**, **the Methodist Church**, **Saltmine**, **UCB**, **Elim Church** and **New Wine** were amongst organisations who dedicated significant resources to HOPE and to the promotion of HOPE throughout the year.
- The **Girls** and **Boys Brigade** gave their summer camp a strong Acts of Kindness dimension in partnership with the HOPE on the Streets High Point.

HOPE projects often channelled people towards Associate Groups, or used their resources as part of a HOPE initiative. Associate Groups partnered with HOPE in the production and distribution of publicity material, DVDs and other printed resources. Other forms of support included advice and information, material resources, prayer and pastoral aid, volunteer workers and help getting the word out about HOPE08.

A major expression of partnership came by way of financial contributions

- Large agencies were asked to consider giving £5,000 - £10,000 per year
- Smaller agencies were asked to consider giving £2,000 - £5,000



- In total, **almost half of all funding** for HOPE came from Associate Groups, with partner denominations accounting for **6%** and partner organisations making up **42%** of the funds given to HOPE08 from 2006 to 2008¹

Andy Hawthorne, veteran of many Christian campaigns and initiatives, says of HOPE that it has been “one of the easiest things I have ever been involved with in terms of financing.”

Small Associate Group Case Study - HOPE for Justice

HOPE For Justice is an initiative working to combat human trafficking in the UK and abroad. The founder, Ben Cooley, had long had the desire to do something about this injustice, and he saw an opportunity with the launch of HOPE. He founded and named his organisation “specifically because of HOPE08”. For the November 2008 launch event of his national campaign, HOPE offered to do what it could by listing the event on its website, and including it in emails that it sends to its supporters. In addition, Cooley values the lessons he learned from observing how HOPE balanced a lot of different expectations and denominations. “They did it well. It shaped me and my thinking in trying to reach the whole church.” HOPE08, he says, “has done a great work in bringing lots of groups of people to the table.” This vision for working with existing groups has encouraged Cooley to look at his own organisational strategy. “Big events and rallies are not always the way forward. It is good to focus on small venues and get local church support.”

Large Associate Group Case Study - Alpha

Cooperation between Alpha and HOPE08 was apparent across the country. Churches hosting Alpha planning meetings and events often set aside time specifically to talk about HOPE, and many Alpha courses were launched under the HOPE Explored banner. Alpha did not incorporate the HOPE logo in any of its printed material or on its guest-facing website. However, Alpha did mention HOPE and provide appropriate links to HOPE sites and resources on Alphafriends.org, a website devoted to people running the courses. Regarding the close identification between Alpha groups and HOPE groups in many areas of the UK, Bonnie Yule-Kuehne never heard any negative feedback. She is unsurprised that this would be the case, due to the care that HOPE leaders took in establishing personal relationships. It has always been Alpha’s intention to “play its part” in Christian work across the country, and Yule-Kuehne appreciates the similar vision shared by HOPE. Alpha’s goal is that where they can, they will work together with existing groups. Yule-Kuehne recognises that in this Alpha and HOPE are pulling in the same direction. Indeed, from her perspective “the message of working together is one of the strongest things HOPE offers.”

1. Figures from financial report by Clive Dudbridge, 31 December 2008.

young people

HOPE Revolution was the official youth arm of HOPE08, working under the strap line Change Me, Change My Friends, Change My Community, Change My World. Gavin Calver is the Director of Church and Schools Resource at Youth For Christ, and he also heads up HOPE Revolution. Although YFC assumed a large portion of responsibility, Calver is clear that it was not just YFC's project. "Collaboration was the key. It truly was pan-denominational. There were no fences – everyone was invited."

Initially, the big push had been for youth to sign up by texting in their contact information, with the aim of attracting 100,000 teenagers. Unfortunately, this coincided with a series of high profile scandals at the BBC and elsewhere involving fraud and mis-use of audience's texts. In the end HOPE Revolution received about 15,000 individual registrants by text. Fortunately, more traditional methods of recruitment were also used, including posters, cards and word of mouth. An active web presence and strong relationships with local youth groups ensured the success of HOPE Revolution.

In many cases the local HOPE Champions were also youth workers. "This has meant that the quality of the HOPE Revolution events has been high." HOPE Revolution deliberately did not use the '08' in its logo, and it is not winding down. "If anything, it will get bigger. The best is yet to come."

Young people engaged in other ways with HOPE08:

- HOPE Champions report that **the majority of people reached by their HOPE activities were under 20 years of age.**
- **74.3%** ran projects that included primary school children in some way
- **85.7%** report reaching young families
- **85.7%** of participants record also working with secondary school students
- **62.9%** worked with teenagers

Throughout the UK, young people also took active roles in leading HOPE events:

Youth Case Study (Macclesfield)

The Macclesfield Christian Mission worked closely with the Message Trust to run a series of HOPE events in local schools. As a whole, the projects gained exceptional feedback from the church, the council and the community. In the schools especially, teachers were left with a positive view of the church. Pupils too were “blown away” by the impact of hearing about God and His power to work in their lives. The local radio station and newspaper covered many of the events, including a youth concert and a community weekend. In all, 28 local churches were involved, reaching over one thousand young people through the schools covered by the HOPE activities. “The HOPE year helped to take the church out to the community and break down any barriers.”

Ignite HOPE (Cardiff) had young people in key positions on the team. Although youth-driven, Ignite HOPE's events were not youth-exclusive. For three days in May 2008 more than 430 young people donated 6,500 hours of kindness to their communities. In the evenings a further 800 young people are reported to have attended the city central site for music, worship and teaching. The site also hosted numerous family-friendly activities. Teams were sent out at night into the city in order to mix with clubbers and ensure that people got home safely. Building on these events, Ignite HOPE ran for a further ten days across South Wales, attracting more than 500 people. Gary Smith, co-founder of Ignite HOPE tells how local communities were touched by the actions of these Christian teenagers. “Kids we met during the projects came along to the evenings to see what this was all about.” Some members of the support crew for the evening events joined Alpha courses as a result of their good experience working with the Ignite team. “One policeman patrolled on the Saturday and came back on his day off, grabbed a t-shirt and got stuck in. It was brilliant”.

the public - police, government and the media

HOPE08 enjoyed a high public profile.

- In June 2008 Prince Charles hosted a reception at Clarence House for the organisers and volunteers of HOPE08

"I just wanted to say how full of admiration I am for all your extraordinary activities, your devotion and your ability to motivate other people."

- HRH Prince Charles

- In December 2008, Prime Minister Gordon Brown also invited local HOPE workers and board members to a reception at 10 Downing Street. At the event he publicly recognised how people of faith are at the heart of every social movement that has transformed society, including the work of HOPE

"I applaud all those involved in HOPE08."

- Prime Minister Gordon Brown

HOPE's phrase 'Do It Together' also meant wanting to work with secular bodies. Early on it gained the support of stakeholders such as the **Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)**, the office of the **Metropolitan Police Commissioner** and the **Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)**. Considering its modest budget, small team and large vision, HOPE's success at partnering with public sector organisations is especially worthy of note.

The HOPE Champions were asked about the general effect of HOPE08 on their church's attitude towards secular or non-Christian organisations.

- **61.8%** agreed that their church's relationship to these groups has improved
- Only **38.2%** thought the attitudes were about the same
- **No church** reported having a worse relationship with secular institutions as a result of HOPE08

"Local authority and police are now less suspicious of church groups. 'On the streets' activities did a lot for Christian credibility."

police

- **67%** of those polled thought that their working relationship with the police had improved

"Links with neighbourhood policing at county and local levels have improved dramatically, with the police committed to keeping the agenda moving."

Where there was a working relationship, the respondents were asked whether it was the police or the church that had made the first approach:

- **53%** report telling the police about HOPE08
- **18%** report making first contact, but the police were already aware of HOPE
- **9%** say that the police made the first contact with the local HOPE group

Local Police

Many regional police forces officially included HOPE in their community strategies. One example is the Sussex Police Equality Scheme of 2008/11 which states: "East Sussex Division are supporting the HOPE 2008 initiative. District Commanders are encouraging neighbourhood specialist teams to link with HOPE initiatives locally developing improved dialogue with faith communities."

government

Many Government ministers and MPs were aware of HOPE projects in their region.

- **30%** of HOPE Champions record telling their MPs about their plans
- A further **10%** say that while they made first contact, their MP was already aware of the initiative
- **64%** of the respondents report that their church's relationship with their MP had stayed roughly the same
- **18%** indicated improved relations

Consistent with its vision for community engagement, HOPE enjoyed greater success at the **Local Government** level.

- Many HOPE projects working with local government report funding being made available, as well as public support by way of personal attendance at events or publicity functions
- **68%** polled thought that relations with their council had improved
- **61%** report being the ones to tell their Council about HOPE08
- **6%** say that they made the first contact but their Council was already aware of HOPE
- **6%** report that the Council made the first contact

Local Government Association

Cllr David Rogers represents Newhaven & Ouse Valley West and he also works nationally with the LGA, where he chairs Community Well-being, one of seven main Boards. He offered his views on partnering with LGAs. “Local authorities do not operate on a command and control model and so to get one or two councillors on board is not to get the organisation on board.” Council agendas are set well in advance, and so the proposed initiative needs to clearly fit with the goals already set by the council. Rogers was asked directly if Christian projects posed a problem. “Not really. The Government encourages faith-based initiatives.” For future initiatives on the scale of HOPE, Rogers recommended first that the head of the organisation needs to be the one making the contact, secondly that the chief executive or chairman of the LGA is the appropriate office to reach, and thirdly that the approach needs to be made far enough in advance to be incorporated into the coming agenda for the year.

Working with local government is valuable, but it does come with some **challenges**. HOPE partners who worked closely with councils were asked to share their experiences for the benefit of anyone planning similar events in the future:

- The pastor of a small Baptist church and member of the steering committee for a HOPE project in East London reports that her own council is “markedly anti-Christian.” They were resistant to overt faith-based initiatives, and were not willing partners with HOPE. **The committee found that the neighbouring council was more amenable**, and accepted invitations to attend prayer events and other HOPE functions.

- Those heavily involved in fun-days (such as Re:Act) are used to negotiating with town councils. **Every fun-day has to have permission, and each council has its own procedure.** It is important for organisers to be ready with the right forms. Open-air BBQs, live music and high noise levels – mainstays of most fun-days – were flagged as particularly troublesome. If town councillors are resistant to the event or to the organisers, these can often be sticking points.
- A number of organisers of public events such as food stalls, entertainments and sports activities mention **Health and Safety and Childcare regulations** as two areas worth paying special attention to. Volunteers need to be aware of these regulations before they arrive and it is important to keep thorough documentation of the training and steps taken in these areas.

Research for this report found no instances where attempts to work with local government were totally unsuccessful. Even where there were some hitches, imagination, patience, persistence and an evident desire to cooperate with the council's planning process served local HOPE organisers well.

Council Case Study (Marple)

The local HOPE08 team decided to join already existing community events such as the Marple Carnival and the Marple Food Festival. Over the course of the year, up to twelve local churches partnered with the town council in these events. According to the HOPE08 coordinator, the goal was "to get more involved with community events, to take the gospel and to show acts of kindness... by doing so to raise the profile of the church in the community." The churches involved have received positive feedback for many of their events, especially where the activities were offered for free. The 'GLOOT' (God's Loot) initiative, where redundant items are given away, seem to have impacted the community most. The local press also covered those events where the churches partnered in council run events such as the festival and the carnival.

media

From the beginning HOPE knew that they did not have the resources or stories that would necessarily attract the mainstream national press. They knew that attention from regional press was more likely, and sought to resource local coordinators for this eventuality – preparing strategy documents and devoting a chapter in the HOPE Resource Book to this topic. HOPE employed Fritha Washington (née Wheeler) as their Communications Officer, and she was a valuable resource for HOPE groups engaging with their local press.

- There are numerous examples where local newspapers, radio and online news sites took an interest in HOPE08 activities
- **59%** of HOPE Champions polled found that their church’s relationship with the media improved as a result of HOPE08
- Where there was interest, **61%** report being the ones to tell the media about HOPE08
- **9%** report that they were approached by the media first

“BBC Radio Devon has been very eager to promote the HOPE activities. They were very enthusiastic about our Christmas event!”

As well as local secular media, HOPE also focussed its resources on Christian media outlets. Fritha Washington wrote articles for Christian publications as well as denominational literature including calendars, prayer leaflets and promotional literature. Every two weeks ‘E-News’ emails were sent out to everyone on the database and websites such as www.HOPEnews.co.uk also helped get the word out.

- With the help of Matt Bird, HOPE08 approached a number of Christian journalists and editors. **Some publications did not commit regular feature space to HOPE but were happy to publish stories on a case-by-case basis.** These included the *Catholic Herald*, *Faithworks*, *War Cry*, *The Church Times* and *Christianity* magazine
- **Sixteen newspapers and magazines agreed to devote regular space to HOPE-related stories.** These included *The Baptist Times*, *New Wine Magazine*, *The Methodist Recorder*, *Inspire* magazine, *The Salvationist* and *The Church of England Newspaper*
- The Christian media company **New Life** branded their monthly paper with the HOPE08 logo for the duration of the year, and agreed to devote considerable space to telling HOPE stories

HOPE materials and resources

HOPE produced a range of materials and resources throughout the year. HOPE Champions were asked to provide more detailed feedback on how effective they found the resources.

Resource	Very Useful	Useful	Did not Use	Not Aware
Promotional DVD	69%	31%	0%	0%
Brochure (6 pages)	21%	64%	0%	15%
Resource Book (160 pages)	60%	31%	6%	3%
Website	27%	67%	6%	0%
E-news	6%	82%	6%	6%

Three resources in particular are worthy of further comment:

website

Not including HOPE Revolution, there were three main parts to the HOPE family of websites.

- **www.HOPEnews.co.uk**. Hosted by **Vivid Broadcast**, this website provided a platform for broadcast reports, news stories and user-generated content. It was also the home of the Shout About It! service which encouraged participants to send in notices of planned events and then sent the bundled messages out as a regular email digest
- **www.HOPEinfo.co.uk** was intended to be the public face of HOPE08, designed for anyone interested in what the initiative was all about. Run by the **Christian Enquiry Agency** and sponsored by the **Church Army**, the site won the 2008 Christian Web and Blog Award for Best Christian Social Action Website

- **www.HOPE08.com** was the inward-facing website, intended primarily for participants and organisers of HOPE08 activities. Some users commented that this site was too busy, and difficult to find the desired information. Others who used the site regularly admitted it was not always easy to navigate, but emphasised that they still found it helpful.
- HOPE continues to maintain its web-presence offering '2009 and Beyond' and 'Over To You' links and resources following the theme *"This isn't over. ITS OVER TO YOU"*

dvd

- **23,000** copies of the promotional DVD were produced. The DVDs were given away for free, and as of October 2008 there were only 200 copies left
- Funding for the DVDs was an early budget priority, and they were considered to be the first salvo of the publicity campaign for HOPE
- The DVDs were given away at the launch event and other locations in lieu of brochures and leaflets. Upon reflection, Ian Chisnall suggests that this relatively expensive form of communication was not always the best choice in this context. "Printed material needs to be there first!"
- DVDs were considered by many to be a great success, scoring the highest amongst HOPE participants with a combined 'Useful' or 'Very Useful' score of **100%**

resource book

"The Resource Book was fantastic. The best thing that happened."

The HOPE Resource Book was the major material production to come out of HOPE. It was published by **Authentic** in 2007.

- By the close of 2008, **29,420** copies had been sold
- The book raised funds for HOPE of about **£10,000**
- A follow-up 'HOPE Great Ideas Book 2' is planned for summer 2009. One of the main contributing authors to both books is Laurence Singlehurst. He would like to see the old resource book and the next publication together to be considered as "the manual for mission in the next five years... [these resource books] are HOPE's strength."

the legacy of HOPE08

What might the legacy of HOPE look like in the churches and communities that it touched? As the HOPE year entered its final season, the HOPE Champions were asked to look ahead to the effects of the initiative in their locality:

- 79% thought that HOPE08 has provided practical help for their church
- 82% agreed that HOPE08 has inspired their congregations
- 83% thought HOPE08 has made a tangible difference
- 94% remain enthusiastic about the goals and visions of HOPE08

Appendix II contains a list of the types of projects that look set to continue.

A significant continuing HOPE project is **HOPE Scotland**. Becky Frank, HOPE Scotland Co-ordinator, relates how from the beginning they worked towards building a sustainable initiative. A national Scottish board is in place and materials have been produced including online resources, newsletters and a HOPE Scotland booklet. The project looks set only to grow. "From 2010 on churches know that this initiative will go seasonal and they can plan for it even now."

Amongst the HOPE Champions, plans to build on **partnerships** forged during the HOPE year was a common theme:

- "Our HOPE group has been approached to take over from the previous Churches Together group which had almost fizzled out."
- "We plan to continue to think wider than just us - to think we can do much, much more together."

- “Several new initiatives involving co-operation between the churches are being developed.”

Other groups expected to work with **structures, events** and **procedures** put in place as a result of HOPE:

- “The central steering group will continue to operate and will build upon what has been done.”
- “Healing on the Streets, a Nightclub project and a Hot-meals-for-the-homeless project have all become ongoing projects into next year.”
- “I hope that enthusiasm to spread the gospel will continue to increase, and that we can make use of the different High Points as a starting point for ideas in the coming years.”

As in Scotland, many groups report keeping the **HOPE brand** in a more personalised form:

- “We have already dropped "08" and are making plans for a similar but bigger programme next year.”
- “All our banners, T-shirts, Hoodies etc. are without the '08 part, so the identity of HOPE will be continued throughout '09 and beyond.”
- “The HOPE logo is now a permanent addition to our main street side notice boards. ‘HOPE for our neighbourhood’ is now a visible strap line for our local community. We have realigned our budget to allow for mission activity that follows the HOPE calendar of High Points.”

Legacy Case Study (Leicester)

The HOPE experience in Leicester provides one example of the integration of relationships, structures, branding and forward thinking that characterises much of HOPE's legacy in the churches and communities. One local volunteer tells how “locally, churches are committed to many more joint outreach, social action and prayer activities as a result of HOPE. Leicester has been a city where it has seemed hard for churches to work together in the past, but HOPE has allowed a significant change to take place for many. Networking and mailing have allowed many new contacts to be made and we anticipate key groups and initiatives will continue to tap into this. Through a generous piece of funding from a church body we've been able to assemble a library of course materials and start up kits for churches to borrow from now on for Fresh HOPE and HOPE Explored initiatives. These will continue to be used in 2009 and beyond.”

One of the most important aspects of HOPE's legacy is the **challenge that it has made to expectations** of what Christian initiatives are supposed to look like. During the course of research for this report, most concerns about HOPE could be divided into two main categories. Yet rather than indicating failure, in each case the concerns actually point towards the success that HOPE enjoyed in implementing its goals.

- The **first** set of criticisms revolved around issues relating to the **perceived short-term nature of HOPE**. The '08' nature of the initiative caused some confusion. Some partners who got involved with HOPE were mystified about the decision to limit the initiative to 2008: "HOPE has built up the brand and now they are going to shut it down!"
- The **second** set of concerns had to do with the **perception that HOPE and its visionary leaders took on lower profiles as the year progressed**. Some church workers told how "there was a lot of sound at first" but then the voices seemed to fall silent. Feedback included stories of churches waiting for HOPE to be like "a big bang" that continued to hit the churches. There was a perception from some quarters that the high profile leaders of HOPE should have been constantly promoting big, centralised HOPE-themed events.

It is significant that these perceptions coincide precisely with the main vision of the HOPE08 team. HOPE was set up to resist creeping institutionalisation. The aim was always to resource individual churches, not own a brand. All the leaders agree that this was a crucial aspect to HOPE's vision.

"We are not building Christendom. These things don't have to go on forever!"

- Steve Clifford

HOPE team members wanted to set a counter-cultural example by the way they tried not to build empires. When leading a project there is a natural desire to micro-manage all the events and information. But HOPE focussed on giving up control and allowing others to run with the plan.

Similarly, HOPE's team sought to empower local leadership. It is not true that they pulled back from HOPE - most of the team did numerous events and had to turn things down because they were already engaged in HOPE work elsewhere. In any case it would have been impossible to fulfil all of the invitation and enquiries stemming from the year of HOPE. What is true, however, is that for HOPE this was entirely consistent with the original vision to move away from what Laurence Singlehurst calls "the honey-trap model" – big event oriented initiatives revolving around high profile, personality-based leaders. Instead, the nature of the vision was always that it was an empowering model for individuals and grass-roots churches: a focus on the local.

“There is a change in the church. It is looking beyond its four walls in a way I have not seen before. People are thinking how to impact their community. Rowan Williams said ‘Thank you for waking the sleeping giant.’ This is brilliant! There are enough resources in the church to do what we have to do.”

- Andy Hawthorne

HOPE has initiated a change in expectations of how nation-wide Christian projects might work. HOPE’s founders intended to de-centralise their programme and move it away from personality-driven events. They planned to stop after one year so as to resist the lure of the institutional empire. Putting the brakes on is a new and sometimes shocking thing to Christians used to older models of evangelism and organisation-building. HOPE tried something which seemed different and daring. Instead of owning they gave away. Instead of collecting they shed. Instead of making themselves bigger, they went smaller. And, much like the mustard seed planted in faith that Jesus told his followers about, this small thing has grown – and is growing still – larger than anyone at first had hoped.

recommendations and reflections for future projects

- *A new model of mission seems to have emerged across the UK in recent years combining words and actions, being good news as well as proclaiming good news. HOPE08 has been an important champion of this change.*
- *Grass roots collaboration between local churches served by national agencies allows the empowerment of Christians to serve their communities in ways which are appropriate to their situations.*
- *Non-prescriptive models of mission allow a flexibility of approach within a national vision. A give away 'brand' creates an expression of unity in the midst of a diversity of activities.*
- *The small scale relatively low cost administrative base provided limitations to the support of the HOPE initiatives. An earlier employment of a key administrator and detailed, planned database would have helped both communication and evaluation.*
- *Black Majority Churches represent a vibrant and growing part of the UK church scene. An earlier consultation and opportunities to shape the vision might have resulted in an even greater buy in from this part of the church.*
- *HOPE's use of new technology (web/email/text-messaging) assisted communication in ways unthinkable previously. It is anticipated that future initiatives will further benefit from technological change.*
- *Target setting for initiatives such as HOPE has always proved challenging. Certain targets, such as the number of locations adopting HOPE, were outperformed by a factor of 3:1, while other targets proved more difficult to either achieve or monitor.*
- *Large 'successful' churches sometimes find it difficult to see the benefits of an association with national initiatives such as HOPE. Future planning should consider articulating the vision of large churches serving smaller churches as an expression of their commitment to the wider body of Christ.*

- *The HOPE high points provided a helpful model for churches to plan their diaries, reflecting on both the church's calendar and the rhythm of everyday lives.*
- *The HOPE08 Resource Book provided an invaluable resource, enabling churches to access creative ideas and resources with which to deliver their HOPE initiatives. A number of networks and denominations invested in the book as an expression of their commitment to HOPE and desire to resource local churches. A new HOPE Resource Book will be available in July 2009, drawing on the lessons learnt from 2008 and providing fresh, practical materials to move the vision forward in coming years.*
- *Engagement with local councils and police has many positive advantages. Early approaches are both appreciated and will result in greater opportunities for joined up activities. Mutual understanding of the different cultural environments between the church and state agencies takes time to develop.*
- *The intentional use of villages as the first part of the HOPE strap line, 'HOPE in our villages towns and cities' was clearly appreciated, but much more could have been done. There is a need for increased understanding of rural church life when nationwide initiatives are being planned.*
- *There are a tremendous number of excellent resources widely available to help churches engage more effectively in their communities. The challenge for everyone is to remain aware of these and make good use of them.*

conclusion

Considering the nature of the model and the values that HOPE worked from, the success that the initiative enjoyed across the country is all the more remarkable. The amount of churches and regions which signed on, the new community projects that began and which look set to continue, and the strong partnerships that HOPE participants made with each other, with local government and with the police is testament to the strength of the vision guiding HOPE08. It is the nature of this achievement that has been the focus of the present report. HOPE08 has undoubtedly left the UK in a better state than it found it, by doing more, by doing it together and by doing it in word and action.

appendix I: HOPE by denomination, region and population

Drawing from various databases and sources provided by HOPE it is possible to get an idea of the breakdown of participation by denomination and by region.

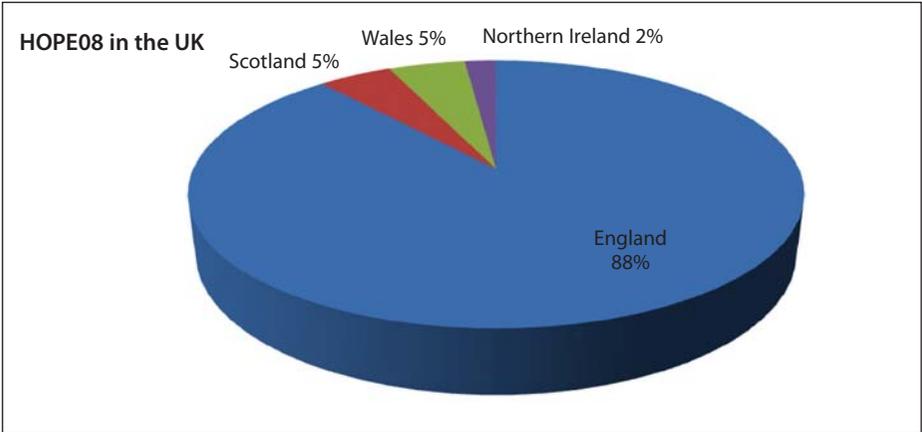
It has not proved possible to provide an exact number of churches or individuals involved in HOPE08. This is due to the open-handed nature of HOPE08 in which groups were encouraged to work under the HOPE banner without being required to report back to a central office.

Over the course of the initiative, HOPE08 worked from three main databases.

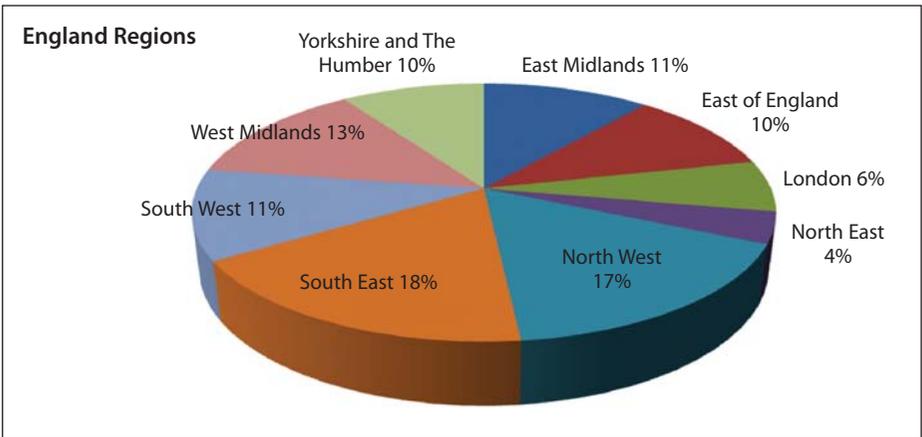
1) Regional Database

This database relates to areas in which HOPE08 has taken part.

- This number comes out to **1478: 1309** of these locations were in England, **71** in Wales, **68** in Scotland and **30** in Ireland
- The database is derived from an original list of 500 areas identified by HOPE as ideal participant locations as these regions all had populations larger than 20,000 people
- As of December 2008, there were still 32 areas of the original 500 that had not had any churches register with HOPE08
- It is significant to point out that the number of locations reached in total far exceeds HOPE's initial projections



Participation by Region within England¹



2) Individual Database

Another database consists of individuals who registered with HOPE08.

- As of September 2008 this list had **2913** names
- This was HOPE08's first database, begun to track the various requests for information and registrations of interest from the general public

1. For England, HOPE08 followed the Government's regional boundaries: www.gos.gov.uk/regionfinder.

- The HOPE leadership team recognised that the individual nature of this registration list did not reflect the fact that HOPE was primarily an initiative working for and through groups, churches and organisations

3) Churches and Organisations Database

In order to measure the take up by churches and other organisations, a new database was created.

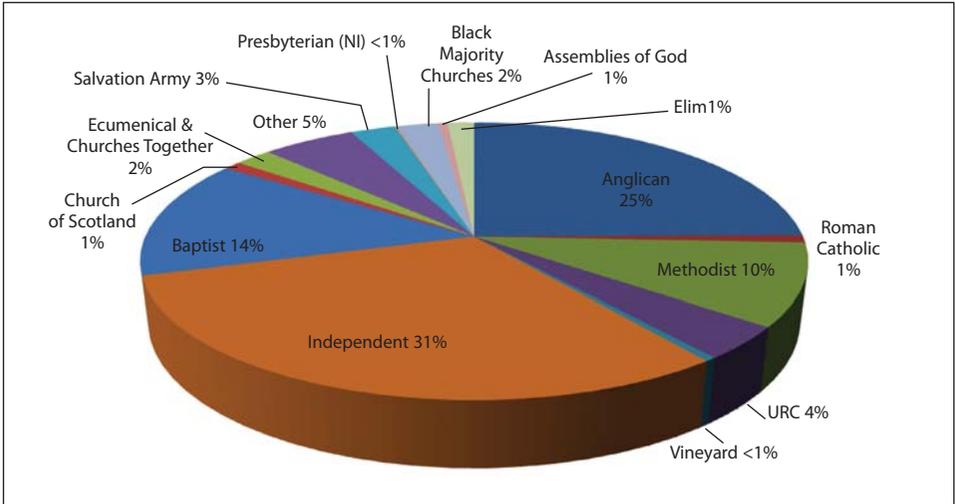
- This is the source of most of the statistical results in the present report
- This list did not differentiate between inter-church groups, para-church organisations and churches
- By removing duplicate entries and multiple names linked to one address we are able to reach a total of **1337** registrants

It should be noted that this number indicates registrants with HOPE08, not *participating churches*. There were more actual churches and groups participating than those registered. The regional nature of HOPE meant that many cities and counties instituted their own registration systems without joining up with the system used by the national office. Examples include:

- Greater Manchester appears **19** times on HOPE's registration list, yet there are at least **79** churches offering HOPE Explored courses through the website of HOPE Manchester.
- Leicestershire appears **26** times on HOPE's data, and yet the local information literature declares **contact with over 70 churches and organisations**.
- HOPE's official registration list reveals only **six** churches from the Bradford area. However, more than **80** churches are known to have participated in HOPE Bradford events.

Further indication of the disparity between registrants and participants comes from the Theos October 2008 survey targeting HOPE Champions across the UK. The survey asked about churches working together on HOPE projects. Of the respondents, **21** claimed to know of Roman Catholic churches involved in HOPE, **15** indicated knowledge of Assemblies of God churches and another **15** said they knew of New Frontiers Churches working on HOPE in their area. Yet the registration statistics indicate only **11** Catholic churches, **7** AoG and no NF churches.

Churches and Groups Registered with HOPE08

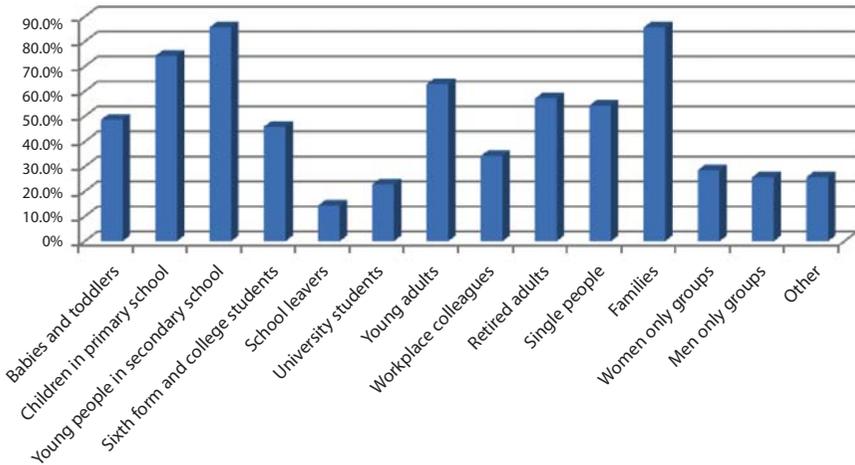


N.B. It should be noted that these percentages indicate *registrants* with HOPE08, not *participating churches*.

- **Anglicans** includes Church of England congregations and Anglican churches in Wales and Scotland
- **Baptist** refers to those churches that identified themselves as such in their name or literature. The category does not further differentiate between different Baptist organisations, affiliations or independent congregations
- **Black Majority Churches** is a label of convenience, following the online Black Majority Churches UK Directory, sponsored, in part, by the ACEA
- **Churches Together** and other ecumenical groups often registered with HOPE on behalf of the partner churches in their area
- **Independents** and **New Churches** form the largest sub-group of registrants. This includes, amongst others, Chapels, Free Churches, and Bible Churches. New Churches include Community Churches and House Church groups. Many of these churches identify themselves as 'non-denominational', and most say they are evangelical either in their name or their literature

- **Methodist** and **United Reformed Churches** have been differentiated where that has been indicated by the churches themselves. However, it should be noted that many Methodist and URC congregations operate together as one group
- The **Other** category refers to registrants who provided only private addresses and self-evident youth groups and organisations. The category also includes assorted Christian organisations and businesses, including Christian bookshops, various healing ministries, and a hospice

Groups Reached by HOPE08 Activities



HOPE Champions were asked to indicate from a list all the groups they thought were primarily reached by their HOPE08 activities. Projects around the country show a definite focus on children and teenagers, with secondary school aged children and families each attracting 85.7% of the response. This was followed by primary school children (74.3%) and young people (62.9%). Besides parents of children, the main focus on adults was on singles (54.3%) and retired people (57.1%). In the main HOPE projects do not seem to have been aimed at school leavers (14.3%) or university students (22.9%). The Other category included prisoners and international students.

appendix II: examples

christmas

Christmas is already a firm fixture on the events calendars of most churches, and it traditionally marks a congregation's highest point of engagement with its wider community. Leaders are always looking for creative ways to serve the neighbourhood and tell the Christmas story. For this reason it might be useful to list just some of the different Christmas events that occurred under the Gift of HOPE banner.

- Beer & Carols events at a city-centre pub
- A 'HOPE mobile' travelled around the village with gifts of HOPE to teenagers
- A town centre outreach including carols, Christmas presentation, hot chocolate, prayer
- Town-wide carnival event with follow up church service
- The new drop in centre for young people offered a time for people to ask any questions they liked about Jesus and Christianity
- Town centre community carol singing event involving all local churches
- HOPE Community Gospel Choir
- Re-enactment of the Nativity with real animals
- Free mince pies giveaway
- A number of churches' outreach events united under the HOPE banner: gift-wrapping, carol singing, drama, healing prayer on the streets and a live nativity all took place across the city on the same day
- Candlelight procession for children
- Hog roast on the High Street for 'late night shop opening' night

- Kick started a Healing prayer initiative on the streets
- Radio advertising campaign
- Churches joined together to each 'adopt a hostel', specifically ones that accommodate the homeless. Churches were encouraged to buy presents for the residents, and then remain in the contact with them to support them in future
- 'Christmas Fun-day' for children and families in the surrounding community
- Free Gift Wrapping in the local shopping centre
- Sing Christmas on the local BBC. Church groups are encouraged to 'host' the event in a cafe, pub, residential home etc. and it is broadcast on the radio and over the internet
- Massive outreach event on the last late night shopping night in the city involving around 30 churches: carol singing, belief surveys, present wrapping, mince pies and hot drinks
- An Advent Labyrinth in the church and in the Village Hall
- 'On the Town' Act of Kindness outreach event

words and actions

This lists but a sample of the variety of words, prayers and service events that occurred during the Year of HOPE.

- Houses Of Prayer Everywhere: Prayer groups of 2-3 across Scotland that provided prayer and care for their communities
- Debt counselling
- Street Pastors
- Detached Youth Work
- HOPE community football
- Big Cream Tea

- Visits to primary schools
- 'HOPE in the Park' Passion Play
- Radio HOPE: A 10-day radio station
- Party in the Park
- Journey into Wholeness/Fair Trade and Christian book stalls
- Prayer Room
- Free Lunchtime BBQs
- Children's messy church activities
- Action weeks
- Family fun days
- Car washes
- Healing Rooms
- Friends International Student Ministry
- 'HOPE Explored' suppers
- Bands and theatre groups visited secondary schools
- Working in the streets and parks with the local community
- Churches Together celebrations
- Stage Show and Concert
- Photo Marathon contest and exhibition
- Blood Donor drives
- Flower shows
- Plant giveaways

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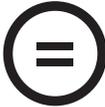
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The whole Church, for the whole Nation, for the whole year

An evaluation of HOPE08

HOPE08 was an initiative of the churches across the UK which aimed to demonstrate Christian faith in action and to explain the meaning of that faith in villages, towns and cities.

This report by Theos, the public theology think tank, evaluating HOPE 2008, was commissioned by the HOPE Board in June 2008. The aim of the report is to record the extent and nature of HOPE generated activity across the UK during 2008, and identify successes and areas for improvement, in order to support individuals and organisations in their planning of future initiatives.

"The passion and drive of the church in the UK is amazing, and we saw involvement from a huge variety of denominations and church streams. Thousands and thousands of churches took the 'do more, do it together and do it in word and action' challenge of HOPE08 and made it their own."

Steve Clifford

"HOPE08 was always a grassroots movement. I think that the timing and sense of God's spirit caused a fantastic mobilisation of ordinary people to do extraordinary exploits in their own communities. Thank you for being a part of such a nationwide initiative to see our communities transformed."

Roy Crowne



Theos ✨
The public theology think tank