

# ALEX AFRIYIE



# WALKING WORTHY

**Introducing his theme, incoming President Alex Afriyie highlights three ways we can 'walk worthy' of our calling to represent Jesus in the UK today**

**A**s I prepare to serve as President of Baptists Together (May 2026–May 2027), I am reflecting on the times we are living in. They feel well described by the Japanese word for crisis, formed from the characters for danger and opportunity. We face global instability, political

and economic polarisation, and declining trust in institutions, alongside a growing sense that everyone is defining truth for themselves. Yet this is also a moment of opportunity. There is a renewed hunger for spiritual truth, particularly among young adults.

We are living in exciting times where young adults are turning up at church and looking for answers. We have seen this in the statistics from the Quiet Revival report<sup>1</sup> that has also been confirmed by our Church Annual

Returns showing growth in baptisms and church attendance, especially among young adults.<sup>2</sup> Something is shifting in our culture; on 10 January 2026 the Guardian reported the sale of Bibles had "reached a record high in the UK in 2025, increasing by 134 per cent since 2019 – the highest since records began".

With around 1822 Baptist churches across the UK, places where people can encounter salvation, community and purpose, the key question is this: how can we walk worthy of our

calling to represent Jesus in the UK today? Drawing on Ephesians 4, I want to highlight three ways.

## 1. BY BEING JESUS-CENTRED COMMUNITIES (EPH. 4: 1-6)

Paul says, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." We know there are plenty of reasons to be divided but Jesus "himself is our peace, who has ... destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility". If we relate to each other from "every tribe, tongue and nation" through our worship of the lamb (Rev 7:9), then we will declare to the world "there is one body and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Eph 4: 5-6). This will cause us to be a prophetic sign of heaven on earth, the answer to a divided world.

One of the things that encourages me as a local pastor in London is seeing working class and middle class white, black and brown people from a variety of backgrounds worshipping and doing community together as a Kingdom Family. There are examples of those with more giving to those who are struggling to pay their rent or have a holiday. This is God's vision of a shalom people (Isaiah 54:10). If we can demonstrate that what unites us is Jesus, then His people will flourish physically, emotionally, relationally and spiritually. Communities up and down the UK will therefore be impacted and "People from many nations will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the

mountain of the LORD, to the house of Jacob's God. There he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths.'" (Isaiah 2:3 NLT) and therefore heal our spiritually barren society.

Our Declaration of Principle says, "That our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is the sole and absolute authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures..." If we take Jesus as our authority to heal and save, then we will take Scripture seriously. This will cause us to take our relationship with Jesus seriously and with humility seek to work and worship together demonstrating that community of vulnerability and genuine love.

I am looking forward to seeing how others around the country are preparing to equip the young adults now beginning to turn up at our churches on Sunday mornings. The first thing I believe we need to do is to give them a strong foundation in the basics of the faith – an understanding of the gospel, repentance, assurance of salvation, their identity in Christ, baptism and the infilling of the Spirit. We also need to give them an understanding of building a strong intimacy with Jesus through the word, prayer, fellowship and worship (Acts 2: 38, 42). Another important area is a clear understanding of what belonging together as the church means and how we can be a witnessing missional community (Acts 2: 42-47).

Some reasons expressed by young adults as to why they are coming to church that I have heard from my context can be summarised in three ways. The first is a need for belonging. The second is a need for a sense of

purpose. The third is a thirst for truth in a confused world. One of the ways we have sought to answer their desire for belonging, purpose and truth in our local church has been by creating 'Food for Thought'<sup>3</sup> discussions that look at the major issues of our day and see how we can apply the truth of the Bible to them in a loving missional way. We have noticed that Gen Z and millennials have especially benefitted from this.



## 2. BY BEING COMMUNITY ORIENTATED - RELEASING PEOPLE'S GIFTS AND MINISTRIES (EPH. 4: 7, 11-13)

Alan Hirsch speaks about creating an 'apostolic environment'.<sup>4</sup> By this he means an environment where all the ministries and gifts of the Spirit are allowed to flourish and be expressed. To walk worthy of our calling needs leadership in our churches that encourages believers to express their ministries and spiritual gifts; where every member is a minister, where the minister or pastor along with other ministries is there to equip and release ministry in all (Eph 4:11-12).

We need to be communities that not only disciple new believers in the basics of the faith but equip them in their lives to

express their spiritual gifts and reach their God-given Kingdom potential.

We also need to be equipped in the fruit of love as we learn to share our sorrows and victories with each other. Often deeper forms of community and discipleship can be best expressed through smaller churches<sup>5</sup> or mirco-churches<sup>6</sup> and new, pioneering communities. Larger churches can do this through home groups or cell groups that not only do Bible study but also emphasise life-application and mission. Each church then becomes an equipping centre for life and mission. As we go into the world we go having been equipped to demonstrate as well as speak about our faith, “equipped for works of service” (Eph 4: 11-12).

### 3. BY BEING MISSION FOCUSED – SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

In a world hungry for authenticity, Paul reminds us that maturity comes through “speaking the truth in love” (Eph 4:15). When churches cultivate honest, loving relationships, we grow in unity and effectiveness for mission. Truth spoken without love wounds; love without truth fails to transform. We need both. Jesus welcomes everyone as they are, yet he also calls us not to remain as we are. In his encounter with the woman caught in adultery, he offers both forgiveness and transformation: “Neither do I condemn you... go and sin no more” (John 8:11). Authentic Christian communities hold these together, trusting in Jesus’ power not only to forgive

but to change lives.

Imagine churches filled with people committed to becoming more like Jesus, willing to speak truth in love, and confident in sharing the good news in their neighbourhoods. Such communities offer a powerful alternative to a polarised and superficial culture. The gospel remains “the power of God for salvation to all who believe” (Romans 1:16).

My hope is to inspire and be inspired by hearing many stories of how people are walking worthy of our calling to be Baptist Christians, united for mission, being eschatological communities of hope, a taste of the age to come in our 21st century, unstable, and uncertain world.

### REFERENCES

1 Riannon McAleer and Rob Barward-Symmons, *The Quiet Revival* (Swindon: Bible Society, 2015), [theresource.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/The-Quiet-Revival.pdf](https://theresource.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/The-Quiet-Revival.pdf).

2 “National News”, We can choose to tell a new story – one of gracious growth, accessed August 26, 2025, [baptist.org.uk/Articles/715969/\\_We\\_can.aspx](https://baptist.org.uk/Articles/715969/_We_can.aspx).

3 An explanation of “Food for Thought” is available here [alexafriyie.com/gifts](https://alexafriyie.com/gifts)

4 Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: +reactivating the missional church* (USA, Baker Publishing Group, 2006), 152-155

5 [baptist.org.uk/Groups/423439/Small\\_Church\\_Connexion.aspx](https://baptist.org.uk/Groups/423439/Small_Church_Connexion.aspx)

6 [baptist.org.uk/Articles/695775/The\\_benefits\\_of.aspx](https://baptist.org.uk/Articles/695775/The_benefits_of.aspx)



**Alex Afriyie is President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain 2026-27. He will be inducted into the role at the 2026 Baptist Assembly in Harrogate**

**Alex has been the minister of London Network Church (East Acton Baptist) for over 30 years. He has been involved in Baptist Union leadership in various ways since 2010, including serving as a director and moderator of London Baptists over a 6-year period and being a member of Baptist Union Council**

**To find out more about his theme, watch him interview other leaders and more, visit [alexafriyie.com](https://alexafriyie.com)**