

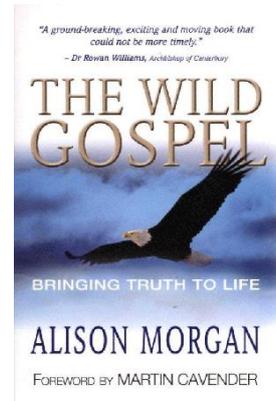
# The Wild Gospel – Bringing Truth to Life

Revd Dr Alison Morgan  
with a foreword by Martin Cavender

Monarch 2004, reprinted 2005 and 2009. Also available on Kindle.

## What's it about?

What is truth? Who was or is Jesus? What does it mean that he is the truth? What does it mean for us to live by the truth – not just to know it, but to actually live our lives by it? Does it work? Where do we start, what questions do we ask, how can we get outside the goldfish bowl of the world which surrounds us and reach through to connect with the living God? What's it meant to be all about, this good news that Jesus came to bring? And how do we experience it, not just as intellectual beings but as emotional ones? These are some of the questions I try to answer, from my own experience and from the experience of others. They have led me to look at what it has meant to be a Christian in different historical periods, and to try and come up with some conclusions about how we can make sure we are living and communicating our faith in ways which make sense in the culture in which we live.



## Publisher's summary

In this highly original book, Alison Morgan shows that Jesus overturned every assumption which kept people from experiencing the living reality of God. Examining church history, prophecy past and present, the state of our culture and of the church today, and drawing both on personal experience and the experience of others, Alison blends analysis and imagination, history and poetry in this prophetic challenge to the Western church.

- To read the introduction on Fulcrum click [here](#)
- To read reviews on Amazon click [here](#)
- For a free study guide to *The Wild Gospel* click [here](#)
- To buy a copy click [here](#)
- To buy on Kindle click [here](#)

## From the back cover

- "A ground-breaking, exciting and moving book that could not be more timely as the Church looks for fresh ways of speaking God's truth in and to our culture" - Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury
- "Winsome and readable, this is a holistic book, bonding beauty and truth, experience and knowledge. Don't miss it" - Canon Michael Green
- "There are occasions when a book comes along which is quite different from others; a book which has a content, style and shape which has not been seen in quite this way before. This is one of those occasions. Alison Morgan has brought together intellectual rigour, a swathe of references and hugely varied footnotes with life-changing personal testimony in this extraordinary writing about truth in the power of the Holy Spirit of God. I believe this prophet for today has spoken God's truth" - Martin Cavender, Director of ReSource, in his foreword"
- "Inspiring and informative, unforgettable and unputdownable - a great book. I loved it" - Bishop David Pytches
- "What a splendid, stimulating, refreshing and beautifully written book this is" Bishop Eric Pike
- "There is no more important issue facing the church today than understanding our culture and how we respond to it. A wonderful tool This book is a must" - Laurence Singlehurst, Cell UK
- "I cannot remember ever before having started a book again the day after I finished it" - Bishop Richard Hare
- "Alison Morgan writes with passion and commitment about the ways in which the gospel engages with contemporary life" - Dr Lavinia Byrne
- "An amazing book, offering an insightful analysis of two millennia of Western (and Christian) history, while addressing the needs of people in the 21st century. It offers a way of engaging with the Christian faith that is intellectually well-grounded and personally enriching" - Dr John Drane

## Review by James Newcombe, Bishop of Carlisle

I recently read a review of a book about eighteenth century naval history. "Of all the books I have reviewed in the last twenty years" wrote the reviewer, "this is the one that has given me the greatest pleasure". I was inspired enough to go out and buy it. I

hope, therefore, that when I say exactly the same about Alison Morgan's new book 'The Wild Gospel' you may be inspired enough to get hold of it. You won't be disappointed.

This has to be one of the most stimulating, encouraging and challenging books I have ever read. Though not usually given to superlatives, I find them tripping off the tongue as I attempt to describe an extraordinary tour de force. Other commentators have called 'The Wild Gospel' prophetic. I agree. There is a real sense of God speaking through Alison Morgan's words, both to individuals and the Church.

She issues a challenge to change based on the timeless Gospel. "The revival of the Church can be built only on a foundation of changed lives of individuals who have received the word of God and learned to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit". This book charts her own journey down that track and offers guidance to fellow travellers. It is intensely personal, but somehow manages to avoid becoming mawkish or sentimental. She speaks with passion about the importance of discovering and experiencing the reality of God's love rather than just trying to explain and understand it. She also develops her central theme of truth in terms of encounter rather than concept. "Truth", she says, "was not meant to be dissected – it was meant to be lived". As well as being extremely well-written and readable, 'The Wild Gospel' displays a remarkable breadth of knowledge. It is informative, thought-provoking and packed with memorable illustrations (quite a gold-mine for preachers!). Alison Morgan thinks and writes in pictures and, through her own – often poetic – insights, she has no difficulty in persuading the reader that "it is as imagination pushes aside the boundaries of convention that the tide of decline will begin to turn".

One of the many reasons why I like this book so much is because it addresses most of the pressing issues with which I'm concerned as a Church Leader. Spirituality, Church growth, mission, communicating the Gospel in today's culture – they're all here, and tackled with a maturity and wisdom that is frankly breathtaking. Alison Morgan neatly exposes some of the false assumptions which abound in contemporary society (for instance, about what really matters in life) and she talks about the Gospel as a key which can unlock the closed doors all around us. The Church, she argues, has domesticated the Gospel and somehow reduced it so that it fits neatly into our materialistic world-view. But she is convinced – not least from her own experience – that "when appropriately communicated, that Gospel has lost none of its power and appeal".

This is not Alison Morgan's first book. I hope very much that it won't be her last.

#### **Review by Paul Bayes, National mission & evangelism adviser to the Archbishops' Council**

This book is a kind of pilgrimage in which Alison invites us to travel on a journey with her. It is a journey she has already made and now wants to share with other searchers after truth.. The Introduction sets the proposed 'journey' into an appropriate context. Alison invites us on this expansive cultural journey to catch a glimpse of the 'cultural' impact of the Jesus phenomena. The impact Jesus was to have not only on his own culture but also as the echoes of his ministry reverberated throughout the last 2000 years. Sometimes being clouded over by 'a wandering away after false gods' but always being called back to seek after truth and live in truth. To consider how the 'Jesus phenomena' has affected the lives of individuals, communities, societies and nations in every age and generation. Three strands emerge most clearly, i) a searching for truth and the radical impact that has on individuals lives, ii) the cultural context, historical and contemporary and iii) how the Church can rediscover its call to bring people into a living relationship with God and impact the prevailing cultures with Kingdom values and virtues. It is an excellent book to take on a retreat or reading day – to read it and allow oneself to be taken on this journey and consider the view along the way through 2000 years of various cultural landscapes. It is the sort of book you could give to a weary traveller, someone who perhaps has become a bit lost in the fog of post-modernism and secularism and is asking if the doings of an itinerant preacher in a far flung Roman outpost could even begin to have any relevance for a sophisticated 21st century western man or woman. With respect to Mulder and Scully the truth isn't out there – but to be found in Jesus!

#### **Review by Stewart Jones, Diocesan Missioner, Diocese of Canterbury**

The wild emerging what? With my post arriving at all sorts of times, the crash of a heavy package through the letter box generated even more thankfulness than normal. 'A package for me.' 'But I don't think I ordered anything from a catalogue this month. It's not my birthday and surely no one is sending Christmas presents yet!' On opening the parcel I discovered two books inside and a letter from the publisher. As missioner I had been sent 'The Wild Gospel' by Alison Morgan and 'emergingchurch.intro' by Michael Moynagh. (Both published by Monarch). These are two very relevant books for the current church scene and they wanted me to have a read to see what I thought.

So half term week and a holiday in Portugal provided the perfect context to catch up with some reading and to have time to reflect on what they were saying. I have enjoyed both of them a great deal. 'The Wild Gospel' weaves the personal testimony of the author with fluent and concise descriptions of Christian thought and life throughout history in such an engaging way it was hard to put the book down. Alison is trying to look at the question 'What is truth?' and does so in such a refreshing way that it is a book I would warmly recommend as many people read as possible. At one point she says:

*'We live in a culture which by and large is not receptive to the gospel. But we do not help the gospel, because we ourselves have lost touch with its dynamic power. We live by the truth; but it is a truth which has been stripped of its energy.'* (p27)

This is the challenge we all face and in this book there are lots of pointers as to how this might change. It is a thoughtful, challenging, human story which deserves to be read. I am very pleased to receive books to read but especially pleased when they are readable, practical and life enhancing. 'Wild Gospel' and 'emergingchurch.intro' are certainly that and as missioner I wholeheartedly recommend them.

### Review by Steven Croft, Leader of Fresh Expressions, for the Church Times

The Wild Gospel is a timely reminder never to judge a book by its cover. I thought, wrongly, that this was going to be a light read. Instead, I found myself on a demanding journey, working through the gospel and the shape of the Church for today. The journey begins with three chapters on Jesus; continues with four on the Church and culture, and ends with a final section on 'a gospel for our times, which looks in turn at individuals, at the Church, and at the world. There is nothing shallow here. The material drawn from the Gospels is fresh and interesting. The surveys of gospel and culture in the Christian tradition are impressive, and will be an excellent resource to anyone coming new to the field. One of the chief themes is the integration of the person and the work of the Spirit with both individual Christian experience and the life of the Church and the world: a vital and neglected area for Christian mission. The parts that most lived for me were the stories of Alison's visits to Africa, or of events in her family. The book mixes personal testimony and anecdote with demanding theological engagement with sources and texts. It is a volume I will go back to on particular issues: the referencing is thorough, and the bibliography has all kinds of interesting lines to pursue. *The Revd Dr Steven Croft is Archbishops' Missioner and team leader of Fresh Expressions. He was formerly head of St John's Theological College, Durham.*

### Commendation from Stuart Burns, Abbot of Burford Priory

The 'Wild Gospel', as its title suggests, has all the freshness of wind on a headland as the author shares her fearless search for the truth, cutting through centuries-old attempts to tame the Gospel. This eminently accessible book is the fruit of Alison Morgan's exploration of what it means to be a human, created and loved by God, at the beginning of the twenty first century.

### Commendation from Peter Brierley, Director of Christian Research

Thank you very much indeed for taking the time and trouble to write such a splendid book as The Wild Gospel, which I recently read with much profit and interest. Your breadth of reading is impressive, and your analysis is very insightful. I really enjoyed your book and I am so grateful to you for writing it. Essentially I believe that the church in this country does indeed need to become "wild"; to have maverick leaders who can be respected and followed; churches with resources sufficient to do the unusual and unexpected for the sake of the Gospel; for people being willing to be made fools for Christ. We have lost that wildness and with it the Holy Spirit who stimulates it. Your book is an eloquent tool for His grace to be urgently reinstated both in the lives of individuals and of the church as a whole. Thank you again so much for writing so fully and so persuasively.

### Review by Bryan Nichols, on [goodbookreviews.com](http://goodbookreviews.com)

A thrilling book dealing believably with the way the truth of Jesus can transform any community when Christians avoid being conformed to their cultural environment. Alison Morgan investigates and illustrates God's truth bringing life into any culture to which the Holy Spirit is allowed to apply the radical Good News of Jesus. Jesus brings and reveals a new reality which is counter-cultural; the gospel experienced practically in the daily round and personal problems of life, rather than found by rational thought and understanding. Here is a vision showing the church that "The kingdom of God is most readily available to those who know they need it."

Suggested to Mark Russell, a member of the Archbishop's Council by Rowan Williams.

### Review on [Google books](https://www.google.com)

A pivotal look at the impressive power and reach of the gospel--even in these times of doubt and skepticism. Alison Morgan has a theory: just as our culture has lost touch with the gospel, so the church has lost touch with the gospel's power. Instead of being powerful and life-changing, the gospel has become something tamed, packaged, and institutionalized. The "Wild Gospel" shakes the church out of its lethargy by reminding it of the wild spirit and raw power of the biblical narrative. The author takes a look at how the gospel's truths relate to today's changes and opportunities. With penetrating insights into both culture and Scripture, "The Wild Gospel" is a call to return to the radical and vibrant power of the gospel's message.

The Wild Gospel is available, along with Alison's other publications, from [The Mathetes Trust](http://TheMathetesTrust.org), from Alison's [website](http://www.alisonmorgan.com) or from Amazon and other online retailers.

