

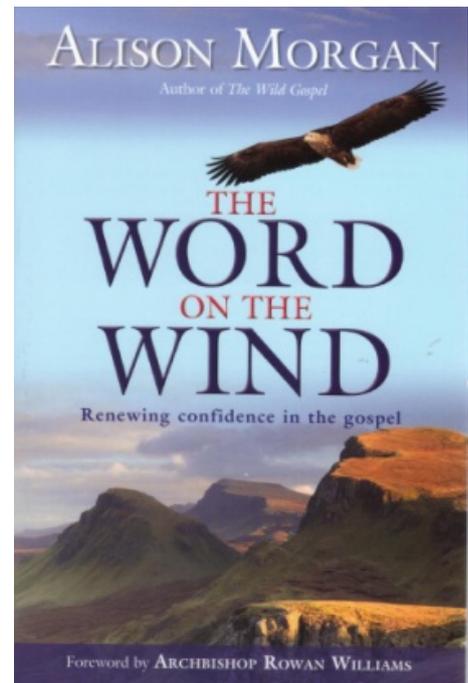
# The Word on the Wind

*renewing confidence in the gospel*

Revd Dr Alison Morgan

with a foreword by Archbishop Rowan Williams

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## Synopsis

The book is in three parts. The first part offers an analysis of the context in which we now minister, and asks whether we can be confident that we still have something which is wanted and needed by people today. Alison points to the increasing evidence for renewed spiritual searching and, focussing on the importance of story, suggests that we have the opportunity not just to find our own individual places in God's story but to offer that story more widely to a society in search of meaning.

Part Two examines the tools which are available to us as we seek to share our faith with others. Looking first at the Word and then at the Spirit, Alison suggests that all too often we have allowed ourselves to be led astray by the assumptions of a materialistic society; we have flattened the Word and tamed the Spirit. Affirming the insights of our different church traditions, and drawing on her experience of ministry in this country and in Africa, she shows that it is open to us to minister powerfully and effectively to those we meet.

The final part of the book asks to what extent we need to change the way we do things if we are to offer the gospel effectively to those around us. Alison suggests that two things are necessary: first that we develop our understanding of discipleship, and secondly that we think constantly and creatively about church. If we wish our identity as disciples of Jesus to find authentic expression in our churches we must be creative not just in the way we do church, but also in the way we think about it.

Throughout the book, the big picture of the world in which we live is interwoven with stories of people whose lives have been changed by their faith, and of churches which have found ways to reach out creatively to their communities. Each section ends with poems, scriptures and questions for reflection and discussion.

## FOREWORD by ROWAN WILLIAMS

'Nobody much wants to be arrogant or overbearing; and so often we Christians are so concerned not to look or sound arrogant that we can only murmur apologetically about what ought to be infectious excitement. Finding the right sort of confidence is quite a challenge; but Alison Morgan shows that it is possible in this warm and encouraging book, rooted in extensive experience in both the UK and the younger churches abroad.

She shows us that true confidence comes from inhabiting a story larger than ourselves – so, strange as it may sound, true confidence may be expressed in the happy acknowledgement that we don't know quite how to talk about the reality that has overwhelmed us. Part of the strength of this book is that Alison is determined that we shan't confuse loyalty and obedience to Scripture with a myopic focus on unimportant details or a style of reading that ignores what *sort* of text is in front of us – any more than we should confuse common sense and imagination in reading the Bible with a particular style of scholarly fashion.

And of course if we find ourselves in the middle of a story that our minds can't quite get themselves around, we should not be too surprised to find ourselves being – well, surprised: surprised by joy, by grace, and yes, by miracle. Such surprise need to be chronicled as much as the challenges that we face in a confused and rebellious age. Alison pulls no punches about the scale of these challenges and about our reluctance as

churches to respond with the sort of creativity and fullness of heart that we need, but she also pulls no punches about the scale of the transformative power of the Gospel.

This is a welcome and invigorating contribution to the mission of the Church in the UK and elsewhere. I hope that it will be blessed in finding the readers who most need to encounter its message, and that it will be used by God to motivate anew all those who are trying to share the indescribable riches of God in Christ with their neighbours.'

+Rowan Cantuar

## Commendations

- "This powerful book will help Christians to find new faith and vision in our common call to mission and provides an immense range of resources, rooted in theology and practical experience, to enable us to proclaim the Gospel in new and compelling ways today." – **Archbishop John Sentamu**
- "The Word on the Wind is prayer that has been distilled by a powerful and poetic mind. Never abstract and never shallow, it brings the fountain-fresh water of the Spirit to an age that's dry, and sick of dusty answers." – **Rt Revd Paul Bayes, Bishop of Hertford**
- "Another inspiring book from Alison Morgan, combining insightful analysis, lucid argument, moving testimony, and a much needed gift of insight from the African church:.. An encouragement to live confidently for the God revealed in the gospel of Jesus" – **Bishop Graham Cray - Archbishops' Missioner and Leader of the Fresh Expressions Team**
- "The Church is shrinking and wrinkling because we have taught people to be Christians and not Disciples. Alison Morgan is a Disciple who loves Jesus and loves people. She yearns to help others step into all God has for them, and this book will do just that. Peppered with stories of changed lives, this book will inspire and challenge. You gotta read it!" **Mark Russell – CEO Church Army**
- "Alison Morgan's writing is so winsome that it's easy to be caught up in the beauty of what she's saying before you realise she's just smacked you between the eyes with a piece of two-by-four. Like her previous book, *The Wild Gospel*, which was a great inspiration to me, this new book presents a deeply radical message in the most eloquent and seductive manner. You've been warned!" **Michael Frost, author, *The Shaping of Things to Come***
- "This title truly describes the book. It embodies a confident, well informed, infinitely attractive gospel. And it does speak with freshness and power to a world hungry for meaning. Her integration of science and theology, of Word and Spirit, of England and Africa, of church and individual, is remarkable and engaging.. She writes brilliantly. This is a book to buy, ponder, and share." **Canon Dr Michael Green**
- "This is a hugely important book. In it, Alison Morgan weaves together powerful stories of people's experience of faith with deep reflection about culture, the Bible and faith in the 21st century. It is encouraging, uplifting and inspiring and offers a vision of how each one of us can regain and maintain our confidence in the Gospel." **Dr Paula Gooder**
- 'As an apologist for the Christian faith she does for her generation what C. S. Lewis did for his. I loved this book. So will you.' – **Rt Revd James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle**
- 'An eminently readable, timely, and radical exploration of the power of the Word - an exciting and challenging read.' – **Abbot Stuart Burns OSB**

The *Word on the Wind* was published by Monarch Books, an imprint of Lion Hudson, in 2011, and can be ordered from [The Mathetes Trust](#) or from Alison's [website](#).