

REPORT ON THE 2023

# EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP FORUM



Dear Friends,

In late May, over 700 Evangelical leaders from all over Europe and the world met in Wisła, Poland, for the 2023 European Leadership Forum. This was my 21st Forum – and I look forward to it every time! ELF is unique in many respects: the quality of the teaching with biblical and theological depth combined with serious engagement with current European culture, the sharp strategic thinking, the emphasis on relationships and cooperation, and the reliance on the work of God.

I returned home refreshed and inspired, having heard so many encouraging stories and witnessed God actively working through many Gospel leaders. It was such a joy to serve at ELF again this year. I cannot think of a more important meeting place for Evangelical leaders in Europe than ELF.

Europe is in desperate need of knowledgeable, well-equipped, and courageous Gospel leaders. So, it has been amazing to see how the spread of the Gospel in Europe has been reignited through ELF. I marvel when I think of the wave of church planting that has taken place in Europe during the last two decades. I rejoice when I see the fruits of the year-round mentoring and training programs. They are of crucial importance for leaders in challenging circumstances. ELF is truly making an impact!

Within the field of my calling – apologetics and persuasive evangelism – the situation now, due to ELF, is radically different compared to the situation 20 years ago. Christian apologetics is spreading fast in Europe, helping believers to deepen their convictions and their faith in the Gospel, as well as helping non-believers to approach the Christian faith and investigate its claims.

None of this would be possible without you. You have been so generous, and your support is so crucial for Europe and the Gospel. Through your support, weary ministry leaders are receiving the support they need, churches and ministries are growing larger than they could have imagined, and Europeans are hearing the good news of Jesus.

We are eager to work together this coming year as we watch God use all of us to bring Europe and the world to Christ. Thank you so much for partnering with us in this exciting work!

In Christ,



**Stefan Gustavsson**

Director Apologia – Centre for Christian Apologetics  
European Leadership Forum Steering Committee Member







## The Annual Meeting

For the past 20 years, we have had the tremendous opportunity to train, equip and resource European Evangelical leaders at the European Leadership Forum (ELF). This year's ELF gathered in the small, serene mountain town of Wisła, Poland for the tenth time. Throughout the week, the main meeting hall buzzed with multilingual prayer and praise. It overflowed with joy, as Christians were able to unite together and become further equipped, resourced, and mentored by world-class ministry leaders and speakers. Many attendees entered ELF isolated and discouraged, but all attendees left encouraged and energized for another year of ministry.

This year's ELF was no small undertaking. Through your generous relational, financial, and prayerful support, God powerfully used this year's ELF to reignite the fire in the European Evangelical church. Thank you!

**Throughout the week, the main meeting hall buzzed with multilingual prayer and praise.**



# The Details

1

Over 700 participants from 52 countries attended ELF. 286 Evangelical leaders received scholarships so they could be united with peers and mentors, and be equipped, encouraged, and resourced. Thank you for supporting their ministry!



2

God is using ELF to light a global fire for the Gospel. This year we had **22 global leaders from 10 different countries** who attended ELF to learn how to develop a Forum movement in their own countries.

One of our global leaders commented on the great privilege it is to get trained at ELF:

*“Participating at ELF has been an invaluable experience for me on multiple levels... I am committed to stewarding this privilege of attending ELF well and utilizing the knowledge, connections, and inspiration gained through ELF to make a lasting difference in the lives I serve.”*



**PAUL HYUNG-KEUN CHOI**

Professor at Seoul Theological Seminary and  
General Secretary for Korea’s Lausanne Committee

3

Each Gospel leader chose a specialized leadership Network, to be trained and equipped. Forum Networks specialize in evangelism, media communication, science, theology, art, and more! **We had 24 Networks and 250 Network sessions.**

Here are some comments from the Network evaluations:

*“During my time at ELF, God spoke to me very clearly about the next steps in how to partner with the younger generation in Poland. God gave me courage and boldness to speak to others about it, and I got amazing understanding and support.”*



**ANIA GREENWOOD**

Wroclaw City Team Leader  
of Steiger Poland

*“I have never in my 35 years had a warmer welcome to any event, and after a few days, I stood in wonder of observing a community giving a glimpse into heaven in terms of love and beauty. Oh, how many powerfully gifted leaders I met! They have helped accelerate ministry growth and provided encouragement in the process.”*



**MAGNUS GAUTESTAD**

Church Media Specialist at  
Arroyo Baptist Church in Spain







4

We were grateful to have **115 gifted and fruitful Evangelical leaders** give their time, talent, and treasure to lead 360 Network sessions, workshops, and seminars. We had an additional 34 leaders come to ELF to mentor Gospel leaders. Every leader makes significant sacrifices to serve at ELF, yet most of the Forum speakers and mentors return to ELF every year because they share the burden and passion to better equip ministry leaders in Europe.

5

Our bookstore is often one of the greatest highlights of the Forum. **The total value of this year's books was \$67,773, and the cost to leaders was only \$12,882.** Many participants brought along extra luggage just so they could stock up on these affordable, valuable resources that they wouldn't have access to apart from ELF.



6

We maintained an online presence throughout this year's ELF. Each plenary session was live-streamed so that over **4,000 viewers from 12 different countries** were trained and equipped by ELF sessions!

7

The Forum Expo is another highlight for participants to connect. **We had 22 Exhibitors from Christian ministries and organizations** who networked with leaders by offering best practices and opportunities for them to get involved and gain additional resources. Scores of connections came from Gospel leaders meeting other leaders doing the same thing in different places, being eager to learn from each other.

8


Many participants loved participating in personal mentoring sessions over the past year. During the year, there were **23 Year-Round Mentoring Initiatives with 111 participants.** During the Forum, there were 241 one-on-one mentoring sessions organized by the ELF team and hundreds of relationships that God organized!

9



For the first time, participants who are worship leaders by vocation were invited to lead in the plenary worship sessions. They each sent in a prerecorded version of Kari Jobe's "The Blessing," and we all sang together with them. **Plenary Hall gave a glimpse into heaven during this song!**

Heather Holdsworth comments on this year's powerful ELF worship:



*"What an utter joy to worship and serve our wonderful Saviour together. The accents and languages of the nations heard at every turn were vibrantly wonderful. I return home invigorated with fire in my faith!"*



# The People

## THE SPEAKERS

This year we were so thankful to offer the teaching of 115 gifted and fruitful ministry leaders. It was a particular delight to experience the teaching of Conrad Mbewe (*Founding Chancellor, African Christian University*) at every morning plenary session. Over four days, he unpacked the theme of God's faithfulness throughout the book of Malachi. His teaching was rich and beneficial to so many leaders!

**During Conrad's teaching, Balazs Koncsard (a worship leader and theology student in Hungary) had a powerful encounter with the Lord:**



*"It is my first time attending the European Leadership Forum in person, and I can honestly say that it is a huge refreshment in my calling. I'm writing this shortly after I had a deep encounter with God in the morning plenary session. I had bitterness towards God in my heart that I didn't even realize because I felt like he abandoned me while I was doing his work. The message this morning brought this issue to the surface, and I finally saw the true character of God in my life. He is with me, He has not abandoned me; instead, He is refining me in fire. I needed this so much."*

Our evening plenary sessions were led by several other gifted leaders: Michael Reeves (*President, Union School of Theology*), Julia Garschagen (*Director, Pontes Institute for Science, Culture, and Faith*), Luke Greenwood (*Director, Steiger*), and Lindsay Brown (*Director, Fellowship of Evangelists in the Universities of Europe*).



**Luke Greenwood shares why he continues to invest in ELF:**

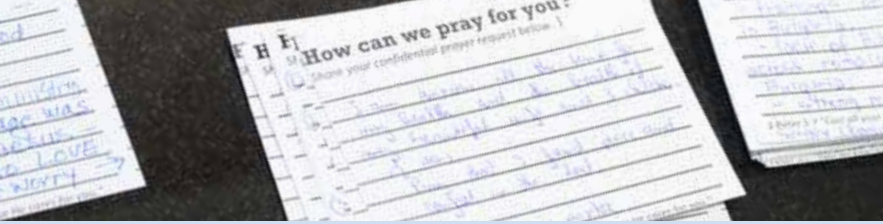


*"ELF 2023 was a great encouragement and investment! It was great to see many new people, especially many younger leaders now attending and being invested in. There was also important space given to younger leaders in the speaking and workshops, bringing a fresh voice into the Forum. We come each year, with a select group from our mission which is a good way to keep developing our people. ELF is a key place for training, networking, and hearing what God is doing around Europe."*

Scan to  
View the  
Livestream  
Sessions







## THE VOLUNTEERS

We had generous support from 84 volunteers. 61 were from the United States and 23 were from Europe. Many have been faithfully serving at the Forum for years, and this was the first time for others! We were so grateful for their help.

This was Ryan Heath's 2nd Forum. He is a pastor at Scottsdale Bible Church, and he offers his pastoral care to the ELF volunteers during the Forum. He reflects:



*"I really enjoyed my time serving at ELF again this year! As far as the importance of ELF, as you sit in the plenary session and hear the Word taught so passionately and accurately to a room full of key pastoral leaders from 52 different countries, I can't imagine a higher impact room for the Gospel! Many of these pastors come from areas where there is very little support and I love the respite and encouragement they experience at ELF. Then when you add in the year-round mentoring and network aspect of the support, the ministry impact grows and compounds throughout the year. Each of those pastors and ministry leaders in the room represents exponentially more individuals than just themselves, as they lead their own ministries back at home. ELF is a very high-impact strategy, and I thank God it exists."*



**" ELF is a very high-impact strategy, and I thank God it exists."**

**– Ryan Heath**





## THE PARTICIPANTS

All of our participants know that ELF is much more than a one-week event; it is a relationally, emotionally, and spiritually transformative movement.

Noah Johnson is a church planter in Slovakia. He attests to renewal that occurs at the Forum:



*"I came into the Forum with hurt and was a little disillusioned about continuing in ministry. Through the encouragement of new friends, the prayers of fellow ministers, and new connections through networking, the Lord has answered my questions. I am now returning home with a fresh vision and energy to continue on in the calling God has placed on my heart."*

Andreea Bojoga, a physician and member of the Christian Medical Association of Romania, shares why the Forum is transformative:



*"The experience of being at the ELF is transforming not only at a personal level, as I can see Him and the Gospel more powerfully and beautifully than before, but also refreshes my vision for the ministry I am involved in, better equips me in our Christian calling of sharing the Gospel - especially how relevant, consistent, and coherent it is for our challenges nowadays. . . I strongly believe this experience is transforming and as many Christians as possible should attend and multiply what they've received here in their personal context - for a revival across Europe and the whole world."*



**"I believe God is doing great things in my country —and will do even bigger things in the future."**

— Tomas Coufal



Angela Bosnjak is a theology student and youth ministry leader in Bosnia-Herzegovina. She shares why ELF is such a blessing:

*"I deeply believe that the Lord has brought me here not only to renew me and prepare me for the coming period, but I was given a remarkable opportunity to learn from older, more experienced Christian workers in different fields... Participating and meeting new people who share the same passion for reaching young people for Christ is an incredible joy and encouragement... Thank you for showing me God's love in this way. Maybe it's a small thing for you, but it's a big thing for me."*



Tomas Coufal is the editor-in-chief of a Christian magazine in the Czech Republic. He shares how ELF has a growing impact:

*"Being at the Leadership Forum is a really joyful experience for me, as I can see the bigger picture of what God is doing in Europe and the world. . . I believe God is doing great things in my country - and will do even bigger things in the future. Thank you for being a part of the story."*



**“Participating and meeting new people who share the same passion for reaching young people for Christ is an incredible joy and encouragement.”**

**– Angela Bosnjak**



**Ovidiu Hanc, a pastor and professor in Romania, shares why ELF is spiritually nourishing:**

*“ELF is a real blessing, like an oasis in a desert - a place of spiritual refreshment and getting close to God. Being involved in full-time ministry in both pastoral and academic life is something that is very demanding (not to mention the basic role of a husband and father of 3 boys). In this context, ELF has been a blessing in the fact that it provides the spiritual equipment and input needed for everyone that is involved in full-time ministry.”*



**Nilmersson Pereira Da Silva is a missionary and pastor in Hungary. He shares why the Forum is critical to his ministry:**

*“Coming to the Forum is a dream come true for me. Here I met people who have the same challenges I do and also leaders who inspire me. Being here also allowed me time to rest a little bit; I feel loved, understood, and cared for... Thank you for being a part of what God is doing in Hungary. Thank you for being a part of what God is doing in my life.”*

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**A STORY ABOUT YOUR  
IMPACT IN EUROPE:**

# **EQUIPPING A LEADER IN SLOVENIA**

Two million people live in Slovenia. Like the vast majority of Europe, Slovenia is rapidly growing in secularization, and most Slovenians identify as agnostic or atheist. Sadly, there are only about 2,000 Evangelical Christians in the entire country, which is roughly 1 believer for every 1,000 Slovenians. Fortunately, God is not done with Slovenia, and He is working through our ELF leaders!

Anja Kranjc is 1 of 8 Evangelical leaders from Slovenia who were trained and equipped at ELF this year. This was Anja's second year being trained at ELF. Anja works as a professional psychologist and serves as a youth ministry leader. She may work in a non-Christian environment but she stays firmly rooted in her Christian convictions. Her mission is to use biblical principles to help non-Christian people with mental problems and disorders. However, this is challenging in practice - she often faces the dilemma of how she can actually use biblical principles in a non-Christian environment.

This is where ELF came in. Through your support, we were able to provide Anja with a scholarship so she could participate in the Forum and receive the resources, connections, and mentorship she needed. After last year's Forum, she shared:

*"I have learned a lot of new things at the Forum, especially when helping people with their problems in the church. For example, now I understand emotions from a Christian perspective and about how Jesus sees our feelings, not just in a typical psychological way."*

Last year was so valuable to her ministry and she was so eager to return and build on what she learned!







This year she participated in the Professional Counsellors Network, as well as remaining involved in Year-Round Mentoring. She expressed her deepest thanks to God, her mentor, and to you! Due to your generosity, she is able to reflect:

*“ELF has been a huge help for me - actually, it was life-changing for me to join the Forum. I really feel so blessed. It is such a gift for me because I always get so much from it - a blessing, guidance, new ideas, and a clearer vision from God. ... Being a part of ELF also encourages me to grow in my relationship with the Lord because all of the leaders are such amazing examples of people who trust in our God 100% and serve him with all they are!... I am so thankful to God for all of you and for my wonderful mentor and I feel so privileged to be a part of ELF.”*

After this year’s ELF, Anja went home freshly resourced and inspired to faithfully continue on in her ministry as a light in the darkness in Slovenia.

You are making a direct difference for the Gospel in Slovenia through Anja. And there are thousands of European leaders like her that you are training, equipping, and resourcing by means of ELF and all of the Forum’s year-round strategies. Thank you for uniting, equipping, and resourcing these dear Gospel leaders from all over Europe!

# THANK YOU!

Zefjan Nikolla has attended many Forums - he even leads the Albanian Leadership Forum! He puts it simply:

**“The European Leadership Forum has been the single most transformative gathering that has shaped my life and ministry. Thank you for your support!”**

Zefjan is only 1 of the many Gospel leaders who thank you for supporting this year’s ELF. Thank you for prayerfully and financially supporting these leaders who are the hands and feet of Jesus in Europe. With your continued support, Europe is hearing the good news of Jesus through one ELF leader at a time. Thank you!



**Scan to Donate and help more leaders like Zefjan!**



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# EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP FORUM

**FOCL** FORUM OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS

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