



Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

Hello and welcome to Scripture Untangled, a podcast by the Canadian Bible Society. My name is Joanna LaFleur. I'm a friend of the Canadian Bible Society and I'm going to be your guide for today's episode.

Today we're going to hear from Graham Singh, and he's interviewed by CBS ambassador Reverend Dr. Andrew Stirling. Graham Singh is founder and CEO of Relèven, a global charity and fund manager aimed at transforming community-owned properties into new and impactful locations. Relèven has a team from across sectors, social innovation to property finance, urbanism and faith sectors, and they help to assemble, fund and operate these projects.

They've released hundreds of millions of dollars in property values back to local communities and Graham has led four of these historic building and community renewal projects in the UK as well as in Canada, including where he is currently the rector of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal's recent church plant, St. Jack's, Montreal.

Graham acts as a consultant in the areas of social impact, investing, private wealth management as well, and he's a graduate of the London School of Economics, Cambridge University, St. Miletus College, the University of Western Ontario, Asbury Theological Seminary and Oxford University's Saïd Business School Impact Innovation Program. So, it's a rich and interesting conversation about what to do with church buildings and strategic locations across the country when they can no longer support themselves with their own congregation.

Enjoy this conversation with Graham Singh.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

Andrew Stirling: Graham, it's such a delight to have you on Scripture Untangled.

And I have waited a while for us to have this opportunity and welcome to Scripture Untangled.

Graham Singh: Thank you so much. I know we have other people who are joining us in this call, but just seeing you, Andrew, and having some time to catch up on all that the Lord has been doing is pure joy all by itself.

Great to be here.

Andrew Stirling: Thank you, Graham. Likewise.

Graham, please tell us briefly something about your background and how you came to have such a strong and clear faith in Jesus Christ.

Graham Singh: Well, I grew up with a great start in a loving Christian family home in Guelph, Ontario, and a choir school where I learned exactly when to stand up and sit down, according to the Anglican tradition, which is very important that you get that right. But I think by the time I had all of that Scripture and song and love poured into me, I still left for university not really knowing where I stood in terms of my faith.

And that took me to eventually to the UK to London School of Economics and out into the business world. And it was there that I began, I found out about this church called Holy Trinity Brompton, where apparently this was the church where all of the beautiful women were based. I thought, this is, I better go and check this out.

I was a young man in London.

Andrew Stirling: Very important.

Graham Singh: Not the first person to be attracted to a church because of, you know, these kind of possibilities.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

And it was there they put me on their Alpha Course. And I thought, I don't need the Alpha Course. I know exactly when to stand up and sit down in church.

You know, I don't know what they're talking about. And I made friends with a fellow called Alex, and his father was an Anglican minister. So, between the two of us, we thought, we know what we're doing.

We do not need these people's Alpha Course. And we sat in the back, very smug, like the two, you know, grouches on the Muppets. Critical of everything.

Andrew Stirling: Looking down on everybody.

Graham Singh: Looking down on everybody. And they would call people up to the front to pray, etc.

And we thought this is too much. Until one day, I now recognize it as the Holy Spirit prompted us to say to each other, boy, there's something, Lord, that if these people really are who they say you are, it's possible we've never really known You before. And if this is really You, Lord, please come into our lives in a new way.

And my friend Alex and I both filled with a presence of the Lord and a knowledge of who He was, which was just different than anything we'd had growing up. And that began, Andrew, what I would call a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and, informed so much of what's happened since then. So that was really that life changing moment for me.

Andrew Stirling: You transitioned from, a business background, naturally having had that initiated with the London School of Economics, and you became then eventually an Anglican clergy. What inspired you to the calls to ministry? And did you feel an impulse? Did you feel something different? What happened there, Grant?

Graham Singh: So that calling, Andrew, was really to do with the closing of churches that I witnessed in the UK and the response to that. And in the UK, by that point, some

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

8,000 churches had been closed, many of which were Anglican, being the national church there.

Many were small, rural village churches as well. But there began these new missions. One was called "Soul in the City," to figure out how groups of young people could go to these empty churches and begin to see the renewal of neighborhoods.

And I was so inspired by that, that I ended up being recruited into a new team set up in the Church of England, specifically to do with closed churches and church planting. That was both from Holy Trinity Brompton and the National Church. And they said, would you be willing to spend some more of your time on this? And as I spent more time, I sensed the Lord's calling.

The church sensed that calling. And I ended up leaving the world of advertising, first of all, part-time and then full-time to retrain in what's now called St. Miletus College, which is the new church planting training college in the UK. So it was that sense of trying things out, sensing that call, the church responding and confirming that call, and then having really outstanding opportunities to retrain.

Andrew Stirling: Yeah, it's interesting. I have a great relationship with Graham Tomlin and, and, you know, sort of know the history and the tradition of that theological seminary. In terms, though, I can understand you dealing with the crisis within the church and you responding to that.

What difference, though, do you think being an ordained clergy makes in that? I mean, as opposed to, say, coming in as a business person with a plan, what qualitative difference does it make to be a priest?

Graham Singh: That's a very interesting question. And I think I, first of all, would want to unpack most of what we often do mean in the clerically centred churches like Anglican, Presbyterian, United, Lutheran, Catholic, where, you know, the idea that Father knows best, which is kind of a Catholic phrase. I think in general, Father doesn't know best with many, many things.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

I think we've gotten it wrong. I would go to Alan Hirsch and his book, *The Forgotten Ways*, his study of the Ephesians fivefold ministry, you know, of apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher, and Hirsch's critique to say, for heaven's sakes, those are gifts for the whole church. They're not gifts for any one person.

And I think we've misunderstood that of expecting the clergy person to be gifted in everything. And we end up in clericalism. So, to me, I would first of all say, I think there are lots of reasons why we don't need clergy in the way... you know, and I fight against them. I'm wearing clerical collars today for you, Andrew. I thought, here we are, the Bible Society, I better dress up properly.

Andrew Stirling: Oh, me too. Yes.

Graham Singh: But in general, as you know, I'll wear the same jacket, but with a normal shirt in order to be, in a sense, the same as others, to be part of the priesthood of all believers. However, to respond to your question directly, I do believe that there are particular people called for particular times to particularly lead where God's people are going.

And I think that calling of saying, no, I will lead where the church, where the Lord is calling the church to go. I really did feel that calling. And there's a certain inheritance.

And as we'll get into, I'm sure in a moment, you know, thinking about issues of the land and our physical presence in cities is something that really needs leadership. And it's not for the board chair of the church, who's an accountant. You know, that's fine.

That's very important. It's also from the center to say this is the core of evangelism, discipleship, to think of how we lead into cities. So, I think it's about leadership and it's about recognizing I really believe the local church when on fire for the Lord is the greatest power for change in the world that we have.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

Andrew Stirling: Is there a Biblical image, character, story that perhaps animates you more than any others into this kind of ministry that you're happening?

Graham Singh: Yeah. Well, it started with Acts 2, chapter 2:42-47. I thought there's the picture of the early church, the meeting together in homes, breaking bread.

I was studying the apostles teaching. They had the favor of all the people and the Lord added daily to the number of those who were being saved. I mean, I've always looked back at that and thought, look at all the other things we put into church.

And there we are in a few verses, we've got the method, you know, we've got the picture. That being said, that takes place in a physical context. And I love thinking about, you know, what is Jesus' property strategy? You know, the Guy clearly owned no house, had no church building, never ran a capital campaign.

He seemed to have a very dodgy treasurer as well, you know, Jesus and property. You got to go a little bit beyond Jesus to get into the early church. It's an underground movement.

There's no property holding is not a significant part. But as we get to today, and we look out at where we are in the church, we see this physicality in an urban environment. And that led me back to the story of Nehemiah, which would be my favorite story.

And the place I really root a lot of our ministry, both in our church, our local church in Montreal, and in the charity that I lead, Relèven, the story of Nehemiah, right? He's their cupbearer to the king, to a Persian king, time of exile, but the exile is over. He could have gone back, but he still got a decent job, right? And he weeps over his city. And this is very dangerous, right? The king could have said, look, you're a terrible cupbearer.

You're supposed to bring me joy and bring me my wine. And now you're weeping over your old city. But of course, the king doesn't send him off.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

The king says, in the most beautiful words, what do you need, Nehemiah? This to me is a start of why I love the story of Nehemiah, of how can we weep over our cities, weep over the things that need to change and realize that even people who would not call themselves God's people, maybe what we'd call people of peace, there are times where the Holy Spirit just helps them get it. So, the king got it and sent Nehemiah now with his own resources. So, these were not tithes and offerings prayed for at the Sunday service.

This was funny money, right? And then he goes and gets permission from other funny money, other difficult kings, rites of passage, wood, timber, you know, etc. And he begins to rebuild. But he doesn't go and this is I, Andrew, this is my, you and I've had this conversation before that my slight... this is the capital campaign's favorite passage, right? If you're a pastor trying to raise money for your church, you've got to go to Nehemiah.

But of course, you start talking about it as though you're rebuilding a local church. When Nehemiah was not, he was rebuilding the city gates. The city gates were places where people made contracts, where they were married, where they solved conflicts, where we defended the city against marauding armies.

They were places of safety and justice. This is what Nehemiah rebuilt with the non-God's people money in order that God's people would thrive. And to me now, as I look at where we are thinking, we want to have people in churches, you know, and we want them praying and reading from the right hymn books or whatever it is we think they should do, standing up, sitting down at the right time.

I actually believe this is a time God is calling us particularly to look at our potential for restoring the broken city gates, the isolation, the opportunities for resilience. So, Nehemiah, I love him. You even got Sanballat and Tobiah, right? The nasty old guys in the back.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

Every time Nehemiah goes looking for more money, these guys are out to get him. And I think, oh, I've seen that one before.

Andrew Stirling: Oh, I have played that game many times over the years.

I really have, yes. And it knows no national boundaries, let me tell you.

Graham Singh: Absolutely.

Andrew Stirling: No, absolutely. I mean, Nehemiah is, of course, a great inspiration. I suppose the next question really that arises out of the Nehemiah example, Graham, is how in concrete terms, in terms of our stewardship of the buildings that we do have and recognizing that we have to have a ministry that is broader than just those buildings, how should we understand the notion of what you've coined dying and living churches? I mean, what is the distinction and what is the point of transition?

Graham Singh: I have a very clear test that I like to think of on this, Andrew, and I would offer to our listeners today is when life in church is such that you would be willing to bring your best non-Christian friend to church, then things are in a great position.

And that happens with a lot of great Christmas carol services and Easter services. And you think, yeah, my neighbor will come to that. And they'll even tell you, don't ask me to come to your Alpha Course, but I'll come to your carol service, right? Neighbors say things like that.

When none of your non-Christian friends want to come to anything, then we're in trouble, I think. And I think that is actually the point of death. And beyond that, we can be into dead man walking, where the church is still functioning.

There may even be some money. We may start selling off pieces of the land. But actually, the church is not neither growing in evangelism nor discipleship.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

And I don't believe there is any discipleship without evangelism. So, to me, it's that point where invitation begins. And unfortunately, that point where invitation ends, which is, by the way, why I love Alpha, because it's the easiest way of getting started on invitation, right? On just beginning, you can start doing that.

So, to me, that is the point of death, in my view.

Andrew Stirling: In terms of congregations being renewed and or being reformed, I mean, I think of examples now of congregations and parishes who are then creating sort of other churches that are break-offs, and an integral part of spreading the mission. I think of St. Paul's Bloor Street, for example, and St. George campus, right, as an example of doing something different, but actually going right into the heart of the city.

How do you maintain, I think, and I'm talking now really as a pastor, how do you maintain the pastoral balance between on the one hand maintaining a place for the faithful, those who have for so many years been so faithful to a particular parish and congregation, and yet at the same time, not losing your focus on reaching beyond the bounds of those people? How do you balance those two things, Graham?

Graham Singh: Well, thanks for the question, Andrew. And I think, thinking again of our listeners, I'm sure there are many, many different ways of approaching that question. I'm certainly happy to share my experience of, you know, 20 or so years of local church ministry.

I think the point of death; I think we need to be careful that we're not afraid of the point of death. This is an essential Christian; we are the people who understand that death has been beaten. And therefore, to see death and face it, and to see and know that resurrection is coming is essential for our discipleship.

So, first of all, facing the end of a particular expression of what we think the church means to me, we should not be afraid of it. And being afraid of it and trying to resist it, I think can lead to other problems.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

Now, somebody who says, "I don't really want to be involved in any invitations. I don't want to hear about your Alpha Course. For heaven's sakes, don't even think about changing my hymn book. You know, just give me what I need."

And I think at times, and this is where I'm not a very good pastor at times, Andrew, in certain contexts, where I think we need to be able to face that down to say, you know, that is not going to help build the church. And it's not going to help you in your walk with the Lord. So, to me, facing that and bringing that to a place of invitation of whatever that may be, to me is the beginning of helping that happen.

Now, if somebody says, could you allow for a service of, you know, aimed at younger families to be happening at 11 o'clock, and we move the more traditional service to nine o'clock? We've done a lot of that, haven't we, Andrew? You know, we all know how tiring that is. I'm not sure if that's a great idea. I've only been subjected to that once in 20 years.

The rest of the times I've refused to do it, to say, for heaven's sakes, you know, and I'll give you an example. There was a lady called Doreen, and she said to me, listen, I'm not sure that I like any of your newfangled ways, and I'm not sure I really like you. However, what you're doing is clearly bringing in the children.

So, I think it might be okay, and I think I might support it. That's actually a real conversation, right? She was really honest.

And in the end, her favorite song that we sang with the kids was called, *Are You Ready, Ready, Ready?* And a few months later, after we planted that church with a whole new way for young families, and using Alpha, this was in the UK. It was a church plant out of Holy Trinity Brompton. She was on her deathbed, and she was intubated.

She had tubes there. She couldn't speak. And all she could say was, I'm ready.

I'm ready. So to me, at times we need to equip clergy and teams to be able to help folks to say, this is actually our best way of honoring you, older person, more

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

traditional believer, is that you will die seeing that there has been renewal in the place that you have stewarded. And if that means you don't like me for a little while, I'll be willing to tolerate that to see it.

I'm not saying I'm the wise guy with all the right ideas, but I have seen a lot of fruit with Alpha in ministry. It's the easiest thing for us, but it does take that jump of, this looks new.

--

The Bible Course: Taking a moment out of this conversation here to tell you about The Bible Course, because whether you're a seasoned Bible reader or you're just starting on the journey, The Bible Course offers a superb overview of the world's best-selling book.

This eight-session course will help you grow in your understanding of the Bible. Using a unique storyline, The Bible Course shows you how key events, books and characters all fit together. It's great for in-person groups, but it can also be used for digital gatherings.

It can be used anywhere you like. Watch the first session for free and review the accompanying course guide. Go to BibleCourse.ca to learn more.

That's Bible Course . ca.

--

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

Andrew Stirling: Yeah. It's also, I mean, we're up against also, I think at times, the church and I think any institution, but the church in particular is up against an age-old problem of idolatry. What can happen is, as you well know, and I know, a place can become, and a tradition can have an idolatry to it.

It becomes the focus and the locus of the mission and the purpose. Not the sharing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the sharing of Christ with the world. So, when you talk about sort of the dying, you have to die to your idols.

And dying to idols is one of the greatest challenges, isn't it, in dealing with people pastorally?

Graham Singh: In terms of a practical tool of idol-smashing and putting those images, those reflections of who we think God is, into their right place. To me, which is the right way to deal with false idolatry, getting that image into its rightful place. I love having a band at church, you know, with guitars and drums and really get everybody singing and their hands in the air, etc.

And then I love when nobody's looking. We've got a musician up on the pipe organ, and there we are singing *Be Thou My Vision* with guitars. And then, boom, you hear the pipe organ roaring behind that band.

And you see somebody who's a more traditional believer, and they think, that's what I really love. I love hearing that pipe organ roaring. But it just happened with that band.

It wasn't one or the other. And I think in music, we have an amazing opportunity to mix styles in a way that really does resonate with those who, there are traditions, we have to respect those who've gone before us. And there are ways of mixing.

And I think, I love the opportunity for art to do that.

Andrew Stirling: Yeah, you're right. Art can open doors, can't it? I mean, it really can both visually and audibly.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

It can make a difference. And, you know, one of the, I love the organ, and I love the organ coming in. And I love, I'm like you, I love mixed music and various forms of it.

I play the guitar; I don't play the organ. So, you know, I have a certain bias.

Graham Singh: And I've seen some of that recently at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church, Andrew, that, you know, from all the roots that you laid there, that the caliber and mix of music from that church is outstanding.

Andrew Stirling: Yeah, it's great. Yeah, no, it's a wonderful team. It really is.

And I'm blessed by having had, you know, very fine people in all areas there. I'm glad you mentioned it. Thank you.

And I'm sure Jason will feel the same way. I am concerned a little bit, Graham, as somebody who's ministered in rural Canada, and came from South Africa to a fishing village in northern Nova Scotia, to see that many of the local rural churches are also struggling. And having been very much in an urban setting for the majority of my ministry, I get into a certain urban mindset.

How do we transition from dying churches to living churches in rural areas, where it seems to me to be a much more difficult transition to take place? What do you think?

Graham Singh: I think the rural church is the place where we're most likely to say, this place is the centre of community, and that's why it's here. And therefore, when the church is no longer functioning as clearly as it has been in the past, people will say, well, this was a community place. And you get local groups of activists, community activists will say, we'll take this place over as a community centre.

I mean, one of the places, you mentioned Atlantic Canada, you look at the bankruptcy of the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland, which is on the back of some very difficult litigation that led to 34 churches being sold at court auction. Now that's Newfoundland. It's a very Catholic area where that has had devastating effects on those rural communities and small-town communities.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

And in fact, local groups have been trying to deal with that. And the question of how would they finance this thing as a community hub? All these questions come forward. They're very much part of what we're doing with 3.11. But in terms of the communities of faith themselves, I think we have another answer from another part of Canada, in Quebec, where right now, we're seeing the provincial government really tightened down.

They do not want churches operating in schools, cinemas, municipal halls, etc.

Andrew Stirling: Yes, exactly.

Graham Singh: And there's a lot of reasons to be pushing back on what they're doing.

I'm hoping to be presenting in the parliamentary committee, looking at the review of that law. But one of the responses, for heaven's sakes, is we're going to have to use the church buildings we have more intensely. So, in a village setting, I would hazard a guess that you still have quite a few house churches, quite a few evangelical churches that are renting and using other spaces.

To me, the beginning of a rural church is how many churches can we pack in there on a Sunday, even if they're small, is a starting point. And then similarly with the rest of the week, how many other nonprofits could be sharing that space? And in the case where a municipality does buy the local rural church, it's a challenge to then allow those churches to be back on Sunday, which means we need to be shrewd about how those properties are handed over. It's one of the reasons we're so focused on this question.

And I think it's a new day, but the sharing of those spaces between sacred and secular, it's a kind of co-consecration, which is a term we're working on further, which I would define as having more than one competent authority declare that a place is sacred. And it's an interesting challenge, but we're used to having one, right? Where the Presbyterian church says this place is a consecrated place. That's it.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

That's all. Well, I think we need to be more adventurous in understanding there are parts of society that would claim that other things are sacred. And I don't believe it actually takes away from our Christian definitions of sacred by acknowledging that a use of space can be a multiple use of space.

So, the simple answer, there's some deeper answers.

Andrew Stirling: Yeah, no, that's excellent. That's very helpful.

Shifting gears a little bit, Graham, and let's talk about the Bible and let's talk about Next Gen. And there seems to be almost a disparity between, on the one hand, the relative decline of the church in the West. Let's name it.

We know that. On the other hand, the spiritual hunger amongst Gen Z, we're seeing that the Bible Society has just done a survey in the UK and it's really quite revealing. And same in Europe.

I'm actually seeing it and even talking to diaspora clergy here in Canada, where they're talking about the second and third generation immigrants and families of refugees actually coming back to the church, having left it in the second generation or whatever. There's a change taking place. How do we deal with that? How do we promote, for example, the reading of Scripture to the next gen?

Graham Singh: Well, isn't it wonderful just to start with the testimony of what the Lord is doing? And when I got to Quebec, where we live now, when I got here 10 years ago, the church, understanding what is the church in Quebec, where is it going, was very difficult to see.

To see Catholics and evangelicals really connecting with each other and to see the mainline Protestant churches, many of them anglophone mixed in, it was very, very difficult. Now, as I sit here in 2025, our children are 16, 14, and 11. They're all involved in a very good Bible camp that they go to.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

Two of our children will be working there next summer. They get together on the weekends with friends from multiple churches around Montreal. They're inviting their friends to Alpha Courses, some of them meeting in schools, some of them in church.

So, I don't know how to explain it, Andrew, but it is actually happening, even in a place like Quebec. And to me, that is enormously exciting. I think the connection between particularly evangelicals and Catholics is stronger than it's ever been.

Andrew Stirling: Yes, I agree.

Graham Singh: Is that out of desperation? I don't think so, actually. I think it really is out of the missional opportunities there.

So, I would say for one thing, it's happening, and I don't know exactly how to explain it. As a father of teenagers, I kind of step back. I think something's working.

Let me just not disturb it.

Andrew Stirling: Don't put your foot in it.

Graham Singh: And we have the pastor couple who really lead our church at St. Jack's, while I lead mostly my work with the foundation.

Curtis and Marnie, they're a few years older than us, and they're in their 60s. And I watch them, the wisdom they have, and I think the wisdom of clergy who've seen some years. There's time and space for clergy, as we all were when we were much younger.

There's space for that. There's also a need for wisdom. And I think as regards the shift in generations, wisdom brings with it an understanding that the Lord's plans, His mercies are new every morning, and He's doing this.

So that's one answer. In terms of structurally, I think more and more the shift from instructional worship to participative worship, which is also seen in the education

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

system, from instructional, here's a lecture, to here's a seminar. We can go back to Jesus quite quickly, to a rabbinic method, and think this is a better way.

Discussion and being able to open up a sermon, for instance, and say, right, let's turn to our neighbor, three or four people, talk about this, I think is an easy option for younger people. I think they seem to resonate with it. And I also think some of the very polarizing questions, which we've really wrestled with, I can tell you, when I first got to Quebec, I thought, I'm not even sure I can call my wife, my wife in public.

I think I have to call her my partner. I was told, you know, this is almost offensive, c'est ma femme, you know, instead of saying c'est ma conjointe, it's my partner. I'm no longer scared of that.

Maybe that's because I've been in Quebec a little longer. And I think younger people are not as afraid of those polarizing, effectively cancel culture. I think they're rebelling against cancel culture.

And I think that's altogether a good thing for the church to be able to say, you know what, if you want to come, I have a bit of a joke, Andrew, with our main site, St. Jack's, I say, look, come to St. Jack's, Monday through Saturday, all kinds of groups and nonprofits and theater groups, you should come. It's amazing. You know, everybody's welcome.

But be careful going on Sunday, because the people who meet on Sunday, they're all convinced this guy from 2000 years ago is God. They all sing songs to Him. They're praying.

If you go on Sunday, you know, be warned. You know, they really mean it, right? And actually, I think younger people are more open to real, genuine positions. And they're against the idea of a kind of general washing over everything, which I don't think was any good for anybody.

So, I see it as altogether positive of the way things are going. Yeah.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

Andrew Stirling: How do you, I mean, just ending now with a couple of personal questions.

I mean, how do you keep so positive, when you are dealing with at times, you know, issues of decline and sadness loss? Do you have any spiritual practices that are sort of part of your life, Graham? You know, where do you turn when Graham Singh needs a little TLC?

Graham Singh: Well, one answer is I took my first major sabbatical this year. And that was such a blessing. And I think sabbatical time itself is so important.

And I really focused on Father Richard Rohr's book, *Falling Upward*, looking at the first half and second half of life. And Bessel van Kolk's book called *The Body Keeps the Score*, looking at trauma, and realizing a lot of our work with churches in transition, the end of their life, its trauma, and understanding that. So those are two spiritual practices that have informed me in a deeper, you know, kind of middle of life way.

And realizing, you know, how much I had not attended to both of those thoughts. That's one answer. The other is I found in practical terms, waking up and reading the Bible every day was something I used to do religiously.

I now find waking up with a blank sheet of paper and making sure I'm willing to write down what comes to my mind as it comes, as a form of prayer. And it's like journaling, but it's a little bit different, where sometimes I'll write a new letter to the Prime Minister about our foundation and how we need a new financial instrument for how to reframe these churches and how we're going to end homelessness with, you know, redeploying religious land, and I'll wake up with those things. And I think I've come to realize those dreams and visions.

Now I can go back to the Scripture and say, Lord, can you guide me on where that was? So, I think my daily practice has been more blank page than formula. And I would say that and getting, I called when at the beginning of my sabbatical, I called a

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

few different people. And one of them who's one of the most confident people I know, he said, Graham, I'll tell you this, get absolutely as much possible help as you possibly can in a sabbatical time.

Get up, do as much time with your spiritual director, get a new counselor, get a dietician, get, you know, get all of this help because you as a pastor, pastors are often some of the worst people at getting that help.

Andrew Stirling: Oh, very much so. Right.

Graham Singh: So, I think those are a few spiritual practices that have encouraged me, Andrew.

Andrew Stirling: It's lovely. In terms of your own life now, and I ask this of every guest, I began asking the very question with the very first person that I interviewed, who at that time was actually dying of cancer.

And it was a very emotional podcast, the very first one. And since then, I've asked the same question. What is it that you would like those who've been listening to pray for you, for Graham Singh, for your ministry? What can we do to pray for you?

Graham Singh: Thank you so much.

I think as I look out on this second half of life, I really have the burden of what are we going to do with these properties and how are we going to move our money as Kingdom people into seeing a renewal of cities. And at times the complexity in communities of faith, the complexity in cities and the complexity in finance is something I'm spending more time on. And on good days, I have the space to put those pieces together and move forward.

On the harder days, they can be kind of almost crushing. And I think I would invite your prayers for how do we give that to the Lord? How do I give that to the Lord every day? And so be true to my calling, but hand back to Him the complexities, which He, I believe He's getting ready to work some miracles in this area. And I will do my part.

Scripture Untangled

Season 12: Episode 7 | Graham Singh | Rebuilding People, Places & Purpose

I will play my part. But the more I step away and let Him do the miracles, the better they are. So I think stepping away from a complexity, I know I'm called to, and being a good person in the middle, how to be a good person, a loving person, loving father, loving pastor in the middle of that and not get stressed out while those things are happening.

There, I don't know if I stuck a few prayer requests into one, Andrew, but there it is.

Andrew Stirling: I think we can handle the multiplicity of requests. The Almighty will help us do that.

He does it every day, right? So absolutely. Graham, on behalf of the Bible Society, thank you so much for this time. It has been most joyful.

It's been most enlightening. And as one of my African friends used to say to me, Jesus is Lord of the altar, the aisle and the shopping mall. There is no place where He is not actually still Lord.

And I think what you have said today has made that abundantly clear. Thank you, Graham, and God bless your ministry.

Graham Singh: Thank you so much, Andrew.

God bless.