

The sky looks pink to me

At the beginning of April 2004 I informed ACEA's Executive Board of my intention to step down as General Director. Within a few days my four-year-old son yelled at me, 'Daddy, the sky looks pink to me!' When I looked at the sky it looked its normal grey and gloomy self. Then I noticed he was wearing the new sunshades he had received for his birthday.

Each of us wears lenses that are shaped by our experiences, circumstances, culture, educational background, personal calling or life-assignment. One of the lenses I certainly wore during my time at ACEA was shaped while observing the departure of Clive Calver, the former General Director of the Evangelical Alliance. Within hours of his departure every piece of paper that bore his name was on its way to the rubbish bin. As I stood there looking at the scale of this operation I heard the Lord say to me, 'Don't you ever forget this, it's not about you, it's about the people!'

Another lens that shaped my time at ACEA was an interview with a potential employee. Each candidate was required to give a presentation. In came a young man who looked the part, with his artist-like presentation case. As the interview went on, despite our demands, we soon realised that he did not have a presentation. Again the Lord said to me, 'Look out for those who come to you with empty cases.' My own prayer whenever I met with people or had to make strategic decisions was, 'Lord is the case empty?' This has saved me a lot of time, energy and disappointment. It has prevented me from chasing after the wind, opportunities and people who would not bear fruit or were not in the best interests of our churches.

Yet, the most significant lens was my call to serve the Black Majority Churches (BMCs) I did not believe that it was right to have BMCs. It was for this reason I left the New Testament Church of God in January 1992 to attend Kensington Temple, an Elim Pentecostal Church. Likewise, I studied theology at London Bible College, instead of one of the plethora of Black Majority Bible Colleges that were emerging. But again it was the voice of the Lord which changed that. After preaching at a Baptist church which was _0 without a minister for several years, He said, 'Mark, these people don't need a pastor and they certainly don't need you. Your people need you. If you walk away who is going to stay?' Since then I have had to learn about my people, to identify with their pain and suffering, hopes and dreams as well as sharing in their joy and success, and supporting their development.

My sincere hope is 'that these and other lenses have helped me to be faithful to the Gospel in serving you, the Christian Church and our society on the whole. My personal vision and passion for the Church to transform itself in order to transform society is as strong as it has ever been. However, leadership is about effectiveness not an office. In moving on from ACEA I earnestly desire to hear God anew, develop and maximise my own leadership potential and be available to serve the Kingdom of God.

As you also look to the future, however the sky looks, I hope that you will see the wider purposes of God. I trust He will bless and keep you in perfect peace as you continue to support the work of ACEA with your prayers, co-operation and increase.