

Report on the 2025

# EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP FORUM



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I've just returned from the 2025 European Leadership Forum (ELF) in Wisla, Poland, and I want to take a moment to share what's on my heart.

I saw God at work in wonderful ways. Over 850 Christian leaders from across Europe and beyond came together to seek God, to be equipped, and to encourage one another. I serve as an ELF Steering Committee member, Network leader, speaker, and mentor, learning alongside others who, like me, are doing their best to serve the Lord in various contexts.

This was my eleventh time at ELF. I still remember coming to my first ELF—feeling a little tired and wondering if anyone else out there knew what ministry in my part of the world felt like. But ELF was a major encouragement. The Lord led me to people who were walking a similar road and who reminded me that I wasn't alone. God has powerfully used ELF in my life and ministry!

Over the years, I've not only been refreshed, but I've also been given the chance to pour into others. Through mentoring relationships, conversations over coffee, and shared moments of prayer, I've watched younger leaders gain clarity and confidence. It's humbling and beautiful.

The best part is that what happens at ELF doesn't stay in Wisla. I've taken what I've learned from talks, sermons, books, and even stories and brought these insights back home. I've used them in my own sermons. I've shared them with fellow pastors and church members. I've watched them open doors for Gospel conversations in places where doors have been closed for a long time. ELF is truly a catalyst, not just for me, but for the entire European Church.

Leaders from across the continent are doing the same—they are taking the resources they've been equipped with at ELF to their contexts, and they are spreading the Gospel throughout Europe. They are using ELF resources all year round!

**If you've supported ELF in any way—through prayer, giving, or time—thank you!**

What you're doing matters. You're helping Gospel leaders who are pressing on in tough places, providing them with fresh strength and hope in the Good News of Jesus Christ. The impact of your contribution is multiplying day by day—I've seen it with my own eyes. The Lord is truly using your generosity for His kingdom work here in Europe and beyond.

In Christ,



**Leonardo De Chirico**

Pastor of Breccia di Roma Church in Rome, Italy  
and Director of the Reformanda Initiative

**European Leadership Forum Steering Committee Member**





# The Forum's Annual Meeting

This May, over 850 Gospel leaders gathered once again in Wisla, Poland, for the 23rd European Leadership Forum (ELF) Annual Meeting. Representing 53 countries, these leaders came from across Europe and beyond—each carrying the joys and challenges of ministry in their unique contexts. Some arrived tired, others sought new connections with believers, but all came to praise God and ask Him to work in their lives and ministries.

God was faithful. Through 31 Networks and over 100 ELF leaders and mentors, God poured out His love, wisdom, and encouragement. Leaders learned better how to serve the Lord in their ministries upon their return home, new connections were formed, and conversations turned into new year-round collaborations that will see a multiplication of fruit.

We praise God for how He moved mightily through the 2025 Forum Annual Meeting. God used ELF to equip His servants not only with knowledge and resources, but with new encouragement to proclaim the Gospel to Europe. We thank Him for doing far more than we could on our own and sending these Gospel leaders back to their home countries ready to spread His Kingdom.



**“The Forum, with its mission to renew the Church and evangelize Europe, is exactly the kind of movement I have longed to be part of. I appreciate the Forum’s clear commitment to biblical truth, the Gospel of Christ crucified, and its stand for orthodox Christian beliefs around marriage and gender. I return to Wales with renewed hope and commitment for the ministry ahead, knowing I will also have ongoing support and input.”**

**Darren Blaney (Pastor, Wales)**



# Gospel Leaders Grow...

LOVE

*...from Acorns to Oak Trees*

ANSWERS

MODELS/  
EXAMPLES

VISION

TRAINING  
AND SKILLS

KNOWLEDGE/  
CONVICTIONS

INTERNATION-  
AL PEERS AND  
MENTORS

PRACTICAL  
STRATEGIES

RESOURCES

ENCOURAGEMENT

God is transforming the lives and ministries of Gospel leaders across Europe through the European Leadership Forum (ELF). Using the image of giant oak trees with far-reaching branches growing from small acorns, ELF identifies, equips, unites, and resources Gospel leaders (“acorns”) to help them grow into spiritually mature Christian leaders (“oak trees”) who have far-reaching impacts for His Kingdom in their own contexts.

Many leaders first arrive at the European Leadership Forum Annual Meeting during

seasons of doubt, exhaustion, or isolation. Others are seeking answers to their questions in ministry and mentors who can guide and train them to become more fruitful. Through biblically-centered teaching and Gospel-oriented relationships, they leave the Forum Annual Meeting equipped and refreshed to take on further leadership roles when they return home. They continue to be resourced and encouraged in their ministries through the Forum’s year-round initiatives.

The European Leadership Forum serves as a greenhouse, cultivating these Gospel leaders on their path to maturity so

that by God’s grace and power, they can make Kingdom impacts far beyond ELF’s Annual Meeting or year-round initiatives. God is producing ripple effects through these leaders’ apologetics, discipleship, church planting, national gatherings, and more for His glory.

As Forum leaders love and pour into Gospel leaders through Christ-centered Plenary and Network sessions, Workshops, and Mentoring meetings, God is turning spiritual “acorns” into mature, Gospel-sharing “oak trees.” In this way, He is using the European Leadership Forum for His glory and expanding His Kingdom across Europe and beyond.





# What is the Fruit of the Forum?

## **Petra Ratkovics** (*College Teacher and PhD Student, Hungary*)

“I have been teaching theology and courses on Christianity and culture for undergraduate students, and I am currently developing a ministry on YouTube aimed at laypeople and any potential theologians. This vision and my commitment to highlevel theological study were born out of, and greatly supported and supplemented by, my attendance at ELF. **The people I have met, the examples I have seen, and the opportunities I have been granted all had a transformative effect. The goal of ELF is to unite, equip, and resource its participants, and I can gratefully and confidently say that the Lord has blessed me in all three areas.**”



## **Khatuna Liluashvili** (*Youth for Christ Leader, Netherlands*)

“Being at the Forum has been so encouraging, strengthening, and empowering! Coming to the Forum feels like coming home, where you meet your brothers and sisters and find strength in unity. I love the quality of the Forum and of the people. They are superb in every field. **I already made plans to bring one of the speakers to my local church and to organize an event for both Christians at my church and university students.**”

## **Joel Tuchscherer** (*Church Revitalization Leader, Germany*)

“God has put the revitalization of churches on my heart, and last year, I was able to attend the Church Revitalisation in Today’s Context Network at ELF. I also participated in the Forum Year-Round Mentoring in this area. In Germany, where I come from, revitalization is much needed. So many churches are dying, and they don’t even know it yet. **The Forum has equipped me incredibly well to address this topic, and I am currently working to launch a network of others involved in church revitalization in Germany.**”



## **Saimir Nasufi** (*Youth Leader, Albania*)

“Being at the European Leadership Forum is very helpful for me because **I learn how to lead in my church.** I gain from the experience of other leaders and make new connections. Through these interactions, I get to hear about God’s work in other countries in Europe. At the Forum, I see that God’s workers need to be united and that we need to stand together with each other.”

## **Valentin Giurici** (*Pastor, Romania*)

“The Forum has helped me because I met with Christian leaders who are authorities in their fields and people who are strongly anchored in the Bible. This is wonderful because the world often looks turned upside down, and we seem to have no hope when we look at the world. **Meeting these brothers and sisters at the Forum brought me much joy and hope.**”





# A Life Changed by the Forum



Over a decade ago, a young youth leader from Slovakia named Ján Máhrik made his way to the European Leadership Forum.

What drew him to ELF wasn't a flashy program or the chance to listen to a well-known speaker—it was the personal testimonies and encouragement from his father and wife, who had both previously attended the Forum.

While a master's student in IT, Ján worked as a part-time youth pastor and developed a national youth ministry on the side. He was full of questions about ministry and was eager to attend ELF.



**“That first ELF was exciting! I was hungry for information. I joined every single session I could! I went to Pre-Forum and Post-Forum Seminars, I went to all the Workshops, everything!”**

Ján experienced a week packed with seminars, lectures, books, and inspiring Christian leaders from across Europe. Ján dove in and absorbed as much as he could. “I was happy, fulfilled, and overwhelmed,” he says, and ELF left a lasting impression. “That was a great time,” he recalls, “but it takes at least two to three years to realize how to use the Forum.”

Over the next few years, as Ján continued to attend ELF, his life and ministry began to change. While continuing to work in youth ministry and starting his own IT business, he felt the calling to plant a new church. This transition took a toll on him personally and in ministry as he added more and more to his plate. He had a young family, and he was working overtime to fit everything together.

That year, as Ján travelled to ELF, close to burnout, he prayed for God to provide him with a mentor who could shepherd him through his difficult transition; God's answer came swiftly.

“I was eating lunch alone at a table, and some guy approached me,” Ján recalls. That man was Forum speaker Ed Doepel, who said to Ján, “I was praying to God that He would show me whom I could talk to and invest in, and God showed me you.”



**Ján Máhrik**  
Pastor, Slovakia



Ed sat down with Ján, and they ate lunch together, kept talking through the afternoon sessions, and met together for evening coffee. Throughout the day, Ján shared about his family and ministry. Ed listened and, in the evening, gave a direct piece of advice: If Ján didn't make adjustments to his way of working, he would lose everything. Ján took Ed's advice seriously and made changes to his life, adding with a smile, "My wife is very thankful."

Ján and Ed have since built a wonderful friendship. Not only did Ed help mentor Ján through this difficult situation, but Ed also happened to have planted several churches.

As the years went by, Ed introduced Ján to others with biblical wisdom and practical experience, and Ján continued to lean on Ed's advice for his own church plant, which officially opened in 2016. "That was very encouraging, and the friendship lasts until today," Ján relays. "That's one of the relationships that was providential, thanks to ELF."



This kind of long-term investment is what Ján now tries to implement as he gives back. In recent years, he has returned to ELF not only as a participant but as a mentor and the teacher of multiple ELF sessions, because, as he puts it, "I gained a lot, so I have to give a lot."

Today, Ján is a church planter, author, and award-winning podcaster, reaching thousands across both Slovakia and the Czech Republic through online ministry. He sees ELF as a crucial support system—especially in his context.

**"Ministry is tough, always. Churches in Slovakia, and in Eastern and Central Europe, are under-resourced, under-funded, under-staffed, and we always pray that God will provide. ELF is definitely a way of God's provision."**

Ján is now entering another new season—increased involvement with ELF and also stepping into a leadership position on his denomination's national board. Ján epitomizes ELF's strategy of identifying high-impact Gospel leaders and uniting, equipping, and resourcing them.

**"I've been equipped, encouraged, and resourced by ELF. It's not always about material resources; it's also about having encouragement, know-how, and networking."**



A curious young man, full of questions, has grown into a leader who not only has a significant Gospel impact in his context in Slovakia but who now pours into other European Gospel leaders at ELF, giving to others in the same way that he once received. God is using the Forum to create a Gospel renewal across Europe.



# How God is Using the Forum



**Ștefan Ilutan**  
(Pastor, Romania)

“I am a returning ELF participant, and I have been so blessed to grow in knowing the Lord. **I have also grown in understanding my calling and how I can serve both in my church and in my community, all because of what ELF does at the Forum and through the resources available year-round.** We have partnered with ELF by organizing ELF-like events in Romania for students, pastors, and teachers, and every year, we host at least one ELF speaker.”



**Daria Novikova**  
(Director of a Missions Organization, Austria)

“At the Forum, I receive invaluable mentorship, encouragement, and practical training to deepen my leadership skills and better serve the calling God has placed on my life. The community, guidance, and insights I’ve encountered have already begun to bear fruit in my ministry and personal walk with Christ. **The Forum is not only shaping my journey, but it’s also impacting the broader body of Christ, as we leaders are better equipped to serve, disciple, and lead with**



**Ornela Pica**  
(Director of a Missions Organization, Albania)

“This is my second time participating in ELF. Before, I was facing many challenges, especially in my role as a director in a missions organization. I felt alone, limited, afraid of failure, and inexperienced for the role. I lacked the courage to speak to groups which I did not know, and I often chose to stay in my comfort zone. **My first time attending ELF impacted my growth both personally and professionally.** I have grown more in the Lord, connected with other brothers and sisters in ministry, and gained confidence speaking to groups. **I am more confident because the Lord has used the people at the Forum.”**



**José Calvo**  
(Pastor, Slovakia)

“This year at the Forum, I was able to teach a Workshop. I believe it blessed me even more than I was able to bless others. **Learning from top evangelical leaders from different areas is eye-opening, and the resources like books, networking relationships, and Forum Initiatives are an ongoing strengthening for my ministry.”**





# This Year's Forum Plenary Speakers

Every year, the Forum is blessed by outstanding speakers from around the world who sacrificially give their time and talents to teach and mentor Gospel leaders at ELF. This year's gifted array of speakers poured out their gifts during Plenary gatherings, Network sessions, Workshops, and Seminars.



## **Peter J. Williams**

***(Principal and CEO of Tyndale House, Cambridge)***

Covered four figures from the Book of Judges over the course of four days, during the morning Plenary sessions. He took us through lessons learned from these leaders' successes and failures and showed how we can apply them to our own ministries.

**Evening sessions were led by wonderfully gifted and encouraging leaders:**



## **Rico Tice**

***(Co-Founder, Christianity Explored Ministries)***

Provided a vision and strategy for faithful evangelism.



## **Heather Holdsworth**

***(Teacher, Author, Artist)***

Spoke about building resilience in ministry, sharing how to find strength and encouragement.



## **Leonardo De Chirico**

***(Director, Reformanda Initiative)***

Explained why remembering the Council of Nicaea is important today.



## **Zefjan Nikolla**

***(General Secretary, BSKSH Albania / IFES / InterVarsity)***

Concluded the evening Plenaries by illustrating who we are as Gospel leaders through the Beatitudes.





# You Can Continue Your Partnership in the Following Ways:

**Pray:** Prayer is the foundation of the Forum's ministry—it remains our most important resource! Ask God to continue working through the Forum to identify and nurture Gospel leaders to spread His Kingdom. You can also sign up for our monthly digital prayer letter.

**Volunteer:** The success of the Forum's Annual Meeting depends on the dedication of committed volunteers. This year, 96 individuals faithfully served to make sure every Gospel leader felt valued and every session ran smoothly.



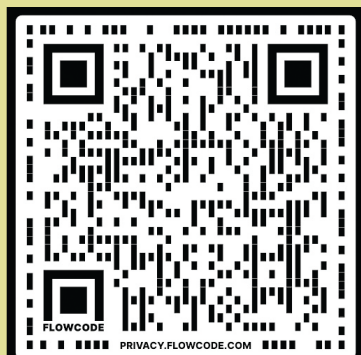
## David Sanchez, Volunteer

“The most rewarding experience of being an ELF Volunteer was watching God's Kingdom coming together, God's people from different countries, different languages, and different cultures working together for His purpose. I got to see what the Kingdom will be like in eternity. It was amazing!”

***If you are interested in volunteering, check out: [euroleadership.org/volunteer](https://euroleadership.org/volunteer)***

**Follow:** Stay connected with the European Leadership Forum and the Forum of Christian Leaders by following us on Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, and YouTube. We share regular updates about our ministry and how God is working.

**Give:** Support the Forum financially to help unite, equip, and resource Gospel leaders across Europe. Ongoing contributions—regardless of size—make a meaningful difference. You can start or increase a monthly gift by scanning the QR code below:





# We asked Forum participants to share how God used the 2025 ELF in their lives.

## This is what they said.

“This is my first ELF meeting, and without a shadow of doubt, **this has been the most impactful Christian conference I’ve attended in the last 20 years.**”

“I came to ELF with an open heart, but I didn’t expect to be so deeply encouraged by the faith and wisdom of leaders from across Europe. It reminded me that **we are not alone in our calling, and I am renewed, challenged, and filled with hope for what God is doing through His people.**”

“I came three years ago for the first time and **met an older mentor** who completely understands me and has become my biggest cheerleader as I am on my journey as a Gospel leader. **Thank you, ELF!**”

“**Coming to ELF helps me realize I can do this for another year.** The Forum brings the mission back to the forefront and focus of my ministry.”

“**I love the Forum! It has transformed my life and ministry.**”

“**The Forum is more than a conference; it is holy ground where God is raising up a new generation of leaders for His Kingdom.** I go home with a renewed sense of calling, a strengthened faith, and a joyful, thankful heart. All glory to God, who does immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.”

“**For me, the Forum is the greatest blessing as a leader, as it unites the church and greatly impacts God’s Kingdom in Europe.** This is the only place I really feel I am served, where I can renew my perspective on and approach to my life and ministry.”

“I am truly grateful for the opportunity to be at ELF. I feel equipped, refreshed, and more deeply connected to the global church. The seminars, mentoring sessions, and meaningful conversations with fellow believers have shaped both my personal walk with God and my ministry. **I see how God is using this time to challenge and encourage me to remain faithful, creative, and courageous in whatever I do.**”

“**Through the European Leadership Forum and its mentoring program, God is reminding me that I’m not alone.** I’m meeting people from all over Europe who share the same calling, and I feel encouraged, and refreshed.”

“**What encouraged me most is the sense that the Forum doesn’t end when we leave.** I feel like I’m going home inspired with a fresh desire to serve, but also equipped with relationships, wisdom, and access to the expertise of the leaders who invested in us. I look forward to seeing how God will bear fruit not only in my life but also in the lives of others.”



# Report on the 2025 EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP FORUM



FORUM OF  
CHRISTIAN  
LEADERS

PO Box 1442, Wheaton, IL 60187

[FOCLONLINE.ORG](http://FOCLONLINE.ORG)