



Successfully being a European voice with local traction – the example of the “Marriage Week”



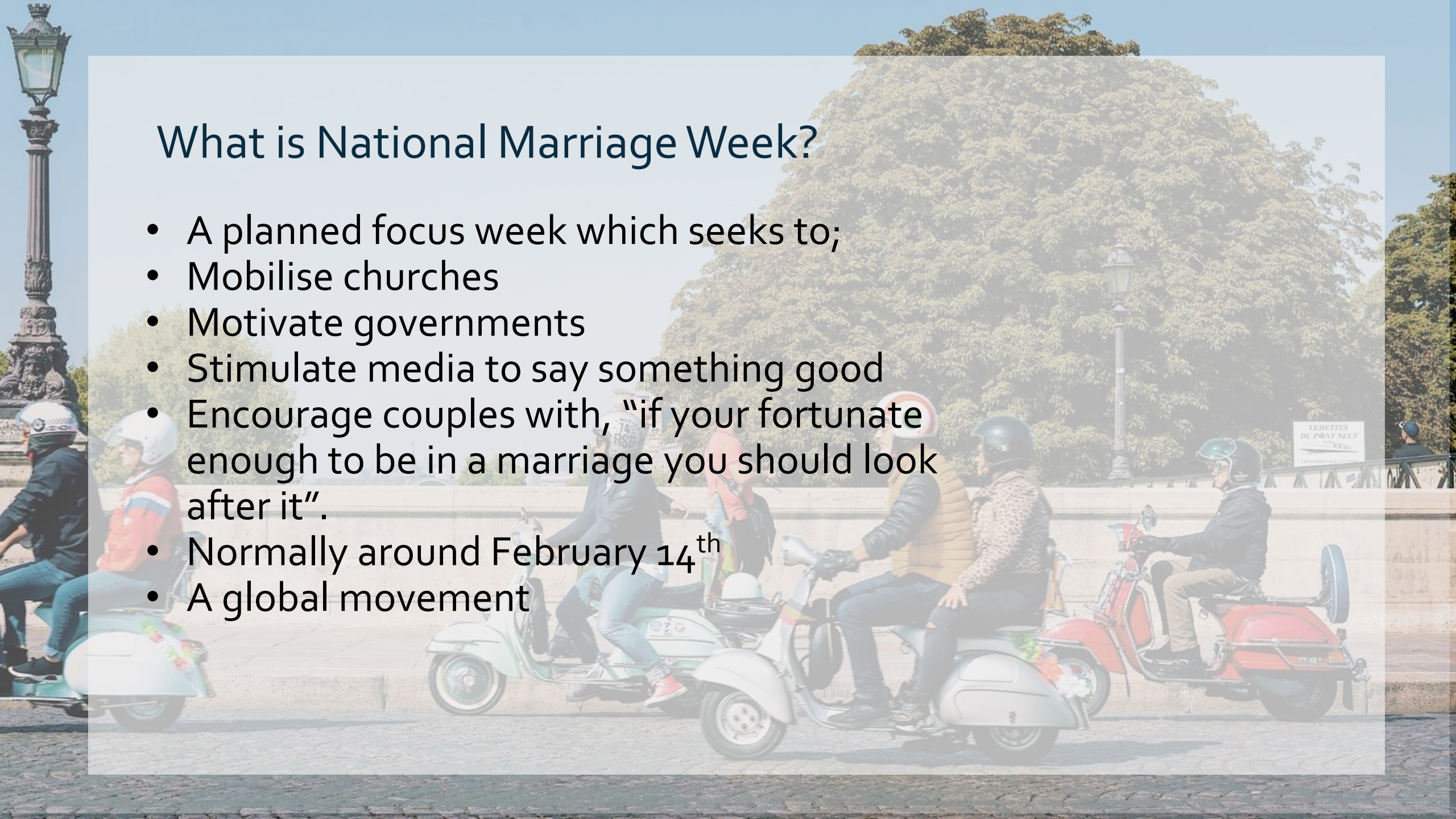
Richard and Maria Kane,  
Marriage Week  
International,  
United Kingdom



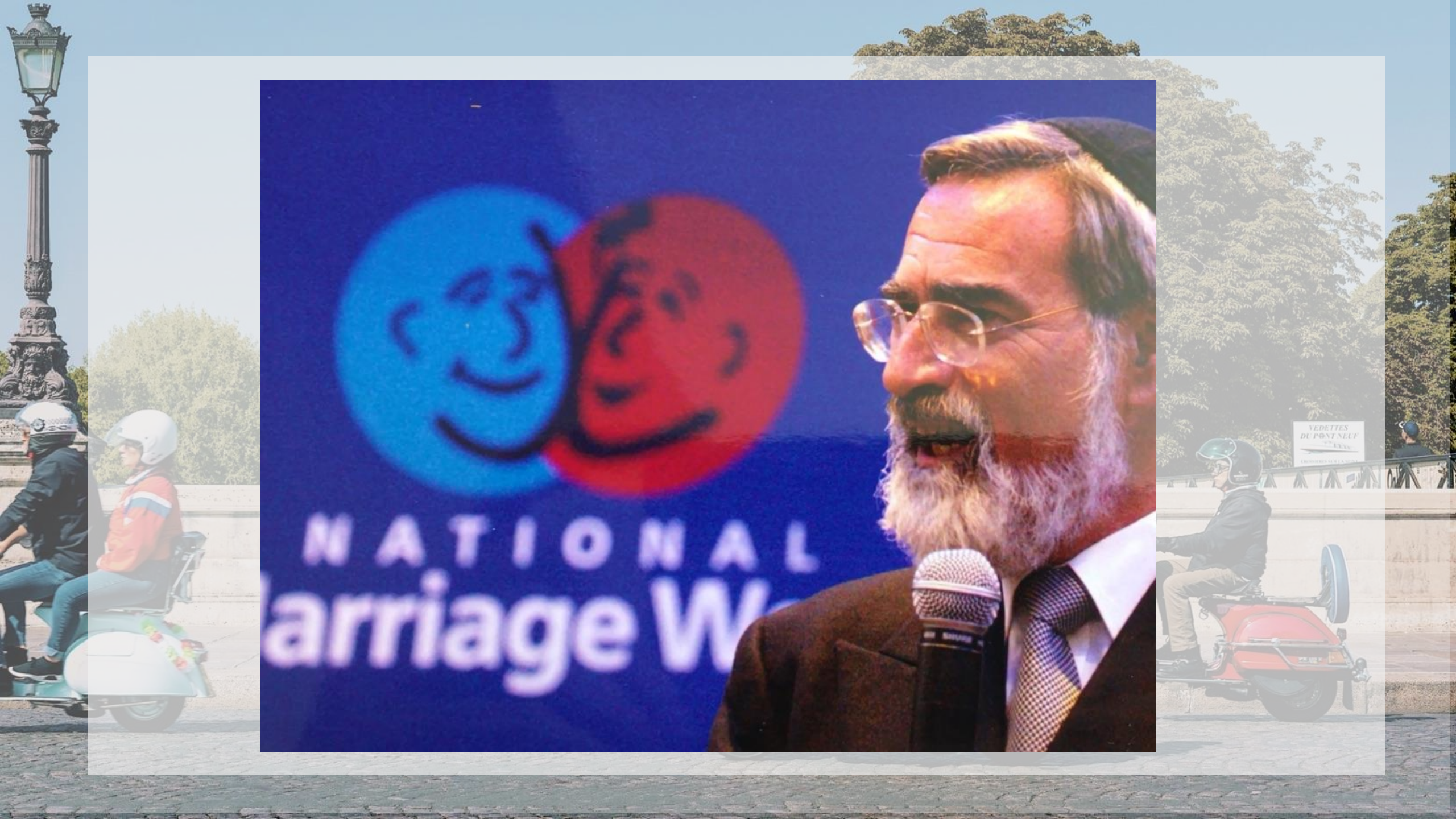
Connect, equip & represent

# What is National Marriage Week?

- A planned focus week which seeks to;
- Mobilise churches
- Motivate governments
- Stimulate media to say something good
- Encourage couples with, “if your fortunate enough to be in a marriage you should look after it”.
- Normally around February 14<sup>th</sup>
- A global movement







# International Network



VEGETES  
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# Why Marriage Week?

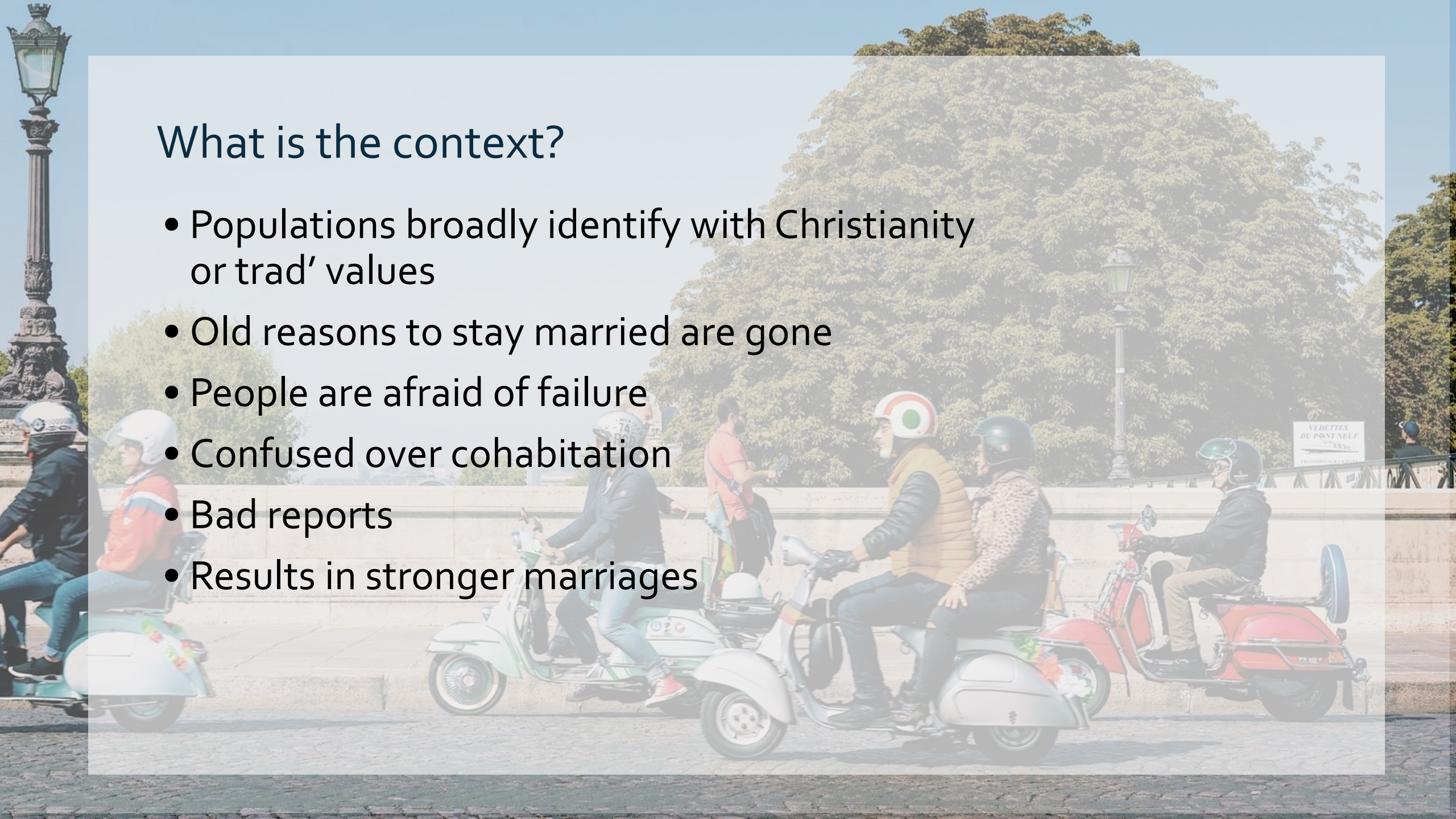
- Bless the nation
- Disciple the nation
- Local expression
- Don't be put off by the fringe
- Scratch the itch
- Join a movement
- 26 nations





## What is the context?

- Populations broadly identify with Christianity or trad' values
- Old reasons to stay married are gone
- People are afraid of failure
- Confused over cohabitation
- Bad reports
- Results in stronger marriages



# Numbers

- 5200 volunteer leaders hosted an event
- 624,000 people physically attended a MW event
- 520 million people will have heard something about MW on media
- 26 nations
- 35% increase in marriages in Bulgaria.
- 15% decrease in divorces in Bulgaria
- In UK divorce has stopped increasing and marriages are lasting longer.



## Closer look at Bulgaria

- 26 public events took place this year (60% more than last) in almost twice more cities in the country: Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Rousse, Stara Zagora, Smolyan and Blagoevgrad!
- In October 2019 we organized a special event and invited like minded leaders of NGOs, businesses, medical doctors, musicians, family consultants and therapists, university professors, representatives of the three main Christian denominations (Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic) etc. I shared with them about the opportunities Marriage Week initiative presents for bridging with different groups in our society and influencing them.
- Over 25 people from Sofia came and actively participated in the meeting. I contacted other leaders from different cities, and share the vision and what they can do. Most of them were able to organize an event or did something else for or during MW!



# Themes

## Special focus on the young and single people

- This year there were 3 events organized for university students for MW with topics in the area of relationships. I had the privilege along with others to speak there. We were able to share some personal stories and testimonies as well and they were well received.
- **Mayors to support the initiative**
- **This year I invited 19 mayors from different cities to support MW.** Five of them - the mayors of Blagoevgrad, Rousse, Smolyan, Kazanlak, and Dimitrovgrad, said that they would support MW! We interviewed the mayor of Kazanlak who does great job in encouraging marriage by organizing special event for couples celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. One of the mayors personally married a couple as a sign of his support for MW, which was covered by the news!



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## Events

One of the speakers this year in the School of Successful Marriage was a motivational speaker, who is a pastor, and who leads online talk show on marriage and relationship. This provided a good opportunity for him to share Biblical truth on marriage and relationship and about his faith. Everybody liked him a lot as well as the whole event!

The event of Smolyan's city Lady's Club MW gathered in one place prominent people the Orthodox bishop viceroy, a Muslim cleric, the head of the National Statistic Center and the head of one of the hospital departments in the city.





# Media

- **Large media coverage**
- Four national TV station (Europe TV, SKAT TV, Channel 3, Bulgaria 24) and two Bulgarian national radio stations invited us to participate with interviews. This gave us again great opportunity to share solid principals and truths on marriage and family, as well as moving stories, examples and valuable statistics. Bulgarian National TV station did life broadcast on marriage with one Orthodox and one Protestant couple for MW, in their "Faith and society" program. Many media published our press releases.
- We used the data of a good research done by Marriage Foundation in UK showing that Bulgaria is among the five countries with least divorces in Europe. Our press release went into the media, and gave us more opportunity to speak on MW. A Christian online newspaper (Evangelical News) published each day a different interview, with a married Christian couple during MW.

# Personal Stories

- **Touching personal stories and testimonies**
- **We received 17 stories** for the **MW contest** for married people. The topic this year was “The heritage of the good example”. The stories and testimonies touched many, including the jury of the contest, which had on its board some prominent people! Two new couples, famous in their sphere of influence, participated in MW jury this year.



Constantinople





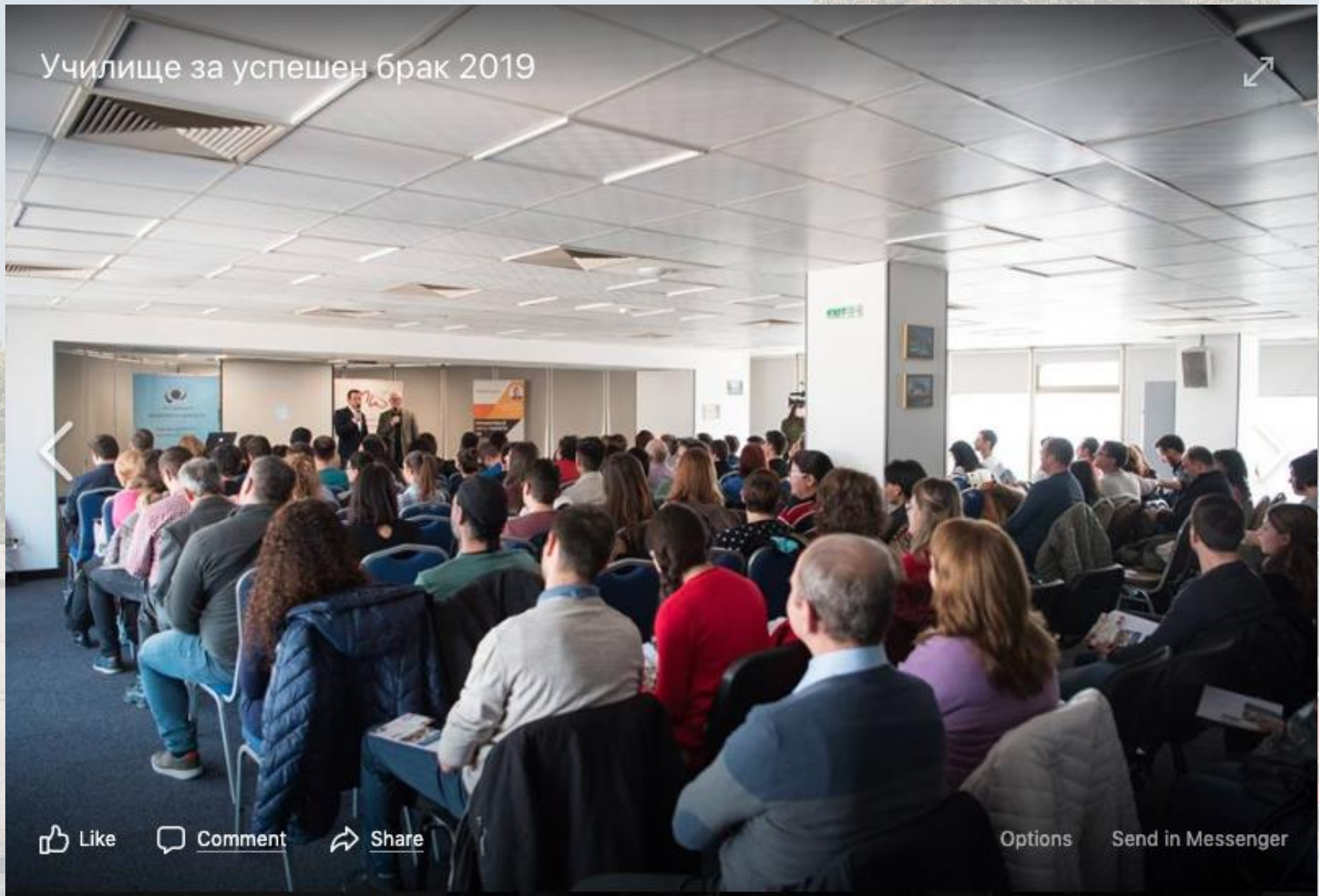


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СОЦИАЛНА МРЕЖА

**КАК ДА ПРЕДОТВРАТИМ РАЗДЯЛАТА  
В СЕМЕЙСТВОТО**

# Училище за успешен брак 2019



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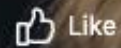
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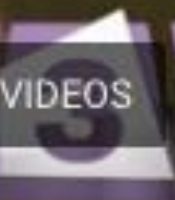
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**ЗАЩО НАД ЕДНА ТРЕТА ОТ БРАКОВЕТЕ  
ПРИКЛЮЧВАТ С РАЗВОД?**



2:15 / 39:41



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ЗА УСПЕШЕН И ЩАСТЛИВ БРАК?



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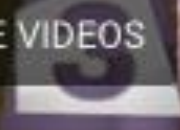


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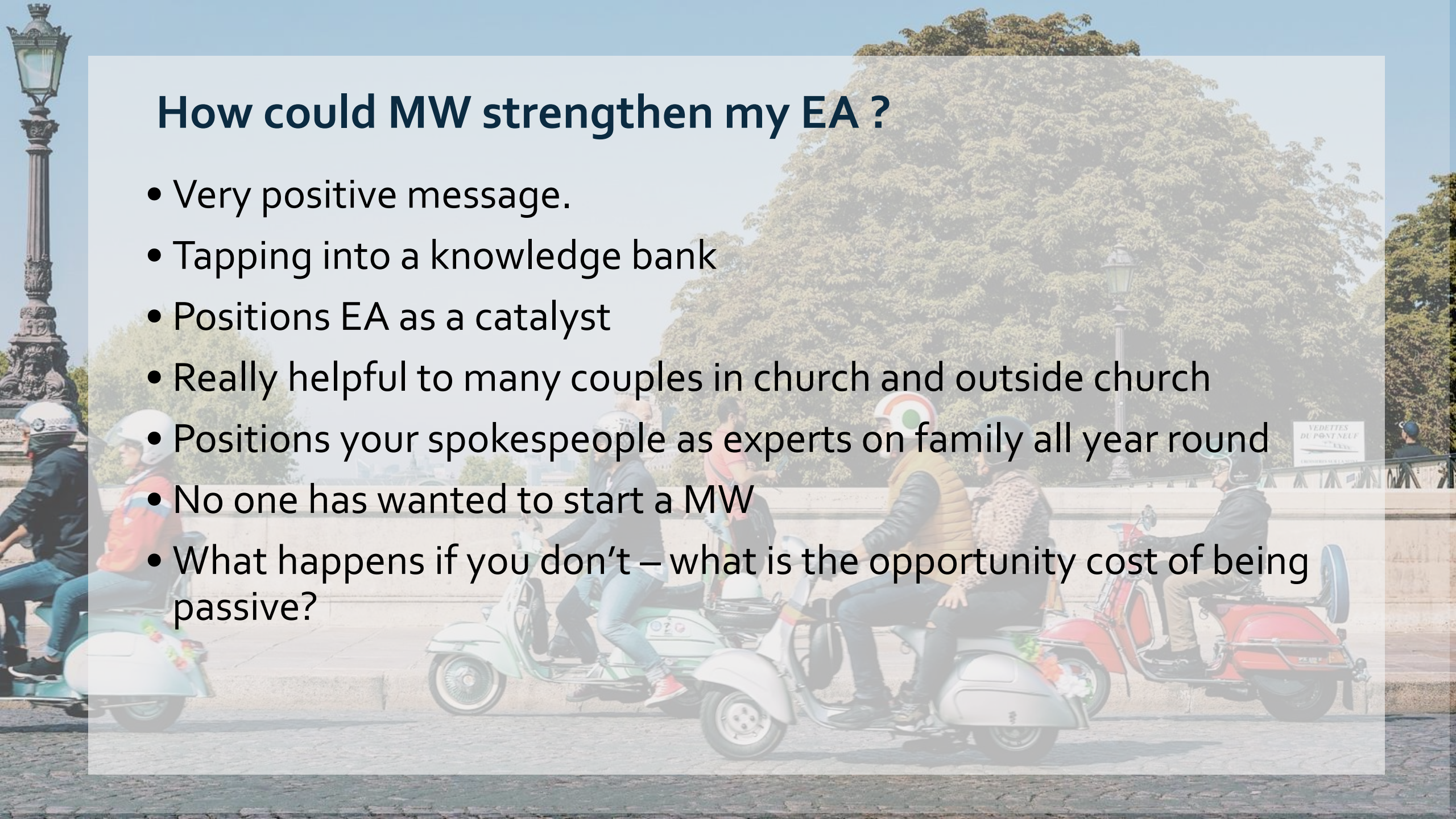


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# How could MW strengthen my EA ?

- Very positive message.
- Tapping into a knowledge bank
- Positions EA as a catalyst
- Really helpful to many couples in church and outside church
- Positions your spokespeople as experts on family all year round
- No one has wanted to start a MW
- What happens if you don't – what is the opportunity cost of being passive?



<http://www.marriage-week.org/>



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## Welcome to Marriage Week International

**Marriage Week International encourages the development of Marriage Week's throughout the World.**

Marriage Week draws together media, business, church, government, faith groups and in fact anyone who cares about marriage. It can be as small as a few friends reaching out to their neighbours or as much as thousands of local events taking place in bars, restaurants, community halls, and more often than not in Churches.

Marriage Week's take place on or near Valentines Day (Feb 7-14), however increasingly Marriage Week's are occurring at different times of the year, such as Ukraine and UK in May.



**Marriage Week celebrates the vibrancy of marriage as the basis for family life.**

### Marriage Week around the World



Albania



Austria



Bulgaria