

metconnexion

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FEATURING

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T H E R I S I N G G E N E R A T I O N



EDITORIAL

Marian Izzard

The theme for this edition of MET Connexion is The Rising Generation, focussing on the importance of young people - particularly children and teenagers - in our worship, in our mission and in our church communities.

'The Rising Generation' was a term used by John Wesley who stressed the importance of the care and development of children to be nurtured in the Christian faith as vital for revival to continue in the Methodist Church. Chris Ritter, pastor of Geneseo First Methodist Church in Illinois, USA and author of Seven Things John Wesley Expected Us to Do for Kids expands on this concept in his fascinating article on 'John Wesley and the Rising Generation'.

Ed Mackenzie, Lecturer in Biblical Theology and Mission at Cliff College reflects on the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of 1820, held in Liverpool and how it recognised the significance of ministry amongst children and young people as being key to the renewal of the church.

Gareth Crispin, Lecturer in Practical Theology at Cliff College challenges us to think about Intergenerational Church: what it is and what might help us embrace it. He offers some questions for reflection and further reading.

Resource Reviews on children, young people and all ages are interspersed between these articles to provide further reading and resources to equip and encourage individuals and churches in this area of ministry.

David Hull, Lead Pastor of Freedom Church Bristol and Chair of MET reflects on the reported outpouring of the Holy Spirit amongst students at Asbury University, in America in the light of our Wesleyan heritage of revival, and considers lessons for the church of today.

Rachel Jordan-Wolf, Executive Director of Hope Together, shares exciting opportunities and creative ideas to celebrate the Coronation with your local community.

Our Good News Story by Gavin Murray on 'Just-Ice' shares how a deep concern over human trafficking combined with a passion for making ice cream brought Just-Ice into being. An incredible story of an amazing faith venture!

Our Bible Study is the first of a 3 part series by Derek Balsdon, our former Development Worker on 'Images of the Holy Spirit'. This first study explores the Image of Fire.

Praying Always is compiled by Roz Addington, our Prayer Coordinator who provides us with a weekly focus for prayer over four weeks featuring The Church, Great Britain, World Issues and The Natural World and Climate Change.

The next edition of our magazine will be available in the early autumn.

Every blessing

Marian

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JOHN WESLEY AND THE RISING GENERATION

Chris Ritter



PASTOR AND AUTHOR CHRIS RITTER CONSIDERS WESLEY'S COMMITMENT TO MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN

'Gift or no gift, you are to do this, or else you are not called to be a Methodist Preacher.'

John Wesley

In June 1784, John Wesley found himself surrounded by a group of over sixty children, aged six to fourteen. He had just preached a sermon at Stockton-on-Tees in County Durham when the children approached him and, one by one, began to kneel. The aged Wesley knelt among them. Soon the adults were drawn back into the building for prayer. Wesley wrote in his journal, 'The fire kindled from heart to heart till few, if any, were unaffected. Is this not a new thing on earth? God begins his work with children! Thus it has also been in Cornwall, Manchester, and Epworth.'

Not only did the Methodist Revival include children, but Wesley ensured that ministry with children would remain a priority. Unless Methodists continually invest in the rising generation, he asserted, 'the present Revival will be a res unius aetatis,' a thing of only one age.

No one ever accused Wesley of Peter Pan Syndrome. Like others of his age, he seemed to view childhood as a sort of illness that one might hope to overcome as quickly as possible. Ever committed to diligence, Wesley even wrote a tract opposing holidays from recess in school. But it is also clear that Wesley cherished children and their souls.

The records of early Methodist conferences include explicit expectations that Wesley placed upon his preachers. While these requirements were not limited to leaders, they demonstrate a top-down commitment that shaped the DNA of the early Methodist movement.

TEACH CHILDREN INTENTIONALLY

Long before Crosby, Stills and Nash were singing about it, Methodists understood the value of teaching children well. Although Wesley is best known as an evangelist and organizer, he spent more time on education than any other single concern. It is sometimes said that Methodism built a school before it ever built a chapel. Wesley's Lessons for Children were a series of two hundred Bible stories for use with younger children. Every Methodist home was encouraged to obtain Wesley's best-selling Instructions for Children, a 39-page catechism he adapted from a French source. He worked tirelessly to build schools, edit curricula, and equip parents.

For Wesley, true education was aimed at formation, not just information. In his sermon 'On the Education of Children' he named the sins that Christian training would help children overcome. Among these were self-worship, pride, deviation from truth, and living contrary to justice. The end of Christian education was to help children think, judge, and act like Christ. Proper education is an extension of God's sanctifying grace.

Methodist preachers were to spend at least an hour each week teaching children. This was a non-delegable task: 'Gift or no gift, you are to do this, or else you are not called to be a Methodist Preacher.' As to the spirit of the task, Wesley

would recall the long-suffering instructions of his own mother. He noted how his father, frustrated by overhearing his wife's repetitive lessons, asked, 'How could you have the patience to tell that blockhead the same thing twenty times over?' Her reply: 'If I had told him only nineteen times, I would have wasted all my labour.' We can only assume the blockhead in question was young John. We can be grateful for her persistence.

KNOW CHILDREN PERSONALLY

Home visits were a mandated practice of every Methodist preacher. In America, we often excuse ourselves from our ordination vow to 'visit from house to house,' saying that people don't really want or expect that in today's world. But I am not sure they wanted it in Wesley's day, either. A visit from a Methodist preacher was something of a spiritual audit of the home. The format for home visits was taken from Puritan Richard Baxter and included direct questioning about sin, spiritual disciplines, and spiritual progress. Wesley added to Baxter's programme an expectation of personal conversation with the children in each home.

After speaking a few loving words to everyone in the house, Wesley encouraged private dialogues with each person about their spiritual progress. The goal was to get to the topic of the heart. Asking good questions would help a visiting preacher know their level of each child's understanding: 'With these you are to be exceedingly tender, lest they be discouraged. If you perceive they are troubled that they cannot answer, step in and take the burden off them, answering the question yourself. And do it thoroughly and plainly.'

Preachers were also to lead group instructions for children in each society. While adults needed a quarterly ticket to participate, children were under no such restriction. Ministry with children was an extension of God's prevenient grace and seeking love.

PRAY FOR CHILDREN INTENSELY

Perhaps the best-known story of Wesley's own childhood was the terrible rectory fire from which five-year-old 'Jackie' barely escaped. Susanna, visibly pregnant with her youngest child, knelt to embrace her rescued son, calling him a 'brand plucked from the burning,' an allusion to Zechariah 3:2. She later wrote, 'I determined to pray all the more diligently for him.' Wesley owned his mother's prayers as a great force in his life. Despite the large household she managed, Susanna dedicated one night a week to each child for personal prayer, instruction, and spiritual guidance. She also gathered her whole household together on Sunday nights for a service of evening prayer. These prayer meetings famously spread to the entire community.

Wesley considered his mother exemplary and asked her to record the pattern of spiritual formation she undertook with her children. He published this under the title, 'The Way of Education.' It is a testament to both organization and prayer. Amid high demands and incredible hardships, Susanna was in the habit of bringing her Bible to a favourite chair and placing her long apron over her head. It was her own miniature 'tent



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Methodist preachers were to spend at least an hour each week teaching children. This was a non-delegable task.
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of meeting.' Everyone in the household knew to respect this signal to leave her undisturbed as she prayed for her family and others.

It was said of Wesley that 'he always had a smile and a kind word for the children, and his manner was to place his hands on their heads and give them his heavenly benediction.' Just as Charles Wesley edited a collection of hymns for children, John Wesley edited for them a collection of prayers with the preface: 'A lover of your soul has here drawn up a few prayers in order to assist you in that great duty. Be sure that you do not omit, at least morning and evening, to present yourself upon your knees before God.'

MENTOR FAMILIES MEANINGFULLY

Wesley understood a concept later made explicit by Frederick Douglas: 'It is easier to build strong children than repair broken men.' Preachers were admonished to train parents in 'Mr Henry's method of family prayer.' The Henry in question was Puritan preacher Phillip Henry, the father of Bible commentator Matthew Henry. His twice-daily regime of family prayer included thanksgiving, psalms, confession, and intercession. Children were taught from the catechism and each Sunday the family would reaffirm their baptismal vows. If all this sounds a bit monastic, it was unapologetically so: 'He who would make his house a little church shall find that God will make it a little sanctuary.'

I don't know about you, but I feel a bit rotten about my own parenting when I read about families like the Henrys. But Wesley's admonition was persistence and resolve. His focus was on God's empowering grace and not our personal failings. In his sermon, 'On Obedience to Parents,' he reminded parents that they can do all things through Christ. God intervenes through grace to fill in the cracks left by our own omissions. Methodists were to train and encourage families to be small churches producing great Christians.

CHALLENGE OURSELVES CONTINUALLY

Ministry with children is often messy, thankless work. Yet this fits well within our covenant prayer to serve Christ even when we find the work unsuitable to both our natural inclinations and material interests. It was on ministry with children that Wesley said, 'Do it as you can until you can do it as you would.' As an older man, Wesley had a gift of encouraging younger leaders. William Wilberforce is a famous example. But we should also know the name Sophia Cooke Bradburn. As a young woman, Sophia lived in the same house as the elderly John Wesley. He would greet her cheerfully each morning with the words, 'Sophia, live today!' She took his advice.

When the Revd Robert Raikes asked Sophia what they should do for the poor children in the streets of London, her response was, 'Let's teach them to read and take them to church.' Sophia became perhaps the world's first Sunday School teacher. As she and the Revd Raikes marched the kids to church, people laughed at what seemed to be miserable parade of urchins. The first 'Sunday Charity Schools' were derided as 'Raikes' Ragged Schools.' Why bother to teach these children who

were only destined for manual labour? Some even accused them of political indoctrination. But Sophia and the Revd Raikes ignored these heckles from the cheap seats and persevered. Wesley highlighted their work in the Arminian Magazine. Forty years later, an estimated 1.25 million British children were enrolled in a Sunday School.

CARE FOR CHILDREN PRACTICALLY

The first generation of Methodists built schools, started orphanages, and fed hungry children. Meeting practical needs was viewed as a natural and necessary accompaniment to the work of evangelism. Thomas Rutherford, an early Methodist preacher, travelled with Wesley and later shared stories from his life. Near Glasgow, Wesley noticed a girl without shoes or socks. He dismounted, called the child over, spoke some encouraging words, and gave her some money (Wesley often saved his shiniest coins to give to children). As the preachers continued their journey, the girl's bare feet sparked an old memory for Wesley that he relayed to his companion.

Wesley had been teaching at a school in Savannah, Georgia and his friend, Charles Delamotte, taught at another. One day Delamotte complained that boys in his school mercilessly teased their poorer classmates who had no shoes. No matter how he scolded them, the ridicule continued. Wesley thought for a moment and offered to step in and help. On an appointed week, Wesley showed up at Delamotte's school to teach... barefooted. By the end of the week, all the boys were coming to school without shoes to be more like their instructor.

Near the end of his life, John Wesley was asked by a young preacher: 'What advice can you give in order to continue the great revival of which you have been a principle instrument?'

Wesley's reply was short and simple: 'Take care of the rising generation.'

The Revd Dr Chris Ritter is the author of Seven Things John Wesley Expected Us to Do for Kids (Abingdon Press, 2016) and blogs at peopleneedjesus.net. He and the congregation he serves, Geneseo First Methodist Church in Illinois, USA, are reaffiliating in 2023 with the Global Methodist Church.





Inspire a faith that lasts



INSPIRING A FAITH THAT LASTS IN OUR CHILDREN

Kitchen Table Project – from Care for the Family

Just 50% of children growing up in Christian homes keep their faith as adults. Care for the Family came across this statistic a few years ago and really wanted to do something about it. As a mum to two daughters, that 50% really hit my heart. I want my girls to grow physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually – but more than anything my heart's desire is that they will know Jesus for themselves.

But there are many obstacles to that. Lots of parents don't know where to start or feel unqualified to nurture their children's faith. And even if our churches provide amazing children's work, they only have such a small proportion of time with the children compared to the opportunity parents have with their children every day.

Moses puts it beautifully in Deuteronomy 6:5-7. He says: "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

So how can churches work with parents in putting God at the heart of our homes? It's not just about what our churches do on a Sunday, but about encouraging parents as they share their faith with their children as part of everyday life.

That's where The Kitchen Table Project from Care for the Family comes in. It encourages mums, dads, carers and churches to join together to support each other and share ideas.

A great starting point is the Inspire session, an easy-to-run small group discussion to help parents and carers – and grandparents – to start talking about how to nurture faith. The materials are all free to download at kitchentable.org.uk/inspire.

There are also free fun activities that parents and churches can use to build intergenerational relationships. With The Big Scrumptious Faith-Filled Feast activity mats you can gather to eat food, play games, and share stories of what God has done in our lives.

And the Scavenger Hunts encourage families to join together to explore God in nature – there are four different ones to use throughout the spring, summer, autumn and winter.

We are also excited that our brand new church leaders' training resource that will help churches develop their family ministry is coming soon. To find out more, sign up for our monthly emails, which are full of practical ideas, encouragement and resource reviews. Or follow us on social media for tips and ideas –

   @ktpcampaign

Find out more about all of these resources and sign up for emails at kitchentable.org.uk

Written by Claire Burton, Project Manager for the Kitchen Table Project. Claire and her husband Lawrence are senior leaders at their local church and have two fun-loving daughters.



FEED THE LAMBS

Ed Mackenzie



THE LIVERPOOL MINUTES AND MINISTRY TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

INTRODUCTION

In 1820, the Wesleyan Methodist Church held its annual conference in Liverpool. After a period of growth, this was the first Conference to report numerical decline within the Church, and the Conference adopted a number of 'resolutions on pastoral work' (known as the 'Liverpool Minutes') which were intended to renew the church and reverse its decline. Historians recognise that the Liverpool Minutes helped to reverse the decline of Methodism in the 19th century, and their impact is reflected in their continuing inclusion in the Methodist Church's CPD (The Methodist Conference, 'The 'Liverpool Minutes', 1820' in The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church, Vol 1 (Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 2005), pp. 71-79). The section of the Liverpool Minutes from which each citation in this article comes will be indicated in brackets.

Even with the passing of time, there is much to learn from these resolutions,

and one striking feature of them is found in their approach to ministry among children and youth. References to children, young people, and the family are scattered throughout the Minutes, with one of its key commitments as paying 'particular spiritual attention to the young people of our Societies and congregations' (VIII). The renewal of the church includes a renewed commitment to pass on the faith to the young.

In this article, I will draw out four themes from the Liverpool Minutes that are relevant for today's discipleship of children and youth: Emphasising the Gospel, Explaining the Faith, Equipping the Church, and Encouraging the Family. After introducing each theme, I will show its roots in scripture, point to contemporary research that illuminates it, and offer some suggestions for embedding it throughout our churches.

1) EMPHASISE THE GOSPEL

The first theme that Methodists need to retain is an emphasis on the gospel as the heart of the faith, passing on a clear and vital vision of it to the next generation. This gospel is not about becoming your best self, cultivating a

spiritual life, or even doing great things for God in the world. The gospel is the Good News of what God has done in history to redeem his people. And it focuses on the announcement that God has sent his Son to save us and to transform us.

The Liverpool Minutes recognise that grasping the gospel rightly is key for the renewal of the church. The ministry of Methodists, the Minutes explain, should be marked by 'sound, evangelical doctrine' (II), and such doctrine should be proclaimed experientially, ensuring that doctrine connects to life as well as to the quest for holiness (III). But what exactly does this doctrine include? In its section on 'The Pulpit' (III), the Minutes clarify that it focuses on 'the leading and vital doctrines of the gospel', and these include such essentials doctrines as repentance, an understanding of salvation by grace, the centrality of faith, and the importance of practical holiness. Later in the Minutes, the section on 'Oversight of the Young' (VIII) speaks of the importance of helping the young within the church gain 'intelligent sympathy' with Methodist 'doctrines and disciplines'. Throughout the Minutes,

then, there is an awareness that the gospel is key.

The New Testament similarly emphasises sticking to the gospel and remaining faithful to the Good News of Jesus. In the gospels, Jesus encourages his followers to build their lives on the rock of his teaching (Matthew 16:18), and to be wary of false teaching or false prophets that attempt to move them from it (Matthew 7:15-20). The apostle Paul also focuses on the centrality of the gospel and warns forcefully against abandoning it (Galatians 1:6-9), and similar emphases can be found throughout the New Testament (Hebrews 5:11-6:3; 1 John 2:24-25). While the gospel itself is expressed in a variety of ways throughout scripture, there is a unified stress on God's redemptive work through Jesus. As Gathercole summarises, 'the gospel is God's account of his saving activity in Jesus the Messiah, in which, by Jesus' death and resurrection, he atones for sin and brings new creation' (Simon Gathercole. 'The Gospel of Paul and the gospel of the Kingdom' in *God's Power to Save: One Gospel for a Complex World?* ed. Chris Green (Leicester: Apollos, 2006, pp. 138-154), p. 194).

In today's context, there is often an indifference to the doctrinal distinctives of Christian faith or even a hostility to it. The stress on conversation and building your own faith can often lead us to dissolve the very distinctives that give our faith its power. Worse, ignoring a focus on the gospel can lead to the proliferation of false gospels, or teachings inimical to Christian faith. In a 2005 study of teenage religion in America, one such faith was identified as 'moralistic therapeutic deism', a view in which, 'God is treated as something like a cosmic therapist or counsellor, a ready and competent helper who responds in times of trouble, but who does not particularly ask for devotion or obedience' (Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 148). Other kinds of gospels can also appear if we do not stay true to the apostolic gospel given to us in Scripture.

Staying true to the gospel means we are clear in our minds as to the nature of the

Good News we are to share. It means that we allow its power to work itself out in our lives and our discipleship. And we ensure that as we speak to children and young people, we help them to grow into a relationship with God, centred on what God has done in his Son and continues to do by his Spirit.

2) EXPLAIN THE FAITH

A second theme found in the Liverpool Minutes, related closely to the stress on the gospel, is the need to explain the faith clearly to children and young people. Young people then and now do not simply absorb by osmosis the truths of the faith and it would be wrong to let them pick and choose the elements of the faith they like the most. Rather, churches need to think carefully and faithfully of how best to help them grasp and be grasped by the truths of the gospel.

The importance of this is again emphasised in the Liverpool Minutes. In its section on 'Care for the Children' (IX), it points to the obligation to 'feed and take the oversight of the lambs', the youngest members of the congregations, and there are references throughout the Minutes to the 'instruction' of children. It is particularly in the section on 'catechetical instruction' (XI) - that is, instruction in the faith - that this comes to the fore. There, the Minutes commend that in Sunday Schools and in the home 'catechetical instruction' should take place so that children within the church should be rooted and grounded in the faith. The Minutes refers to the importance of Methodism Catechisms in guiding this task, and these played an important role in ensuring that the essentials elements of the gospel were taught and explained to the young.

In the New Testament, we find too that instructing Christians in the faith - including young Christians - is a key task for the church. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus speaks of 'scribes... trained for the kingdom of heaven' who are like masters of the household bringing out treasures old and new (Matthew 13:51-53). In the Great Commission, the Risen Jesus instructs his followers to make disciples, which, alongside baptism, involves instructing them in all that he has taught (Matthew 28:18-20). Paul also emphasises the role of teaching people

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While the Bible does not offer us strategic guidelines for engaging children and young people, it does assume their integration into the community of faith.

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in the faith, with 'teachers' having a vital role within the church (Romans 12:7; Ephesians 4:11-13). Alongside early Christian prophets, teachers would instruct and explain the faith and so build up the church. Paul's hope and prayer is that believers would be rooted and established in the faith, and so grow in their life with Jesus (Colossians 2:6-7). Since children would also be present at church gatherings (Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20), they too would be instructed in the faith.

In today's context, the idea of 'instructing' young people in the faith is sometimes resisted. Some would claim that children should be encouraged to construct the faith for themselves, while others would emphasise that children learn through participation rather than through intentional instruction. And yet because the gospel does have content, there is something to pass on. And while entering into conversation with children is of course important, it is possible to combine that with instructional approaches that do help young people to learn the essentials of the faith. A church that is confident about the faith it confesses needs to be confident about explaining it to all, and especially to the young.

Prioritising the instruction of youth within the church will mean having a grasp of what it is that we are passing on to young people. Ideally, this should focus on the essentials of what C. S. Lewis called 'Mere Christianity', focusing on the Orthodox beliefs all Christians share, and especially the gospel truths of what God has done in Christ. Methodists can also rightly offer a Wesleyan slant on such doctrines, including showing their relationship to experience - to the 'warmed heart' - and to practical holiness. How such instruction will take place will differ from place to place, but being intentional about the process is vital.

3) EQUIP THE CHURCH

A third theme within the Liverpool Minutes is the importance of equipping the church to minister well to its children and youth. It is not enough to have a vague sentiment that young people need to be incorporated into the church. Rather, we need to embed intentional practices to help ministry within the

church include and focus on children and youth.

Alongside its emphasis on explaining the faith, the Liverpool Minutes also show the way in which engagement with youth should feature throughout the structures of the church. In particular, the Minutes emphasise the importance of ministers within the church engaging with youth as part of their ministry; ministers should engage with the 'lambs' as well as the 'sheep' (IX). One way to do this is to aim to meet and encourage children of church members each week. Sunday Schools should also be encouraged, with ministers meeting and speaking with their leaders, and also visiting the members of the Sunday School once each quarter (X). In a section on 'Oversight of the Young' (VIII), the Minutes suggest that Ministers seek pastoral access to young people between the ages of fourteen to twenty-one. In the formative years when young people transition from childhood to adulthood, ministers have a role to play in offering encouragement and prayer.

While the Bible does not offer us strategic guidelines for engaging children and young people, it does assume their integration into the community of faith. The Old Testament shows how young people are incorporated within God's people through home life as well as through their participation in worship. In the reading of the law at the time of Ezra, for example, whole families - children as well as parents - attended, listening as the law was read and explained (Ezra 8:1-6). In the New Testament, churches were intergenerational communities where adults and the young would meet in homes and build up together the body of Christ. It is also significant that Jesus stressed the importance of welcoming and blessing the young. Whereas his disciples sought to keep children away from him, Jesus draws them to him with open arms and explains that the kingdom belongs to them (Mark 10:13-16). Elsewhere, Jesus notes that one who receives a child in his name receives Jesus, while those who reject children reject him too (Mark 9:36-37). It is striking too to note the way in which the apostle Paul mentored Timothy (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Timothy 1:18-19), helping him to live out and discern his ministry.



The importance of equipping the church to welcome and incorporate children and youth is one that is widely recognised today. Since the church is only one generation from extinction, finding ways to ensure youth are present and ministered to is vital. Research also reveals that churches which invest in young people are more likely to grow. The renewal of the church relies on inclusion of the young, and intentional ministry and discipleship of them.

Suggestions of how best to do this well will differ from the Liverpool Minutes. Our context differs, as does the reality of life for children and young people in the twenty-first century. There are, however, a number of key steps churches can make. This includes ensuring that churches are welcoming and warm towards younger generations, cultivating an intergenerational community, and identifying and drawing on the gifts of the young in our midst (Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin, *Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016)). A key insight of the Liverpool Minutes is that the leaders or ministers of a church should take a lead, since their own commitment to children and young people shapes the ethos of the church.

4) ENCOURAGE THE FAMILY

A fourth theme from the Liverpool Minutes is encouraging the family, and especially encouraging parents to disciple their children in the life of faith. Rather than passing responsibility for the faith formation of young people to ministers or youth workers, parents who follow Jesus should realise that they have a uniquely God-given role to help their children learn the way of faith.

The Liverpool Minutes highlight this dimension in a number of passages. The opening of the Minutes, for example, calls Methodists not just to attend to 'personal religion' but also to the 'Christian instruction and government of our families' (I). A similar emphasis concludes the document, where the desire for the 'abundant effusion' of the Holy Spirit includes families as well as Societies and Congregations (XXI). In its section on the Pulpit (III), the Minutes urge the people of God to 'fidelity in

family duties, and especially in the godly training up of their children.' One key way to help children grow in the faith that the Minutes highlights is through 'family worship' (IV), a commitment that parents make to read scripture and pray with their children. Strikingly, the Minutes also claim that religion within the Societies 'depends largely upon the cultivation amongst us of family religion' (IV).

Scripture also encourages parents to model and teach faith to their children. In the famous passage from Deuteronomy 6, parents are called to speak of faith at home and on the road, and to include symbols and words of faith around the home (Deuteronomy 6:7-9). The picture here is of parents modelling faith among their children, teaching them in daily life the meaning and implications of the law. In the New Testament world, parents would have typically had the role of teaching and modelling faith for the household, and this was true for Jews and pagans as well as those who became follower of Jesus. Paul's instruction to fathers to raise their children in the Lord and instruct them fits neatly within the first century context (Ephesians 6:4).

Despite this biblical teaching, some parents are hesitant about teaching or modelling faith within the home. At times, this is due to a concern for the autonomy of the child, even though parents are happy to pass on other key beliefs and values to their children. At other times, parents fear that talking about faith might actually put their children off Christianity for good. Despite these concerns, research shows that when faith is modelled well within the home, then children are most likely to take it on for themselves (Olwyn Mark, *Passing on Faith* (London: Theos, 2016)). The Spirit works through the parents to plant and nurture the seed of faith in the lives of children.

How then might this shape our churches? We need, first of all, to encourage parents to take up their role of disciplers of their children. This means speaking of 'faith at home' in the context of sermons and signposting helpful resources to parents, including - for instance - the excellent 'Parenting for Faith' resources produced by BRF

(<https://parentingforfaith.org>) or the 'Kitchen Table Project' run by Care for the Family (<https://kitchentable.org.uk>). With a contemporary emphasis on the power of testimony within the church, we can also encourage parents to share what faith looks like in their family and the joys and challenges of praying and reading the Bible with their children. Finally, we might also explore approaches to catechesis, in the home as well as the church (for a discussion of this theme, see Ed Mackenzie 'Generative Catechesis - Teaching the Faith to the Next Generation' in *The Generative Church: Global Conversations about Investing in Emerging Generations* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2019), pp. 106 - 129).

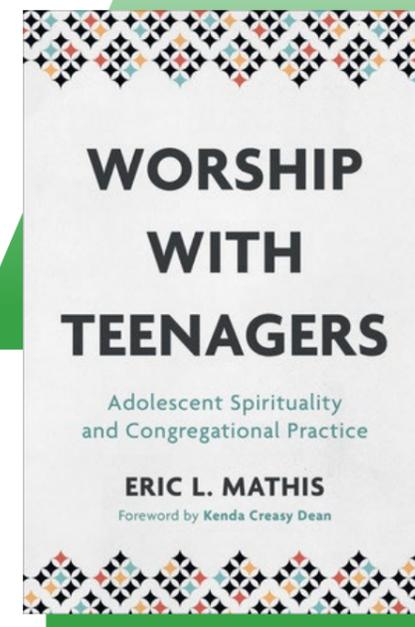
CONCLUSION

The Liverpool Minutes calls the church to focus on children and young people, and in so doing echoes a call heard across churches today. Its call, however, is for an evangelical formation of young people; this requires a clear grasp of the gospel's content and power, and a clear means of helping the young understand it and live it out. Picking up a thread that has for too long been neglected, the Minutes also emphasises that parents alongside churches have a key role to play. The formation of the young is a task for the whole community of God, whether at gathered worship or dispersed within homes throughout the week.

Dr Ed Mackenzie is the Lecturer in Biblical Theology and Mission at Cliff College and the co-director of Generation, the Centre for the Study of Youth, Children and Families Mission and Ministry (<https://cliffcollege.ac.uk/about-cliff-college/centre-ycf-mission-ministry>).



RESOURCE REVIEW



WORSHIP WITH TEENAGERS: ADOLESCENT SPIRITUALITY AND CONGREGATIONAL PRACTICE

Eric L. Mathis

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2022
ISBN: 978-1540964441 | pp: 266 | £16.99

The question of how to incorporate young people into the worship life of the church is a vital one. Worship, after all, is an essential means of grace, a way in which God shapes us to be his people. And while worship can and does happen in the youth group, inviting young and old to gather together in worship can be particularly transformative.

In *Worship with Teenagers*, Mathis brings together the areas of youth ministry and worship ministry to explore the theology and practice of including adolescents in worship. The book is divided into three parts. In part one, Mathis explores 'cultural perspectives' on youth ministry and worship, exploring studies of teenage faith in America, a historical survey of young people and worship, and a discussion of the theological purpose or 'telos' for worship. In part two, Mathis offers a series of 'liturgical perspectives', exploring the role of Christian worship in the life of teenagers, the importance of 'adoptive worship' which embraces teens in the life of the church, and a discussion of how worship is expressed in different cultural and ecclesial contexts. The final part of the book turns to 'pastoral perspectives', seeking wisdom on

worship from philosophy, sociology and anthropology, as well as offering a 'guide to change' for congregations and a 'guide for formation' for youth group worship with teens. Two useful appendices include a 'letter to teenage worship leaders' and a 'worship planning toolbox'.

This is a great book for anyone thinking about helping teenagers to engage more deeply in worship. Mathis does a brilliant job in bridging academic discussion of worship among teens with practical suggestions of how churches can do better in this area, although some readers may prefer to skip to the later chapters which focus on the practice! While the discussion tends to be quite US-focused, Mathis' work can be easily adapted for a British context and contains some great insights, including his suggested 'ecology of worship for youth ministry' (chapter 9) which shows the many ways in which churches might help teens connect with God.

Reviewed by Dr Ed Mackenzie, Lecturer in Biblical Theology and Mission at Cliff College.

Good News Story
JUST-ICE



GAVIN MURRAY SHARES HOW A DEEP CONCERN OVER HUMAN TRAFFICKING COMBINED WITH A PASSION FOR MAKING ICE CREAM BROUGHT JUST-ICE INTO BEING.

'A physio and a vicar walk into an ice cream shop' - it sounds like the beginning of a joke, but it is in fact our reality. We, (my wife, Sally the Physio, and myself, Gavin the Baptist Minister) run an ethical ice cream business providing trauma-informed employment for people with a lived experience of human trafficking. Let me tell you our story of how that happened.

An unexpected evening out for Sally with great coffee and cake changed our lives forever. It was an evening talking about the horror of human trafficking and modern slavery. A few months later, I heard a similar talk. Once we heard some of the stories of those caught up in it - we were changed people. Added to that was the realisation that slavery was happening in this country, we were desperate to be involved - not that we should ignore it if it didn't happen here. Once you've heard these stories - you can't 'unhear' them. Our faith in a God, who became flesh and blood and dwelt among us, was inspiration to be part of the antidote - whatever that looks like.

So, what is human trafficking and how do people get caught up in it and end up enslaved in British houses? It starts with a vulnerability that the traffickers look

out for. The biggest driver is economic - when someone is experiencing poverty they are desperate for a ticket out. It could be a young woman or man in an eastern European rural village or urban environment; a British citizen equally without prospects; a teenager wanting to be loved, looked after or belong somewhere. Similarly it could be people experiencing depression or other mental health episodes, coming out of the care system, or leaving prison.

In all cases, the trafficker comes along and poses as a friend and over time builds a relationship of trust, the foundation to what comes later: a job offer which involves coming to the UK or moving to another city. Once there, the supposed friend turns on them, removes their papers, tells them they owe lots of money and need to pay it back by working, and force them into exploitive labour: sexual, manual or domestic. They are also warned not to go to the police as they are corrupt and can't be trusted. Their nightmare is complete. Night after night, day after day. Abuse, violence, threat, fear. Repeat ... repeat.

The trauma that these people experience is barely fathomable, it broke our hearts, we sobbed and sobbed, as God shared his heart for them, with us.

We began volunteering to help raise funds and awareness to help more and more people get found and rescued. But was it enough? And what could we do, a physio and a vicar? We learned that rescue is not an event, but a process

that begins when they are found and set free. Their recovery is a long hard climb up a steep and slippery slope back to some sort of normality and dignity, and the key to that lasting recovery is healthy, gainful employment in a loving and supportive community.

Rewind a few years, when I was ordained, two good friends gave me a present: an ice cream maker (they knew I loved my ice cream - who doesn't?) and a Ben & Jerry's Recipe Book. We all need friends like that don't we? So started my journey in ice cream making - for family birthdays, special occasions, Christmas, or even charity events. I loved it - and people seemed to like it too.

Then one day, I was serving my homemade ice cream to the family (to Sally and our three children), and had a dreamy moment where I said: 'If we ever had a shop of our own one day, it would be an ice cream shop and we'd employ survivors of human trafficking - you know a sort of social justice thing.'

Immediately Sally replied, 'You'd have to call it Just-Ice!'

And we all went 'Ooooooooh'.

And that was it! The idea started and it became something that we knew we had to give birth to. We were scared about giving up our jobs, moving house, and raising our family. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the former president of Liberia said: 'If your dreams don't scare you they're not big enough'. Martin Luther King Jr said:

'Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter'. So we kept stepping out.

Straight away, it was clear that God was speaking and opening doors for us faster than we had ever experienced before. People were offering help right, left and centre in all the various skills needed to get a business off the ground.

One particular area was legal and the specifics of intellectual property: could we use the name Just-Ice and make it our own or was it owned already? Cutting a long story short, one of Sally's clients did this legal work for us for free and discovered that the name was already owned by Danone, the yoghurt company. Amazingly, they were Danone's lawyers too! After a brief correspondence they agreed graciously to let us have the name - for free! Wow!

We were bowled over and so we kept following the trail that God laid before us. This was clearly something he wanted us to do, and so much so that we left our jobs in London and moved to Derby where we now live and have our manufacturing base (come and see us if you're passing). We use local and, wherever possible, Fair Trade ingredients to make the best premium, artisan, dairy ice cream ever. And we're committed to good ethical practices for a business such as plastic free packaging and Fair Trade clothing.

So far we have employed nine people from a variety of backgrounds, ethnicity and gender. Some of them have moved on to bigger and better jobs once they had gained their confidence and recovered, and some are still with us, making the ice cream and managing sales.

We have one social franchise in Poynton, near Stockport, Manchester, where they are selling our ice cream and employing survivors too. The journey has been a huge rollercoaster and learning curve but we have seen God come through for us on so many occasions we have almost lost count. It is so clear to us that justice is on God's heart. The Bible speaks clearly about that in many places. Micah 6:8 is often known and quoted:

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.*

We also see it in the messianic mandate that Jesus reads from Isaiah 61 at the beginning of his ministry:

*The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.*

It has not been easy at all - pandemic, war, cost of living and the energy crisis all taking its toll on us and our sector. But it is a privilege to partner with God and to see people who've been subjected to the worst form of human treatment, and then to be shown God's love and compassion and healing, and be given a new chance and a new hope. A privilege to be a voice for the voiceless (Proverbs 31:8).

Our vision is to see a network of Just-Ice shops all over the country, providing the same trauma-informed employment for people with a lived experience of slavery ... and, of course, the same fantastic ethical ice cream!

If you'd like to follow us, then find us at justicecreamuk on Instagram or Facebook. If you'd like to support us, then please do go to our website www.just-ice.org.

Gavin Murray is Director & Head Joy-Maker of Just-Ice. Gavin became minister of Morden Baptist church in Surrey in 1999. Whilst there, he and his wife Sally became aware of the issue of modern slavery and decided to start Just-Ice, to offer trauma informed employment to those who had been exploited. In 2017 they moved to Derby with their 3 children to open their ice cream shop. Pop in and say hello if you are in Derby!



INTERGENERATIONAL CHURCH: PASSING FAD OR IMPORTANT FOUNDATION?

Gareth Crispin

GARETH CRISPIN CHALLENGES US TO THINK ABOUT INTERGENERATIONAL CHURCH: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT MIGHT HELP US EMBRACE IT.

Sometimes it's audible, isn't it? The collective sigh of relief when the Minister says: 'And now the youth and children leave for their groups'. Ministers can get on with the 'real business in hand', parents can relax and youth and children (Y&C) can go to age specific groups which cater for their specific needs, making teaching fun and accessible.

In an age when many churches have no Y&C in them at all, their mere presence in the wider church community is to be celebrated, but are we missing out on the blessings that might come from closer interaction between people of different generations?

Interaction lies at the heart of intergenerational church (IG) which has received growing attention in the last few years. IG is not simply multi-generational, with people of different generations in the same location, even in the same all age service (as in figure 1). No, IG is specifically all about actual, meaningful interaction between people of different generations (as in figure 2).

As well as interaction, mutuality is central to IG. Y&C are full members of the church and so are not to be patronised or ignored. They are to interact with others as equals with something to contribute. Their different perspective may provide the catalyst for others to remember the awe that God should inspire or the sheer joy of understanding the Father's

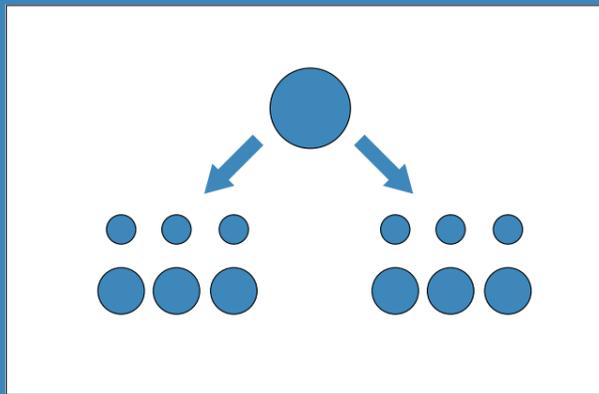


Figure 1.

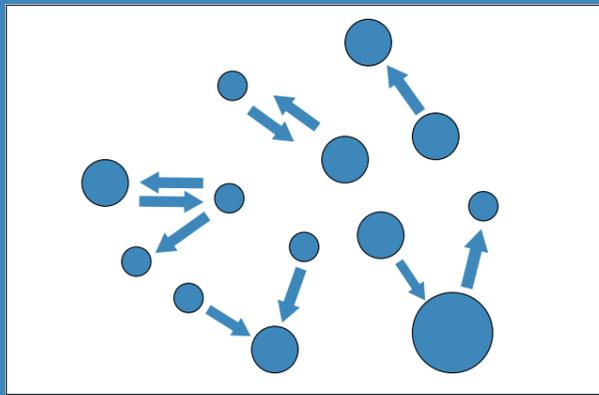


Figure 2.

love for us, or the simple trust that Jesus invites us to place in him. Equally, they may ask difficult questions that others have long since buried as they have 'matured' in faith.

This doesn't commit us to a church that then ignores or patronises older generations, a risk in our contemporary society with its idolatry of the new. Instead, true mutuality recognises that older generations bring continuity and wisdom, knowledge of the story of our faith and a witness to God's grace in their lives over many years.

Equally, IG doesn't commit us to a subjectivist church, focussed only on the views and experiences of people, without biblical authority and teaching. Mutuality doesn't imply whatever anyone says is to be accepted and left uncontested. However, it does mean church leaders fostering new ways of discipleship, including them developing new skills of pastoral oversight to gently shepherd God's people as they interact on a mutual footing.

Of course, you can't find a proof text that says: 'thou shalt never segregate along age lines', but examples of the community of faith being taught together (e.g. Deuteronomy 6, Exodus 16:9-10 and 35:1-4; Ezra 8:1-6; Ephesians 6:1-3 - in the last passage Paul assumes children are present at the reading of his letter to the church) should at least give us pause for thought, and Ephesians chapter 4 should give us even more to ponder. Paul reminds the Ephesian church that as Christians they are all bound together to the one body through the one Lord (Ephesians 4:4-5). In this context he implores them to bear with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2), which is difficult if interaction is non-existent!

The unity of the church of which Paul speaks is derived from the one God (Ephesians 4:6), reminding us that as well as diversity, there is a fundamental unity in the Trinity, God's family into which we are brought when we are adopted as sons and daughters. Adoption in Christ means old and young are brothers and sisters in Christ; maybe viewing others in the church more like this may help in our intergenerational relationships (for more on this angle see Chap Clark, Adoptive Youth Ministry).

Of course, the other Pauline passage that comes to mind is 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 with the picture of the church as a

body. In this passage members of the church are represented as members of a body, where no one part is unimportant. Let's pull three points out from this passage that speak into the question of IG. Firstly, verses 12-14 show us that God has made us one - we are interdependent. Secondly, verses 15-19 help us to see that different people bring different perspectives and that is good! Lastly, verses 21-27 remind us that we cannot say we don't need others.

So, in the church we are in interdependent relationship with those of other ages, younger and older, those people bring things that we cannot think that we don't need, (and let's admit that we sometimes do!) those that are not like us. We are all, to a lesser or greater extent, narcissistic, but 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 forcefully says: 'Brothers and sisters, this should not be.'

If I may switch metaphors for a moment. Let's consider the symphony orchestra and the bassoon. Now, as many of you may know, there is a pecking order in an orchestra (or at least some would like us to think so!). The strings are seen as the most important section, the mainstay of the orchestra. Within that the violins are seen (or is that see themselves!) as superior - if you don't believe me just ask a violinist to tell you a joke about a viola player! Even within that you have the first violins and second violins and then at the top, the crème de la crème is the leader of the first violins who is literally called the Concertmaster (I know! I know!). Not so different from many of our churches, right?

Now let's consider a different instrument: the bassoon. Bassoons are funny instruments (I really like them though that's possibly because my son plays one). They sound like a drunk duck with a cold. In Paul's terms they are members that are treated with less honour. But of course, without bassoons (and oboes, and the percussion etc. etc.) the orchestra ceases to be the orchestra. Hear me right here, we're not talking about all these instruments being in the same building but in different rooms (sounds familiar?) - but in the same room. The sound you get when you hear a symphony orchestra in full flight is quite stunning. If you want a vision for developing an IG church, then maybe this is it. We are (because of God's work in us) and should be (because it still takes practise) a symphonic church, creating a sound that can only come from engaging all.



WHY NOW?

But why are we talking about this now? Why not 50 years ago? Well, of course, people have always talked about it, but it has come increasingly onto the agenda in the last couple of decades for a variety of reasons.

It is likely that part of the catalyst for change has come from the feeling that the segmented models of Y&C ministry and mission, that developed since the late nineteenth century, have not turned the tide of falling numbers. Those models, developed in the context of modern industrial societies with a focus on management and efficiency, reflected the wider segmentation within society as seen within the establishment of the state schooling system.

The last few decades have seen some questioning of these foundational ideals of the previous century, including seeking after new forms of community and a sense of the importance of informal relationships over the previous focus on hiring in expert professionals to run polished segmented programmes. IG writers have also pointed to research which suggests:

- that the best way to retain youth in the church is to integrate them more from the word go (see Sharon Ketchem Galgay 'Solving the retention problem through integration: A communal Vision for Youth Ministry', Journal of Youth Ministry, 11(1)),
- that social learning theory (from Vygotsky) indicates that people learn best in social settings and alongside people who are ahead of them in developmental terms (Holly

Allen and Christina Ross, 'Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship', 2012).

WHY IS IT HARD TO DO?

OK, so we know what IG is, have some indication of why it might be a good idea and we have a vision for it, but why isn't everyone doing it? Over the last few years, I looked at three Church of England churches to see what helped and what hindered the development of IG. I found that there was good evidence to suggest that many of the reasons why churches might not embrace IG are to do either with theology or the leader of the church. Let's consider theology first.

THE IMPACT OF THEOLOGY

It is of course too simplistic to say that if someone believes X they will do Y, we know it does not work like that. However, it is easy to see how some theologies are commensurate with certain practices or expressions of faith and so provide more fertile ground for those practices or expressions than other theologies might.

In my research, I began to see how some of the theology associated with charismatic churches laid foundations that were more positively pre-disposed to IG than more conservative theologies. But before we get into that, we need to pause to consider the risk of instrumentalising theology. It might sound obvious but it needs saying: don't believe something because of what it will give you; believe on the merits of the belief itself. I am all for IG, but equally I am not a charismatic (I come from a more conservative stable) and I

don't intend to embrace charismatic theology merely because it might help me implement an IG church. That said, it is useful to understand why some practices might be easier to implement in some places than others. Understanding how the land lies is important for considering what you might then do next (but should not pre-determine that next step).

So, with that caveat out of the way, what might it be about charismatic theology that provides a good foundation for IG practices? The first thing of note is the experiential nature of theology and practice (Ben Pugh, *Bold Faith: A Closer Look at Five Key Ideas of Charismatic Christianity*, 2017, p.xvii); charismatic evangelical theology in Britain is 'dynamic, seen through the lens of experience,' (Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter*, 2008, p.16) with an emphasis on encounter rather than knowledge.

Corresponding with this emphasis on experiential encounters with the Holy Spirit is the second theological commitment of interest to us; that is, charismatic evangelical theology in Britain views the Bible as 'a collection of stories intended to lead a person to God and to be transformed as a result, rather than a database of dogma to be mined.' (Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter*, 2008, p.189) Thus, the Bible becomes a place of 'encounter with the divine author.' (Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter*, 2008, p.190).

The third theological commitment in charismatic theology is a social doctrine of the Trinity. Social Trinitarianism focuses less on the hierarchy of the members of the Trinity and their substance and more on the equality of the members and their relationships. Whilst Moltmann does not identify himself as Charismatic or Pentecostal, there are significant overlaps in their theological outlook; including at this point where the doctrines of the Trinity and Holy Spirit are more about relationship rather than substance (Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, 1981, p.19); and it is a relationship that includes the impact of the freedom of the Spirit in creation that causes change within the Trinity itself, as the Spirit brings experience of creation back to the Godhead.

Whilst we don't have space here to explore all the different nuances of these theological emphases or the way in which they connect to IG, it is nevertheless easy to see the way in which these convictions might provide fertile ground for IG. As explored above, IG is about mutuality between people of different ages and it is about participation of those different ages in the life of the church. Taken together, the theological convictions above provide a backdrop that is at least sympathetic to the needs of IG. The experiential nature of the church, the focus on 'experience' over 'head knowledge' and a focus on a relational vision of God is far more likely to allow space for meaningful participation of younger people (with their relative lack of knowledge and their experiential approach to learning) than the opposite convictions.

THE IMPACT OF THE LEADER

My research suggested that the second important element to consider when reflecting on why IG might be hard to

implement and practice - is the leader. Church of England churches have specific leadership structures, but what I discovered cuts across most church governance structures. When we talk of 'the leader' in this area, it is both their theology of leadership and them as a leader (including their background and personality) that seems to matter.

Firstly, in terms of their theology of leadership as with the wider theology, I found that those with more conservative understandings of leadership, tended to see themselves as the authoritative shepherd who leads the sheep through teaching. Charismatic evangelicals tended to hold together both a desire to teach authoritatively, but also to foster a more horizontal church culture as well, co-pilgrims leading from the middle, rather than the front.

In terms of building IG practices, it is not hard to see how more conservative theologies of leadership do not automatically lend themselves to allowing the less hierarchical forms of leadership needed to cultivate the mutuality, participation and bi-directional teaching implied in and required by IG. It isn't merely about theology however. Secondly, the leader themselves provides another set of reasons why certain leaders and churches seem to take more easily to the waters of IG than others. What is seemingly important about the leader is their background, their personality.

The background of a leader seems to have received scant attention in leadership books but it seemed so very influential in the churches I looked at. When I asked one vicar for the top 5 ways in which youth and children come to know who Jesus is and to become more like him, he did not pick the home or the wider church as examples. When I asked why, he replied that those places 'had not been his experience.' Let that sit with you for a minute ... I did not ask what his experience was, I asked him what he thought was best or what worked - he replied to me with his experience. He had not experienced the power and place of the biological-legal family or the wider church and so he did not see it as important now!

Another vicar seemed to be a natural to IG. He did not know the literature, nor the language that IG thinkers use but he was doing what they advocated. Why? When asked about his background he replied that he learned most about ministry through his early immersion in youth summer camps and the alternative worship scene (remember alt:worship?). These formative experiences were ones that were highly interactive and participative, experiential - they shared a lot of the same priorities as IG. And here is the kicker. One of the vicars told me that they are told at 'vicar factory' that it will only be a matter of a few years before their church began to look like them. Want to know why your church looks like it does? And why IG might be easy or hard? You could do worse than delving into the formative years of your minister.

What about personality? The links here were a little more tenuous and personality is far more slippery and contested as an idea, but I mention it here as it does at least make sense of some possible reasons why some church leaders might be more inclined towards IG than others.



We don't have space here to engage in a discussion around the strengths and weaknesses of the Myers-Briggs personality types. Even if you feel it does not have empirical backing (which I think it does have) it could, at a minimum, be seen as something that captures accumulated wisdom of people over time.

Myers-Briggs is based on Jungian theory which posits that people have psychological preferences in how they interact with the world. As preferences, these do not determine how people engage with the outside world, they mean only that different people will tend, and be inclined, towards certain postures to the world because that is their preference.

There are three main preferences in Jungian theory. First is the inclination to be extraverted (gaining psychological energy from the outside world of people) or introverted (drawing energy from the internal world of the self). Second is the tendency for perceiving the world through the senses or through intuition. Lastly is the preference for making judgements through thinking or feeling. Because Jung suggested people prefer to use the perceiving or judging processes in the outer, social and inner, private world, most tools that use Jungian theory include a fourth preference choice of judging or perceiving. This allows individuals to consider which processes they prefer to use in the outer and which they prefer to use in the inner world (for a helpful introduction, see Leslie Francis, *Faith and psychology: Personality, religion and the individual*, 2005).

In short, the personality type that appears (from both the literature and my own empirical research) to provide the closest match to core values of IG is ENFP (So someone with a preference for Extroversion, Intuition, Feeling and Perceiving). The summary given to this type by Briggs is:

Warmly enthusiastic and imaginative. See life as full of possibilities. Make connections between events and information very quickly, and confidently proceed based on the patterns they see. Want a lot of affirmation from others, and readily give appreciation and support. Spontaneous and flexible, often rely on their ability to improvise and their verbal fluency (Introduction to type®: A guide to understanding your results on the Myers-Briggs type indicator®, 2000).

CONCLUSION

IG isn't an all or nothing kind of thing. You can introduce elements of IG into the practices of your church and maintain some age-segmentation too (that can even be done in a way that connects the two).

I've tried to set out some reasons why embracing IG to some level might be a good idea but also why it might be hard to do. If you want to think about the possibility of living in a more IG fashion in your church community, it might be worth taking your time and thinking corporately about what IG is, studying some of the passages above, dwelling on the vision of a symphonic church and considering what barriers there might be to IG in your specific context (I won't have captured them all!). Addressing barriers is not easy and will take a while and will need some good open conversations so don't rush it and do it prayerfully. There are some questions and further reading

listed below to help you if you would like to take things further. Whether IG eventually passes as a fad or is taken on by churches as an important foundation for mission and ministry in the twenty first century, only time will tell. But with all the fresh thinking coming out from IG writers, it is certainly something worth thinking about!

QUESTIONS

- What examples can you think of that have demonstrated the importance of intergenerational relationships in your community of faith?
- What do you make of the idea of a symphonic church?
- Meditate on the idea of old and young being brothers and sisters in Christ?
- In what ways do you think your church might find joy in IG?
- What are the major obstacles in your context to intergenerational formation?
- What might be done to overcome obstacles?

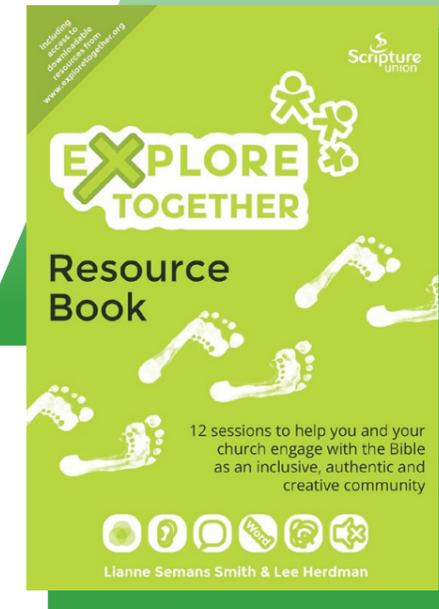
FURTHER READING

- Mounstephen, P. & Martin, K., *Body Beautiful? Recapturing a Vision for All-age Church* (Cambridge, Grove Booklets, 2004).
- Gardner, Jason, *Mend the Gap - Can the church reconnect the Generations* (Nottingham: IVP, 2008). In his book, Jason Gardner has several useful ideas to try out. One that is particularly helpful is setting up Intergenerational Working Group. A body made up of a person from each generation in the church to discuss options and ideas for bringing the generations together. Why not consider setting up one such group in your church?
- Allen, Holly Catterton and Ross, Christine Lawton, *Intergenerational Christian Formation - Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship* (Illinois: IVP, 2012).

Dr Gareth Crispin is a Lecturer in Practical Theology at Cliff College. He is co-director of Generation, the Centre for the Study of Youth, Children and Families Mission and Ministry, and is a member of the Executive Board of the International Association for the Study of Youth Ministry. He writes and speaks at both a popular and academic level on youth, children and families mission and ministry and can sometimes be found on twitter @garethcrispin.



RESOURCE REVIEW



EXPLORE TOGETHER *Scripture Union*

Bletchley: Scripture Union, 2015 | ISBN: 978-1-78506-027-4 | pp: 32 | £4.99

Explore Together is a resource from Scripture Union that helps churches to plan and deliver all age worship gatherings.

Each session follows the same pattern of presenting a Bible passage, a theme and some questions which are then explored together in six zones before people are invited back to share responses to the questions.

People explore the passage, theme and questions together by selecting one or more of the following zones of activity:

1. the Colour Zone - which allows people to explore through colouring pens and materials;
2. the Listening Zone - where people hear songs, poems and testimonies;
3. the Chat Zone - for those that want an open discussion;
4. the Word Zone - for those that want to go deeper with the text;
5. the Busy Zone - that helps engage those that prefer building type activities; and,
6. the Quiet Zone - where people find a more contemplative space.

All the resources needed are provided, or at least identified. Sessions are free to download from their website - see for example: <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/resource/explore-together-god-our-provider>.

Explore Together provides a familiar structure which works well for an all-age context because younger children often benefit from familiarity. Because the zones vary by learning style, the impact is not merely that different ages are brought together but also people of the same age are able to interact with the passage, theme and questions differently.

Depending on your outlook on theology and church life you may be more or less concerned at the absence of any formal 'teaching element' in the sessions. It would be helpful to read the article on page 14 about Intergenerational Church for more on that, but for now, there are a number of things to remember here. Firstly, it is of course possible to introduce other elements and make the resource your own (most resources are improved by adjusting them to suit you and your context). Secondly, *Explore Together* is not meant to be the only thing that churches do - it assumes that sessions form part of a wider programme of church services and discipleship and, thirdly, teaching doesn't have to be in a formal talking slot, it can be woven into other activities.

Explore Together is likely to be a bit of a culture shift for some churches and so the ground may need some prep work before embarking on this, but it has proven to be a valuable resource for many churches in the last few years and would be worth others giving it a go.

Reviewed by Dr Gareth Crispin, Lecturer in Practical Theology and Programme Lead for BA Mission & Ministry at Cliff College.

IMAGES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Derek Balsdon

THIS IS THE FIRST OF A THREE-PART BIBLE STUDY ON IMAGES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Within the Christian faith, we believe in the Holy Trinity; that, in some mysterious way, God is three in one. Most people find it easiest to picture Jesus Christ, because he lived on earth as God in human flesh. Many people manage to picture God as Father, because we all have some concept of human fathers. It is much harder to picture God the Holy Spirit, so within scripture God has given different images to help us understand and experience his Spirit. The main biblical images of God's Spirit are Fire, Wind, Breath, Dove and Oil. This study will focus on Fire, and some of the other images will be the focus of subsequent studies.

We are starting with Fire because you will receive this magazine near to Pentecost, when we celebrate tongues of fire coming upon the followers of Jesus Christ, and all of them being filled with the Holy Spirit. Within the Bible there are numerous others references to the fire of God.

- Where in the Bible do we read about the fire of God? Consider whether or not these are references to the Holy Spirit.

In Exodus 3, we read about Moses and the burning bush. In the hot wilderness, bushes could spontaneously combust. Moses noticed that this bush kept on blazing. Was this God's Spirit blazing away to get Moses' attention? Just after Moses had led the Israelites out of Egypt, we read in Exodus 13:21-22 about the pillars of cloud and fire. Could this have been the fire of God's Spirit present with them during their wanderings in the wilderness?

- In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist prophesied that Jesus 'will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.' How is this prophesy being fulfilled today?

Read Acts 2:1-47

Pentecost was a Jewish Festival which took place 50 days after Passover, and was also known as the Feast of Weeks or Harvest, and was a kind of harvest festival. Jews from the surrounding nations flocked to Jerusalem for this annual festival, which is why so many countries are listed in verses 9-11. God's timing was excellent; the fire of his Spirit blazed when people from so many different places were gathered together.

In v. 1, we read 'they were all together'. This could mean the eleven, plus Matthias, or more likely the 120 mentioned in Acts 1:15. Back in 1:8, they had heard Jesus promise them the power of the Holy Spirit to enable them to witness. 1:14 tells us that 'They all joined together constantly in prayer...'. It is very likely that they prayed for the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus' promise of power still stands. In what ways could you and others within your church seek more Holy Spirit fire?

When the believers came together on the Day of Pentecost, they heard what sounded like a violent wind, which filled the house. 'They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.' Jesus baptised them with the Holy Spirit and with fire, fulfilling the prophecy given through John the Baptist.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus promised them power to witness, and after being filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to witness. The excitement caused a crowd to gather, and those from over a dozen different countries heard these Galileans speaking in other languages. It wasn't gobbledygook, for we read, 'we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues'. Whilst I believe that the primary purposes of the gift of tongues

is to praise God, to intercede and/or to give a message which needs interpreting, sometimes people hear the wonders of God being proclaimed in their own language, and this has resulted in their salvation and healings.

Perhaps what matters more than their speaking in tongues is that they were 'declaring the wonders of God'. Jesus had promised them power to witness, and once filled with God's Spirit, they witnessed to those around them. The fire of the Spirit gave them a passion to proclaim the gospel. On 24 May 1738, John Wesley's heart was strangely warmed, and this gave to him a burning desire to evangelise. Receiving the fire of God's Spirit gives us a passion to share God's Good News.

At Pentecost, and ever since, outpourings of God's Spirit are welcomed by some and rejected by others. That has been the case throughout the life of the Methodist movement. At Pentecost, some asked 'What does this mean? Some, however, made fun of them' (2:12-13). In the gospels there are numerous instances of Peter leaping into action, and often putting his foot in it. Being filled with the Spirit hasn't changed his impetuous character, but now God's Spirit is guiding his words. He explains that what is happening is the fulfilment of Joel 2:28-30, the outpouring of God's Spirit upon his people. Even though Peter was probably aware that this was in fulfilment of Jesus' promises, he started with something that would resonate with his Jewish audience, one of the Old Testament prophets.

- When you have opportunities to witness to others, how can you listen more clearly to where God's Spirit wants you to start your evangelism?

After starting with Joel, Peter then spoke about Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection. He then linked this back into the Jewish scriptures by quoting part of a Psalm, and then spoke about some of David's words being fulfilled through the resurrection of Jesus, their Messiah. Peter started where his listeners were, and then soon brought Jesus into the conversation. God's Spirit can help us to know how and when to bring Jesus into conversations.

Resurrection was a contentious topic within Judaism; the Pharisees believed in resurrection, but the Sadducees didn't. Peter wasn't afraid to speak about this touchy issue because he now knew for sure that resurrection was a reality. Verse 32 reads: 'God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.' Declaring that they had seen the risen Jesus gave an invitation to the crowd, to ask any of them about what they had seen. Personal testimony continues to be a powerful way to give witness to the reality of God.

Trinity Sunday comes right after Pentecost, and will be 4 June this year. I like to preach on Trinity Sunday, and have often shared something about my experience of each person of the Trinity. I am also willing to share that I don't understand how God is three in one, yet I accept this mystery. On occasions I have used v33 as my text.



- What can you glean from v. 33 about the person and work of the Holy Trinity?

The fire of God's Spirit wasn't just blazing in the followers of Jesus, he was also igniting something within the gathering crowd. In v. 37 we read that the people were cut to the heart and asked, 'What shall we do?' Peter replied with such wisdom that it must have come from the Spirit. He told people to repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, and that they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Even though Peter had been one of Jesus' closest three disciples, he recognised that Jesus' forgiveness was also available to all those gathered before him, providing they repented of their sin and believed that Jesus was their Messiah. Every one of them could also receive the same gift of the Spirit. (It wasn't until Acts 10 that Peter realised that this was for Gentiles as well as Jews.)

In v. 39 Peter explains that the promise of the Spirit is also 'for all who are far off'. That includes Jews who were dispersed across various nations as well as Gentiles, and also includes us, almost 20 centuries later. The fire of God's Spirit wants to burn brightly within each Christian and within every church today.

In v. 41 we read that around 3,000 people accepted Peter's Spirit-inspired message, and were baptised. The fire of God's Spirit coming upon the 120 believers blazed so brightly that the church immediately grew to over 3,000 people.'

- Over the past 2,000 years, what other occurrences have there been of the fire of God's Spirit falling afresh? What have been the results?

The final verses of Acts 2 show that within the early church there was devotion to the apostles teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Miracles were common, people shared their possessions, they praised God, enjoyed favour from other people, 'And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.'

- What aspects of the early church are present within your church? How could you facilitate some of those traits increasing within your church?

I draw this Bible study towards a close by quoting some words from Paul, 'Do not put out the Spirit's fire' (1 Thessalonians 5:19). Within our individual lives and within our churches, it is all too easy to put out the Spirit's fire, or even just to let the fire die down. If/when this happens,

'What shall we do?' (2:37). We can repent of our sin, renew our trust in Jesus Christ, and seek the rekindling of God's Spirit. In Malachi 3:2-4 we read about the Lord being like a refiner's fire, and the fire of God's Spirit has a purifying effect upon our lives and our churches. May we, and our churches, have the Spirit blazing within us, purifying us, giving us the passion to declare the wonders of God, and may we witness the Lord adding to the number of those being saved.

The Revd Derek Balsdon served as the MET Development Worker from 2018 - 2022. He is an accredited minister with the Global Methodist Church, and is currently involved with preaching and healing ministries. Derek and his wife Hilary currently live in Congleton, and are seeking God's guidance for the next season of their lives.



O GOD OF BURNING, CLEANSING FLAME

William Booth

O God of burning, cleansing flame:
Send the fire!

Your blood-bought gift today we claim:

Send the fire today!

Look down and see this waiting host,

And send the promised Holy Ghost;

We need another Pentecost!

Send the fire today!

Send the fire today!

God of Elijah, hear our cry:

Send the fire!

And make us fit to live or die:

Send the fire today!

To burn up every trace of sin,

To bring the light and glory in,

The revolution now begin!

Send the fire today!

Send the fire today!

It's fire we want, for fire we plead:
Send the fire!

The fire will meet our every need:

Send the fire today!

For strength to always do what's right,

For grace to conquer in the fight,

For power to walk the world in white:

Send the fire today!

Send the fire today!

To make our weak hearts strong and brave:

Send the fire!

To live, a dying world to save:

Send the fire today!

Oh, see us on your altar lay,

We give our lives to you today,

So crown the offering now we pray:

Send the fire today!

Send the fire today!

Send the fire today!

*William Booth (1829-1912)
Adpt. Lex Loizides
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SEEKING THE EXTRAORDINARY THROUGH THE ORDINARY

David A. Hull

DAVID A. HULL REFLECTS ON THE REPORTED OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AMONGST STUDENTS AT ASBURY UNIVERSITY, IN THE LIGHT OF OUR WESLEYAN HERITAGE OF REVIVAL, AND CONSIDERS LESSONS FOR THE CHURCH OF TODAY.

When I was asked to write this article, references to 'the Asbury Revival' were, for many, simply a footnote in history. It was revival which led to the foundation of Asbury University and further revivals have since followed. There are many people, still faithfully following Jesus all these years later, who look back on those revivals as seminal moments in their spiritual growth.

Yet, in the ensuing month since receiving the invitation to write, talk of 'the Asbury Revival' has resurfaced - not as fond recollections of an experience more than 50 or 70 years ago, but as a present reality. On Wednesday February 8, 2023, a chapel service concluded at Asbury University as the preacher, Zach

Meerkreebs, left the platform, feeling that he had failed to hit the mark - a sentiment familiar to many preachers. He reportedly sent a text message to his wife, 'Latest stinker. I'll be home soon.'

Several students, however, remained in chapel and continued to sing in worship; others began to join them. The worship continued non-stop for over two weeks, in what the University has described as an unusual 'outpouring' of the Holy Spirit (<https://www.asbury.edu/outpouring/>). It finally culminated on Thursday, February 23 in a prayer service that had already been months in the planning. That prayer service marked the 200th anniversary of the Collegiate Day of Prayer - for revival and awakening on college campuses in America - a movement which itself grew out of revival in New England's Second Great Awakening.

Over those two weeks of outpouring, thousands travelled to Wilmore, Kentucky to share in the experience. News of the event quickly spread around the world via social media, developing a hunger in the hearts of many for a similar move of God where they are.

A TRULY SURPRISING NARRATIVE

It is inspiring to hear accounts of moves of God around the world. They do indeed stir in our own hearts a hunger for awakening, renewal and revival.

Before John Wesley experienced revival in England, he read, in October 1738, Jonathan Edward's account of revival in New England, America. He described the account as a 'truly surprising narrative of the conversions lately wrought in and about the town of Northampton in New England', adding the note in his Journal, 'Surely, "this is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes!"' (John Wesley, Journal, October 9, 1738). We do not know what ponderings, passions and prayers that account kindled in Wesley's heart and mind, but I am sure it stirred a hunger for revival within him.

What we do know is that it would not be long before Wesley himself began to experience revival. As the year turned from 1738 to 1739, he gathered with many of his friends at the Moravian meeting house in Fetter Lane, London, to see in the New Year with an all-night prayer meeting. His life would never be the same. He wrote in his Journal:

Mr. Hall, Kinchin, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles, were present at our love-feast in Fetter Lane, with about sixty of our brethren.

About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of his Majesty, we broke out with one voice, 'We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.' (Wesley, Journal, January 1, 1739.)

VAIN WORDS

Wesley's quest for revival had begun with desperation even more intense, it seems, than that which Zach Meerkreebs felt as he left the platform at Asbury University. Wesley had returned from a missionary trip to America feeling an utter failure. Doubt and disappointment had characterised the trip from its beginning. No sooner had he arrived in Savannah, Georgia in February 1736, than he had been asked by the Moravian leader Augustus Spangenberg, 'Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God?' Spangenberg was relentlessly persistent in his questioning. Wesley prevaricated before answering in the affirmative, but he added in his Journal, 'I fear they were vain words' (Wesley, Journal, February 7, 1736).

Returning to England in January 1738, he wrote in his Journal, 'I went to America, to convert the Indians; but O! who shall convert me?' The sense of despair continued throughout the following months until he went to St Paul's Cathedral in London on the morning of May 24, 1738. The words of Psalm 130, sung by the choir, seemed perfectly to express the feeling of his own soul: 'Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice' (Coverdale/Book of Common Prayer).

That evening, he went 'very unwillingly' to a meeting in Aldersgate Street and, there, he received the assurance of faith, the witness of the Spirit of which Spangenberg had spoken. He famously wrote in his Journal: 'I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.' (Wesley, Journal, May 24, 1738.)

It was this experience which spurred him on to read Edward's account of revival in New England and which led Wesley to the all-night prayer meeting as the year turned from 1738 to 1739. As 'the power of God came mightily upon' him that night and he stood 'amazed at the presence of his Majesty', a flame was kindled in his heart which would soon spread like wildfire in the greatest revival Britain has ever known, changing almost countless lives around the world.

AS AT THE FIRST

The fire thus ignited in Wesley's heart brought him to Kingswood in Bristol, where he began to preach in the open air to the infamous miners at Hanham Mount on Sunday, April 8, 1739. The fire of revival began to spread.

In June, just two months later, he received a letter in Bristol from his fellow Methodists in London, urging him to return. It seems they sensed that the Holy Spirit was no longer present with them in the way he had been before.

So, Wesley returned to London, and he met again with his friends in Fetter Lane, the very same place in which they had gathered to see in the New Year six months previously. He described the scene in his Journal: they humbled themselves before God, confessing that they had grieved the Holy Spirit by their divisions, trusting in their own works rather than in Christ, and ceasing to grow in holiness. He then added, 'In that hour, we found God with us as at the first. Some fell prostrate upon the ground; others burst out, as with one consent, into loud praise and thanksgiving; and many openly testified, there had been no such day as this since January the first preceding.' (Wesley, Journal, June 16, 1739.)

An outpouring of the Holy Spirit was given at the beginning of the year, igniting revival, and then, six months later, another outpouring of the



Holy Spirit was given. I find that very encouraging!

SEEKING THE HEART OF GOD

How, then, are we to seek revival, an outpouring of the Spirit of God? That, it seems to me, is what Wesley's revival ministry was all about: teaching people to seek the Lord through the ordinary means of grace: prayer and fasting, Bible reading, receiving Holy Communion, sharing in purposeful Christian fellowship, engaging in acts of mercy. Those are the channels, given to us by God himself, through which his Holy Spirit flows into our lives, the ways in which we deepen our discipleship, growing in grace, holiness and the knowledge of the Lord. That is the way in which Wesley himself sought revival in his despair, doubt and discouragement.

It is about seeking not the hand of the Lord made manifest in revival, but his heart in the ultimate relationship for which we were created. As we discover his heart, he gives us his hand - at times quite spectacularly and often unexpectedly. It is as we do the ordinary things that, occasionally, the Lord moves in an extraordinary way. That, it seems, from a distance of 300 years, is what happened in the Evangelical Revival, the Great Awakening.

That, it seems, from a distance of 4,000 miles, is what might have happened in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Asbury this month. There has been much excitement, and rightly so. There is a hunger to develop and there will be lessons to learn. However, we should not necessarily seek simply to copy the experience of revival in Asbury in the hope that it will result in revival where we are.

What brought an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to Asbury? 'The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going' (John 3:8). It has been a spontaneous move of the Spirit of God. It wasn't spontaneous, free-flowing, endless worship that brought the outpouring of the Spirit - that was the result of the outpouring.

The extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit followed an ordinary chapel service, as ordinary students gathered

in worship - just as countless Christians around the world gather in worship every week - and as an ordinary preacher tried his best to be faithful in declaring the Word of God - as countless preachers seek to do Sunday by Sunday. As they engaged in the ordinary means of grace, the Lord met them in an extraordinary way. The Wind, it seems, was pleased to blow in a mighty gale.

This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes! Let's continue to seek his heart through the ordinary means of grace, trusting him to move in extraordinary ways, as he pleases - and let's remember that revival often begins in desperation. 'Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known' (Habakkuk 3:2).

This article was first published by Light + Life (lightandlife.fm), under the title 'Seeking the Ignition of a Spirit-Fuelled Movement', and is reproduced here, with minor revisions, with kind permission of Jeff Finley, Executive Editor of the Free Methodist Church USA.

The Revd Dr David A. Hull has been a Methodist Minister for almost twenty years, serving in the worlds of church and education. He is Lead Pastor of Freedom Church Bristol (wearfreedomchurch.co.uk), a Free Methodist Church based in Kingswood, the birthplace of the Wesleyan revival. Passionate about seeking a rekindling of the Wesleyan flame, David is Chair of Methodist Evangelicals Together and of Share Jesus International (sharejesusinternational.com) and is a member of the Council of the Evangelical Alliance (eauk.org). He is married to Sarah and they have three young daughters.



“

Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known.

”



met | Methodist Evangelicals Together

MET AGM: NEW HORIZONS
Bank Holiday Monday 29 May
2.00 – 3.30 pm

At Cliff Festival

Samuel Chadwick Lecture Room,
Cliff College, Calver, Hope Valley S32 3XG

See AGM Reports enclosed with the magazine

met | Methodist Evangelicals Together

REVIVE: Prayer Weekend
Friday 17 – Sunday 19 November

The King's Park Conference Centre, Northampton

- Bible Teaching • Inspiring Worship
- Praying for Revival • Christian Fellowship

Further details will be available at
methodistevangelicals.org.uk/revive

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DIGGING FOR TREASURE
Saturday 30 Sept | On Zoom

Spirit and Truth:
Biblical Preaching for Revival

Expository Preaching Day-Conference

with guest speakers

Further details will be available at
methodistevangelicals.org.uk/dft

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MET SW CONFERENCE
Friday 26 – Sunday 28 Jan 2024

Livermead Cliff Hotel, Torquay

We do not lose heart

Realism and hope from 2 Corinthians 4 & 5

With speaker Jonathan Lamb,
Minister-at-large, Keswick Ministries



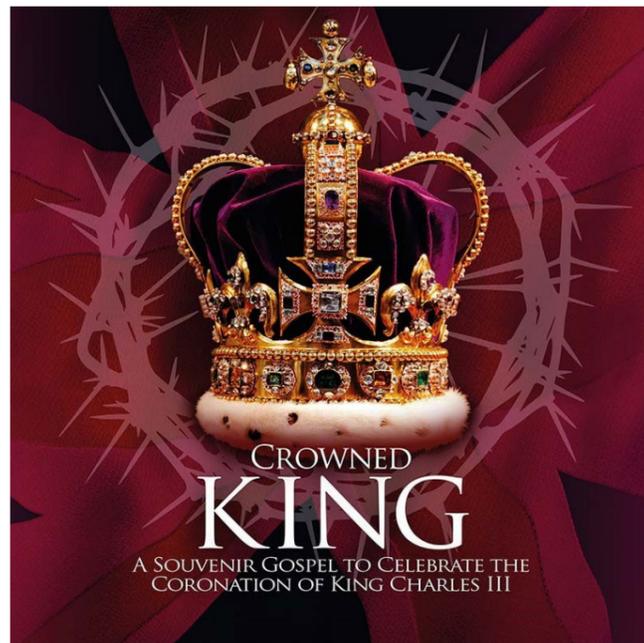
For further details visit
methodistevangelicals.org.uk/swconference

THE CORONATION WEEKEND AND THE KING OF KINGS

Rachel Jordan-Wolf

RACHEL JORDAN-WOLF SHARES EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES TO CELEBRATE THE CORONATION WITH YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY.

Have you plans for the Coronation weekend? It's a great opportunity to gather the community and to celebrate together, with the church at the heart of this national moment. Westminster Abbey really will be the heart of the Coronation ceremony as this unique rite and service takes place in this



ancient building built for worship. This gives us an opportunity to point to the ultimate King, the King of Kings - Jesus Christ.

Hope Together have partnered with Biblica to do just that by producing a souvenir edition of Matthew's Gospel. It has a beautiful celebratory cover and an illustrated introduction on the Christian symbolism and witness inherent in the service. Catherine Butcher, who is now a royal commentator for UK news media, has written this stunning introduction. It takes the reader through the prayers and promises that King Charles will make and shows how he will need the help of God to fulfil this role. It helps us understand the anointing and symbolism of being called by God. Catherine points out the cross on all the crown jewels and how this demonstrates that all power is held under the authority of Christ.

During the Coronation ceremony and service, just like his mother the late Queen, King Charles will be given a bible. When the late Queen was handed this she was told it was 'the greatest treasure this world affords.' It is this same treasure that we are offering to all the people who receive a copy of Matthew's Gospel, a treasure greater than all the jewels in the world - the word of God. This will help readers to follow on and read the life of the King of Kings, finding out all about Jesus Christ for themselves.

Our hope is that this book will be passed out at the street parties planned up and down the land. If you're thinking of running one you can find all the help you need on the Eden Project's website for the Coronation Big Lunch www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch. The Big Lunch is a great opportunity to build deeper relationships with



those in your local community and it can be as big or small as you can manage. It might be a simple glass of something sparkling and piece of cake or a full blown all day event! Hope Together have produced a special Grace that you can use for these occasions just as people are about to dive into their food. With the Grace and the books, the community celebration becomes an opportunity to witness. You can find the Grace on the Hope together website. hopetogether.org.uk/thekingscoronation

Recently, the new king came to visit the area in which I live here in Shoreditch. I was amazed by the level of excitement from the local school children, they were shouting, waving, jumping up and down and they all desperately wanted to shake the king's hand! Many schools will look to give their school children a commemorative gift to mark the occasion of the king's Coronation and the souvenir of Matthew's Gospel is the perfect gift. We have created an assembly plan to go with it that you can use to help primary

children think about the Coronation and turn their thoughts to the King of Kings. It's called 'If the hat fits'. Looking at what it means to be a monarch, it can help children think about questions like 'Is a king or queen just about wearing a crown?' and 'Do you choose to be a king or queen, or are you chosen?' There's even a ready to run slideshow presentation; you can find these on the Hope Together website.

Your church might be running a special service over the Coronation weekend or want to take a moment in your normal Sunday service to pause and pray for the new king. Hope Together have written a prayer for these services; it is free to download on the website. A Coronation service is again a good invitation to those in the community or you could involve local schools and bring them in to mark the occasion with you. The souvenir Gospel would make a great gift for these occasions. If you are looking for more resources to run a Coronation service on the Sunday then the Church

of England website contains a whole set. www.churchofengland.org/coronation/prayer-worship

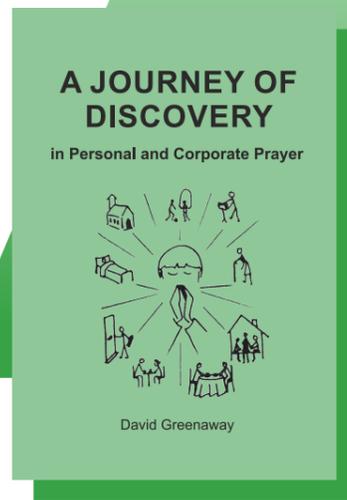
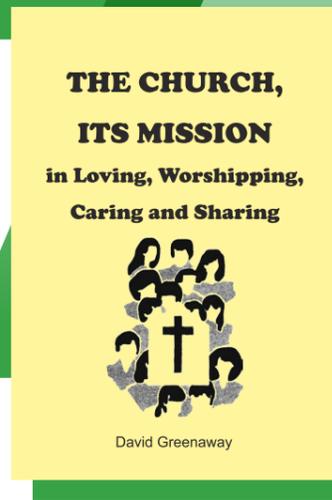
The final day of the Coronation weekend is the Big Help Out. This is a fantastic opportunity for churches to volunteer, serve and share again with their neighbours. Thousands of organisations will be marking the Coronation by giving everybody the chance to try volunteering for themselves and make a difference in their community. This would be something that your church could be part of 'growing community' and serving alongside others whilst making new friends and getting to know neighbours better.

If you're simply watching the Coronation on TV, why not get some friends round to watch it together so that you can share your faith and give out the Souvenir Gospel. You could use the Grace before you all eat cake! There are so many opportunities and we at Hope would love to hear from you about what you're doing where you are. Do send in your stories to office@hopetogether.org.uk

Have a great Coronation Weekend and let's pray that people pause, think and find out about the King of Kings: Jesus Christ, as a result of this national moment. If you've enjoyed hearing from Hope then do sign up to our regular e-news hopetogether.org.uk/signup.

Dr Rachel Jordan-Wolf is the Executive Director of Hope Together. She leads the Hope Together team as they equip and inspire churches to reach out with the Good News of Jesus.





THE CHURCH, ITS MISSION IN LOVING, WORSHIPPING, CARING AND SHARING

David Greenaway

Ilkeston: Moorleys Print, Design and Publishing, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-86071-900-7 | pp. 127 | £9

This book is a thoroughly Bible-based exploration of the Church's mission. The author considers each aspect in turn, and if only Christians were able to follow all the teaching in this book, then the church today would look very different. There was nothing new that I had not read, been taught, or experienced in the many churches where I have worshipped during my lifetime, but sadly I have never been a member of a congregation where all the points in this book were in operation. Perhaps there are such churches, and the rest of us would do well to begin to work together to achieve more of the teaching, but I think that the church as David Greenaway longs for us all to be is, for most of us, still far from reality. I was left with a feeling of sadness that we are so far from being what we are called to be.

This is certainly a challenging book, though easy to read and with good, clear print. There are simple line drawings to illustrate the points made, and I found these helpful to ponder on. There are also very useful lists of questions, charts and agencies that can assist in various ways.

Reviewed by Sue Wiggans, Local Preacher in the Isle of Wight Circuit.

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY IN PERSONAL AND CORPORATE PRAYER

David Greenaway

Ilkeston: Moorleys Print, Design and Publishing, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-86071-901-4 | pp. 28 | £3

CHALLENGING QUESTIONS FOR THE CHURCH

David Greenaway

Ilkeston: Moorleys Print, Design and Publishing, 2022
ISBN: 978-0-86071-902-1 | pp. 12 | £3

These two booklets are well presented and easy to read. The booklet on prayer is a beginning for those setting out on the journey of faith, and a gentle reminder to those of us who have been longer on The Way. Whilst it obviously cannot go into detail or depth, it sets out the different types of prayer we need to use, and gives Bible references for the reader to explore. A brief look at praying in the Celtic tradition is included. There is a helpful list to make sure everyone is included when praying for the church's ministry - every task is important!

The booklet of challenging questions is exactly that, and very good they are! 'Lessons from a church for Adults with a Learning Disability' is an interesting and inspiring account of alternative, accessible worship.



PRAYING ALWAYS

*Roz Addington,
MET's Prayer Secretary*

'Be Holy for I am Holy' (Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15) is a phrase which keeps coming back to me. Our nation, and indeed the church, are far from being as God would have us be. To be holy means to be set apart from sin and impurity, to be set apart for God in every aspect of life, fully dedicated to him. As Christians we are adopted as children of our heavenly father. As such, we need to be holy - at least keep striving towards that.

Sadly, we are not living as God expects. Through the many words and pictures God has given me over the past few years, I believe he is about to act, which hopefully will cause people to re-evaluate their way of thinking. I pray that it does. We do

not have an easy time before us, either in the church or nation, as God shakes them to the core - God's words not mine! Back in August 2022, God gave me a picture of people falling from tall towers - 'ivory towers' was the phrase which came. I believe that time is at hand. We need to pray that as human structures fall and crumble, people will realise that trusting in their own strength and ideas is futile. It is only God's wisdom that can fix our many troubles. Prayer for revival is vital, and for people to turn to God in repentance and prayer.

If you wish to contact Roz with any prayer requests then please email her at: roz.addington1@btinternet.com



WEEK 1 | THE CHURCH

- 1. Repentance:** The acknowledgement of sin and the need for repentance; moving away from biblical holiness; denial of the Holy Spirit's power; not seeking God's vision for the church. (Isaiah 1:16-20; James 4:4-10).
- 2. Church Leaders:** The President of Conference, Graham Thompson and Vice-President, Anthony Boateng; the President Designate Gill Newton and Vice-President Designate, Kerry Scarlett; all in positions of leadership. (Proverbs 16:3; Phil 4:6-7).
- 3. Scriptural Holiness:** The centrality of prayer within the church; renewed passion for preaching the gospel; the wind of the Holy Spirit to fall, bringing holiness; a thirst for seeking God's truth in Scripture. (James 1:5-8; 2 Timothy 4:1-5).
- 4. Mission and evangelism:** A searching of God's vision for our church; a re-discovery of the understanding of grace; the need for the power of the Holy Spirit; Hope Together, especially HOPE 23-24. (Ephesians 2:4-10; 2 Timothy 1:6-7).
- 5. The work of MET:** The 3R's: re-kindling of the Wesleyan vision, renewing the Wesleyan mission and raising up of a new generation of Wesleys'; God's provision, vision and guidance for the future; for David Hull as Chair; the trustees and executive; the AGM in May; those struggling with Methodism's direction of travel and seeking a new way forward. (Joshua 1:6-9; Hebrews 13:20-21).
- 6. Cliff College:** The Principal, Ashley Cooper, and the staff; mission opportunities; the uptake of students on both residential and on-line courses; Cliff Festival, Eden Restored, 26th-29th May 2023; protection over all of Cliff's work. (Psalm 127:1; Romans 10:13-15).
- 7. Children and young people:** Nathan Veall, seeking to reach out to the younger generation; inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit for youth and children's workers across the connexion; clear Biblical teaching; protection from erroneous teaching and false doctrine. (Proverbs 2:6-8; Titus 2:6-7).



WEEK 2 | GREAT BRITAIN

- 1. The Government:** Wisdom and strength for the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak and all cabinet members; a return to God at the centre of Government and the formulating of godly policies; for Christian MP's; integrity and justice; the new first minister for Scotland. (Deuteronomy 28:1-2; Philippians 2:1-5).
- 2. Social unrest:** The economic crisis; growing social discontent across the nation; those struggling with personal debt; charities seeking to help, particularly CAP (Christians Against Poverty); adequate resources for Food Banks; a turning back to God. (1 John 3:17-18; Acts 3:19).
- 3. NHS & Social care:** The backlog of those awaiting treatment, exacerbated by strikes; better communication between the various departments - children's services, social services & mental health; care packages for the vulnerable. (Proverbs 3:5-8; Isaiah 30:15a).
- 4. The Royal Family:** King Charles III following his Coronation; a transforming encounter of the Holy Spirit; harmony and healing within the wider royal family; wisdom in moving forward. (Proverbs 8:14-17; Psalm 51:10-12).
- 5. Northern Ireland:** Minister for Northern Ireland, Chris Heaton-Harris; unity amongst political parties; the outworking of the Windsor Framework; the Devolved Government; continued peace within the nation. (Matthew 19:26; 1 Peter 3:8-9)
- 6. Gangs, knife crime and County Lines:** Youngsters entangled in gang culture; knife crime and drug abuse, County Lines; those reaching out to young people, giving positivity and purpose; for the Christian message of hope to reach all young people. (Matthew 11:28 -30; Luke 10: 1-3).
- 7. Christians in the workplace:** Those struggling to stand up for Christian values in workplaces, especially in media and education; for their integrity to shine out; courage and boldness to speak out against injustices; protection against false accusations and lies. (2 Timothy 1:7; Ephesians 6:10-12 & 18).



WEEK 3 | WORLD ISSUES

- 1. The Persecuted Church:** Islamic controlled countries and dictatorships; upholding of basic human rights; exposure of discrimination and inequalities; justice for those in detention; strength and resilience for those suffering. (1 Peter 5: 6-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:3-4).
- 2. Russia/Ukrainian war:** For de-escalation of the conflict; the Russian people detained for speaking out against the invasion; exposure of deception and a weakening of tyranny; strength and resolve for Ukrainian troops and people. (Psalm 33:13-16 & 18-22; Romans 1:18).
- 3. War torn areas of the world:** Refugee camps; adequate resources for relief and aid agencies to tackle famine and disease; safe access to areas of greatest devastation; those affected to find their hope through the redemptive love of Jesus. (Psalm 121; Psalm 55:22).
- 4. Natural disasters:** Those suffering from earthquakes and other disasters, particularly Turkey and Syria; those affected by rising sea levels; aid agencies working to alleviate the suffering; finance to re-build infra structure, particularly in poorer nations; the will of world leaders to tackle underlying causes. (Galatians 6:2; Romans 12:12-13).
- 5. World poverty:** People living in poverty; compassion and aid from the richer nations; provision for those facing starvation; adequate sanitation and housing; health care; support and resources for those charities tackling the situation. (Matthew 25:34-45; Psalm 140:12).
- 6. Terrorism:** Perpetrators of terror to encounter God; victims to find the peace of the Lord; change to regimes across the world encouraging acts of terror; cyber-attacks. (Galatians 6:7-8; Colossians 3:25).
- 7. The world economic situation:** For world leaders to seek divine wisdom rather than human wisdom for solutions; courage for bold decisions; a global move for populations to seek godly solutions. (Psalm 33:10-11; 1 Timothy 2:1-4).



WEEK 4 | THE NATURAL WORLD & CLIMATE CHANGE

- 1. Repentance:** Forgiveness for our abuse of the planet; our ravaging of its resources; destruction of its ecosystems; pollution of the land and sea; reduction in biodiversity. (Isaiah 24:4-6; Revelation 4:11).
- 2. Give thanks:** For initiatives around the world addressing some of the issues; the planting of new areas of rainforest; the great green wall across Africa, bringing life back to degraded landscapes; conservation areas on both land and sea; projects supported by A Rocha; pray for other such initiatives. (Psalm 33:6-8; Jeremiah 10:12).
- 3. Britain:** Realistic targets for the reduction of carbon emissions; our 'throw away' society; legislation to prevent sewage being dumped in rivers; public resolve to halt the littering of the environment; programmes to increase biodiversity. (Genesis 2:15; Psalm 104:24-25 & 30).
- 4. Carbon emissions:** New technologies to reduce emissions; an urgency among governments to act collaboratively; financial guarantees from wealthier nations to enable poorer nations to make greener and more sustainable choices. (Hebrews 11:3; 1 Timothy 6:17-19).
- 5. Despoiling of the earth:** Illegal logging; rising sea levels and those living with the consequences; loss of habitats and extinction of wildlife; destruction of ecosystems; pollution of land and sea. (Nehemiah 9:6; 2 Chronicles 7:13-14).
- 6. Plastics:** Worldwide commitment to reduce all plastics; the finding of environmentally friendly alternatives; political resolve to generate legislation and funding enabling this to happen; the clearing up of polluted habitats. (1 Timothy 4:4-5; Galatians 6:2).
- 7. COP 22 Agreements:** Implementation of formulated decisions; an urgency among governments to address the state of our planet; to become wise stewards of the natural world and its resources; commitment to release finance to poorer nations; collaboration and the working together to bring meaningful change. (Genesis 2:15; 1 Peter 3:8-9).

STRENGTH WILL RISE

Brenton Brown & Ken Riley

Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,
We will wait upon the Lord,
We will wait upon the Lord.
Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,
We will wait upon the Lord,
We will wait upon the Lord.

*Our God, you reign forever.
Our hope, our strong deliverer.*

You are the everlasting God,
The everlasting God.
You do not faint, you won't grow weary.
You're the defender of the weak,
You comfort those in need;
You lift us up on wings like eagles.

*Brenton Brown and Ken Riley
Thankyou Music copyright 2005*

*Wait for the Lord;
be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord*

PSALM 27:14



FROM THE CHAIR

The Revd Dr David A. Hull

Dear Friends,

'Thus the flame spreads to those of riper years; till at length they all know him, and praise him, from the least unto the greatest.' With these words, Wesley concluded his journal entry for Tuesday, 8 June 1784, the earlier part of which is quoted at the beginning of the article which opens this edition of MET Connexion.

As Chris Ritter explains in that article, Wesley was describing 'an uncommon work of God among the children', as many of them responded to the preaching of the gospel. It was a scene which concluded with Wesley on his knees, amongst the children who knelt beneath the pulpit, leading them in prayer.

Wesley was neither the first nor the last to observe that the gospel flame is sometimes kindled amongst children before it spreads from them to older generations. In recent weeks, at the time of writing, I have come across two churches in different places, both of which began life initially in work amongst children. As the children responded to the gospel message, so their parents and wider families came to investigate and then themselves became followers of Jesus, to such an extent that, in both places, a new church was established.

It was just over a fortnight before Wesley's 80th birthday when he knelt with those children in Stockton-on-Tees. It was a moment which might have confirmed an approach that had marked

his ministry from the earliest days following his strangely heart-warming experience of faith on 24 May 1738. Less than a year later, he purchased land in Kingswood, Bristol where he built not only a chapel, but also a school. He later stated that he had devoted more time, attention and energy to the work based on that site, than anything else he had done - such was his commitment to ministry amongst children and young people, particularly through education. For generations to come, many Methodist missionaries would follow his pattern, quickly establishing a school, and sometimes a healthcare facility, alongside the worshipping communities they formed through preaching the gospel.

It is this approach to mission and ministry, rooted in Wesley's urgent call in his own day to prioritise work amongst the rising generation, that has inspired MET's Rising Generation work. Even as this edition of MET Connexion goes to press, Nathan Veall - the rising generation representative on our Executive Committee - is at work, developing an exciting project that seeks to reach and equip a new generation of students, university leaders and younger adults new to the workforce, in the work of the gospel. Please do keep Nathan and the work he leads in your prayers.

I'm delighted that Freedom Church Bristol, of which I am Lead Pastor, meets on that piece of land originally purchased by Wesley in 1739, now known as the

Kingswood Estate. It has had a history of transformation. When Wesley's school moved away, the site was purchased by Mary Carpenter, a Victorian reformer who, concerned about the fate of juvenile offenders incarcerated amongst adult criminals, established one of the first reformatories in the country on the site. It was the Home Office which constructed the buildings which still stand on the site today and, when they became vacant, were passed into the ownership of a local body of trustees for the purpose of Youth and Community work. The site now houses many local organisations engaged in community transformation and it is here, amongst these many groups, that Freedom Church meets. As one visitor said, the church is bringing the gospel back into the heart of the work of community transformation focussed on children and young people, just as Wesley intended.

On this site, as in many other places, a flame has been kindled amongst the younger generations before it has spread to those of older generations. Let's pray for all those involved in ministry, mission and evangelism, not least amongst children and young people - the rising generation - that we might see a rekindling of the flame in our own day.

Rejoicing in our partnership in the gospel,

David



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