

The Tale of the Tide

BLAYZE WHITE



A 30-year-old Methodist minister who should've known better than to believe the Church was finished.

At thirty, I'm often told how 'refreshing' it is to see someone so young in ministry, as if I'd stumbled into a retirement home by mistake. When I'm out in the wild, pubs, parks, people often ask, 'Why would someone your age want to become a minister?'

It's a fair question. By all accounts, I belong to the unlikeliest generation to hear God's call. I came of age in the early 2000s, when the so-called 'New Atheists' were the rockstars of reason. Dawkins told us that 'faith is the great cop-out.' Hitchens declared that 'religion is man-made.' At school, no one refuted them; we just nodded politely and moved on. It seemed as though Britain's

long Christian story was ending, faith replaced by facts, prayer replaced by peer-review.

And yet, in the middle of that climate, God called me.

A QUIET REVIVAL

Fast forward to today, and something unexpected is happening. The Bible Society recently reported what it called The Quiet Revival: a 50% rise in monthly church attendance in England and Wales since 2018, with the biggest surge among 18 to 24 year-olds. It seems the 'God delusion' wasn't the last word after all.

Across the Western world, the so-called secularists are quietly becoming seekers. Podcasts, universities, and social media are again alive with talk of meaning, morality, and even, dare we say, the divine. Historian Tom Holland publicly credits Christianity as 'the moral revolution' that shaped the modern world. Jordan Peterson lectures to packed halls about biblical wisdom. Russell Brand and Joe Rogan, once poster boys for secularism, now muse aloud about God. It appears that after decades of disbelief, people are realising that atheism, though clever at tearing down, offers little to build life upon.

As Ecclesiastes reminds us, 'He has set eternity in the human heart' (Ecclesiastes 3:11). However sophisticated our scepticism, the ache for transcendence remains.

WHEN GOD CHOOSES THE UNLIKELY

But what intrigues me most is who God seems to be using. Not the expected clergy or theologians, but controversial, even scandalous figures such as politicians, pundits, and provocateurs. The list makes for uneasy reading. Nigel Farage calls for 'a muscular defence of our Judaeo-Christian heritage'. Donald Trump peppers his speeches with talk of God and prayer. Even in tragedy, such as the recent murder of commentator Charlie Kirk, many have been moved not by the vitriol online, but by the grace expressed in Christian responses. This is not to canonise such figures or endorse their every stance, but simply to acknowledge that God often works through imperfect instruments for his perfect purposes.

It's strange, isn't it? The loudest public talk of God sometimes comes from the least saintly mouths. But then, that's hardly new. Scripture is full of such paradoxes.

God calls Cyrus, a pagan Persian king, 'my anointed', using him to rebuild Jerusalem (Isaiah 45:1). He humbles Nebuchadnezzar, a tyrant who destroyed

the Temple, until the king himself proclaims, 'Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt the King of heaven' (Daniel 4:37). He turns Saul the persecutor into Paul the preacher, saying, 'This man is my chosen instrument' (Acts 9:15). God's recruitment strategy has always been suspect and gloriously effective.

THE REACTION TO THE REACTION

Perhaps this is the equal and opposite reaction to the militant secularism of the early 2000s. When a culture swings too far from its spiritual centre, there's often a pendulum correction. As Joel put it, 'Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision!' (Joel 3:14). Many sense we've lost something vital, our moral compass, our shared story and are looking again toward the faith that once grounded us.

But there's a warning here, too. If people are being drawn back to church, they must find Christ, not merely cultural Christianity. The tide may be turning, but it's our task to channel that movement – to disciple, not just to cheer from the shore. As Paul wrote, 'We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making his appeal through us' (2 Corinthians 5:20).

THE CALL FOR TODAY

So yes, the 'new atheism' had its moment. It won the lecture halls and the airwaves, but it could not satisfy the soul. And now, through the most surprising of voices, God is stirring hearts again. He always has a habit of doing that, calling light from darkness, faith from doubt, and prophets from the least likely places.

If the tide truly is turning, let it not wash past us. Let it carry us, young and old, sceptic and believer alike, back to the One who still says, 'Behold, I am making all things new' (Revelation 21:5).

BLAYZE WHITE

Blayze is a Methodist presbyter serving in the Bury Circuit. Now 30, he was not raised in a Christian household but came to faith at 17 after a long season of searching. Blayze is a devoted husband and the father of three.



BRING MET:REVIVE TO YOU!

with a visit from our Ambassador
REV DR DAVID HULL

Rediscovering what God has done | Renewing our vision for today

Evangelism • Discipleship • Revival
Bible Teaching • Seminars
Worship Celebrations

Whatever works best where you are!
For more info, contact Janet Walker
janet.walker@metrevive.uk
07799 068539

