

THE MAGAZINE OF METHODIST EVANGELICALS TOGETHER

RE:VIVE

*This is My Story,
This is My Song*

SPRING 2026

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Sang Their Story

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EDITORIAL

Our theme, 'This is My Story, This is My Song', resonates with 'Our Story, Our Song', which is the theme of the current President and Vice-President of the Methodist Church.

We have a range of contributors in this edition, several of whom offer a personal reflection on their story and song. Tom Stuckey, former President of the Methodist Church, reflects on a lifetime in Methodism. Blayze White, Methodist minister, shares a personal testimony along with a Bible Study. Brian Hoare, another former President of the Methodist Church, explores how the Wesleys shaped many of the Methodist hymns, and how their influence resonates in our worship today. David Juliano, Florida Methodist pastor, reveals a forgotten dimension

of Wesleyan theology – and asks why Methodism's greatest song isn't being sung.

We celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Lay Witness movement and Brian and Hazel Rollins share their story of the impact and influence of this movement in their own lives and in the UK.

'This is My Story, This is My Song' lies at the heart of the MET:Revive Ambassador ministry. Our Ambassador, David Hull will be willing to offer Bible teaching, seminars or a worship celebration at your church or worship gathering. See page 17 or the enclosed flier for more details.

We trust that you will find inspiration and encouragement as you dip into this edition!

Marian Izzard - Editor

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Chair Letter

CHRIS BRIGGS

*Tell me the old, old story
Of unseen things above
Of Jesus and his glory
Of Jesus and his love*

Katherine Hankey

What's the story?

Oh, that we would tell our stories, often, with passion! Stories of an encounter with Jesus, stories of transformation because of Jesus, stories which give testimony to what God can do in our lives, the church, and the world.

The power of story is so great. I wonder if in some parts of the church we have pushed out story and eased in programmes, strategies, and budgets instead. Don't get me wrong. I'm not against programmes and strategies. In fact, in many ways my mind wants to organise things into such. Of themselves they can be helpful. Sometimes we need to structure things when we sense what the Spirit is doing so that we are well placed to catch the wind of the Spirit. I think the Wesleys were very good at that. The problem comes when we build the structures, strategies, and programmes thinking that the Spirit will automatically fill them or that this will mean people share faith more easily. It can result in 'having

a form of godliness but denying its power' (2 Timothy 3:5). It is a dangerous position to be in.

How did the disciples go about telling their story? Their training programme had been walking and talking with Jesus for a few years. Their method was to start walking and talking some more when Jesus was gone, walking to the ends of the earth. As they walked, they were to make disciples. They shared their experience of Jesus. They called others to experience Jesus as well, because by his death he brought people into relationship with God. It was relational. If only we could encourage people into encounters with Jesus and not so much with programmes. Faith and life bubbling up from within, is more likely to share the excitement that Jesus brings than programmes. Again, I am not against programmes. One of the greatest programmes I have used regularly is the Alpha Course. I believe that Alpha has been God anointed, but it is clear that, even with Alpha, story plays such a central and important part.

We will be familiar with the way that films and television programmes often use a façade for scenery. In the old westerns, small towns could sometimes be built of outward façades. All sorts of buildings would be there but there was little or nothing behind the façade. They were lifeless. Let us encourage story from people – stories of, and about Jesus. They are full of life, and are life-changing! If there were enough stories that were passionately and naturally shared, maybe we wouldn't need so many programmes. Let us be the best storytellers about Jesus.

As we devote this edition to story and song, we might also remember the good work of so many hymn and song writers who have helped us

sing not only our story but the great story of God's love for the world and those in it, and his amazing plan for salvation. Methodists were renowned for their singing. We sang our theology. Sometimes there was a little more affection for the hymnbook than the Bible within the Methodist people, and we must be careful there, but maybe it was because Charles Wesley in particular was so good at getting the story into song.

As we think of God's story, and story in song, I am reminded of something that I do every now and again in worship. I invite the congregation to be still and listen for the song of heaven; to prepare to join in with the worship that is constantly offered to God; to join their voices with that of the angels in Revelation 15:3-4

*Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty,
Just and true are your ways, King of the nations.
Who will not fear you, Lord, and bring glory to your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come and worship before you,
For your righteous acts have been revealed.*

Story and Song, woven into our discipleship and an expression of heaven itself. I want to hear more!



Chris Briggs

How Methodists Sang Their Story

BRIAN HOARE

Brian Hoare, former President of the Methodist Conference, explores how the Wesleys shaped many of the Methodist hymns, and how their influence resonates in our worship today.

The Preface to the 1933 Methodist Hymn Book opened with the familiar words: 'Methodism was born in song'. Wesley saw the hymnbook as 'a little body of ... divinity' and Methodism has always sung its creed. If you knew your hymns you knew your faith!

Early Methodist hymn singing evolved against a background of traditional Anglican hymns which generally used one note per syllable (as, for example, in 'O God our help in ages past'). John Wesley called this 'singing in a slow drawling manner' and it soon fell out of favour with Methodists. He wrote: 'We sing swift, both because it saves time and because it tends to awaken and enliven the soul'.

Wesley preferred simple tunes. He wrote: 'There are two things in all modern pieces of music which I could never reconcile to

common sense. One is singing the same words ten times over; the other, singing different words by different persons at one and the same time'. Wesley judged 'It has no more religion in it than a Lancashire hornpipe'!

Charles Wesley's hymns proved challenging to composers who were used to traditional Anglican hymnody. He often used metres which the old Anglican tunes did not fit. Consequently, many new Methodist tunes were written, usually by leading chapel singers who were gifted in writing good singable tunes rather than using trained musicians. The tune *Diadem* (to 'All hail the power of Jesus' name') composed by James Ellor, a hat maker, is a good example.

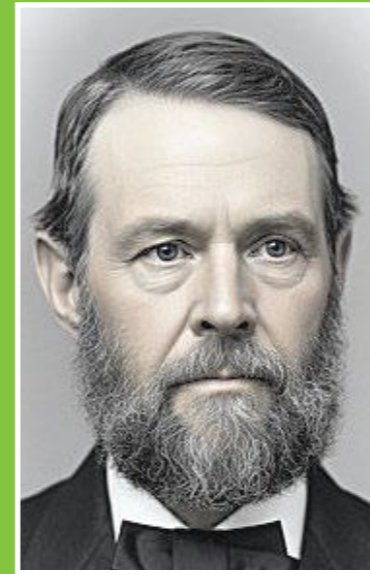
The 'feel' of Wesley's hymns with their emphasis on personal experience was also new and

needed different styles of tune. Composers began putting two or more notes to a syllable and tunes became more melodious, florid and repetitive. Chorus hymns became popular. Congregations wanted variety and a new form of hymnody emerged which was distinctively Methodist.

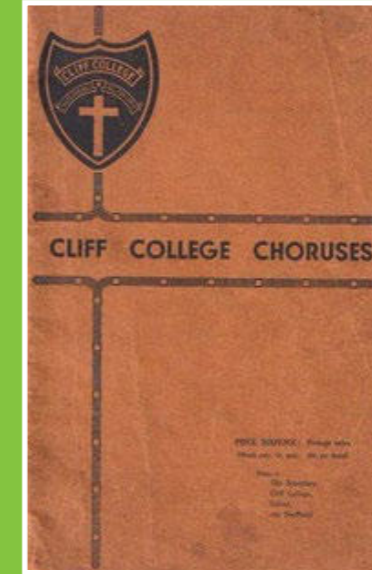
Much to the annoyance of High Churchmen, the Wesleys were happy to adapt popular tunes from any source, however secular. Yet even a great critic of the Wesleys, Dr John Scott, admitted: 'The Methodists have got some of the most melodious tunes that were ever composed for church music; there is great harmony in their singing and it is very enchanting'. Methodist hymns were music for the people. No longer were congregations dictated to by choirs and clergy: they sang music they enjoyed as an exuberant expression of their faith.

In Wesley's day, hymns were usually sung unaccompanied, but increasingly, Anglican congregations aspired to a more refined style of music with organs, choirs and anthems. John Wesley did not approve! His *Large Minutes* ruled: 'Let no organ be placed anywhere till proposed by the Conference'. Not that Wesley disliked organs, but their cost, the expense of tuning them and paying an organ blower was unjustified. Organs were not officially sanctioned in Methodism until 1820 – and even then, they remained contentious. When the Leeds Brunswick organ was installed in 1826 over a thousand members left Wesleyan Methodism!

In rural chapels things were different. They were largely unable to afford organs anyway, and instead 'gallery choirs' were formed to help lead the singing.



James Ellor



Cliff College Choruses



Gallery singers



The organ at Brunswick Methodist Chapel

Increasingly, after Wesley's death, other musical instruments were introduced to accompany the choir.

One of the first fruits of the Methodist Union in 1932 was the publication in 1933 of *The Methodist Hymn Book (MHB)* which was used for the next fifty years. The Preface explained that it aimed 'to provide a collection of tunes which, while giving appropriate expression to the sentiment of the hymns, shall be true to the robust and simple Methodist spirit and thoroughly adapted for congregational singing. For such purpose ... simple, persuasive melody is essential'.

The publication of MHB was followed in 1934 by another book very different in style: the *Cliff College Chorus Book*. Reflecting the college's strongly evangelical tradition it contained simpler songs and choruses, often quite short and with catchy tunes, which became popular in midweek women's meetings and youth groups as well as the college's evangelistic missions. Subsequent years saw the emergence of other books such as *Youth Praise, Sound of*

Living Waters and then collections like *Mission Praise* and *Songs of Fellowship*, all arising out of the explosion of new song and hymn writing in the late twentieth century.

As MHB was approaching fifty years old, Conference decided a new hymnbook was needed and *Hymns and Psalms* was published (1983). However, it had come just too early to be able to include more contemporary material which Methodist congregations increasingly wanted to sing, and within three decades a further 'authorised' Methodist collection, *Singing the Faith*, appeared (2011), this time including a good amount of the newer hymns and worship songs.

The church scene today is dramatically different from that of the 18th century. We live in far more ecumenical times and many characteristics of Methodist hymnody have spread through most denominations. Contemporary Christian worship is broadly eclectic. We all sing each other's songs! Just as the Wesleys had trawled their music from many

sources, so in that sense we have all become more 'Wesleyan'. Wesley urged his people to sing both 'lustily' and 'spiritually' and whatever book we sing from, we must do the same today.

REV BRIAN HOARE

Brian is a retired Methodist minister who, besides various circuit appointments, was New Testament Tutor at Cliff College, Secretary for Evangelism in the Connexional Team and President of the Conference (1995-96). He is well known as a hymn writer and musician, and has also served as both chair and magazine editor for MET's predecessor movements.



Ye Servants of God

CHARLES WESLEY

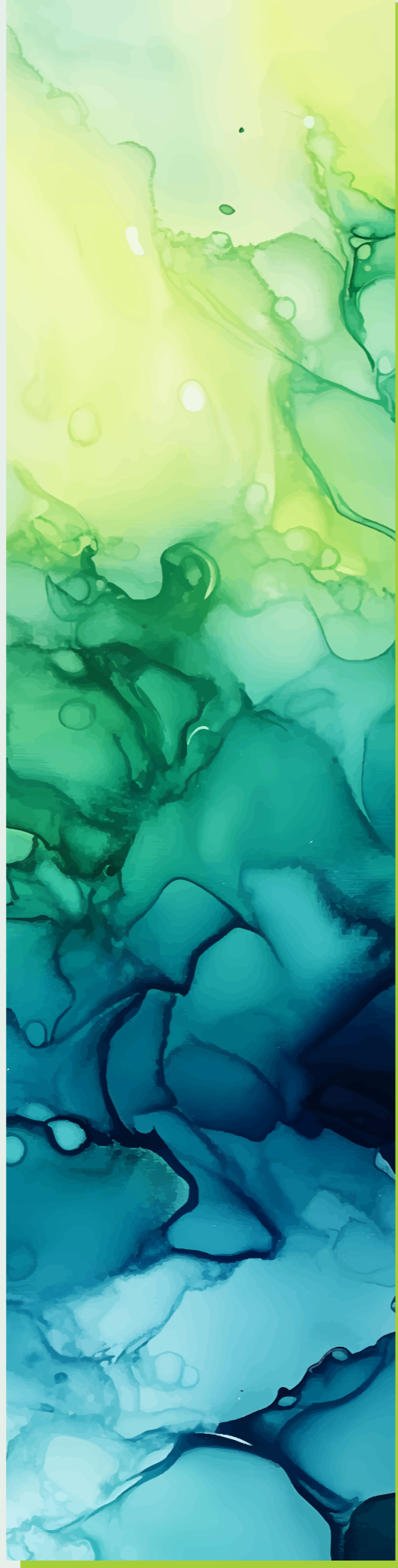
Charles Wesley (1707-88)

*Ye Servants of God, your Master proclaim,
And publish abroad his wonderful name;
The name all-victorious of Jesus extol;
His kingdom is glorious, and rules over all.*

*God ruleth on high, almighty to save;
And still he is nigh, his presence we have;
The great congregation his triumph shall sing,
Ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.*

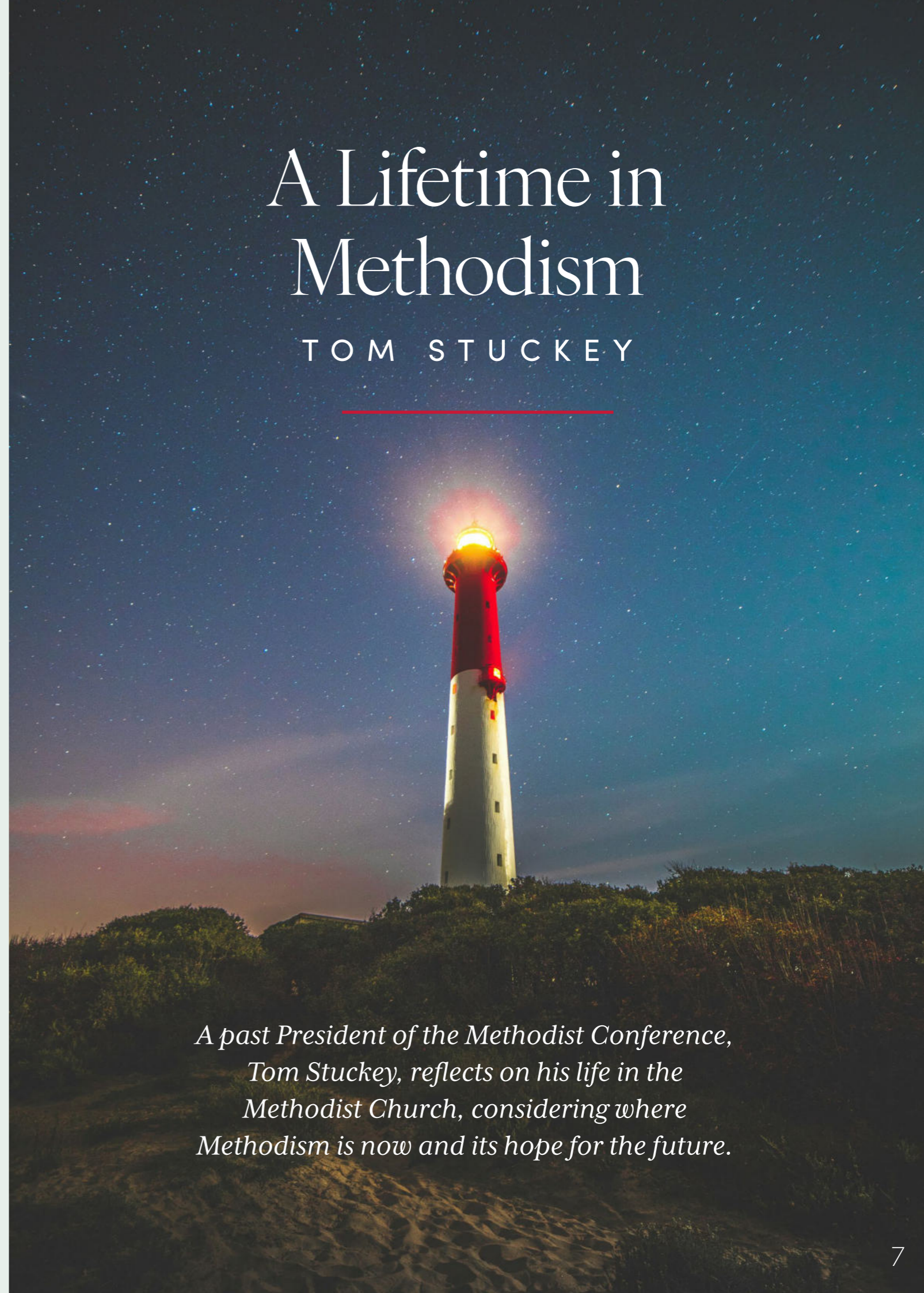
*'Salvation to God who sits on the throne!'
Let all cry aloud, and honour the Son;
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim.
Fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.*

*Then let us adore, and give him his right:
All glory and power, all wisdom and might,
All honour and blessing, with angels above,
And thanks never-ceasing, and infinite love.*



A Lifetime in Methodism

TOM STUCKEY



*A past President of the Methodist Conference,
Tom Stuckey, reflects on his life in the
Methodist Church, considering where
Methodism is now and its hope for the future.*

I am now 86 years old and look back over my life as a Methodist. As an only child, I was always reading and searching for answers. I remember how in Sunday School I was told off by my teacher for asking too many questions. When I left grammar school at 16, I began an apprenticeship in Westland Aircraft, Yeovil. At that time, as a precocious teenager in my search for meaning, I asked to be placed on the circuit plan. I felt I could make a better job of preaching than many of those who occupied the pulpit! Everything changed in 1957 at a Youth Camp in Weston-super-Mare where I gave my heart to Christ, experienced his presence and received a call to be a Methodist Minister. My parents were dismayed. They were told: 'Tom will grow out of it'. I never have, and my parents eventually came round.

I had to complete my apprenticeship before I could begin training at Richmond College, London in 1964. My life there of studying Greek, Hebrew and Theology took a new turn when I married Christine, my wonderful long-suffering wife.

My first appointment was in Scotland. Having to preach twice to the same congregation every Sunday was a formidable challenge. This homiletical (preaching) requirement necessitated additional theological study. I was fortunate to be able to go part-time to New College, Edinburgh. There resided world-famous biblical and theological professors who fed my searching mind and my soul. They instilled in me a love of learning.

THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD

Ordained in 1969, my second appointment was on a demanding council housing estate in south Bristol. Working 14 hours most days and never taking time off, the inevitable happened. In the season of Lent in 1973, I collapsed. It was during this period that the Bible really exploded in me with Holy Spirit vitality. Not only did my wife, Christine, and I receive the filling of the Holy Spirit and gift of tongues, but I became caught up in the tide of charismatic renewal which was bubbling up across the churches of Britain. It was inevitable that I should meet up with Rev Dr Bill Davies, (who established Dunamis – a movement offering fellowship and support for charismatic Methodists), contribute occasionally to the Dunamis magazine and find fresh ministerial colleagues beyond Methodism. Here was a new ecumenism.

For some of my more evangelical colleagues, this effervescent new wine of the Spirit exploded the traditional wineskins of their churches causing splits and the fragmentation of their congregations. My firm theological grounding in Edinburgh University helped



My preaching scarf depicts the theme of Word & Spirit

me to cast this releasing Holy Spirit experience within a 'Theology of the Word'. I remember in a sermon of that time saying,

- When the Word is without the Spirit we dry up;
- When the Spirit is without the Word we blow up;
- When the Spirit and the Word come together, we grow up.

On several occasions in my ministry, both before and after 1974, individuals, quite out of the blue, had said, 'One day you will be President of the Methodist Church!' This prophetic word indeed came to pass in 2005 – the very year before my retirement. My Presidential message (even some of the words) was given to me in a prophetic vision of Ezekiel 37. In my address about 'Word and Spirit', I again repeated the three-line phrase above. My Presidential address of 2006 to the Ministerial Session of Conference focused on Mark 1:15 in which I spoke of the present 'kairos' moment and 'the need for repentance'.

AN UNREPENTANT CHURCH?

In the ten years which followed, I took this message around the Connexion through preaching and study days linked with my books *The Edge of Pentecost*, *Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land* and *Covid-19 God's Wake-Up Call?* (These and my other six books are available through Amazon). While I was encouraged by the expectancy of my audiences when I preached, (many of whom answered my appeals publicly as they gave their hearts to Christ), repentance was not on the agenda of the ordained ministers; some of whom got quite angry.

Today I still stay with Methodism. I pray for Methodism, but I also weep over what Methodism has become.



The launching the joint initiative of 'Fresh Expressions of Church' at Lambeth Palace with Archbishop Rt Rev Rowan Williams.

Our church has secularized and mechanized the imperative of repentance. 'Let's do things differently: worship songs instead of hymns, a music group instead of the organ, chairs instead of pews, having chats in worship rather than sitting under the power of the Word. This is not repentance. It is too shallow and too churchy! Repentance (metanoia) is 'kingdom' orientated (Mark 1:15). It centres on our relationship with God and with others. It demands a total mental, wilful and spiritual shift of heart and mind by acknowledging that we have stumbled into the wilderness and lost our providential way. Why has this happened Methodism? The root cause is theological.

THEOLOGY AND SCRIPTURE

The Methodist Church does its theology within the dynamic framework of four components: scripture, reason, tradition and experience. This is given the label 'The Methodist Quadrilateral.' The key question is: 'which of these components do you put first?' Rev Dr Donald English, one of the 'greats of our church', argued that the Bible was the 'centre piece for our knowledge of God through Jesus by the Holy Spirit'. He saw reason, tradition and experience revolving around the Bible like the dangling pieces of a baby's mobile hanging over a cot or crib. Theology in Methodism no longer follows this approach. Any consensus which once we had about the authority of scripture has now disappeared. Methodism (according to a Conference Report) has seven different ways of looking at the Bible! Thus, we find that within the Quadrilateral, 'reason' and 'experience' usually become the starting point, while scripture is brought in to justify what we have decided to do. Does this sound back-to-front to you?



Preaching, though an interpreter to a large Methodist charismatic congregation in Cuba

Most people are put off by the term 'theology'. The term literally means 'thinking about God' or 'speaking of God' (from two Greek words; theos – God and logos – word). A theologian (from the two words) is therefore a person who not only thinks, but prays. Where does one start the process of theological thinking? My studies in Edinburgh have left me in no doubt. The starting point must be John 1:14. 'The Word became flesh'. This happened supremely in Jesus Christ and subsequently with the scripture which through the Spirit 'becomes the Word of God'. Tragically, contemporary Methodism does not start here.

Thus, a fourth line sentence to the three-line comment above about the relationship between Word and Spirit would be:

When Word and Spirit are no longer central, then a church becomes (in Wesley's actual words) 'A dead sect having the form of religion but without its power'.

HOPE FOR METHODISM

I mentioned above that I stay with Methodism, pray for Methodism and weep over Methodism. This implies that I still have hope for Methodism. At the start of the year, I wrote a letter to the Methodist Recorder complaining of how our Connexional institution 'has morphed into a bureaucratic management machine'. The letter concluded: 'Martin Luther stormed against a Church where Law had replaced Grace. Should a similar prophetic shift in thinking and maybe even personnel take place at the top of our Methodist Church?'

I received a host of responses more or less on the lines of 'At last someone is speaking up'. There is still a faithful hopeful remnant within our church.

My hope is further kindled by the experience of Elijah in 1 Kings 19. He is marginalized, fearful, in despair, feeling to be a failure and alone. An angel comes to him and he is commanded 'Go and stand on the mountain before the Lord'. His ministry is not over. Neither is mine. God tells him, him and us, (v.15-18) that there will be a purge, a change of direction as God raises up a new leader and prophet. God also reminds Elijah of the large company of the faithful at the grass roots who wait, work and pray for better times.

Back in Bristol, the Spirit told me that Methodism is God's Church not ours, therefore I continue to praise him for all that is past, and trust him for all that's to come.

REV TOM STUCKEY

Tom is a Past President of the Methodist Conference, a one-time Chair of the Methodist Southampton District and a former Canon of Salisbury Cathedral. He is married to Christine. They live in Christchurch, Dorset and have children and grandchildren.



PRAYER FOCUS

WORD AND SPIRIT

Pray for a coming together of the Word and Spirit in the Methodist Church. Pray for the church to return to a theology with the authority of scripture at its centre; for true repentance where it has moved away from biblical principles; for churches to take seriously the need for prayer and Bible study (2 Timothy 3:16; Romans 12:2).

FOCUS ON THE CHURCH

The Methodist Church: The President, Rev Richard Andrew and Vice President of Conference, Matthew Forsyth in their last weeks in office. Pray for Conference 25 June – 1 July, that all discussion and decisions will be honouring to God; pray for the President and Vice President designate, Rev Mark Slaney and Caroline Stead, as they prepare to take up office (Psalm 37:3-6; Proverbs 19:21).

Children and young people: Give thanks for the number of young people seeking and exploring faith; pray for their growth and nurture in spiritual and biblical truth. Pray for the Holy Spirit to inspire youth and children's workers across the nation to teach God's love in dynamic and creative ways. Pray for all who go into schools to bring the Christian message of hope (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Mark 9:42).

FOCUS ON NATIONAL ISSUES

The shaking of the nation: As God begins the shaking of the nation, pray for people's eyes to turn to the Lord in

the days that lie ahead; for the light of Christ to shine into the dark corners of our land. Pray for God to prepare each of us to speak out boldly and courageously to share our faith stories with those outside the church that they may find their hope in Jesus (Haggai 2:7; Psalm 46:1-3).

Integrity and accountability: For integrity and honesty in all institutions and services throughout the nation – both public and private sectors, such as in the media, government and the Royal family. Pray for all decisions made to be for the good of the population and not individual interests; for God to continue bringing into the light that which is hidden in darkness (Proverbs 10:9; 1 Peter 3:10-12).

FOCUS ON WORLD ISSUES

Focus on Yemen, the third most dangerous country globally for Christians. Pray for a loosening of control by Houthi rebels, an Islamic militant group who brutally persecute Christians. Pray that God would bring peace and justice to Yemen; that secret churches will be able to meet, and for leaders to find the strength to keep serving (1 Corinthians 16:13; Isaiah 41:9-11).

Focus on Sudan, ranked the fourth most dangerous country. Pray for a peaceful resolution to Sudan's civil war, a future for the church and protection over all believers. Pray for openings for Sudanese Christians to spread Jesus' peace to others (Jeremiah 32:17; Deuteronomy 31:6).

Online Bible Studies

MET:Revive hosts two weekly online Bible Studies on Zoom. These take place on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 7:30 – 8:30 pm. They are hosted and led by MET:Revive members with an occasional series being led by the MET:Revive Team.

The Monday group is led by Di Smart and the Wednesday group is led by Guy and Mary Byham.



Guy and Mary share about the Wednesday group:

In order to share the gospel with others, we need to know what God's Good News says and how to share it with those we meet, so that they too may come to accept Jesus as their own saviour and friend, as Jesus tells us to. A Bible study can be an ideal way to learn and share together.

We try to alternate study series between the Old Testament and New Testament books. These have included studies on various biblical characters, the parables of Jesus, events in the life of Jesus and special events celebrated by Christians, such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost.

We welcome participation and encourage discussion during the meetings. There are friendly conversations with questions about the

passage being discussed. We encourage members to share their thoughts and experiences. It is an excellent opportunity to hear what God is saying to us, which is different for everyone, and also to refresh our minds with God's word. We finish each meeting with a hymn.

Please do feel free to join us – you will be most welcome! If you are interested, please email Marian Izzard at admin@metrevive.uk for details of how to contact us and the Zoom login numbers which are the same each week.



The Forgotten Fifth All

DAVID JULIANO

Florida Methodist pastor, David Juliano, reveals a forgotten dimension of Wesleyan theology hiding in plain sight – and asks why Methodism’s greatest song isn’t being sung.

“

‘Without the Fifth All, the Four Alls are a beautiful song that lies on the composer’s desk and is never sung.’

”

‘All must witness to their salvation’

In September 2024, researchers at the Leipzig Municipal Libraries in Germany made an astonishing discovery. Hidden among their collections was a previously unknown composition by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – a twelve-minute serenade written when the composer was barely a teenager. They named it *Ganz kleine Nachtmusik* – ‘Very Little Night Music.’ For over 260 years, this little masterpiece had been sitting on a library shelf, unheard and unplayed. When it was finally performed at the Leipzig Opera, fans queued for 400 metres to be among the first humans to hear this music in centuries. The young musicians who premiered the piece had been handed the manuscript without even being told what it was. No one could have imagined what it turned out to be.

I know how those researchers felt, because while researching for my book on Wesleyan theology, I made a discovery of my own – not in a German library, but in the *Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland* (Vickers (ed.), 2000). What I found had been hiding in plain sight for over a century. I had stumbled upon, if you like, Methodism’s own lost masterpiece.

Most Methodists who know their heritage can recite the Four Alls:

- All need to be saved
- All can be saved
- All can know themselves to be saved
- All can be saved to the uttermost

These four statements beautifully summarise the Wesleyan gospel, but what I discovered is that in 1909, Dr George Eayrs added a fifth clause: ‘All should declare their salvation.’ Decades later, at the Ecumenical Methodist Conference in 1951, Dr W.E. Sangster put it even more forcefully: ‘All must witness to their salvation.’

Must. Not ‘should’ or ‘might want to consider.’ Must.

For over a hundred years, this ‘Fifth All’ has gone virtually unnoticed – even among Methodist evangelicals. When I stumbled upon it, I felt like Indiana Jones discovering the Lost Ark. Here was a crucial piece of our heritage, right there in the published record, and almost no one seemed to know about it.

A SONG THAT MUST BE SUNG

The theme of this edition of RE:VIVE is ‘This is my story, this is my song.’ I want to suggest that the Fifth All does not merely fit that theme – it is the theme. After all, what is a testimony if not the Fifth All in action? A saved person singing the song of what God has done.

Think of it this way: the Four Alls are a magnificent composition. They lay out the full scope of salvation – its necessity, universality, assurance and fullness. It is breathtaking theology. But without the Fifth All, it is a beautiful song that lies on the composer's desk and is never sung. Glorious music that no one ever hears.

Eayrs and Sangster understood something vital: theology without practice is incomplete. Or as the apostle James warns, 'faith without works is dead' (James 2:17). You can have the most beautiful theology in the world, but if you never share it with anyone, what good is it? The Four Alls describe what God has done for us. The Fifth All describes what we must do in response: tell someone.

I believe the decline of Western Methodism is connected to our forgetfulness of this Fifth All. In 2022, Dr John Hayward, a Christian mathematician at the University of South Wales, analysed church data using the same 'R' rate technique that became familiar during the pandemic. His research suggests that at current rates, British Methodism could face extinction by 2036 – almost exactly 300 years after God raised up the Wesleys 'to reform the nation, particularly the church, and to spread scriptural holiness over the land.'

I do not share these figures to throw stones from across the pond. British Methodism shaped my faith and my calling, and I love it dearly, but I believe we have the remedy – and it has been hiding in our own tradition all along.

There are, at the end of the day, only two kinds of churches: a telling church and a dying church. That conviction is what drove me to write my forthcoming book on the Five Alls. I did not write it as an academic exercise. I wrote it to put a tool in the hands of ordinary Christians so they could share the gospel with confidence and joy.

MY STORY, MY SONG

My connection to British Methodism is personal. I first encountered the Four Alls as a young minister serving in the Tamworth and Lichfield circuit in the early 1990s. They never left me, but my journey to the Fifth All took some unexpected turns.

After my time in England, I lost my calling. I returned to the United States defeated and unsure of my faith. I needed a job, and the only thing I was trained to do was preach. So, when a District Superintendent rang and asked me to serve two little rural churches in

Tennessee, I said yes – not out of spiritual conviction, but out of necessity.

I describe it this way: imagine a trained paramedic who decides the whole thing was a mistake. Then, driving home, he comes upon a terrible crash. People are bleeding in the road. He doesn't say, 'Well, I decided not to be a paramedic.' He jumps in and helps. That's what I did. Somewhere in the midst of visiting hospitals, preaching sermons and caring for souls, my calling came flooding back – not through a dramatic experience, but through the simple act of sharing the gospel with people who needed it.

The Fifth All, lived out, brought me back to life before I even knew it had a name.

Years later, a woman in my congregation named Diana approached me with a vision: it was of an evangelism group she wanted to call 'Grow and Go.' It would involve ordinary church members going into the community to share their faith at shopping centres, the county fair, anywhere people gathered. I was terrified and thrilled in equal measure, but I knew this was a movement of the Holy Spirit.

What happened next astonished me. When I invited these lay people to share their testimonies during worship, many confessed that trying to share their faith had exposed their own spiritual need. One woman said, 'I thought I was a Christian because I went to church and tried to be a good person, but when Diana asked me to share my faith with strangers, I realised I didn't really have anything to share. That's when I understood I needed to be born again.'

Another said, 'The first time we went to the shopping centre, I was terrified. But as I started talking to people about what Jesus meant to me, I discovered he meant more to me than I ever realised.'

These were Wesley's 'Almost Christians' becoming altogether Christians – and it happened because they tried to live out the Fifth All.

ONCE I WAS BLIND

As the father of children with disabilities, one of whom is blind, I find the story of the man born blind in John 9 profoundly personal – and the ultimate model of witnessing. The religious leaders demanded theological explanations he could not provide. His response was devastatingly simple: 'I only know one thing: once I was blind, but now I see' (John 9:25, paraphrase).



You don't have to be a theologian. You don't need a degree in divinity. People can argue with your theology, but they cannot argue with a changed life. You just need to tell what Jesus has done for you.

This is my story. This is my song. And it must be sung.

Mozart's *Ganz kleine Nachtmusik* sat unplayed for 260 years. When it was finally performed, people were overwhelmed. The Fifth All has gone unnoticed for over a century, but the composition is complete. The theology is sound. The song is written.

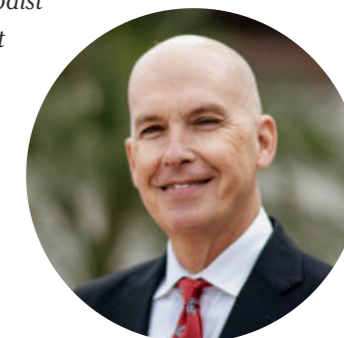
Now it needs to be sung – by you, by me, by every Methodist who has tasted grace and knows it is too good to keep to ourselves. Who in your life needs to hear your story? Your testimony doesn't have to be polished or dramatic. Like the blind man, you simply need to say what is true.

As Charles Wesley wrote: 'O let me commend my Saviour to you.'

That is the Forgotten Fifth All. And it is time we remembered it.

REV DAVID JULIANO

David is a Methodist pastor serving in Sebring, Florida, USA, and a member of Methodist Evangelicals Together. He first served in the Tamworth and Lichfield Circuit in the early 1990s. His book on the Five Alls of the Wesleyan Gospel is forthcoming from InvitePress. Visit the5alls.com



PRAYER FOCUS

THE FORGOTTEN FIFTH ALL OF METHODISM

Pray for this forgotten Fifth All of Methodism to be spread abroad; for the Holy Spirit to convict people of the necessity of 'telling our story'; courage for people to step out in faith into the unknown to talk about what Jesus means to them, a 'must' to witness about our salvation; pray for the church to wake up and sing our song! (Matthew 5:13-17; 1 Peter 3:13-15).

FOCUS ON THE CHURCH

Revival: Pray for the wind of God's Spirit to blow through the church, bringing repentance and a turning

away from all that is not holy; pray for a return to our foundational roots of spreading Christian holiness across the land; pray for an acceptance and a desire to seek the work of the Holy Spirit; for all in positions of leadership within the church to uphold godly values (2 Timothy 4:1-4; James 4:4-10).

Cliff College: Pray for the Principal, Rev Andrew Stobart, and staff; for spiritual growth and confidence for all students; suitable placements and experiences for students to share their faith and reach out to others; for more students to come to the college to explore

their calling; adequate funding for all the courses. (Psalm 25:4-5; James 1:22-25).

FOCUS ON NATIONAL ISSUES

The Government: As the nation is shaken, pray for wisdom and discernment for the Prime Minister and all Members of Parliament; pray for a return to integrity and trust amongst all politicians; pray for openness and honesty in all dealings and decisions. Pray for Christian MPs – for courage to stand firm on Christian principles and for their integrity to shine out; pray for a return to the Christian roots our land was built upon. (Haggai 2:6-7; Philippians 2:1-5).

Natural disasters: Pray for all who have been affected by the recent flooding across the nation; for finance to rebuild homes and damaged infrastructure; for careful discernment of where it is necessary to build flood defences by the appropriate authorities. Pray for people to turn to the Lord to find hope in their distress and light in their darkness. (Nahum 1:7; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

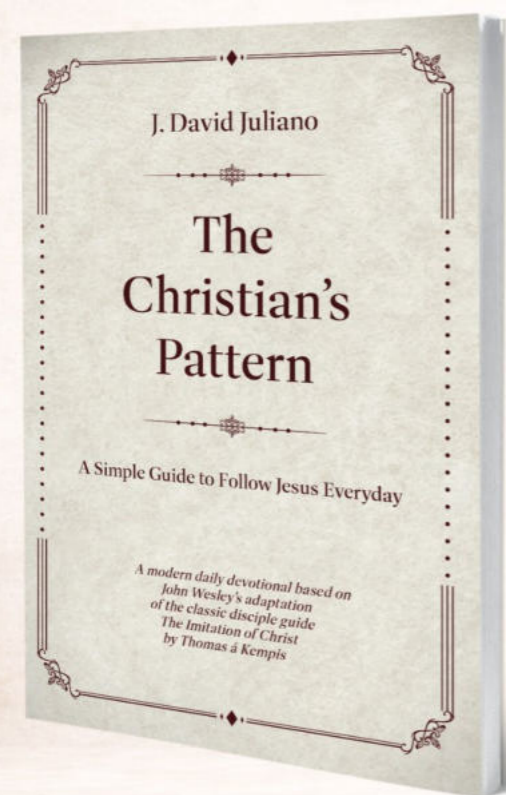
FOCUS ON WORLD ISSUES

Planet in crisis: Given the apparent changing weather patterns across the globe with areas affected by extremes of weather, such as soaring temperatures and flooding, pray for resources to combat the underlying causes; for new strains of crops to stand extremes of weather; for farmers to cope with these extremes of weather. Cry to the Lord for mercy. (2 Chronicles 7:13-14; Revelation 4:11).

The Middle East: Pray for the situation in the Middle East and for peace. Pray for wisdom and discernment for the Israeli and American governments and leaders around the world. Pray for a turning to Christ of both Jew and Muslim. Pray for godly leadership in Iran and for a tolerance to Christians in the country; pray for protection for the growing Iranian church; for the mental and physical wellbeing and release of Christians in prison. (Matthew 17:20; Luke 12:11-12).

PRAYER FOCUS CONTACT

The Prayer Focus section is compiled by Roz Addington. If you wish to contact Roz with any prayer requests or prayer related items, please contact her via prayer@metrevive.uk



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From the MET:Revive Ambassador

This Is My Story, This Is My Song

For John Wesley, the turning point in his story as a friend and follower of Jesus was astonishingly simple and deeply personal. On 24 May 1738, after striving and desperately searching for many years, he came to know – truly know – that he was saved: forgiven, freed, a favoured child of God. He described it as an exchange: the faith of a servant, who serves out of duty, for the faith of a son, who lives from the deep certainty of being loved.

With it came the great assurance of faith – the witness of the Spirit within, the love of God shed abroad in his heart. It brought him into the Good, Great, True Story and thus put a new song in his heart. The echoes have sounded through the years, still ringing out and shaping lives and communities across our world to this day.

That same Story, the same song, lies at the heart of the MET:Revive Ambassador ministry. Whether your fellowship is a handful of faithful friends in a front room or a congregation filling a cathedral (never say 'never!'), the invitation is the same: whatever works best where you are. No gathering is too small, no occasion too large, for the Spirit to bring encouragement and renewal.

I would love to visit you to offer biblical teaching, seminars, or a worship celebration. Do take a look at the enclosed flyer and pass it around. If any of these forthcoming dates are near you, please do come and say hello. If not, please do be in touch about how we might be able to bring something to your area.

For enquiries, contact Janet Walker:
janet.walker@metrevive.uk | 07799 068539

REV DR DAVID HULL

David is a Methodist Minister and Lead Pastor of Freedom Church Bristol (findfreedom.org.uk), serves as MET:Revive's Ambassador and Chair of the Association of Wesleyan Evangelicals (AWE). His ministry focuses on encouraging evangelical Methodists across the Connexion, and seeking a rekindling of the Wesleyan flame.

FORTHCOMING DATES

Thursday 23 April
AWE National Board Meeting & Evening Celebration, Garstang

Sunday 10 May
Tisbury Methodist Church 125th Anniversary (Morning)

Wednesday 13 May
Meetings in the North West (Evening)

Thursday 21 May
South Glos Filling Station (7:30 pm)

Wednesday 27 May
Bruton Filling Station (7:30 pm)

Sunday 7 June
St Austell Circuit (Morning)

Sunday 7 June
Billy Bray's Memorial Chapel Anniversary, Truro (2:30 pm)



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A Simple Dream: Keep Shaping The Shapers Of UK Congregations

IAN BUCHANAN

CEO of LWPT (LEADERS OF WORSHIP AND PREACHERS TRUST), Ian Buchanan, shares how LWPT resources and equips churches and leaders

Since joining The Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust (LWPT) I've seen some glorious developments. Before my time here, LWPT decided to take their Methodist passion of investing in emerging congregational leaders (the shapers) for the sake of that congregation, to all denominations.

Well, this appears to be our 'Kairos time'. Many other denominations across the UK are also waking up to the need to invest more training in their own emerging church-based leaders. They want to see the ongoing development of godly shepherds for the generations arriving and those yet to come through their doors.

We offer UK church-based Christians three simple ministries:

1. Bible-based communication skills development
2. Bible-based resources for congregations and leaders and
3. Tuition grants for Bible-based studies in UK learning institutions.

Think of an arrowhead with communication at the tip, resources in the left corner of the blade and tuition grants in the right corner.

We've always had a range of resources for Christians, but the newest ones often rise in the popularity ratings the fastest. Our webinars, workshops and now

the Christian leader's podcast and video 'The Word Shared' (stories, sermons and conversations with well-known church leaders) seem to be scratching where many are itching. For the latest LWPT developments, you can read the current issue of our online newsletter, Ichthus, and sign up for your own free copy each quarter at lwpt.org.uk/ichthus

One of the joys of this job is seeing emerging Christian leaders (house group leaders, counsellors, disciplers, evangelists, worship leaders and preachers – anyone who shapes God's people using God's word) effectively ministering in local churches. Recently, I spoke to one of those leaders whose congregation lives in one of the toughest neighbourhoods of one of the cities on our islands. He took my breath away. His daily ministry reaches people who are easily overlooked by government agencies. It's a daily challenge but his congregation love him because he cares for them, loves them and teaches them all that he has learnt.

I have seen new trustees join LWPT at the 'top table' when other trustees come to the end of their term. At our AGM this year we will be strengthening our ties to MET:Revive when your Vice-Chair, Rev Dr Gareth Higgs (Moorlands College) joins us. If you'd like to consider whether joining our trustees is for you, please email me for an application pack – ian.buchanan@lwpt.org.uk

We depend on individuals and churches to support us with their prayers, time and money, but we have also seen an encouraging growth in support from Christian trusts as well. The simplicity of the logic (shaping the shapers of congregations – local leaders) through those three distinct



Tribute to Doreen Sparey-Delacassa

As we were going to press, we received the unexpected news that Rev. Doreen Sparey-Delacassa has been promoted to glory following a short illness.

The news comes, of course, with sadness, yet we grieve as those who have hope, rejoicing that Doreen now enjoys the nearer presence of the Lord Jesus, in whom she placed her trust and whose gospel she proclaimed with such friendliness and faithfulness.

A Methodist minister and passionate evangelist, Doreen had been a member of MET:Revive and our predecessor organisations for many years, serving most recently as Chair of MET South West until January of this year. She was well known to many across the Connexion through Easter People and Share Jesus Missions. Many of our trustees and officers had the particular joy of sharing the recent MET weekend in Torquay with Doreen, a memory now all the more precious. We recall her friendship and ministry with affection and admiration.

We know that many members will wish to hold Doreen's family, friends and fellowships in their prayers at this time, including her daughter, Methodist Minister Rev. Naomi Sparey.

Naomi Sparey writes:

Doreen loved sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection through preaching, administering the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, prayer walks, Bible studies, holiday clubs and outreach activities. Best of all, God was with Doreen throughout her ministry, inspiring her, sustaining her and transforming her as she offered God's saving love and grace to others.

ministries (that arrowhead) resonates with trusts too. A simple dream making a profound impact in UK churches via their leaders.

I'll be retiring from this role in May, with the unusual privilege of seeing my successor (Jonathan Law) take my place, and then I have a chance to help him find all the ropes needed to ensure that the good ship LWPT continues to catch the big winds. If this is a ministry that you would like to see shape even more leaders of UK congregations, please do consider becoming a LWPT Partner using the leaflet in this magazine. The 'Ripple Effect' of your support will change many lives.

See a short video of 'LWPT in a drop' with this QR code through your smartphone, or by going to: bit.ly/LWPT-Spring26

IAN BUCHANAN

Ian is the CEO at LWPT. His job and his personal ministry focusses on developing leaders in churches in the UK. He preaches in churches around Guildford.



The Leaders of Worship and Preachers Trust

Testimony and Bible Study

BLAYZE WHITE

'This Is My Story, This Is My Song'



Methodist minister, Blayze White, shares how scripture, song, and the Methodist tradition shape a people who don't just believe the gospel – but sing it!

I can still remember the first time I felt led to go to a Methodist church. I didn't grow up in a particularly churchgoing family. Faith was present, but more like a polite guest than a permanent resident. Yet, through the quiet witness of friends, grandparents, and godparents, I found myself drawn to explore more.

My first attempt was an Anglican church. A beautiful building, rich liturgy ... and not a single person spoke to me. I began to wonder if I had accidentally attended a vow of silence convention.

Next, I tried a lively evangelical church. Everyone spoke to me. Repeatedly. Enthusiastically. I'm fairly certain I was welcomed by the same person at least three times! Lovely, but slightly overwhelming. This isn't typical. I've since had deeply positive experiences in both Anglican and evangelical churches, it just so happened that on those days, I caught them at either end of the ecclesiastical spectrum.

Then I tried the Methodist church in Market Rasen. For those unfamiliar to this church, it stands atop a set of stone steps, looming

nobly over the street, part chapel, part architectural warning. As I approached the heavy front door, I half expected a man with a lantern and a tragic backstory to answer. Instead, I was met by some of the warmest, kindest people I have ever encountered. They welcomed me with a gentleness that immediately disarmed all my expectations. They could see I was out of my depth, and they met me there with grace.



Market Rasen Methodist Church

They showed me into a pew ... and then promptly shut the door behind me!

Now, I have many theological questions, but near the top of the list remains: 'Who decided to put doors on pews?' And more importantly, 'Why did they think it necessary to lock them?' I remember thinking, *'How little faith must they have in the preacher that escape routes are required!'*

Yet, something happened in that place. When the singing began, everything changed. This elderly congregation came alive. They sang with a depth, a conviction, a joy that filled the room. The building suddenly made sense. It wasn't imposing; it was resonant. The acoustics lifted their voices heavenward, and what I heard felt like the very thing described in Psalm 40:

'He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.'

Psalm 40:3 ESV

I walked in as a teenager weighed down by guilt and confusion. In that moment, I glimpsed something transformative: God gives his people a song.

METHODISM: BORN IN SONG

It is no exaggeration to say that Methodism was born singing. Charles Wesley is believed to have written over 6,000 hymns. Around 100 – 200 remain in regular use today, which, if nothing else, proves that perseverance is a spiritual gift. *'If at first you don't succeed,' he seems to say, 'write another 5,800 hymns.'*



Charles Wesley

Charles wasn't simply prolific, he was purposeful. Together with his brother John, he understood something vital: if the gospel is to reach the heart, it must be both heard and felt.

So, Charles wrote hymns that were:

- Theologically rich
- Biblically grounded
- Emotionally resonant
- Accessible to ordinary people

In a time when many could not read, hymns became portable theology. People learned scripture not only by hearing it preached, but by singing it repeatedly.

Colossians 3:16 captures this perfectly: *'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly ... singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.'* (ESV)

Methodists didn't just believe the Bible, they sang it into their bones.

In fact, early Methodists were often recognised as they walked to worship, carrying two essential items: a Bible and a hymn book. That was their identity, people of the Word, and people of song.

SONG AS TESTIMONY

Music has a remarkable ability to express what ordinary speech struggles to contain. Even those with no faith will say, *'That song just gets me.'*

Scripture is full of such moments. Take Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1–10. A woman who had known deep pain and longing is suddenly overwhelmed by God's provision. What does she do? She sings: *'My heart exults in the Lord ... I rejoice in your salvation'* (1 Samuel 2:1 ESV).

Or Moses, in Exodus 15. This is a man who, only chapters earlier, was offering God every excuse imaginable (Exodus 3 – 4). Yet after the Red Sea, after deliverance, his first response is not analysis, but adoration. He sings. Then something beautiful happens: others join in. Miriam takes a tambourine, the people respond, and a shared story becomes a shared song.

This is the pattern of Scripture:

- God acts
- People respond
- The response becomes song

Your story becomes your song.

SONG AS IDENTITY

I once tried to explain the power of sung worship to my dad, who found the whole thing slightly baffling, particularly the hand-raising. 'Why,' he wondered, *'do people sing with their arms in the air?'*

Providence provided an answer. He took me to a Sunderland football match. Now, Sunderland is a club that has truly embraced the biblical principle that *'the last shall be first'* ... just not yet.



Sunderland AFC

What struck me wasn't the football, it was the singing. Thousands of people, united in voice, singing with passion, hope, and unwavering loyalty. When the opposing fans fell quiet, our side gleefully informed them: *'You're not singing anymore.'*

There was my dad, arms raised, voice loud, fully invested. I gently pointed out: 'This is what I've been trying to tell you about church!'

Singing forms identity. It binds people together. It expresses belonging. This is precisely what Charles Wesley understood. His hymns gave early Methodists a shared language of faith, something they could carry into mines, fields, and homes.

A NEW SONG

One of the dangers we face is assuming that the great songs of faith are all behind us, but

Scripture refuses to let us think that way: *'Behold, I am doing a new thing'* (Isaiah 43:19). God is not only the author of old songs, He is the giver of new ones.

The same Spirit who moved Hannah and Moses, who inspired the hymns of Charles Wesley, is still at work today, drawing people to Christ and putting new songs in their mouths. The question is not whether God is still writing songs. The question is whether we are still listening.

THIS IS MY STORY

I love singing in church. This is not because I am good at it. I am not. If you heard me, you might conclude that my 'joyful noise' is doing a great deal of heavy lifting. Some say everyone has the voice of an angel. Mine does, but it's an angel with a persistent chest infection. Yet, I have never wanted to sing more than when I am worshipping, because something happens in that moment.

I find myself drawn into a story bigger than my own. I join my voice:

- With Moses on the far side of the sea
- With Hannah in her joy
- With generations of Methodists who sang their faith into being
- With congregations today, still declaring God's faithfulness

Sometimes through ancient hymns. Sometimes through new songs. Always through the same unchanging gospel.

Every now and then, we sing those familiar words:

'Morning by morning new mercies I see...'

Something stirs again, because that is the truth at the heart of it all: God is still giving his people a story, and

he is still giving his people a song.

FOR REFLECTION / BIBLE STUDY

1. Read Psalm 40:1–3
 - What 'new song' has God placed in your life?
2. Read 1 Samuel 2:1–10
 - How does Hannah's song reflect her story?
 - What would your equivalent be?
3. Read Exodus 15:1–18
 - Why do you think song is the first response to deliverance?
4. Read Colossians 3:16
 - How does singing help the Word of Christ dwell in us?
5. Consider your own worship
 - Do you see singing as optional, or essential?
 - What might it mean to recover our identity as a people of both Word and song?

"This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Saviour all the day long."



BLAYZE WHITE

Rev Blayze White is a Methodist presbyter serving in the Bury Circuit. He is a devoted husband and the father of three.



CHRIS BRIGGS

May is Christianity Month! For those who have not seen previous articles or who are new to the vision, Christianity Month is an opportunity to celebrate the way in which Christians have already changed the world in so many ways, and for intentional Christian witness.

Setting a month aside to be intentional in celebration and witness does not mean we neglect either throughout the rest of the year. However, there are times

when it is useful to have a united effort to raise awareness. Hobbyists, enthusiasts, charities, businesses, and organisations all realise it is a good thing to raise awareness by setting apart a day, a week, or a month to celebrate. That is why we have interesting things such as World Lazy Day in August, and National Bed Month in March.

Christianity Month is an opportunity, in smaller or larger ways, to share with others the impact the Christian faith has had on the world. Some of these things might take time to plan, others might just be our normal events, but in May we link them with Christianity Month and perhaps give some literature out.

Here are some simple things you could do, even this May:

- Tell a few friends it is Christianity Month

- Email me and request a digital copy of the logo which you could put on the bottom of your emails during May, or print onto an A4 poster to put in your window or around your church
- Contact a local newspaper, radio station or television company and ask what they are doing for Christianity Month
- If you use social media platforms post the logo and #ChristianityMonth just to raise awareness
- Take a copy of this magazine to a coffee morning and ask who knew it was Christianity Month
- Make a note to plan early for May 2027, talking to others in your local church

For more information and for a copy of the logo email me at: chair@metrevive.uk

Reviews from MET South West Weekend

23-25 JANUARY 2026

SPEAKER DEREK BURNSIDE



HEROES & VILLAINS

BRIAN ADDINGTON writes

Blend together food, fellowship and focused Bible study. Add in Torquay and January, and one arrives at the MET SW Conference held on the last weekend of January.

This year's main speaker was Derek Burnside (Principal, Capernwray Hall Bible School). Under the loose heading of 'Heroes and Villains', Derek helped us explore some of those biblical characters who give us shining examples of what it is to be a person of faith, living out the life-transforming love of God. Each

passage we looked at also had those whose lives can act as a warning to us, and gave us something to think about, particularly how we respond to the challenge of being a 'work in progress'.

Early on, Derek reminded us that there is often some 'poor area' in the best of us, and even those areas we sometimes describe as the worst, can have redeeming qualities. Jesus is the only true hero of the faith.

One of the illustrations Derek gave us was of a guitar string being held in tension. Only when the tension

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between the extremes is correct, can a tune be played.

As the weekend drew to a close, we were all encouraged to invite someone else to next year's weekend, where the main speaker will be Rev Chris Briggs (Chair of MET:Revive). Could you be the person that I am inviting? One does not have to live in the South West to attend.

Looking forward to seeing you beside the sea next January and digging deeper into all that our loving God has for us!

KATE RAWLINS writes

After battling the wind and the rain, flooding, and fallen trees to get there, along with a storm raging, and the waves hitting the hotel windows, the Holy Spirit gently settled on the MET South West Conference and gave us a weekend of great teaching, fellowship, worship and food.

Derek Burnside guided us through the 'heroes and villains' of Gaius and Diotrephes (putting God first); Tychicus and Archippus (what ministry has God given us for now?); Euodia and Syntyche (Christians sometimes fall out with each other, but put it right in Christ); Demas and Alexander (are we battered or beaten?). The words in brackets are what challenged me at the time! I was also encouraged, enlightened and blessed by Derek's thoughtful, funny, inspired words.

Saturday afternoon saw Rev Graham Shaw give a presentation about the Zimbabwe Victim Support charity. As always, he brought good news stories about what the charity is doing, but also shared something about the terrible injustice that makes the charity necessary in the first place.

The worship that punctuated the sessions was led by members of the committee, greatly enhanced by Joan Wragg's Spirit-filled music. It was wonderful to have time to be still and quiet, as well as excited and loud in our praise.

A truly good time. Those of us who don't live by the sea absolutely loved watching the wild sea – it added a new dimension to the weekend!

Next year we are being led by Rev Chris Briggs: I'm looking forward to it already! The challenge was for each of us to bring one person with us next year, but you don't have to wait to be invited, just come and be blessed by our God.

PAULINE SCOTT writes

I am an Anglican who likes to share fellowship with my Methodist friends. This was my second MET SW Conference at Torquay. All the teaching was fabulous, but the session that spoke to me most was 'Finishing or Fizzling' from Colossians 4:2-18. What happens if we lose our focus on Jesus? We need to be sure that we 'complete the work we have received from

the Lord' and not fizzle out. Fizzling means the light has not gone out, but it is not burning brightly.

The weekend was a great encouragement to keep burning brightly and be equipped to finish the race strongly. So, if you would like outstanding teaching, warm extravagant fellowship and glorious food there's no better place than the MET SW Conference where you will find nourishment for body, mind and spirit.

GERALD HARDY writes

As a hardened attendee at this annual gathering, I feel qualified to say that they never disappoint and this year was no exception. It is always a pleasure to renew acquaintance with numerous familiar faces, and friendliness with conviviality rules the day. We always have excellent speakers. This year, Derek Burnside excelled in his teaching and as always, we enjoyed inspirational worship. All in all, a glorious experience. Roll on the next one!

We would love to see you at MET SW next year! If finances are a problem, there is a discretionary fund that could be made available, separate from MET:Revive: The Briggs Personal Discretionary Gift Fund for Promotion of the Evangelical Faith. Contact chris@briggsworld.co.uk or nicola@briggsworld.co.uk for further details, or write to 16 Booth Drive, Ashbourne, DE6 1SZ.

News from MET SOUTH WEST

Caroline Colin, newly appointed Chair of MET South West

During another enjoyable MET South West Conference held at the Livermead Cliff Hotel in Torquay over the weekend of 23 – 25 January 2026, I was humbled to be appointed as the next Chair, with effect from 24 January 2026.

Deep and grateful thanks are given to Rev Doreen Sparey-Delacassa (Chair), Tony Wragg (Secretary), Paul Violet (Treasurer), Sue Hamblin, Julian Tawn and Mark Pellow. These folk and many who have gone before, have cherished, led and prayed into and over the MET SW Conferences for many years.

The mantle has passed to me, and, as a means of introduction, I have been asked to tell you a little about myself.

I am the eldest of three children born to a Liverpoolian mum and Geordie dad, both of whom met, married and raised a family in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. I met my husband, Len, whilst we were taking part in an amateur dramatic production of Pirates of Penzance at the Bulawayo Theatre in 1983. We have two adult children and four wonderful grandchildren.

Len and I were raised within the Methodist denomination of Christianity in Bulawayo attending two of the five churches within one circuit. We were married at my home church, Main Street Methodist Church, and held offices of steward (Len), choir member (me), and member of Women's Association (obviously, me). We transferred our membership to Hillside Methodist Church and served there prior to emigrating to England in December 2005 for no other reason than the economic downfall of the Zimbabwean Dollar and the reality check that we needed to shore up our financial stability for later life. That move was one of the hardest things I have ever done and, 20 years later, still causes a tear to fall on its recollection.

However, on arriving in Exeter in January 2006, I attended the Mint Methodist Church in Exeter. The minister at the time was Rev Andrew Sails, who encouraged me to consider training to be a Local Preacher, something I was never asked to consider whilst in Bulawayo! I was accredited on 15 September 2012, at Wonford Methodist Church and have been privileged to hold that office to this day. I candidated for the Methodist ministry in 2017, but was not successful. The Lord clearly had other plans for me.

I am a passionate evangelical Christian. The whole of scripture points to and tells of Jesus, God's son who was born as a baby to Mary, who died an awful death and shed his blood for my sins, who victoriously defeated death and was raised to life on the third day. I believe he will come again to restore this broken world to his Father's original, perfect intention. Jesus is my Saviour.

From an early age, and growing up into adult life, Christian teaching, godly friendships and prayer partners have been paramount to shape, correct and encourage me to be the Christian woman that I am today.

As a woman, saved to the utmost, I humbly offer who I am to work alongside Committee members, to ensure that the annual MET Conference held in the South West of England and open to all, continues to offer a wonderful weekend away where great biblical teaching, fantastic praise and worship, superb hotel service and 5-star silver service afford an annual breathing space at the end of January. You are very welcome to join us!

Note the weekend of Friday 29 – Sunday 31 January 2027 and join those gathering to hear Rev Chris Briggs (Chair of MET:Revive), who will be our guest speaker.



MET SW CONFERENCE

Friday 29th – Sunday 31st
January 2027

Principalities and Powers: Avoiding the Paralysis of the Church

SPEAKER: CHRIS BRIGGS

LIVERMEAD CLIFF HOTEL, TORQUAY

Booking form and details in the autumn edition of RE:VIVE magazine

Story and Song

ANDREW STOBART



The new Principal of Cliff College, Andrew Stobart introduces the focus of this year's Cliff Festival.

Long before I knew anything about Cliff College (or had any inkling that one day I would be entrusted with the role of Principal), I used to play my way through an old copy of *Cliff Choruses* that my parents had stowed in the stool of the piano. As a ten-year old who regularly played the organ for services in the rural Methodist chapels around my home, I didn't fully appreciate *why* these choruses connected with congregations so well, but I knew that they *did*.

Three decades later, sitting at the principal's desk in Cliff College, I understand more fully why *Cliff Choruses* was – and is – such a beloved volume. The songs connected people to a story. Perhaps a Cliff Trek came to their church and that was when they first made a commitment to follow Jesus; perhaps they had attended the Whitsun anniversary weekend, or a Derwent Week, and experienced the renewal of God's Spirit; perhaps they had even been a student at Cliff for a year and discovered a lifetime's vocation as a preacher and evangelist. *Cliff Choruses* isn't just an old collection of songs; it is a testament to stories of transformation. The College's other noteworthy publication, *Joyful News*, told many of these stories week by week for eighty years.

'Story and Song' is our theme for Cliff Festival this year, picking up inspiration from the Methodist Church's President and Vice-President of Conference. Over the late May bank holiday weekend, over 800 people will gather in the Peak District to study the Scriptures, sing out our hearts in praise, and enjoy fellowship, learning

and activities for all ages. There's still time for you to make plans to join us!

The format of our work may have changed since the first *Joyful News* was published 143 years ago, but Cliff College's purpose remains the same: *to inspire and equip ambassadors of the joyful news of Jesus*. The transformation needed in our lives, our churches and our society will not come from a cunning plan or a shiny strategy. Transformation happens when we personally encounter Jesus, and when we make ample space in our lives for Jesus' word and power – Scripture and the Spirit (Colossians 3:16-17).

We sing and tell stories because that's what humans do. We sing and tell stories about Jesus because that's what Christians do. We sing and tell stories *about the change that Jesus is bringing about in our world* because that's what Methodists do. 'Story and Song' is an anthem to focus us as we seek to live boldly in Christian faith today. If you or your church want to explore how Cliff College can resource and support you, then please be in touch. Together, let's tell and sing the joyful news that transforms the world: 'Christ for all; all for Christ.'

REV DR ANDREW STOBART

Andrew is the Principal of Cliff College, having previously served as Academic Vice Principal. A Methodist presbyter and theologian, he sees his vocation as equipping God's people to share the joyful news of Jesus with clarity rooted in deep understanding. He can be contacted by email: principal@cliffcollege.ac.uk



Friday 22nd – Monday 25th
May 2026

SEMINARS

We shall be hosting two seminars over the weekend which will be led by Rev Dr Howard Mellor

- Saturday 23rd May – 4.30 pm:
The Scandal of Atonement
- Sunday 24th May – 1.30 pm:
'Perfected in Love' – Holiness misunderstood!

AGM

We shall be hosting the MET:REVIVE AGM on Bank Holiday Monday 25th May 3.30 – 5.00 pm Samuel Chadwick Lecture Theatre.

(this will be a hybrid event – in person and on Zoom)

Our Story, Our Song

AT CLIFF FESTIVAL WEEKEND



Revive Gathering Weekend

Friday 13th – Sunday 15th
November 2026

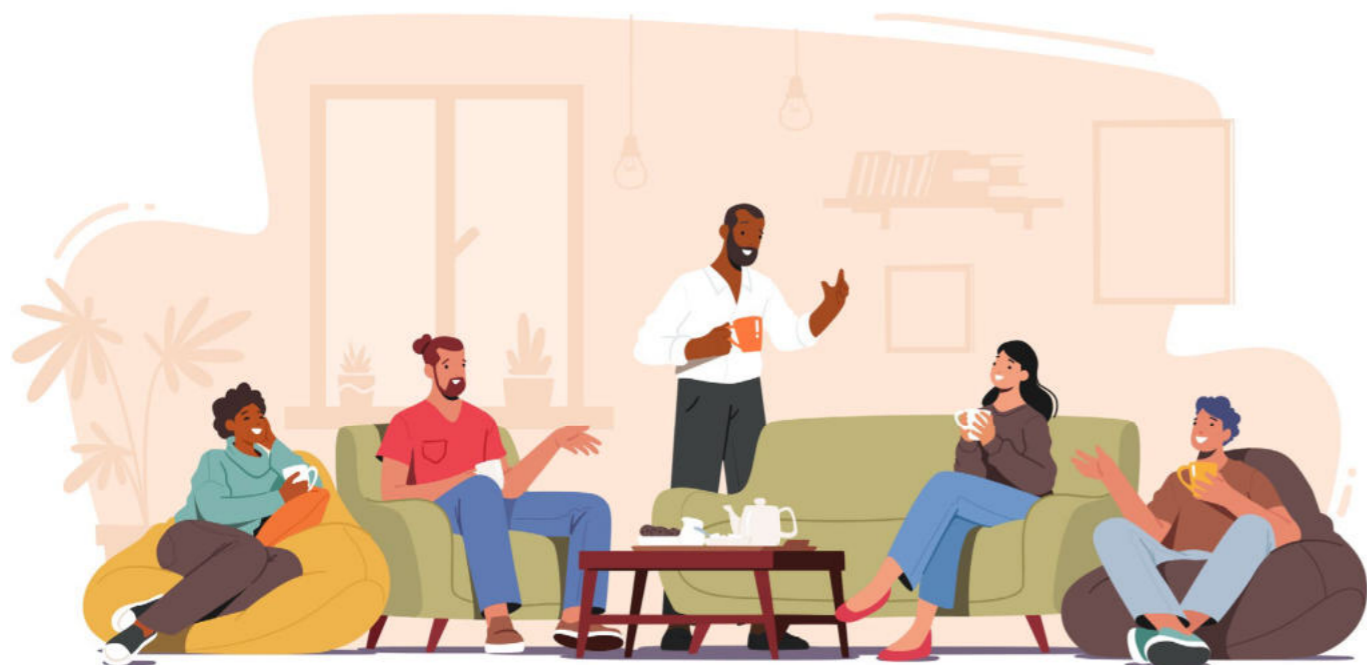
SPEAKER: ANDREW ROBERTS

(Methodist minister and author of the best-selling book 'Holy Habits')

The Hayes Conference Centre
Swanwick, DE55 1AU

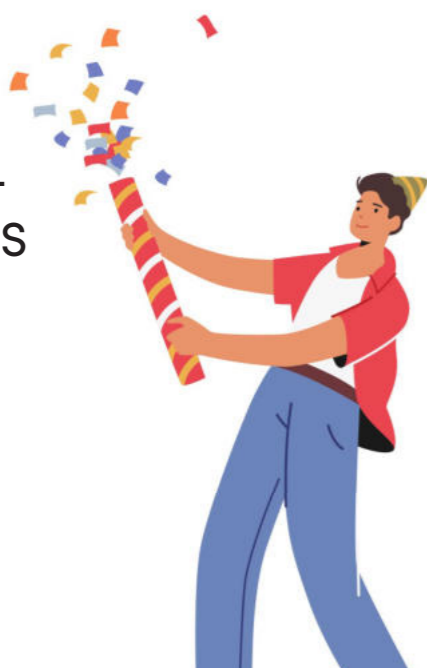
Weekend: £300 (£285 if booked by 30 June 2026).

Further details and to book: metrevive.uk/revive



Celebrating the Lay Witness Movement

BRIAN
& HAZEL
ROLLINS



Former leaders of the Lay Witness Movement, Brian and Hazel Rollins, reflect on the impact and influence of the Lay Witness movement in their own lives and in the UK

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the introduction of the Lay Witness Movement to churches in the UK in 1976. It was instrumental in bringing us into a living faith and played a large part in our development as Christians.

Lay Witness was the brainchild of Professor Ben Campbell Johnson, an American pastor, who realised the impact that lay people could have by sharing their Christian faith at other churches. He developed the format for church weekends comprising worship, meals, and visiting team members giving personal testimony and leading group discussions - gently, but asking searching questions.

The first weekend was held in Phoenix City in 1961 and the results were such that Lay Witness was born.

In October 1976, as a result of contact between Dr Roger Haining, a Lay Witness team leader from Seattle, and Colin and Janet Newell and Nev Sharples of Bolsover,

five Methodist churches in England each held a Lay Witness weekend. Dr Haining led them with both American and English team members. The weekends had a tremendous impact on the churches and the lives of church members - new and deeper commitments to Jesus Christ, increased membership, new Bible study groups. These and other results were experienced by many churches later.

A group was formed to promote and coordinate weekends in Great Britain and the Lay Witness Movement was formed. Its aims were 'to bring people into a closer relationship with Jesus and to bind the church family into a more loving and caring community'. As a result of the tireless work of that group, by the end of 1978, 18 Lay Witness weekends had been held and 52 team members recruited.

As the number of weekends increased, by early 1980 it was clear that full-time leaders were needed. Tom and Margaret Moyle, who had taken part in the 1976 weekends, took on this role. The Movement continued to grow, and by 1986 it was running 40 Lay Witness weekends annually.

We knew nothing about the Movement until 1984 when our minister suggested we hold a Lay Witness weekend. The weekend was held in September 1985, led by Michael and Tricia Bancroft from Lammack, Blackburn. We had been members of the church for many years and held various offices. At that weekend, hearing team members talk about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, we realised that this was missing from our lives. At the Sunday service, we both responded to the invitation to commit our lives to Jesus. Although neither knew that the other had intended to make that response, it has been one of our joys that we did respond, allowing us to give so much together.

Shortly afterwards, Michael and Tricia invited us to go with them to Lindley, Huddersfield in May 1987 as 'observers'. Hazel reluctantly agreed. Brian was adamant he wasn't going, changing his mind a short time beforehand. Following that weekend, we both believed that God was calling us to join the Movement. Our first weekend was under Tom and Margaret's leadership at Lammack, in October 1987.

In 1989, at the end of a weekend led by Michael and Tricia, Michael asked us to give a valid reason why we should not become Team Leaders. We couldn't. Brian also joined the Management Committee.

In 1995, Tom and Margaret decided it was time to retire. Tom suggested we take on their role. We accepted that

it was God's plan, when a speaker at an event we were attending, told us that God had a role for us to take on together. Brian retired as senior partner of a firm of solicitors and we converted our garage into an office. We held the position until 2004 when we were replaced by Alan and Jennifer Goulden and they were followed by Mike Owen.

As well as attending over 70 weekends in England, giving hundreds of information talks, speaking and publicising the Movement at denominational conferences, we led groups to share in Lay Witness celebrations, and take part in weekends, in South Carolina, South Africa, the Philippines and Australia. Our time in Lay Witness helped shape and develop our walk as disciples of Jesus Christ. We were privileged to serve God and his church in this way and are grateful to him for the way he equipped us for this service.

When the Movement ceased in 2014, it had held 1124 weekends, impacting many church members and their churches. We leave the last words to others who shared testimony following a Lay Witness Weekend:

'Jesus became my friend at a Lay Witness Weekend, when I was 15, partly through hearing the team's testimonies.'

'The fruit of the weekend: three families who had recently joined were able to say 'this is our church', a youth Alpha course has been planned, a second weekly prayer group and a new house group have started.'

'I realised that my faith had reached a comfortable plane and that I needed to move on. I am learning to spend more time with God.'



BRIAN & HAZEL ROLLINS

Brian and Hazel are members of MET:Revive and are part of the leadership at Wigan Methodist Mission. They have been married 61 years and have four children and seven grandchildren.

LAY WORKERS

Give thanks for the inspiration and work for the Lay Witness Movement and its legacy. Pray for all lay workers across the church in whatever form that may take – local preachers, leaders of worship, pastoral workers, youth and children’s workers. Pray that they may be inspired by the Holy Spirit in their work for the Lord; for many to be impacted by their witness and come into a closer relationship with the Lord. (Hebrews 4:12; Romans 8:15).

FOCUS ON THE CHURCH

MET:Revive: Chris Briggs as chair; for the trustees and Marian Izzard as administrator; David Hull’s role as ambassador, particularly for invitations from churches to speak; wisdom and discernment on the way forward.

Online Bible studies and prayer meetings; the upcoming AGM in May and MET:Revive’s involvement at Cliff Festival. (Colossians 1:9-12; Hebrews 13:20-21).

Hope: For people across the Connexion to keep their hope fixed on Jesus in these dark and difficult days; to reach out and grasp his assurance and keep hold of the promises in Scripture and let his light guide us in the darkness of all that is happening in our nation and the world. (Romans 15:13; Psalm 119:114).

FOCUS ON NATIONAL ISSUES

Gang culture: For all who are involved in gang culture and all it entails; the breaking up of county lines and drug supply chains; for Christian youth workers reaching out to lost youngsters with a better pathway; for our youth to find their hope in Jesus, leading to transformation in their lives; for a realisation of the fruitlessness of violence; for the police as they attempt to combat the violence across our land. (Psalm 145:17-20; Psalm 107:13-16).

Children and young people: For youngsters who are suffering from anxiety, depression, and associated illnesses; for underlying causes to be identified and for specialist help to be available at an early stage; for people to reach out to help these vulnerable young people. (Luke 12:6-7; Isaiah 41:10).

FOCUS ON WORLD ISSUES

Russia/Ukraine: Pray for a peace which is acceptable to Ukraine and not biased towards Russia; for a halt to the targeting of power supplies and the civilian population. Give thanks for the distribution of Bibles in Ukraine over the last 4 years. Pray for a continued spread of the gospel amongst troops on the front lines – both Ukrainian and Russian – and amongst the population, bringing hope in their darkness. Pray for protection for Russian Christians in a repressive regime; for the Russian Orthodox Church to be true to biblical belief (Proverbs 3:5-7; Romans 1:18).

The World Economic Forum (WEF): Pray for the influence of the WEF on the world and for prominent business leaders to be open and honest. Pray for integrity and the exposure of any negative and erroneous ideologies that might be harmful to humankind. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of the CEO and the managing board responsible for the forum’s mission and operations. (Micah 6:8; Isaiah 66:1-2).

GOOD NEWS STORY

Ian Pinhey, a Devon farmer, shares experiences of God’s faithfulness



I live in mid Devon with my wife Debbie, and my five children. I am a fifth generation farmer, and have a passion for feeding people both physically and spiritually. I was asked to share my story on BBC TV’s Songs of Praise last year, which opened the doorway for me to meet David Hull when he spoke at the West Devon Filling Station in the autumn. I didn’t know anything about MET:Revive and was encouraged to hear what David shared with us that evening.

I have always felt that faith and farming go hand in hand. Life on a busy farm in Devon can be challenging and rewarding, all at the same time. The farm is a fantastic place to bring up a family and to see God’s hand at work all around you, particularly

in the springtime as hedgerows, woodland, and crops of various kinds burst into life.

We have had our fair share of trials over the years, but God has remained faithful through it all. I feel blessed to have been brought up on a farm and in a Christian home, and can never remember a time when I didn’t know that God was real and that he cared for me.

I left school at 16 and came straight home to work on the farm, but within a few years we were thrust into the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001. To see our livestock culled and business crumble in front of our eyes left us wondering what the future would look like. It turned out to be another opportunity for God to open doors that may never have been opened, had we not gone through that pain.

One such opportunity was as a result of not having any livestock for 12 months, which gave me the opportunity to go out to Bulgaria with a team from local churches in my area. A team would go out each year to help improve facilities in a rural orphanage, and it was while I was there in 2001 that God really challenged me.

I had felt him prodding me for some time about exploring the call to preach, but being a very shy young man, I managed to convince myself that God couldn’t possibly be asking me to do that, so I ignored the call. Deep down, I knew this was God. It was while I was out in Bulgaria, that I became very aware of how comfortable my life was, and yet I was willingly ignoring his voice. I made every excuse under the sun, but it was when I saw how joyful the children in the orphanage were in the face of poverty, it humbled me, and meant that I was unable to say ‘no’ to the God who had given me everything.

I guess the rest is history, and I now find myself regularly preaching, largely in the Methodist circuit, in mid Devon. I met Debbie in 2002, we were married in 2004, and now we have a full house with five children from 10-18 years old. It’s been a joy to watch faith grow in each of their lives and we trust that God will lead them each along the path that he has for them.

Throughout life, we will all experience our share of joy and pain, but through it all, God remains faithful. If he calls us, then he most definitely equips us too. The verses from Proverbs 3:5-6 encapsulate this: ‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight’.

PRAYER FOCUS CONTACT

The Prayer Focus section is compiled by Roz Addington. If you wish to contact Roz with any prayer requests or prayer related items, please contact her via prayer@metrevive.uk

Grandparenting for Faith

BECKY SEDGWICK

BRF Ministries, 2024
ISBN 9781800392045
pp. 197
£9.99

Before you turn away from this review because you are not a grandparent or do not know anyone who is, please pause and read on a sentence or two. The reason I say this is because I would change the subtitle of this book to 'Sharing God with the people you love'.

Due to the way family life has changed so much, the role of grandparents has also changed. In some cases, grandparents are on hand for regular childcare which can make a big difference to family budgets. In other cases, grandparents have little contact because their families have moved far away, perhaps to another part of the country, or another part of the world and contact is through video calls or some other means. This book is written to enable you to use the hints and tips for those you care about, whether they are near or far.

Becky Sedgwick reminds readers that children today get their ideas about God from different sources, be that television and film media, collective worship in school, or their RE lessons. God's plan on the other hand is that children learn of faith in the home (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). This is confirmed by Youth for Christ research in 2016 who asked 1,001 young people: what or who influences your faith/religion? 73% said it was their family.

We know that connecting with those we care about is key, and the author emphasises the importance of



this too. It does not need to be complicated. An out-of-the-blue message to say 'thinking of you' can make a difference. It tells them that they matter, and that we care.

Becky Sedgwick is clear that sometimes, it can be difficult to share our faith with our grandchildren, especially if our children have said they do not want us to share our faith with them. Helpfully, Becky gives some pointers of what to do in this situation, and includes a reminder that faith is not only communicated by words. Our grandchildren, and all those around us, will be noticing what inspires us, what our values

are, and how we live our lives. God works through these things and we shouldn't be surprised if our grandchildren or others we have contact with ask us about our faith.

The book concludes with a 'small group notes' section. There are ten ready-made sessions that could be used in a home group or, if you have one, a church book club. Again, the focus does not have to be just on grandchildren; it may be that we have godchildren we would like to find ways of connecting with, or that we want to encourage other grandparents in our congregations.



REVIEWED BY NICOLA BRIGGS

Rev Nicola Briggs is a Presbyterian currently serving as the Superintendent Minister of the Ashbourne One Church Circuit and as Synod Secretary of the Nottingham and Derby District.

Blessed Assurance

FRANCES JANE
VAN ALSTYNE

The hymn writer, Frances Jane van Alstyne (Fanny Crosby) encapsulates the theme 'This is My Story, This is My Song' in her hymn 'Blessed Assurance'.

*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine:
O, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God;
born of His Spirit, washed in His blood:*

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Saviour all the day long.*

*Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love:*

*Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest -
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love:*

Frances Jane van Alstyne (Fanny Crosby) (1820-1915)



RE:VIVE

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