



**FRONTIER
YOUTH TRUST**
MISSION WITH YOUNG
PEOPLE AT RISK

/News



“DO YOU HEAR WHAT THESE CHILDREN ARE SAYING?”

In the local project I'm involved with, we are moving into a season of listening. There is a renewed energy to encounter more young people but before we start dreaming of what might be, we need to listen. We need to listen to our community, both people and to what God is already doing.

To listen well, we need to give it time. Time to sit with those young people and to listen deeply to their hopes and dreams. We need to take the time to listen broadly: to listen to those young people we've known for a long time, to those we've just met and even to those we currently have yet to meet. We need to be aware of our way of seeing the world, and how that will impact our listening, so that we don't miss what is being said.

Over the summer we had a stand at the three weeks of the Soul Survivor Christian Youth festival. To engage the young people attending we asked them 'What five items represent your spiritual life outside of church?' You can read more about this later in this issue. It was clear that the young people hadn't been asked this question before and the answers were deeply considered. It was such a precious opportunity to listen to these young people talk about their day-to-day spiritual lives.

Hearing young people speak about how they engaged in their spiritual lives was a gift, and this gift needs sharing. We have developed an exhibition that explores these young peoples responses that will have its first outing at the National Youth Ministry Weekend. As Frontier Youth Trust we are called to amplify the voices on the margins and to present back to youth workers the spiritual practices young people are engaging with, we hope to empower them to broaden their understanding.

“Do you hear what these children are saying?”

Jesus said, “Yes, I hear them. And haven't you read in God's Word, 'From the mouths of children and babies I'll furnish a place of praise?'" (Matthew 21:16).

In this edition of FYT News we pray that you find space to listen to the God who speaks using the Advent reflections gifted to us by members of the movement.

With much love

Dylan (and the leadership team)

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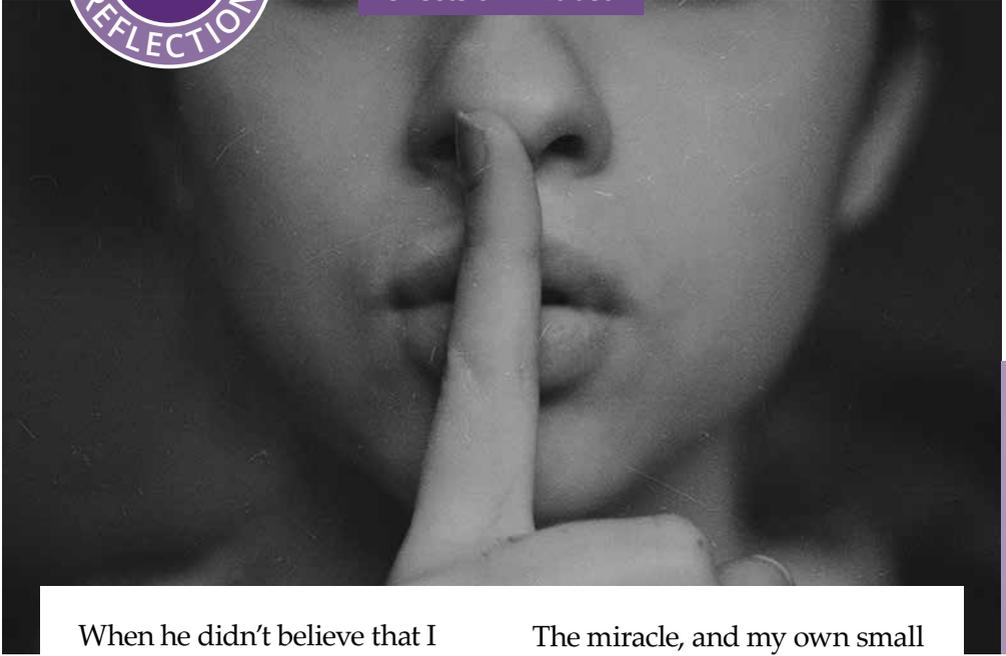


PHOTO BY KRISTINA FLOUR ON UNSPLASH

When he didn't believe that I
could bear a child
I wasn't surprised
He always was a bloody know-
it-all.

Then the days of silence
Of not being told
Of not being able to read his
stupid writing tablet;
not wasting an education on a
woman back in the day.

Bliss.
The miracle and I.
Curled up in each other.
Quietly gestating. Growing.
Glowing.
Into...

The miracle, and my own small
miracle
Of knowing, without being
told
Of being and becoming my
own self and story.

When he popped out, that old
fool still had to remain silent.
As I screamed and keened and
wailed my truth.

It didn't matter that he chose
the name
It didn't matter that he got his
voice back
He knew nothing.

I had miracles all over the place
And my voice.

 Reading: Luke 2:8-15

 Zoe Bell, a youth worker from Kirkby, reflects on the Shepherds



PHOTO BY FLAVIO GASPERINI ON UNSPLASH

“For once in my life I am special”

These were the words of one of an 11-year-old who attended some bike maintenance workshops we organised through our detached project. He could not get over the fact that he was hand-picked and invited to take part. As the small group of young people from our council estate got stuck in to changing tyres and fixing punctures I reflected that this group are a little like the shepherds. Outcast and despised because of where they live and the families they were born into, every day is a struggle for self-worth for these young people. Even though we have spent a year working with

this particular young man, he still can't believe that we want to spend time with him and would choose him above all the other kids in his class from 'nice' families.

The shepherds were similarly despised, outcast and on the margins of society. Probably they thought very little of themselves. Yet God chose them to meet and connect with his Son first, before the reputable members of Jewish society. I wonder if, as they walked back up the hill after realising they were the only, chosen ones to take part in this amazing encounter, one shepherd boy turned to another and said: “For once in my life I am special”?



PHOTO BY BEN WHITE ON UNSPLASH

What do you know about them? We had a think too...

They weren't wise (according to Jewish standards)

There weren't three of them (only three gifts)

They probably weren't all men (I'd definitely ask Helen and Hester to come along with me for a long trip abroad, not to mention any servants they may have had).

Yet they were led to, and found God.

Through their own tradition and expertise, in a way that they understood, they were led to the truth that God is with us.

Other things we wondered...

What did they do after their part in the story ends?

Did they tell others about the baby they found?

Did they listen out for news of what that baby grew up to be and do?

Did they find ways to help others discover that God is with them, in their culture and tradition back in 'the East'?

Finally, perhaps they are more similar to us than we think. They were outsiders visiting, they met a (very) young person who was on the edge, part of a family in disgrace and poverty and danger. In this baby, they also met God. And meeting a young person and God together must have changed them, inspired and driven them forward.

But if it's a journey, meeting, life-shifting, an 'encountering the young and God together' story, one powerful enough that we go back to share and invite others to be part of it. Then please tell me...

... where can I get a camel?



I wonder how grateful Mary and Joseph were to have somewhere to lay their baby? Although the picture-perfect Christmas cards show a sanitised manger, I'm sure this was far from the truth. But Jesus' parents must have done their best to create a safe space in which to lay their child.

When was the last time you felt cradled or sheltered, as the baby Christ was cradled in the manger?

To cradle is to support someone, to hold them - and I love that image - that we can cradle one another, not only physically but also figuratively. We need people in our lives who cradle us, who hold and protect us. Whether that's a friend who will sit with us when no words can be said, someone who stands by us in times of difficulty or hardship, a listening ear, or just

someone who makes us a great cup of tea.

Take a moment to think about those people who cradle you today, and whom you cradle. Perhaps you might like to sit for a few minutes in prayer or meditation with hands cupped together in an open gesture, praying for those people. Or you could send someone an encouraging text, or put a positive message or meme on Facebook or Twitter.

Christmas is a time of great joy and celebration, but can also be stressful, bring back painful memories of lost loved ones, or you may feel under pressure to be the perfect host or to buy the most thoughtful gifts. So during this festive season make time to cradle and support, not only others, but also yourselves.

#MYSPIRITUALSELFIE ON TOUR

Thanks to your generosity and faithfulness, this summer we were able to connect with hundreds of young people and youth workers encouraging them to make a Spiritual Selfie – a picture of things that represented their spiritual life. What we discovered is that young people’s spirituality is broader, deeper, richer and bigger than we ever could have imagined.

We all need a rhythm: ways to sustain us in God’s

mission. Walking in the way of Jesus is not easy. A rhythm can bring us life, fresh insight, and renewed energy; or it can remind us of who we are and what we are doing. Missionaries and pioneers throughout the ages have shaped ‘rules’ of life. At their best, these ‘rules’ are daily, monthly and yearly actions that nurture the soul and open us to God.

The first disciples (Acts 2) built for themselves a rhythm that sustained them: breaking bread, prayer, sharing goods in common, giving to those in need, going to the temple, meeting in homes, eating together, praising God. We all need a rhythm that fits our context and mission-life. What works well for one person in one place doesn’t always work the same somewhere else. So there can’t be a one-size-fits-all answer.

Seeking to answer this question we invited youth workers from across the FYT Movement

to make a Spiritual Selfie, sharing with our community of pioneer youth workers the things that sustain them in mission. The responses were diverse, including: music, mindfulness, time out, labyrinths, journaling, reading, podcasts, cooking, growing veg, meeting friends, doing youth work, lamenting, being by the sea, being in nature, taking a one-minute silence, playing with children, and even morris dancing. The

sheer diversity and creativity



of discipleship within our youth work community was inspiring, energising and refreshing.

Then this summer we took this same challenge to young people and youth workers at the Soul Survivor Christian Youth Festival running over three weeks in August. We were surprised by how many struggled to articulate a spiritual life with any depth – but equally stunning was the diversity, breadth and depth of the spiritual life of others. We have more than 300 responses

of young people explaining how they meet God biking, painting, making things, in nature, in fashion, in silence, in the dark, in becoming a better human, in playing board games with their family, in spending time alone, in cooking, in feeding the homeless... in so many diverse and interesting ways!

It reminded us that God is already at work in young people's lives, outside of their youth group or church contexts. We believe this learning is of benefit to others so we're taking this research on tour to highlight

help them explore discipleship, spirituality and their own experience of God for the first time. Building on the young people's responses to our #MySpiritualSelfie project, this resource offers reflections and activities for both youth workers and young people. Without your support, this vital work wouldn't be possible.

You can build your own #MySpiritualSelfie using items that remind you of how to nurture your soul. Simply find 5-8 items that represent your Missional Spiritual Life, and photograph them on



a calling to join God, who is already at work, on the margins. We will be hosting exhibitions, running training, and seeking to resource youth workers to think bigger, deeper and wider about where young people meet with God and walk in the way of Jesus. Alongside this tour, we are publishing a pocket resource for youth workers working with young people with no, little or a fringe understanding of the Christian faith to

a nice background. These items might be practical resources, they might be symbols that remind you of something that's important, they might be something to do, or they might be metaphors for a way of thinking. Each item should represent a habit, behaviour, practice, routine, or way of thinking that can sustain you in mission. Post your picture on our facebook page, share it round your church, or send it in via email or post.

NEWS FROM THE TRUSTEES:

As the seasons change there have also been some changes to our board of trustees. We have said farewell to Mary McGinty, who has served FYT for well over a decade as a trustee and lately as Chair. Mary's wisdom, experience and humour have been so deeply valued by both the trustees and the staff team and she will be missed.

We're also pleased to announce that Lori Passmore, Ian Tannahill and Matt Davis are taking over to work together as co-chair, developing further our model of shared leadership, recognising everyone's unique skill sets and giftings. We also welcome Anna Henbury as a new trustee. Please do pray for Lori, Ian, Matt and Anna as they step into these new roles and as we continue to grow together as a movement.

PRAYERS:

- As we see out 2019 we are thankful for all that the Leadership Team has done as they work out what being a Movement looks like for Frontier Youth Trust. Looking to 2020 we pray for wisdom and guidance as we move forward, that those throughout the organisation would feel valued, encouraged and excited about the future.
- We are thankful for all those that support us financially, without whom we would not be able to continue supporting youth workers and young people on the margins. We pray that they too are blessed through the work of Frontier Youth Trust.
- We give thanks for the team at Worth Unlimited who give us invaluable structural support and frees up the Leadership Team to do the 'on the ground' work.
- We give thanks for the young people we work alongside and the challenge and purpose they bring to our work.
- We pray for all the youth workers and youth organisations that FYT supports, that we would continue to be a home for them, that we can amplify their voices from the edges and encourage them to take risks as they step out into the new, that we as FYT not only support pioneers, but also pioneer.

FEEDBACK

We are reviewing what information we send out to our members – i.e. the types of mailings, the content, stories, impact data, how often, and in what format – and we would really like your feedback. It is encouraging to know that there is a movement of 300 supporters and 200 youth workers praying for our work and for young people on the margins.

What do you need to help you in this task of prayer? Answers via email to info@fyt.org.uk

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