

**Methodist Recorder article by Ben Andrews, Youth Rep to the British Youth Council**

For me this is my first year of being a 3Generate Youth Representative and so far it has been more than what I had expected. My role is as one of the BYC (British Youth Council) Reps and within this I have had a few opportunities to explore what it is like to be part of the British Youth Council, which is a charity that works to “empower young people” and to get the voice of the youth heard from across the country. My first experience was a trip down to London for one of the members meetings, during the weekend that this meeting happened I found out a lot more about this organisation than I had previously known. As well as meeting some new people and getting to hear about what other communities are doing, we ended up discussing issues ranging from ways to tackle the climate crisis, employment rates for young people (as well as the availability of apprenticeship/internship opportunities), and the support that schools give to their students. Since then my role as a BYC rep has now moved on to online meetings in light of recent events and restrictions throughout the country, however, it is still a great way to engage with others and to hear their views on everything that is going on.

Even though it was only last year that I joined the Youth Reps, the impact it has had on me is really quite positive. Not only through what I have been doing as BYC Rep, but working with the other Reps as a whole has given me such a positive experience. From the very first residential weekend with the other Youth Reps I felt a part of everything going on. As someone who can often struggle when spending long amounts of time with new people, everyone was so welcoming and I just felt so encouraged to be myself. After that first weekend I got to see just how much thought goes into being able to get the voice of the youth in the church heard, which in itself is something I have wanted to be a part of. Something that I have wanted to be able to do or even help with is getting the voice of younger people heard, because I remember what it was like to have thoughts and new ideas of things to do in church and not feel like what I have said is really being listened to. From the first weekend I was eager to get going with things that we had spoken about and then to continue spending time with the Reps. Since then I feel like, as a person, I have become a lot more confident, getting involved in things that, a few years ago, I would never have even considered saying yes to. Some of these include recording a video ‘thought for a day’ and taking part in talking on an Instagram Livestream with the Youth President and with other Youth Reps.

During the last year or so I have also become aware of how the 3Generate Reps are using social media to engage with young people and, since starting as a Rep, I

have partaken in things such as the #PrayerJourney. This was where we, as Youth Reps, spoke about different ways that we each individually spend time with God in prayer. These ranged from sitting in a quiet place and just spending time with God, to going out on walks with nature or sitting and listening to worship music. When it was my time to post about my #PrayerJourney I originally found it quite thought-provoking as I never usually sit and think about how to talk about the ways I have been engaging with God, but doing so allowed me to open up even more within myself.

So, not only have I felt like I have grown as a person because of this role, I have noticed a lot more within my faith now I have had to think about things. Personally one of the biggest changes in my faith that I have seen is through plans for 2020, and the "2020 Vision", making me think about what that actually looks like for me. However, I have since become aware that things don't always go to plan and, because of this, I have learnt to trust in God more, and know that even if times are feeling odd for me He is there.