



The Methodist Church

Children, Youth and Family

Methodist Recorder article by James Carver, Social Justice Rep

Hi, I'm James Carver and I have been asked to tell you about myself and the time I have spent as the Methodist Youth Representative for Social Justice. I come from the Nottingham & Derby District, specifically Clifton in Nottingham, which was once the largest council estate in Europe and where most of the inhabitants are on a low income. When I am not at church, I am studying for a BA (Bachelor of Art) in Criminology at Nottingham Trent University.

My path with God has been a bit up and down. Although I attended the same Methodist church for approximately 10 years, as an early teenager I experienced a conflict in my beliefs when I started being taught science at school. All of a sudden some miracles in the Bible had some scientific explanations and, because of this, I stopped attending church except for Easter and Christmas services. When I was 16 I determined that it is perfectly possible to believe in both God and science as they work hand-in-hand (for example, although I believe the big bang created the earth, I believe God started the process that caused the event). After this, I re-engaged in church life to the full – I was confirmed, became a member of the Church/Circuit/District Synod and volunteered at the Methodist Conference in Nottingham and also at Cliff Festival this year. In addition I am training as a Worship Leader, serve as a member of the district Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee and, most importantly, attend 3Generate.

I applied to be the first ever 3Generate Social Justice Representative, starting in 2018/19, because it linked to my previous roles in EDI groups and in unions inside and outside of the Church, which means I can use this background knowledge to assist in developing the role for the future. A world with social justice is a world where all are treated equally regardless of a person's age, gender, income, ability to get about, religious belief, or sexual orientation (to name but a few).

Since taking on the role, I have worked with All We Can (the Methodist relief and development charity), the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) and the Children, Youth and Family Team's Agents of Change programme, exploring issues such as homelessness and discussing how young people can get involved in social justice specifically by contacting a local Member of Parliament. A highlight of my time as a Youth Rep so far has been attending the Methodist EDI Symposium on the outskirts of Oxford, where racial justice was discussed.

The Youth Rep team is vastly diverse, with views on the Methodist Church from across the Connexion, including (but not limited to) Birmingham, Cumbria, Northampton, Wales and Southampton districts. When we meet at Cliff College it is as though we have been friends all our lives and we support each other.

It is massively important for the voices of children and young people in the Methodist Church to be heard because they will be carrying on the torch of our Church in the future and it is intriguing to listen to their ideas on how to solve the problems in the denomination and around the world. For this reason, don't leave children and young people out of conversations about your church and ask as you would ask anyone else. It might just surprise you.

At the time I wrote this, it is a week before Methodist Conference. Please look at the report and manifesto from 3Generate 2018, which can be found here: www.methodist.org.uk/3GenManifestos

Although I have been travelling up and down the country visiting other districts, I have not forgotten my roots and have been attending the Nottingham & Derby District youth gatherings.

If you have not already done so, sign up to be a volunteer at 3Generate or get tickets for the children and young people in your districts to come along. It is an opportunity for them to meet others in the Methodist Church, which is especially important if they are the only children or youth in their church.

My final words are these, everyone can be a supporter of social justice, it just takes three little things: mercy, justice and faith.