

IN touch

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IN touch is available as a pdf file online at www.kernowyouth.co.uk and at The Cornwall Methodist District website. This newsletter is produced by the Cornwall Methodist Youth Enabler, Andrew Nicholson. To get IN touch email andrewnicholson@resource24.net IF YOU ARE A YOUTH LEADER, PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO YOUR YOUNG PEOPLE!

Cornwall Methodist District Youth Newsletter

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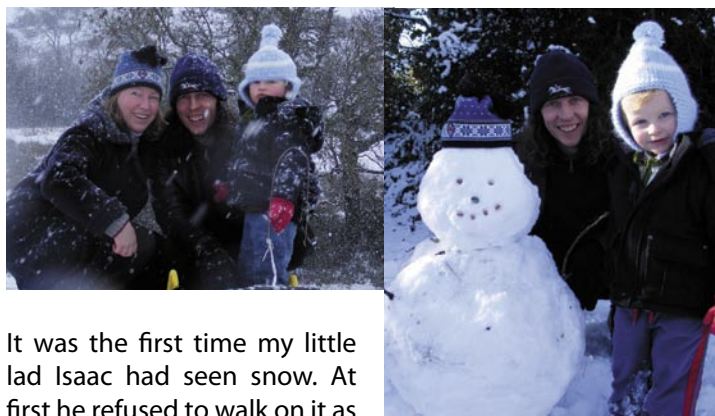
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SNOW BUSINESS! - THE POWER OF TRANSFORMATION

Food for Thought, from Andrew Nicholson, the CMD Youth Enabler

What has been the highlight for you so far this year? Well, one of mine was definitely actually getting a decent amount of snow! I love the way that snow seems to change everything, the environment, and people. People who would normally hurry about their business stop and talk to people in their street. For a fleeting day or two, our towns and villages actually feel like real communities.



It was the first time my little lad Isaac had seen snow. At first he refused to walk on it as he heard our footsteps crunch on the surface. After gaining his confidence though, he was enjoying playing in it almost as much as me! There was one particular moment when we had gone sledging that it started snowing again, really heavily. I was looking up into a seemingly infinite ocean of snow flakes tumbling to the ground. As I tried to spot individual ones and follow them down out of the sky (and catch them on my tongue with varying degrees of success!), I was reminded of the scientific fact that no two snow flakes are identical – every single one that falls is unique. How incredible is that! Why would such a thing ever happen by chance? Why is there not just one type? It reminded me

that God has an incredible attention to detail in His created world. This also reminded me, that every single person in the entire world is as unique as each of those snow flakes. Psalm 139 talks about how God knows our every intricate detail, concluding as the Street Bible puts it, with the phrase "God, I'm amazing! The credit's down to you!" I wonder how many people in our communities need to hear that news today. Perhaps you can be one of those who can share that message with someone who needs to hear that God thinks they are an amazing creation.



It's incredible how snow transforms everything around us. We rediscover the wonder in what was seemingly ordinary just the day before. As I woke up and looked out of my window on that Tuesday morning, I was absolutely awestruck with the beauty of what I could see out of my window.

It's good to be reminded of this, as The Bible is basically a history of how God transforms situations and people's lives. Look at someone like Paul. It makes me laugh when people think they are too bad to become a Christian. Take a look at this guy! (Read Acts 26, 9-23 to hear his testimony when he himself is later on trial). This man was trying to eliminate every single Christian in the early church! He threw them into prison, and voted for them to be sentenced to death. In Acts 26: 11 Paul says "I often went round the synagogues inflicting penalties, trying in this way to force them to renounce their faith; my fury against them was so extreme that I even pursued

them into foreign cities". Basically, this guy was a total psycho! And yet through meeting Jesus Christ his entire life was totally transformed, to the point where he became the most celebrated apostle of the early church, spreading Christianity to completely new parts of the world; transforming whole communities with the Good News of the gospel, even ending up in prison himself for the sake of it.

How though, does God actually make such a transformation possible? When snow melts, everything around us goes back to how it was. In fact the things in themselves hadn't really changed; it was just their appearance that had changed. Well, God talks about a much deeper and more permanent transformation, but he needs our hearts to melt in order for that to happen. In Ezekiel 36, v26, the LORD says "I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead". What is being talked about here, is the heart being transformed with God's love and compassion for His people. It's easy to not let stuff affect us, to put up barriers, and be hard hearted. But God wants us to take a risk, to let those barriers down, and to be made vulnerable. We find this incredibly hard on our own, so that is why God sent His Holy Spirit to live within us, and help us. This is not an instant process, it takes our whole life time – we are a work in progress! But that's where God wants to start with us.. He accepts us as we are (even if we are complete psychos like Paul was), but he doesn't want to just leave us at that point. He desires a relationship with us that will gradually begin to transform us from the inside out. Everybody who was called to serve God in the Bible was called on a journey of transformation.

Christianity will only begin to transform our communities, if Christ first begins to transform you!

PIT STOP

A brand new District event – "Pit Stop" - will be taking place on Good Friday at Gwennap Pit. The idea is to connect people to the events of the Easter story through a series of interactive stations, that will show, that the happenings of 2,000 years ago are every bit as relevant now as they were then. People will get the chance to read about the story, reflect upon it, and then respond to it in various stimulating ways.



You begin at the top of the Pit with the events of Palm Sunday (complete with a real life donkey!), and as you descend into the Pit, there will be a different part of the Easter story on each level, with a total of 12 stations altogether. Hopefully this will be a great opportunity to experience the events of Easter in a completely new way, and really bring the story to life.

Everyone is welcome to try this, but I would particularly want to encourage families and youth groups to come and share this experience together. Everyone is free to go round at their own pace (I would anticipate it taking approx. 1 hour to complete, maybe less), and it will be open between 1pm and 5.30 pm.

Please note. This event will take place, weather permitting. If there is heavy rain, this event will be postponed to a later date.

LIVING ON A PRAYER - 40 DAYS OF PRAYER, SUMMER 2009 - Take action!

This idea was inspired by Share Jesus International (SJI), who are in the process of renovating the Leswidden Retreat Centre, near St. Just. Basically, SJI are looking to provide Leswidden as a resource for different groups to use their facility for a variety of different prayer events. At our last District Youth Executive meeting, it was suggested that we could adopt the idea of 40 Days of Prayer for our whole District. This seemed especially appropriate as our theme for the year from Youth Synod in November was "Living on a Prayer". A few years ago it was young people who inspired the Prayer without Ceasing initiative, but as a colleague said to me recently – "The only problem is, some people have stopped!"

So here is the big idea for this summer. Between 21st June and 31st July, how about as many youth groups from as many churches as possible, organise your own prayer event, or prayer day (or days!), so we can listen to what God is saying to this generation of people in Cornwall.. Maybe, you can inspire your whole church to take up this theme, and they can work with you at putting on a programme of events in your Church or Circuit. Get as many people on board as possible. But let's make it something that is accessible, There are as many ways to pray as you can think of. Let's be imaginative and creative. What about trying something that your community could come in and use? You don't have to just sit round in a circle, and each take turns at saying something (but of course, you can try that if you want!). What about Prayer stations, Graffiti walls (you could have one for the full 40 Days), Prayer walks, meditations, A prayer Box for your community to use, or provide a mobile number for prayer text requests, a prayer tree, etc etc. !. I am in the process of taking the interactive Youth For Christ Labyrinth to different places in the District. Why not use that for a day? (please email andrewnicholson@resource24.net if you are interested) Or how about getting your group together to take a trip to Leswidden for the day? It's a fabulous location near the sea, and a great place to just be still before God, as well as having a good time together (email Alistair leswidden@emergingculture.co.uk).

One approach I am very keen to try to use to engage with people with prayer from outside the church is setting up a Beach version of the Labyrinth. I tried this with a group of friends last August on a rather damp evening, and we created a lot of interest from complete strangers as we dug out a labyrinth in the sand. The idea was to let go of the rubbish in your life and to lay it down at the centre by a large driftwood cross. I'm really keen to put together a team who would be willing to help dig these, supervise them, and just be available to chat and pray with people. If this sounds like you, then get in touch! If your chapel or youth group would be interested in helping out with this at a particular beach, then that would be great. Please let me know.

It would be great if you could discuss this in your youth groups, and in your churches, and let me know what you are doing, so we can put together a programme of activities. I'm very keen to use the iprayer website that was set up by Truro Methodist Youth Group member Jack Baines. So why not also register on that website (check out joinprayer.ning.com), or email Truro Youth Worker and site administrator Steph Trebilcock (stephtrebilcock@hotmail.com) and let them know what you are doing as well.

To launch 40 Days of Prayer, how about as many youth groups as possible use iprayer, on the weekend of 20/21st June? See what young people are praying for in Cornwall, and get your group to post it's own prayer requests. And keep using it regularly for those 40 Days (and beyond!), keep encouraging each other. This is what we need to do, to build each other up in faith. Let's be serious in setting up a wide reaching online prayer community for the young people of Cornwall. Use a Sunday in your Youth Group, or what ever day you meet on, to post your Prayer requests, and Pray for other people's needs in Cornwall.

I believe that people, and even communities can be transformed by prayer. This will only work though if you actively get involved with it. Let's make this something really BIG this summer, something that will make the rest of the church sit up and take notice of what young people can do with God's help. Then it won't be just the rest of the church that sits up and takes notice, it will be whole communities!

SUMMARY - GET INVOLVED!

- 40 Days of prayer – 21st June-31st July
- What can your group do to contribute?
- Let me know, and post on iprayer
- Use iprayer with your youth group to pray, and post prayer requests

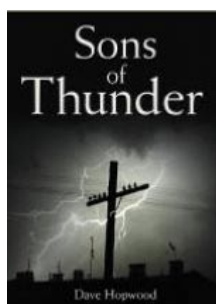
BOOK REVIEW

SONS OF THUNDER

By Dave Hopwood

Have you ever wondered what it would be like if Jesus turned up, living alongside people in Cornwall in the early 21st Century? If so, this brilliant re-telling of the gospel story – "Sons of Thunder" is definitely for you. Written by Dave Hopwood, Creative Arts Director of the Lee Abbey Community; he has also been responsible for a number of other titles, including "The Bloke's Bible". Now I'm not a compulsive reader, far from it! It normally takes me several weeks to get through a book, but I genuinely found it difficult to put Sons of Thunder down. The beauty of this book, is that it totally challenges your pre-conceptions as to what sort of people that Jesus actually hung out with, and is probably a lot more authentic as a result.

The narrative is written through the eyes of Tom, a real drop out, failed student, and generally poor excuse for a human being. He struggles with alcohol, and with an addiction to porn, but he finds that his life gradually transforms when he starts hooking up with Josh and a few other guys from the local pub, and surf scene. They are a ram shackle lot, and things do not go smoothly, hardly at any point, and yet they all gravitate towards Josh, who begins to create some serious attention as he builds an action plan for change. It very cleverly puts the significant events of Jesus' life and ministry into today's context, in a way which seems genuinely plausible, but in a very subtle and effective way. In some ways, it gives you completely new perspectives on what you thought were familiar stories. In fact, you can read this without the slightest bit of knowledge of the Bible, and find this an absorbing, gripping novel. Ultimately, you realise that Jesus really did come to Earth for the likes of you and me, not for the elite and privileged, but the lost and the confused.



My advice – get it! An absolute must; for people who think they know the story of Jesus quite well, and for people who have never heard it. Potentially, a great outreach tool, especially for teenage lads and young men in particular.

Priced at £8.99, and published by Authentic Media. Order from local Christian Bookshops, or online from Authentic Media

What do Methodist Youth Workers do for young people in Cornwall?

One of the functions of my job is to provide a regular set of statistics for Youth Cornwall (formerly the County Youth Service), as to what the Methodist Church in Cornwall is providing for youth. We have 5 Circuits in the District for which Youth Cornwall would describe as "Targeted Youth Work". This basically refers to those areas that have employed Youth Workers working for the Methodist Church. These Youth Workers then help to provide me with the statistics and evidence that I then supply to Youth Cornwall. Where there are measurable outcomes from this Youth Work, Youth Cornwall can then add these outcomes to their target figures that they need to reach and provide for the government, so they can successfully access funding. What's in this for us? Well, Youth Cornwall is a significant contributor to my position as Cornwall Methodist Youth Enabler. So if we can show that our good practice is resulting in a successful provision for our young people, then we are getting acknowledged for the significant contribution the Church makes to the provision for Young People across Cornwall.

I thought it might be useful for other Circuits to see what the benefits of employing a Youth Worker might be, and what kind of work they are supporting. I have simplified this data from the actual tables I supply to Youth Cornwall, but hopefully this will still give a clear indication as to what is going on, and the great contribution that Youth Workers are making.

Summary Of Youth Work And Outcomes

St Austell Circuit - Youth Worker Hilary Balsdon is working regularly with 46 young people aged 11 -19
Of these:

- 5 young people have had informal training to help assist leadership of younger teen groups.
- 2 young people on Local Preachers Training course
- 25 young people involved in Easter musical
- Young people put together a Circuit Youth newsletter
- SONSET Youth Group regularly leads services around the Circuit
- Hilary is studying for a Diploma in Youth Mission and Ministry

Truro Circuit - Youth Worker Steph Trebilcock is regularly in contact with 128 young people aged 11-19 (including all circuit youth activities) Of these:

- 4 are working towards Cornwall Music Award
- 16 are working towards Volunteering Award accredited by Cornwall Youth Service
- 11 Young people were involved in fund raising for new Revolution Youth Café (opened November)
- 11 young people obtained Barista Coffee making qualification to work in the café
- A group from the Circuit went to Soul Survivor
- 4 Members have been on Our Money, Your Dreams panel
- 6 Young people are involved in Youth Synod
- 6 are involved in 2 different worship bands (Truro, Tresillian)
- 10 are involved in Speaking In Drums - a community Drumming and Percussion collective

- 340 attended a concert by The Gentlemen
- 200 attended a concert by 29th Chapter
- New after school drop in at Tresillian started - "The Chill Out", (first Friday of the month)
- Plans for Youth Café in Penpol
- In addition, Steph co-ordinates a school's team for the secondary schools in Truro (taking assemblies, lessons, Christian Unions),

Launceston Circuit - Youth Workers Tim Aldridge and Sam Beazley are regularly in contact with 55 young people

- Both are significantly involved in the local Secondary school/college - mentoring of students; Tim takes an Arts Award course, and Sam also helps in GCSE P.E. curriculum.
- 20 young people have recently made Christian Commitments
- 3 of those young people's behaviour has radically altered as a result
- A varied programme of Youth Work takes place under the branding "Powerhouse"
- Plans to create a state of the art new youth facility in Launceston

Camborne Circuit - Youth Worker Graham Adamson is in regular contact with 43 young people aged 11-19 Of these:

- 9 young people took part on CPAS Growing Leaders Youth Edition course (Core skills)
- A group recently joined with the Fusion group on Scilly to spend New Year together
- 1 Youth Club member has become a helper, and organised all the catering for Youth Group trip to Scilly
- 11 young people involved in setting up a Circuit Youth Forum, to give young people better representation and more of a voice in the church.
- The Event is a monthly Youth worship event, run in association with other denominations in the area
- Graham is currently training to be a local preacher

Perranporth/St Agnes Active8 Project (*Active8 is an ecumenical project, of which the Methodist Church is a significant stake holder*)

Youth Workers Claire Newby and Tim Hibbins are in regular contact with 45 young people aged 11-19 Of these:

- 8 Young People are currently studying for the Cornwall Music Award
- 1 young person returned to education having left school at 14 with no qualifications; now at Truro College studying qualification in Child Care
- A new skate project is being set up in St Agnes
- A group went to Soul Survivor
- Claire and Tim are both involved in a mentoring programme
- Several young people are involved with the youth band
- A Drama Group has been formed and a production in Perranporth is planned for Easter.
- Last year Claire became JNC qualified, and is currently studying final year of MA in Youth and Community, and Applied Theology through Centre for Youth Ministry
- Active8 offers a wide range of different youth provision (also including Youth Club, Cell Church, gender specific issues groups), and is the principal provider of youth services in these 2 communities.

County wide - Youth Synod - This is run by Andrew Nicholson, Cornwall Youth Enabler. Youth Synod currently comprises of 24 young people aged 13-19

- These young people represent their Churches and Circuits, being a voice on behalf of their peers, and then reporting back to their youth groups/ churches.
- Many are now more actively involved in the life of their churches, including leading services, and sharing new initiatives..
- At our annual Youth Synod conference, a weekend brings both

Methodist and Anglican Youth Synod together, and is run as a joint venture.

- 9 members of Youth Synod are elected by that group to be on the Youth Executive which discusses important youth issues, helps to shape youth policy for the young people in the Methodist Church across Cornwall, and plans Youth Synod weekend (together with the Truro Dioceses Youth Planning Group) and other Youth Synod events.
- The target is for 30 representatives for November 2009.

Circuit Youth Forums (CYF's) - Currently, two have been set up – one in the Helston Circuit (14 members) and one in the Camborne Circuit (11 members, see above)

- The idea is that each CYF has representatives from the different Methodist youth Groups in that Circuit. They work together on sharing good practice, forming new initiatives, and having a recognised input in the life of the church
- In Helston, .3 of these members did a presentation to the Circuit Meeting which then formally adopted the CYF as an official Circuit activity
- 4 members are now youth representatives on the Circuit Youth and Children's Committee
- The target is to increase the number of Circuits that have CYF's, to at least 4 in 2009.

Even though these figures relate to only the 5 Circuits where there are employed Youth Workers, plus Youth Synod, and Circuit Youth Forums, these projects alone are still engaging with over 350 young people aged 11-19.

I would very much like to build a more accurate picture as to some of the specific work that is being led by volunteers in different chapels too. Some of these I know about, but others I do not. If you haven't spoken to me about it, I probably don't know about it! I do endeavour to provide advice and support to different youth groups and projects, where I can, but I can only do that effectively if I know that your work exists! So if you've got something going on, I would love to know about it.

Dates for your Diary

Good Friday – (Friday 10th April) **Pit Stop**, Gwennap Pit

April 13th – 19th – **Pilgrimage to Taizé**

STOP PRESS!

Taizé

If there is anyone who is still interested in being part of the trip to Taizé this Easter, from Easter Monday to the following Sunday, there are places still available, but be quick if you are interested. Contact me on 01872 520295, or email andrewnicholson@resource24.net for more details.

April 25th - **Youth Synod Refuelled Event**, Methodist Spring Synod, St. Agnes Methodist Church

June 21st – 31st July – **40 Days of Prayer**. Contact Andrew Nicholson to register your event.

July 25th – 31st – **Cornwall Christian Youth Camp** at Bodmin College. Email Phil Hadley for more details philhad_uk@yahoo.co.uk

August – **Soul Survivor**. Several groups are hoping to go from Cornwall. If your group is interested in going, please let me know and I can put you in contact with other groups from Cornwall, so you can sort out transport together.