



Being a Young Christian post-Christendom

Earlier this year *The Baptist Times* shared perspectives of three young Christians about being young Christians. The authors hope to encourage

older generations in our churches to understand the challenges and embrace the opportunities of welcoming young adults into community.

We've reproduced shortened versions of the articles here, with links to the full versions online.

'We long to be listened to, equipped and advocated for'

By Amanda Higgin

The thing that surprised me most about the Census results was not the results themselves (less than half the population of the United Kingdom identified as Christian – 46.2 per cent, down from 59.3 per cent of respondents in the 2011 census), but how people reacted. My experience of being Christian is being a minority in a secular world, but in the wake of the results I read expressions of concern and shock, declarations of persecution, resolutions to change, a call to arms. Some people seemed to fear that the sky was falling down. I was surprised that the percentage was as high as 46.2 per cent.

I am 25 years old, which makes me an elder GenZ, and the youngest student currently training for ordained ministry at

Regent's Park College. Because I've been on the discernment track for a while, my faith has always come up quite quickly in conversation. I am not sure I have ever had somebody respond "Oh, I'm a Christian too!". Usually, people respond with benign confusion: "Huh, why did you choose that?", "What does that actually mean?"

In the face of disinterest, confusion and hostility, young Christians have to choose to follow Jesus counterculturally. Knowing that we are not encouraged in our beliefs by the society that we keep, how much more important does the church community become? Our Christian families offer a beautiful place to recharge.

But it is particularly painful if we are marginalised. It might take a bit more effort, but know that we long to be listened to, equipped and advocated for. We are desperate to be resourced and supported in our faith by our church families, because our secular, post-Christendom lives are doing the opposite.

Amanda Higgin is 25 years old and currently training for ministry at Regent's Park College, Oxford
Access the longer piece here:



We need to talk about housing

By Nathan McGuire

In thinking about the decline of young adult engagement in Baptist churches, I wonder if 18–35 year olds feel safe to contribute significantly to the Baptist movement. Or are Baptist communities cultivating disenfranchisement?

I often think of the dynamic between King Saul and the future heir apparent, David, in 1 Samuel 16. The relational dynamic was a toxic one. It is no wonder, then, that David had to expend energy to avoid the king's wrath to survive. Today, young adults are not playing the harp to avoid physical spears, but certainly must avoid **spears of indifference** if they wish to belong to the Christian community.

Paul and Timothy, however, present us with a different model: a non-toxic one. Paul invested in Timothy because he valued what God was doing in his life. He saw the gift and took

the risk to equip Timothy so that he could significantly contribute to God's work.

What might this mean practically?

One of the major issues facing young adults is housing. In my context of Southwest London, the average housing price is £840,000 and the average rent for a one-bedroom house-share is £600. Young adults can barely afford the rent, never mind purchasing.

If we are serious about young adults being at the centre of the Baptist movement, we need to talk about housing, especially in urban contexts.

Where is the vision for missional houses / New Monastic communities? Over the last 10 years, there has been a steady increase in Community Housing Cooperatives which are developed by a group of

individuals committed to a local area. They purchase a house (often in disrepair), building, or plot of land and restore and/or develop it together.

While on the surface this is motivated by the need for affordable housing, something more dramatic is going on. Individuals are expressing a commitment to a local area, investing time and energy to see it prosper and flourish equitably among its stakeholders.

What an amazing opportunity for the Baptist movement to add salt to this.

Nathan McGuire is 31 years old and is serving as Associate Minister at Streatham Baptist Church. He blogs at thegodlyirritant.com
Access the longer piece here:



Video games and mission

By Alice Cheeseman

As a certified nerd and habitual gamer, I am always pleasantly surprised to see the interest the world has over video games.

Each year the fascination grows at a rapid pace. It could possibly be due to the chance of escapism from the world, or the opportunity to belong to a community without having to leave the safety of a desk or couch, but the world is quickly paying attention. In 2022, the global video game industry was estimated to be worth \$196.8 billion. More interestingly, the most common age for those gaming in the UK?

16–24 years old.

If you compare the general growth of live-streaming platforms and the rise of video games to the statistics of church attendance, we find a challenging correlation.

During the Baptist Union Council (October 2022), the Young Adults Round Table (YART) noted that the Baptist Union is 'losing young adults from Baptist churches three times faster than older members.'

Video games and streaming platforms may contain the key to reaching a new corner of the world, and an age bracket that the Church has desperately been wishing to connect to.

For the Church has a message that the gaming world echoes - of justice and mercy, of compassion and sacrifice. And people in that space are the loneliest, most desperate for love, and for someone to tell them the good news.

The world is less and less reliant on the tangible - getting online to do 'mission' and fulfil the Great Commission is more pivotal than ever.

Alice Cheeseman is 25 years old, and a qualified youth worker
Access the longer piece here:



For more on young adults, including resources, stories and internships, visit baptist.org.uk/youngadults

