

CONNECT – MARCH 2020

Be Still

By Ali Laing, Next Generation Development Coordinator

Life can be incredibly busy and feels like it's going at 100mph. Sometimes we can all feel like we want to step off the merry go round and sit in a still place.

The truth is very few of us need to be convinced that there is real value in have times of stillness and solitude in our lives. Times to reflect with God about life, work and family.



The problem is that we find it very hard to actually do it. In between genuine family, work and life commitments and also perhaps a small amount of FOMO or, in my case, procrastination. We never seem to get these moments of stillness into life! We justify why and shrug our shoulders and keep going.

But the truth is we can all know stillness and solitude if we are willing to sacrifice a little.

We can all find a couple of days a year if we put it in the diary and accept the challenges it has on life, work and family. It will always seem to come at the wrong time and the temptation to cancel will be strong. But I've yet to have a retreat that I've regretted!

We can also all find smaller times of stillness and retreat in the day in and day out of life. 15 minutes of stillness away from our phones and TVs, a walk in the evening or early morning. Perhaps an evening without binge watching something and just having a bit of time. The opportunities are endless for periods of stillness.

But why? Why do we need more stillness? Science tells us it's good for physical, emotional and mental health. The life of Jesus shows that it is good to spend still, quiet time alone praying with our Father.

As someone who works with younger people, I am growing increasingly aware that one of the most potentially potent forms of mission we can engage with is to create spaces of stillness for young people. Away from phones, games and social media stresses. A glimpse of a relevant form of monasticism if you will!



What could God do in your life if you had a 48 hour retreat of stillness and reflection with Him?

Scripture tells us, "Be still and know that I am God".

Psalm 84 tells us that better is one day in His courts (presence) than thousands elsewhere.

Perhaps Scottish contemporary culture is giving us a Macedonian cry to help them discover stillness and in so doing they may just encounter the life transforming presence of Jesus.

Message Bus – Sharing Jesus with young people in East Kilbride

By David Graham, Children & Youth Pastor, East Mains Baptist Church

On 26th October 2019 we welcomed the Message Bus to East Mains Baptist Church, East Kilbride as we reached out to our young people in the local community for six consecutive Saturday evenings. We were so encouraged as we averaged just under 45 young people over the weeks. It was great to see them using the bus, which has a climbing wall, nail bars, games consoles, iPads etc., and engaging with our leaders. We shared Jesus with the young people every week as we spoke to them from the 'try praying' booklets and many booklets were taken by the young people and some great conversations were shared.



It was important to engage the wider Church in this outreach and it was a superb collective effort with folks coming down to make toasties, serve hot chocolate and steward. We also had a prayer space so that the young people were being prayed for throughout the evening.

As the Message Bus left us on the 30th November 2019, we launched into youth Alpha and praise the Lord for the 35 young people who have been journeying with us since then. Just over a third of the young people have no church connection and are now engaged in our Saturday night youth club, 'The Hub'. We thank the Lord for the incredible work that he is doing and as we move forward, we look to Him to lead and guide and pray that the Holy Spirit will draw young people to a life-long commitment with Jesus.

The things that have inspired me most about our journey so far is the willingness of our young people to invite their friends and be witnesses to them and the importance of a collective church effort in the community. Moving forward, my prayer is that as we take seriously the discipleship of our young people, we will see their impact for the Kingdom reaching their generation.

Stories of Transformation

We have started a new series in Connect to highlight stories of transformation in the lives of people from within our churches who have come to a saving faith in Jesus and have publically acknowledged this through baptism.

This month, Daniel Guyan from Perth Baptist Church has given us permission to share his story of coming to faith and being baptised.

“My life was filled with drugs, alcohol, anxiety, depression and suicidal tendencies. I found it hard fitting in with the people around me and felt like I was missing something, having an emptiness inside. The day I tried to take my life was the day our Lord spoke to me, I heard this voice inside saying things would change and become better.

Since I’ve received salvation through faith in Christ, my journey has been a graceful walk helped by our community Pastor Gordy with study of the Bible and an understanding of what it means to be baptised. I

BAPTISM

can’t express the words of feelings for my baptism except, beautiful! I am now finding my place in this world with Jesus in my heart and soul, no longer am I weighed down by anxiety and depression with feelings of taking my own life - the complete opposite in-fact - those poisons of the mind have gone, replaced with a calmness of the mind and wanting to learn more about our God.

Learning to let Him take the driver’s seat of my life to where he desires me to be and learn, while still handing out wonderful little miracles here and there throughout tough times. I am now not just learning more about our Lord but learning more about myself as well, filled with a new love for life and still continuing my bible studies with Gordy. God didn’t just bring this saint of a man into my life, He’s pointed me to Christ who has given me new hope and faith.”

Invest Trainee – Sam Donaghey

Our Invest Trainees have been with us for a few months now, so we caught up with Sam Donaghey to find out more about what he has been doing and how he is finding the training year.



Since September 2019 I have been working with Ali Laing, with the official title of Young Leader Development Assistant (YLDA for short; which, said aloud, sounds like a lightbulb); this is as part of the Invest Trainee year that BUS facilitates. There are three elements to my year working with Ali: dreaming and scheming about how we can resource and raise up passionate young disciples of Jesus within our local churches that lead within their current context, and into the future; creating those resources or indeed running a gathering or event that will inspire and equip young people and students to follow Jesus; and, being a part of the leadership of Training Hub and participating in the course itself.

Since September I've been thinking about what a podcast that speaks specifically into a Scottish context about the issues that young Christians are facing could be. That has been one of the main projects that I have been researching and preparing, and we are hopefully going to be launching that in late March/early April.

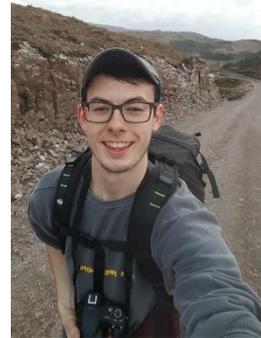
Earlier in the article I mentioned Training Hub, and some of you reading this article might not be familiar with what that is: essentially, it is a year-long course that allows space to discover and explore more deeply who God is, who we are in the light of that, and what we might be called by Him to do. This year is a combination of: residential weekends; day-long conferences; monthly gatherings in smaller, regional groups; and, assignments that help us reflect what God might be saying to us through our learning on Training Hub.

One of the main learning points for me is that I am actually at a more advanced stage of maturity in many areas than I thought I was, and I type those words without any sense of arrogance, but rather a realisation that God has built up in me a maturity of which I need to recognise and exercise. Before, I had been deferring to others to help find solutions to issues, or still feeling as if my maturity level in every area of my life is that of 16 year old. Now, I am starting to recognise the maturing that God has done (and is definitely continuing to do) and how that shapes my life just now.

Learners of all ages at SBC

At the Scottish Baptist College (SBC) we value the diversity of our community as each year mixes together learners of all ages. The inter-generationality helps create classrooms where older learners bring wisdom and younger learners bring new perspectives – and vice versa! Moreover, the spread of generations helps us to be a community where everyone can find their place whatever their age or stage. The experiences of two of our students – Mark Whitelaw and Nicola Sutherland – will shed light on the generations at SBC. Mark, can you tell us a little about your background and why you are at SBC?

I grew up in Newton Mearns and then moved to East Kilbride a few years ago. I go to East Mains Baptist Church and I am involved in the youth ministry. I actually studied 3 years of Sports Coaching before coming to SBC. At the end of High School I began to feel a call to working with youth. I began to think instantly about youth and sport. So I went and studied sports for 3 years but as soon as the lecturer asked us to think about what we were passionate about for our dissertation, I realised that I wasn't passionate about sport. I was passionate about what I was involved in at church with the youth. So I prayed about it and spoke to a few trusted people and I made the switch to Theology. I hope to keep learning more and more and to just gain a deeper understanding of who God is and be able to put that learning into practice as I work with youth.



You've got a lot of energy and passion, particularly for young people – what are you ultimately hoping that you will do as you go through and complete your time at SBC?

I absolutely love youth! They are awesome! I hope to be a youth worker/pastor. I know this course is helping prepare me for this, as did the sports course (working with non-Christian youth). I always aim to be intentional with the youth that I work with and point them to Jesus constantly.

What's been your highlights of College life?

Lunches...just kidding (although they are great!) I have loved just learning more and being in a community of people who just love God and want to learn more too. I also love being able to go to the CU in the Uni, allowing me to chat to many non-Christian people who I wouldn't get the chance to chat to in my course. I love it here.



Nicola, tell us a little about your background – where did you grow up and what were you involved in before coming to SBC?

I grew up in Leith (Edinburgh), but I now live on the Isle of Bute. Before deciding to study at SBC I had a barber shop and I was (and still am) a full-time, single mother to two young children in primary school.

You've come to SBC after a while away from study, what led you to pursue ministry training and what do you ultimately hope to do post-College?

I came to SBC at 43. I did not finish school so I have no standard grades or Highers. When I worked as a barber I was happy, but incomplete. I had a real desire to work to strengthen God's kingdom and truly give Him all my life, so one day I just stopped working. Three months later and after lots of prayer with my pastor and my church, I went to an Open Day at the College with my pastor (I was not brave enough to go alone). Post-College I do not know yet, I am still trying to discern. I do know since making the decision to study, I feel complete and that I am on the right path.

What have been the challenges, frustrations, highlights, and light-bulb moments of training for ministry / at College?

The main challenge for me was learning to study as without completing school, I had never learned to study properly.

I am delighted when I pass each paper and I get excited at the start of each module and I feel each module is better than the last. My faith has grown as have I. My highlight is being part of the SBC family. Staff and fellow students, past and present, feel like family and the support network is like something I have never witnessed, let alone received.

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Our thanks go to Mark and Nicola – we love having you at SBC! If you're interested in being part of the SBC family and joining the learning community, why not come along to our Open Day on March 12th – or if you can't make it, then contact graham.meiklejohn@uws.ac.uk to arrange a time to visit.