

FCC CONNECTION

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The Fellowship of Churches of Christ

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Video Excerpts from Create Conference 2023

Create Conference

Above is a series of talks from Jeff Metzger, one of the keynote speakers during the Create Conference. Jeff was speaking about the importance of inviting the holy spirit to dwell within us daily.

- First Video: **Salvation is essential and is available** <https://youtu.be/ctN2ZQ-n4Cc>
- Second Video: **Invite the Holy Spirit to Dwell in You Daily** <https://youtu.be/6HcKTiCqSDE>

Like, follow and subscribe to our YouTube channel for materials and resources for your daily walk with Jesus Christ.

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Church in the Community Conference



The church around the world is growing faster than it has ever grown before. Christianity is the largest faith in the world, numbering more than 2.4 billion adherents. From China to Chile, Brazil to Botswana, Singapore to Sierra Leone, churches of many kinds are spreading the Christian message and helping with the development of nations.

There is one notable exception to this amazing pattern. Churches in the western world have struggled over the last 50 years to express their life and witness however, there are signs that a new church is now emerging. The United Kingdom consists of people from many nations, languages, worship styles and ways of witnessing. As an historic group of churches FCC is being renewed for witness as part of this new emerging church.

In recent years the Church has once again become a powerful charitable force for good; establishing thousands of food banks, housing projects, mental health groups etc. As FCC we recognise that there is much more that the church can and should contribute to our local community but there are questions about, what that "much more" should look like?

The recent Church in the Community Conference was a gathering of Church and Charity leaders that sought to address that question. The event was organised by Fellowship of Churches of Christ and held at Hollymoor Community Church on June 14th 2023. The Conference is now available to view on You Tube in three separate sessions here:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXmTbQ_oOwBnaKbhjiJ9sI-eeWyEOzxNC





Recently Ordained Ministers

Pastor Atsede Ghetacew

I received Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of my life in Dallas, Texas, at the Ethiopian Evangelical Baptist church. Since then, the Lord has shone in my heart and fully initiated me to follow and serve him. The church armed me with the word of God to be a disciple of Jesus Christ as I needed to get back to Italy; the church prayed and blessed me.



When I returned to Italy, I stayed in the city of Florence, giving me a wonderful chance to start serving God with a little group of fellow Christians—leading Bible studies and preaching the word of God, including winning souls for the Kingdom. In the middle of this, God blessed me in Florence, getting married to the servant of God, Pastor Muluneh, in 2003. Since then, I have been encouraging and supporting my husband in all church duties with a deep sense of humility, compassion, and empathy in Italy at Ebenezer church. I am continuing this support here in Sheffield Emmanuel church as a partner in the kingdom of GOD. As an ordained Pastor, I strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where individuals from all walks of life can find solace, guidance, and spiritual nourishment. I am passionate about fostering a sense of community, encouraging personal growth, and nurturing the faith of congregants.

Recently Ordained Ministers

Pastor Eyasu Sawora

I first heard of the Gospel of Jesus Christ at the age of 17 in a town called Wonji, in central Ethiopia. After having accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour I started fellowshipping in the local church called Emmanuel United Church (Wonji). Here I undertook the necessary teaching and mentorship which allowed me to mature spiritually and in knowledge. I later started serving in the church bible studies, prayer teams and evangelism network. This is where I got to experience my passion for ministry.



After observing my passion for the gospel, my submission to the leadership of the church, and also my calling the fruits of my ministry, the head office of Emmanuel United Church based in Addis Ababa ordained me as a Pastor. That was a pivotal point in my journey, where I fully recognised the faithful work the Lord had begun in my life in using me for his kingdom and glory.

After serving as a Pastor within the Church for some years, the Lord expanded my ministry and I started to travel to different regions of Ethiopia, proclaiming the Gospel and inviting people to give their lives to the Lord. Debrezeyit, Afar, Halaba, Dawro, Walayta, Jimma are some of the regions where I travelled to pastor in the churches. I was also passionate and committed in planting new churches in rural areas, giving teachings, and supporting small churches.

The Lord also gave me the opportunity to advance academically, and I completed my first degree in Theology in Debrezeyit. I later completed my master's in leadership in Addis Ababa.

In 2018 I got married and later moved from Ethiopia to join my wife in London and also continue my ministry. I am currently serving as a Senior Pastor in 'The Gate of Heaven Evangelical Church in London. To God be all the glory!

For Those Who Love History...



One of the good things about FCC is that our roots are long and deep in the UK. Some churches were started in the late 18th century – about 250 years ago. To a certain extent the development, decline and renewal of the churches reflects what has happened to the Christian community in the UK more widely. David Young has sent us a video with a YouTube link that describes what took place amongst a group of Churches of Christ in North Wales around 200 years ago.

It is clear that there was plenty of passion, commitment and involvement at that time. Sadly, nearly all of those churches have closed over the years, and that part of North Wales now represents a major missionary

challenge. It is the dream of FCC to engage in areas just like this to plant new churches and bring the gospel once more into the lives of ordinary men and women. We hope you enjoy the insight into the past in the video link below and view it as a challenge for the future. Reinhard Bonnke used to say, “Africa shall be saved.” Now we may say, “Europe shall be saved.” Interestingly Bonnke was trained at a Bible College in Wales and then went to Africa. Now some of those who were the fruit of his ministry are coming to the UK to continue his work.

You can watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/6ZcUKNkrV6M>

Our Intercultural Future

Harvey Kwiyani produces a fascinating newsletter on a regular basis. In his most recent communication, he makes the important point that while African Christians are passionate about evangelism and mission, their efforts to reach the indigenous population have not been as effective as their passion desires. The main reason is that they do not understand their context very well. In reality, European missions, in their early efforts to reach Africans with the gospel, suffered from the same problem. The gospel did not make much progress in Africa until African Christians helped missionaries to understand the many contexts in which they were working.

By the same token, while most indigenous Christians understand their context well or fairly well, somehow, the same passion for evangelism seems to have evaporated over the last 50 to 70 years. There are many reasons why this is so, and this is not the place to explore those reasons.

It would make sense to connect African passion with indigenous white knowledge of the cultural context. Because of the amazing cultural diversity of FCC, we have an amazing opportunity to do precisely that. Over the next year, we intend to explore how that mutual learning might develop.

In the same newsletter, Harvey includes a wonderful interview with Tim Keller of Redeemer Church and City to City based in New York. You may be aware that Tim passed away recently after a battle with cancer, but his writings and his insights remain with us. In the video below, Tim reflects on the changes in western culture in recent years and offers his thoughts about the communication of the gospel in this changing landscape.

Amongst his many reflections, Tim notes that one of the points of hope in the west is precisely the development of inter-cultural churches, mainly in our cities. In many ways this represents the future of Christianity in the west.

8 Non-Numerical Ways To Assess The Health of a Church

by Karl Vaters

*Geoff Knott produces a regular newsletter that features many useful articles on evangelism and mission. It's called **Word on the Streets**. The following item is taken from the most recent newsletter. From an article by **Karl Vaters**. Karl Vaters has been in pastoral ministry for over 40 years. He is the teaching pastor of Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, a small church in Orange County, California. His heart is to help pastors of small churches find the resources to lead well, and to capitalise on the unique advantages that come with pastoring a small church. He is the author of four books and produces resources for *Helping Small Churches Thrive*.*

Church 'success' is often about numbers - attendees, donations, etc. However, they are not the best way to measure church health and effectiveness, especially in smaller churches.

Here are 8 helpful ways (abridged) to assess the health and effectiveness of a church without using numbers:

1. Ask "What Should We Be Doing And How Well Are We Doing It?"

Jesus gave us the Great Commandment and Great Commission. That is the mission of every church. But the way one church is called to do that is going to be different than the way another church is called to do that. Every leader of every church needs to know how their church is fulfilling the Great Commandment and Great Commission within their context.

We must constantly assess the health and effectiveness of the congregation based on

the following questions: Are we a worshipping church? A loving church? An evangelistic church? A compassionate church? A discipling church?

2. Talk To The People In The Church

"How are we doing?" should be our constant attitude. We need to ask the questions and be open to honest answers.

3. Hear From People Outside The Church

There's a limit to what we can learn about the health and effectiveness of a church by talking amongst ourselves. We need an honest assessment of how our church looks from the outside looking in. When friends and neighbours visit, we need to provide a way for them to give their feedback.

4. Compare Your Demographics To The Neighbourhood's Demographics

Churches typically look like their neighbourhood in one of two ways:

First, unhealthy churches tend to look like their neighbourhood used to look – either when the church was founded, or during the last strong pastorate. They're freeze-dried in place, repeating patterns that no longer work. And they've lost the ability to speak to the people around them today.

Second, healthy churches look like the neighbourhood looks today – with a similar demographic blend of ages, ethnicities and so on. They haven't changed their core message or their values, but they've learned how to communicate them in a way their current neighbourhood can hear and understand.

5. Does Your Bulletin Have A Mix Of Inward-Focused And Outward-Focused Events?

Unhealthy churches are concerned with their own events and comfort – and the bulletin will reflect that. Healthy churches have a good blend of events to strengthen the current congregation (worship, discipleship, fellowship) and events that reach out (ministry teams, evangelism, compassion ministry).

6. Do You Dread Leadership Meetings Or Look Forward To Them?

In a healthy church, administrative meetings are short, effective and as infrequent as possible. When they meet those criteria, meetings that fix problems, cast vision, and build the team are not just enduring, they're exciting, energising, and even fun.

7. Do Conflicts Get Resolved, Or Do They Linger?

Healthy churches do not avoid conflict, they deal with conflict quickly, collaboratively, and effectively. The best way to do that is to spot the conflict either before it happens or as soon as it's noticed. The earlier you address a conflict the smaller it will be, and the easier it is to resolve. Sometimes, smaller issues fade away on their own if you don't give them any air to breathe. But when you know it won't disappear due to lack of interest, the sooner you address it, the better.

8. Listen To Conversations – Are They More About The Past Or The Future?

Unhealthy churches talk a lot about “going back” to the glory days – whether real or imagined. Healthy churches honour the past and build on it, but they have no desire to repeat it or live in it. We must never forget what God has done among us, but our focus should always be on what God is doing now and wants to do next.

FCC Connect Conference

Each year we hold a delegate conference that we call Connect. The purpose is to conduct some business (it's the FCC Annual General Meeting), to worship, to welcome new congregations into FCC and often to ordain ministers. We normally have some equipping elements to the event. Each church in FCC is entitled to send a number of delegates that reflect the size of the worshipping congregation.

Lawrence Kizito will be in touch with churches over the next few months to confirm the number of delegates that you are invited to send.

This year's Connect event will be held on Saturday 11th November 2023 at the Rhema Church near the centre of Birmingham. It is possible to walk to the venue from the railway station in the centre of Birmingham (15 minute's walk) or you can take a tram that gets you closer. The tram leaves from a stop outside of New Street station. Street parking is available and because the neighbourhood is mostly a commercial location, parking on a Saturday is straightforward. The address is Summit house 48 Smith Street, Birmingham B19 3EN.



REACHING ESTATES & CHURCH PLANTING

Council estates, whether located in the inner city or in the outer suburbs, represent some of the hardest to reach communities in the UK. There are many reasons why this is the case. The experience of some is that these "hard to reach" areas are remarkably open to the gospel, but the approach has to be culturally sensitive and appropriate.

Engage West Midlands recently held a day conference exploring how to reach such neighbourhoods. The main seminars were captured on video and are available for you to watch. There are 4 videos in the link below. None of them are short, but all are full of wisdom and insight.

The Videos are available here: <https://www.engageuk.org.uk/reaching-estates-23?>

Personal News

Some of you will be aware that Martin has been undergoing treatment for prostate cancer from late January to early June. That treatment has gone well. Unfortunately, he contracted pneumonia around 8 weeks ago which resulted in a hospital admission. Since then, he has struggled with breathlessness which meant another visit to hospital where he has been for the last week or so, undergoing tests, and waiting for a diagnosis. That has obviously impacted his ability to work although he has done his best to carry on with some tasks that have been within his capacity. Many folks have been praying for him and that is greatly appreciated.

Martin and Lynda Robinson

