

GO

Lives and
communities
transformed
through
encounter with
Jesus Christ

Oct 2025

 Interserve

THE GO GENERATION

Inspiring the changing
face of mission



Where mission begins

This summer I visited South Wales, where my wife and I first met at university. It was good to reminisce – to show our children where our story began, to revisit the best ice cream shops, and to stand again in the spot where I proposed. Although it made me feel rather old (I first arrived there almost 22 years ago), it also reminded me how formative those years were in my faith and my mission journey.

From serving in the Christian Union and organising Missions Weeks, to handing out tea and toast to weary revellers returning to halls after a night out, those experiences shaped me. I remain grateful for all who invested in me at that stage, helping me grow and discover what it meant to live out faith in practical ways.

Here at Interserve, we want to keep encouraging and equipping the next generation of students and young people as they step into mission – whether that's on campus, in their local community, or overseas. This edition of GO highlights some of the ways God is at work through young people today, and how young and old can play a part in cheering them on, praying, and learning from this courage and creativity.

Phil Lewis

National Director
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& Ireland



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The times they are *a-changin'*

IS A CORPORATE DOSE OF AMNESIA JUST WHAT THE UK CHURCH NEEDS? SERENA McCARTHY, INTERSERVE'S COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, ENCOURAGES US TO EMBRACE THE NEW REALITY OF MISSION

Recently, I watched the film Yesterday. It's a funny tale about a struggling musician who wakes up after a car accident, to a world where no-one has heard of The Beatles. Once he has realised this new paradigm, he capitalises on the prolific skill of Lennon and McCartney. He becomes a sensational musician overnight, with hits such as Hey Dude! and an ode to Strawberry Fields from a man who has never visited Liverpool. What has this got to do with the growth of young adult ministry across Interserve and the Church in general? Well, I think we, the Church,





need a collective bout of amnesia to forget the paradigm of the British Church in freefall and inevitable decline. We must welcome the refreshing news that young adults are leading the way in church attendance and enthusiasm for mission. We need to embrace the idea that our culture itself is warming to Christianity as a concept, and be emboldened to love and serve in the way of Jesus more than ever before.

The Bible Society's recent report on Christianity in the UK states that:

The tide of faith is coming in again, and the Church needs to adjust to a new and strangely hopeful reality.¹

I must admit that adjusting to a new and hopeful reality was not something I was expecting. In the wake of Covid, all things faith-related seemed to be crumbling in the UK, and numbers of Interserve Partners and prayer groups appeared to be in decline. However, we have since seen growth in our Partner applications, particularly from younger

applicants, and three new prayer groups (Birmingham, London and the North East) are in the planning stages. According to the Bible Society's research, and anecdotal evidence from across denominations in the UK, it appears that it is time to adjust to this new reality. But how and why must we make those changes?

A NEW GENERATION, A NEW APPROACH TO MISSION

I think the first thing we must do is accept that the next generation is not going to approach mission in the same way as previous generations. Here at Interserve, we conducted some research through Eido in 2024, engaging with over 1,500 Christians and 50 mission-minded church leaders. Although young adults frequently described themselves as passionate about mission, they were considered the age group least passionate about mission even by mission-minded church

leaders.² This suggests a generational misunderstanding. Perhaps, on both sides, conversations need to take place with careful listening to explore these generational divides and then to agree on ways forward within our changing world. Maybe, this is where the misunderstanding lies: that our talk of mission as extending God's Kingdom, everywhere you find yourself, has finally hit home. The world is more interconnected, and younger people are more aware of their global neighbours than their predecessors. They are more familiar and comfortable with cultural differences, meaning they may be more likely to embrace cross-cultural mission. Also, fundraising trends have shown that younger donors are more likely to give small amounts of money to lots of charities, rather than committing to

support one charity their entire lives. Again, this paradigm is positive for Interserve, already engaged in a myriad of different missional activities across the globe. We are ready to capture the imagination of this empathetic generation with a model for mission that reflects this fresh global connectivity.

THE POWER OF CONVICTION

I think the Church must not compromise its conviction on the power of the Gospel to transform lives and communities. The move toward Christianity is proof that the dream promoted by secularism and new atheism has failed. Young people who have grown up in an age of compromise are excited and motivated by seeing lives lived with conviction.



Jon Tyson, an Australian church planter in New York, writes that:

The joy and satisfaction that come from being faithful to Christ will always be richer than the mere ease that comes from drifting along the cultural currents.³

Daniel Kinnaman also writes about the importance of conviction when exploring the relationships between Generation X Christian parents and their Gen Z/ Gen Alpha children:

In digital Babylon, faithful, resilient disciples are handcrafted one life at a time. And resilient disciples seemed to have parents who were willing to challenge them and their walk with the Lord.⁴

I have seen this in my own work with youth and young adults. Too often we get so excited about someone turning up, that we make participating in the social events seem to be the core of participation in the Kingdom. That does not grab a young person's imagination. Doing something difficult together is more likely to build cohesive community than a holy huddle where we celebrate people turning up! In my early twenties, I was involved with the leadership of a young adult Bible camp. I led a meeting for the first time, prayed for healing for the first time, and preached

my first sermon, all in that space. It was an incredible time of growth for me and for other young leaders.

When I look back on the group of young adults who led that week together, that group is walking and serving Jesus today, almost without exception. We were trusted to lead from a young age and at the same time were challenged to live a life worthy of our calling. We certainly were not applauded for simply showing up. I think if we had been, we would not have learnt how to serve one another, trust God and seek first His Kingdom to the same degree.

If our focus is still on young adults' events a few years ago with few attendees, rather than the prayer room filled with young people that I witnessed recently, amnesia for the Church will help us move into new ways of thinking and engaging with the young adults around us. We may not need a knock on the head, but I believe that this is a challenge the UK Church needs to hear. We must lean into this fresh positivity and spiritual growth amongst young adults, while not compromising our conviction in following Christ. The times they are a-changin' - is that a Beatles lyric? ♦

¹ *The Quiet Revival Report*, Bible Society, published in April 2025. Visit biblesociety.org.uk/research/quiet-revival

² To read Interserve's 2024 Eido report in full, email supportercare@isgbi.org

³ Jon Tyson, *Beautiful Resistance: The Joy of Conviction in a Culture of Compromise*

⁴ David Kinnaman, *Faith for Exiles: 5 Ways for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon*



Serena
McCarthy



Hearts on fire for God

**QUY MA REFLECTS ON
HER CURRENT WORK WITH
STUDENTS AND YOUNG
ADULTS AS INTERSERVE'S
YOUNG ADULTS AND
DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT
CO-ORDINATOR**

Everything counts when you spend time with the younger generations. I am so grateful for the opportunities I have to encourage and pray for young people, whether at my own church on Sundays, or representing Interserve at youth conferences and university events. Every interaction and conversation can build to something that God is doing in their lives.

Once or twice a week during term time I travel around the UK, working with other UK mission organisations to host events for university Christian Unions. Each evening includes talks and stories from

students and long-term mission workers, games, prayer, and time for interaction and questions. For some students it might be the first time they've really thought about their part in God's mission, and they connect with both local charities and international organisations. We collaborate as mission agencies to help young people discover how and where God may be calling them to serve, and to learn from each other. I love that we do this together! Through these partnerships we share so many opportunities for young adults to serve and grow, whatever their skills or passions. It's an inclusive and accessible way to help students think about mission.

◆ Everything counts when you spend time with the younger generations.

It's always refreshing to learn from the wisdom and experiences of guest speakers. Once a mission worker shared how she knew aged eleven that God was calling her to mission overseas. It blew my mind! It just goes to show that there is no real limit on when God calls you. You might not fully understand it yet, but once you know God has called you, that's it! That's why it's so important to nurture young people from an early age. You don't know what's just around the corner for them, and every stage of their life could be a critical moment. Supporting them doesn't necessarily mean doing a job like mine, although it could mean getting involved with a local youth or student ministry. But more simply, it could just be taking time to chat with young adults at church, or enabling and equipping them

to serve within your church community. These simple interactions can be a real encouragement to them. We shouldn't limit ourselves to thinking that they need to turn 18 or reach a certain point in their lives before they can serve God. They have so much to offer.

A GENERATION ON FIRE FOR GOD

When I visit Christian Unions, I always go planning to serve and inspire the students. But every time I come back so encouraged about what God is already doing in and through them. It's wonderful to meet young people full of energy and honesty, with their hearts on fire for God. At one university we visited, the Christian Union are so passionate about serving and reaching others that they organise activities for the community every day of the week, Monday through to Sunday from English classes for international students, to playing football together.



Student Christian Union mission night (above)



It's a real reflection of how much they love God and how this generation is living for God's cause. There's so many things they could do with their time, but they choose to serve others daily, putting their faith into action.

I've also noticed how many young people are really searching in terms of their identity, who they are, what's real, and where they can find truth. It's a very exciting and encouraging time to be involved with the next generation. Too often we've heard that Christianity is in decline, but it's no longer true for Gen Z. The Bible Society's 'Quiet Revival' research recently reported that church attendance among 18 to 24 year olds has quadrupled since 2018.¹ It's a huge encouragement! But it's also a challenge to the Church - we need to be ready to 'be there' for young adults growing in faith.

NURTURING SEEDS OF FAITH

I wasn't brought up as a Christian, and I came to know Jesus when I was seventeen. Those early years of faith were fundamental, and I really needed encouragement. It can be such a difficult time, studying hard but also trying to

navigate your way through social norms, and learning to live as closely to God as possible. Since then, I've always had it in my heart to be a kind of big sister for others now facing these challenges. I was involved in student ministry with my church for several years and am so happy to have this role with Interserve.

Another part of my job is building our digital presence, reaching out to young adults not just in person but also online, using my training and experience in product design. But what I most treasure are the one-to-one conversations with young people at church, and at universities, youth conferences and festivals. I know how much it matters that they feel seen, and I love to pray for them. Spending time on our stand, giving young people my full attention, finding out about their life and what they feel God is calling them to do - it is so exciting to see how God is at work. ♦

¹ Visit biblesociety.org.uk/research/quiet-revival/download

Interserve Youth Conference stand 2025 (below)



A journey of *discovery*

GABRIELLA SHARES HER EXPERIENCE OF INTERSERVE'S FIRST EVER SHORT-TERM NEXTGEN TRIP

I recently had the privilege of spending a month with Interserve on an island in Southeast Asia. I would have to describe it as one of the most fruitful and blessed times that I've ever experienced. I will always cherish the people that I met and connected with, both local people and those on the team. The country captured my heart with its relaxed lifestyle and rich culture.

The trip was a time of new beginnings and stepping into the unknown. It was my first time travelling abroad alone and without my family, which stretched my independence and helped to mould me as an individual. I had the opportunity to visit temples and mosques, which was something I had never done before. There

were cultural differences to adapt to, some big, some small. At times I found myself eating rice for breakfast, lunch and dinner. And I even grew accustomed to the occasional shower using water from a bucket(!). God showed me the beauty of stepping out in faith and then reaping a harvest of blessings.

This was the first time that I had the opportunity to serve people internationally, through helping in local churches, serving children in churches and schools, and visiting disadvantaged families. These experiences were eye-opening and truly humbling. They helped me to see the true meaning of our lives on earth – letting our love for God be reflected in our love for people. We are made to serve.

◆ The trip was a time of new beginnings and stepping into the unknown.

However, the most fruitful part of my experience was encountering God in a new way. I learned to sing my favourite worship songs in a different language, and experienced intimate moments of fellowship and connection while worshipping with very small congregations. I was enriched by witnessing the practice of Christianity from a whole new global perspective. There were many unfiltered and natural cultural experiences that initially felt foreign to me. Yet I grew to love and appreciate them for their authenticity, helping me to flourish on my cross-cultural journey. These new shared experiences also enabled genuine

connections with other NextGen trip team members, building unity even though we all came from different parts of the globe. We often prayed together, knowing that God would be our strength and guide as we continued on our journey.

If I was to offer one piece of advice for someone who is considering exploring overseas mission with Interserve, I would advise them to be bold. Take that leap of faith and embrace the beautiful opportunities that will surely come with it! ◆



Interested?

Our new NextGen trips are designed for single young adults aged 18-29 to watch, learn and participate in God's mission alongside Interserve Partners in Asia as part of an international team. Find out more about upcoming trips and other short term opportunities with Interserve via interserve.org.uk/nextgen



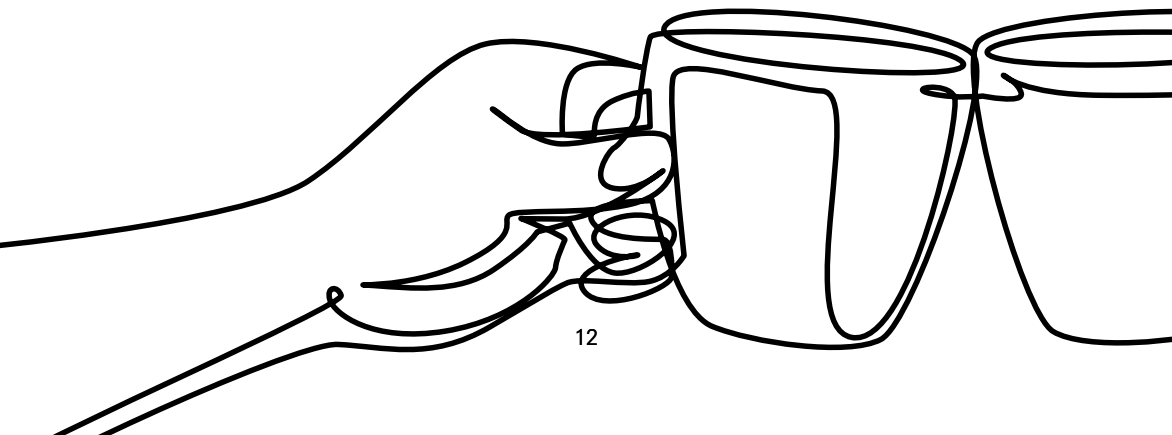
Welcoming the world

**INTERSERVE ASSOCIATE AND FORMER PARTNER JANET
AND HER HUSBAND DAVID CONTINUE TO SUPPORT
CROSS-CULTURAL MISSION THROUGH WORK WITH
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS HERE IN THE UK**

Every summer, thousands of students arrive in our city in Northern England from across the globe. For several years, Christians have been organising events for international students during the summer months. This year over 200 students, from 30 different countries, attended the café that ran every evening for two weeks. Many were from the language schools which run in our city over the summer, whilst the usual students are on holiday. A team of young people from all over UK and beyond worked together to run the café, coordinated by Friends International, an

organisation that encourages work with international students across the UK.

Each evening there were many opportunities to spend time and talk with students, play table games, share about British culture and have gospel conversations. Students new to the UK learnt more about life here, and had opportunities to practise their English, and make new friends both here in Britain and from around the world, in a safe and wholesome environment. Some came along to the optional Bible discussions which ran each evening after the cafe.



These days we are less involved in the summer events, as we want to encourage younger folk to minister there. But we always enjoy going along, and this year we cooked a meal for the team one evening. Hearing the diverse team praying together, and seeing them work together so well in the evening activities and presentations was really inspiring and encouraging. We could sense the enjoyment, relaxation and fun which the international students experienced, and we trust that they were touched by God's love in their midst. One South Asian student, whom we know, explained how much she enjoyed meeting other students from so many countries and getting to know some of the team, as she attended most evenings.

After the intensive two weeks of activities, students who remained for the rest of the summer were invited to join our weekly café that continues throughout the year. We are regularly involved in this café, serving alongside a dedicated team of young people. There are refreshments, activities and table tennis, and students can hear about various topics, from music to British puddings(!), as well as having the opportunity to share about their own country and culture. During each café there is also always an opportunity to

join a Bible discussion, or to sign up for a short midweek course introducing them to Christianity.

As former Interserve Partners we have always had a heart for international students. We previously served in South Asia so know personally what it means to settle into a new country and to learn a new language. We have been working with international students for over twelve years, and have seen some come to a living faith in the Lord. There have been some significant conversations with others, and we trust that in the future the Lord will sow more seeds into these individuals' lives.

This autumn we are thinking of those many students who have now returned to their home countries, some to places where the Gospel cannot be shared openly. We pray that what they have heard about Jesus this summer will give them a thirst to find out more about Jesus, and may the Lord bring more Christians across their paths. ♦



Friendship First Student Session

Inspired by the main Friendship First course, this is a one-off session aiming to give Christian young people confidence, skills, and resources to build Christ-centred unconditional friendships with Muslims. Find out more at interserve.org.uk/friendshipfirst

From Lagos to London



**INTERSERVE PARTNER MOJI
SHARES HER EXPERIENCES
SERVING IN A MULTICULTURAL
COMMUNITY IN LONDON
WHILE TRAINING TO BE A
CHAPLAIN**

It was four years ago that I left my home country of Nigeria and followed God's call to serve Him in London. I was initially employed by a university and imagined that I would continue to serve God in academia, alongside ministry work on a local council estate in a diverse area. But after 18 months I began to wonder whether God was leading me into something new. I resigned from my job, taking advantage of the freedom of my youth, and began praying about what God would have me do.

I attended a church conference when someone gave a short talk on chaplaincy work. My gut reaction was, 'I am too young to be a chaplain. That's so not me!' It didn't help that they shared photos of chaplains who were mostly middle-aged white men! But it stayed on my mind, and

I began to see that this is exactly what my community needs – people who dwell in the everyday spaces, bringing the hope of Jesus. It was around this time that I learned about Interserve through a friend, and joined first as an Associate, and then later as a Partner. Spending time with the team, praying weekly together, and hearing what others do, helped to shape my thoughts through a season of discernment.

On the first day of the chaplaincy course, someone said to me in genuine curiosity, 'Why have you come? You're half the age of any of us here!' I am greeted with the same astonishment and hesitancy at a local foodbank on chaplaincy placement - even by other young people. But I am learning to lean on the assurance of God's calling on my life and find boldness in this truth.

◆ This is exactly what my community needs – people who dwell in the everyday spaces, bringing the hope of Jesus.

I have seen people open up at the foodbank over time. I try to be quiet, listen and remember details from their lives. Too many people feel objectified by society, and remembering details means the world to them. Genuine friendships between myself and clients have emerged, as well as a sense of accountability. Recently, someone came not for food, but to tell me of something that he felt he had done wrong over the weekend. At that moment, I realised what discipleship meant.

Beyond my age, another struggle is breaking through multiple cultural barriers. The theories around chaplaincy work are

often based on a Western perspective. Then I find myself with a client who just arrived from Sudan. I quickly build multiple mental bridges between my Nigerian worldview, the course content, and the client's Sudanese worldview to be effective in my chaplaincy practice! The conversation is bumpy at first, but we eventually find a rhythm.

When I left Nigeria, I would never have imagined that I would be a chaplain. But I have found so much fulfilment in this role. If you are exploring God's call on your life, I would say, 'Allow yourself to hesitate for a moment and bring those doubts to God. Then after that time with God, just go and do what he has called you to do.' Regardless of the questions, I find that my heart settles down once I'm where God want me to be. And remember one last thing: we can take the pressure off ourselves. It is God himself who works in and through us to accomplish his purpose. ◆

Moji also serves as a Regional Connector, building relationships with people who might not have traditionally engaged with Interserve. She is keen to understand the needs of African diaspora congregations and to connect with young adults who have moved from other countries to serve God in London.

If you're interested in connecting with Moji or a Regional Connector near you, please contact supportercare@isgbi.org



Could you be our next **Trustee**?

Do you have a heart for Mission?

Are you skilled at asking good questions and casting strategy?

If so, we would love to hear from you!

It is an exciting time to join our Board of Trustees! We have recently appointed a new National Director and are experiencing growth in our Partners both in the UK and overseas. We are looking to recruit 2-3 mission-minded individuals to serve as board members for the next few years.

For more information, visit interserve.org.uk/trustees

