

11. 3Generate 2014 - Methodist Children and Youth Assembly Conference Report

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Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Draft Resolutions	<p>11/1. The Conference receives the Report.</p> <p>11/2. The Conference directs District Policy Committees to consider ways in which Youth Participation can be kept under review, paying particular attention to the way in which participants in 3Generate are given opportunities to share in the life of the District.</p> <p>11/3. The Conference encourages Districts, Circuits and Local Churches to find appropriate ways for all God's people to contribute to discussions of the issues raised in the Highlighted Areas for Action section of the Report.</p>

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	A summary of 3Generate 2014, the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly.
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attendance and representation at 3Generate • candidates elected for the roles of Youth President and Youth Representatives • content, themes and suggested outcomes for the Church from the three age streams (8-11, 11-18, 18-23) • worship and new additions to 3Generate • highlighted areas for action
Consultations	Children, young people and youth workers.

Summary of Impact

Wider Connexional	Increased engagement with children and young people as detailed in the resolutions and recommendations.
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Introduction

1. The Methodist Children and Youth Assembly, 3Generate, is an event for children and young people aged 8-23 and is a place where children and young people can come, share, develop and explore ideas of faith and church and talk about relevant issues facing children and young people. It is an opportunity for them to come and worship, have fun and meet friends. 3Generate allows every young person to have a voice and we use a model that seeks to enable the church to be in conversation and to hear the voice of children and young people across the Connexion. These voices are captured in a variety of ways.
2. The Methodist Children and Youth Assembly took place from 14-16 November 2014 at the Pioneer Centre in Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire.
3. The event this year focused on the theme of Generous Living and explored ideas such as generous God, generous me and generous life.

Attendance

3Generate Attendees by Age

Age	2013 %	2014 %
8	4%	4%
9	5%	4%
10	8%	6%
11	7%	8%
12	8%	11%
13	16%	7%
14	14%	15%
15	12%	14%
16	7%	9%
17	4%	7%
18	4%	4%
19	3%	3%
20	3%	3%
21	2%	3%
22	1%	2%
23	2%	0%

Voting and Elections

4. In accordance with SO 250(8) and (9) the Children and Youth Assembly held elections and the results are as follows:

Role	Elected
Youth President 2015-16	Craig Gaffney
Methodist Conference Representatives	Grace McAloon Gethin Wood Nyilany Njie
Methodist Council Representatives	Dean Lawson
British Youth Council Representatives	Alysha Wilson Alisha Levermore
Ecumenical Representatives	Nathan Songer Mary Sharples

A Taste of the Event

5. 3Generate is shaped by children and young people and the process that follows the event means that we are in continual dialogue with them throughout the year. Feedback is received from 'The Big Sleepover' resource, shaper groups, volunteers and young people who consult in their local context and help shape the event. Evaluations are also undertaken at the event itself and we invite the children and young people to express their opinions on all aspects of the event. Here are some comments from the 11-18 evaluations about the Children and Youth Assembly:

- "eye opening and amazing"
- "really enjoyable and educational"
- "made loads of friends"
- "good, rekindled my relationship with God"
- "do it more often".

The Three Age Streams

6. 3Generate is split into three age streams to make the event accessible for every child and young person attending. The three age streams are: 8-11, 11-18 and 18-23.

8-11s

7. The 8-11 programme was full of exciting ways for children to express their voice, engage with a variety of topics and meet with God.
8. 3Generators: For the first time this year we launched 3Generators. Every delegate in this age stream was given the role of being a 3Generator in their local context. Each 3Generator chose three challenges to take back to their local community and to make a difference. These could have a global focus or local focus. Each child also filled out a postcard with pledges on how they could live generously; this was posted back to them in January 2015 to act as a reminder. They also made loom band bracelets with three colours that reminded them of the three things they had pledged to do.

9. Speak Out Session: This session was full of different and creative activities that enabled delegates to have their say. They explored big and small ways of how to change the world, trafficking, having their say with the 3Generate Representatives and Youth President, discovering how to be a 3Generator, asking the youth president candidates the big questions and question time with the President and Vice-President of the Conference.
10. Engage Session: Attendees of this age stream were given the opportunity to choose from four interactive sessions. Our guest storyteller Bob Hartmann focused on the theme of Generous Me. Matt Prichard, our guest science magician explored the theme of God, Me and the Amazing World. Our friends from Touchstone brought their interfaith yurt and looked at interfaith activities. There was also learning and reflection on mental well-being.
11. Respond Session: This session was an opportunity for delegates to respond to what they had heard and learnt from the previous engage session. This was facilitated in a variety of different ways including: drama, creative art, stop animation and Lego.
12. Worship and Prayer: The 8-11 age stream explored a variety of ways to worship, pray and meet with God. Some of these included: messy prayer, Godly play. Towards the end of the weekend there was also an opportunity for delegates of this age stream to participate in multiplex style worship as well as in an all age stream context.

11-18s

13. This age stream programme was full of different activities including logins, worship, corridor kick starts, outdoor activities, free time, a magician, a comedian, Rhema Theatre Company, silent disco and the Big Questions Debate. In some parts of the programme there was an overlap between the 11-18 and 18-23 age stream.
14. Logins: This age stream discussed a variety of topics in sessions called 'logins'. Every attendee was given the opportunity to attend two logins and was encouraged to share their opinions and ideas on the chosen topic. Each login was facilitated by an expert and a peer facilitator. The login titles, descriptions and suggestions from the young people are as follows:
 - i. When the Going Gets Tough: keeping your faith during the tough times

Suggestions: The Church needs to be more aware of teenagers' emotions as well as creating the space to talk more about depression.
 - ii. Making Your Mind Up: How do we, ought we, should we make decisions as Christians?

Suggestions: For the Methodist Church to discuss with young people more regularly on important topics like women's rights in the church.
 - iii. Hitchhiker's Guide to Christianity: Some basics about Christianity and Methodism

Suggestions: The Church to consider accepting same sex marriage. Encourage more new people into the Church. For the Church to value young people as much as its older members.
 - iv. I Believe in Miracles: A chance to explore, discuss and question what the Bible and others say about miracles.

Suggestions: there were no suggestions for action to be taken by the whole Church from this login.

- v. Now That's What I Call Worship: Do you struggle with it or not? Explore how to find your place in worship.

Suggestions: The Methodist Church needs to be in continual dialogue with children and young people about appropriate and engaging worship. A review of worship in our churches should be undertaken.

- vi. How Great Your Art: Exploring your faith in a creative way

Suggestions: There were no suggestions for action to be taken by the whole Church from this login.

- vii. Radical Me?: Don't be a minion! Exploring how to be radical in your faith

Suggestions: For the whole Church to go out and help those in need. The Church should be more open to change and should actively encourage people of all ages to be involved in all aspects of church life. The Church should focus on welcoming new people, spreading the word and sharing stories of what people have done. There should be more Bible study lessons which explore what it means to be a radical Christian and the ways in which we can achieve this.

- viii. Social Media – The Good, The Bad, The Ugly: A chance to explore the positives and difficulties of social media.

Suggestions: The Church should advertise the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre and other charities and should support organisations that deal with online abuse. Training should be made available on cyberbullying and online protection for those who work with children and young people affected by these issues. Awareness of social media should be raised and information sessions provided on its positive and effective use whilst being safe. Create a teen Church social media account.

- ix. R.E.S.P.E.C.T - Find Out What It Means to Me: What does respect in relationships mean and what does it look like (for 11-15s)?

Suggestions: To have more discussions on the subject of homosexuality and same sex marriage within the Methodist Church. Provide information on how to deal with domestic abuse as well as giving relationship advice.

15. Ages 16 and above were also given the opportunity to attend two logins; one concerning Pornography; and the other concerning Politics - Why bother?

16. Corridor Catch-up and Kick Starts: During the event this age group also had corridor catch-ups and kick starts. These were opportunities for attendees to gather together with those who were staying in the same lodge and meet with their lodge leaders. During these times delegates were able to find out more about what was happening in the programme and it was an opportunity for them to feed back about parts of the programme they had already experienced.

17. Rhema Theatre Company: As an exciting guest this year, 3Generate welcomed Rhema Theatre Company. Rhema came and performed their original play "It's Not Fair" which explored the theme of human trafficking. Delegates were given the opportunity to respond to what they had seen in the performance and were also given the space to reflect and discuss this important issue. This performance was open to ages 11-23 and in feedback from the 11-18 age steam the piece was described as: "eye opening", "thought provoking" and "informative".

18. The Big Questions Debate: Key issues that were raised from the various logins were developed into questions for the 11-18 year olds to debate. Issues included: social media, being a radical church, human trafficking and worship where all ages can join in. This was also a chance for them to find out what everyone else had been talking about in their logins and they were able to vote to show their opinion. This session was led by the Youth Representatives. The young people's voices and opinions were recorded and taken into account when writing this report and in the formation of the resolutions detailed at the end.

18-23s

19. This age stream explored a wide range of topics in a variety of styles.

20. Small groups: This year each delegate in the 18 -23s stream was allocated to a small group. During the weekend there was space provided in the programme for them to meet with their small group and talk about the programme and what they had seen, heard and were looking forward to. In these groups there was also room to pray for one another and encourage each other in taking challenges back to their local context.

21. Sofa Chats and workshops: The sofa chats for this age stream were designed as a means of exploring some really big issues in a relaxed, safe environment. Each session was led by an expert on the subject and included a peer facilitator. The topics that were discussed in the sofa chats are listed below and include suggestions by some of the young people for action to be taken by the whole Church:

- i. War, Peace and Inter Faith Work: Exploring our response to the 'war on terror', the question of Islamophobia, the situation in the Middle East and the Methodist Church's work on boycotts, divestments and sanctions.

Suggestions: Provide a resource for youth clubs/Sunday schools to use to teach about different countries, cultures and the reason for certain holidays or days. Youth Exchange programmes. More education and informative sessions about other faiths and looking at how we can bring faith groups together.

- i. Methodism, Alcohol and 'Club Culture': Looking at some of the history of the Methodist Church's relationship with alcohol. Exploring the question of teetotalism as against moderation, what it means to be 'in the world but not of it' and where the line should be drawn.

Suggestions: The Church should speak out about class inequality. More Street Pastors, as well as preaching about alcohol and club culture. The issue needs to be discussed in youth groups and resources provided about drinking responsibly, how to be safe when clubbing and how to deal with sexual harassment.

- ii. Church, Community and Leadership: This conversation formed part of a consultation with children and young people on the Larger than Circuit Review. As well as this consultation the conversation explored what should the Methodist Church's role be within local communities?

Suggestions: 3Generate wanted to highlight a desire for increased visibility and engagement of District leadership with children and young people. Enabling better engagement with Districts, eg appointing a district youth representative and finding different ways of those in leadership positions in the District being in conversation with a variety of children and young people. This is taken forward in resolution 2.

- iii. Abortion: Where is the line drawn between right to life and individuals' rights with regards to their own bodies? Who should decide?

Suggestions: Abortion should not be viewed as a taboo subject by the Church. The Church should respond in love and not hasten to judge. Specialist pastoral training should be introduced. The Church should run workshops, information sessions and provide counselling to help and support people. There should be another session on abortion at 3Generate next year in 2015.

- iv. Transgender issues: How should the Church respond to questions of gender identity? What work needs to be done to equip individuals and the Church both locally and connexionally to talk about this taboo issue?

Suggestions: Discussion on this subject at the Methodist Conference resulting in guidance being given so that the Church can be inclusive of transgender people. Opportunities should be provided by the Church for young people to talk about it and voice an opinion on the subject.

- v. Pornography: What should our response as Christians be to the pornography industry? What about the Sun's page three? 50 Shades of Grey? How can we encourage respect for the different sexes?

Suggestions: The Church should help young people feel more comfortable and confident talking about sex and adult things and recognise that it is a normal and acceptable subject to talk about and that sex is not a bad thing. Provide sessions on sex education in youth groups by external and Methodist experts on the subject. The Methodist Church being involved in wider discussions about providing improved education in schools on sex, relationships and pornography. For the Methodist Church to continue its support of 'No more Page 3' and similar campaigns. The Church needs to educate young people and involve them in conversations about the use of pornography as well as recognising the effect this industry has on people's self esteem.

- vi. Politics - Why Bother?: Is it important for Christians to engage with local and national politics? Why? How can you engage effectively and use your vote wisely?

Suggestions: There were no suggestions for action to be taken by the whole Church from this login but delegates expressed their gratitude for this login and said that it was a really good way of discussing an important topic.

- 22. Spiritual Disciplines: In response to some feedback from last year's delegates, this year we introduced a short series of spiritual disciplines. These were four short sessions that explored aspects of personal spiritual disciplines. They were: Prayer and contemplation, The Bible, Participation and Service. The participation element to this discussion has been highlighted in resolution 2.

Worship

Worship and Prayer for 11-23s

- 23. Over the course of the 3Generate weekend delegates had the opportunity to engage in a variety of different worship styles. The worship this year was led by some of the students from Cliff College. In addition to worship the prayer room was open 24 hours a day and was a quiet space for attendees to pray and reflect. Delegates from the 11-18 age steam described worship as being "lively and engaging", "inclusive", "enjoyable" and "interactive".

Multiplex Worship

24. For the first time, this year our collective worship was held in a multiplex style. It started with a simple gathering together, a call to worship of all the ages, every delegate was given the choice to attend a worship style that best suited them and enabled them to meet with God in their own way. Some of the worship styles that were on offer included; the Psalm Drummers, storytelling with Bob Hartmann, café church, creative arts, Godly play, acoustic worship and interactive prayer room. For the final twenty minutes all delegates were called to gather back by the Psalm Drummers and continued together in worship, before going home. This form of worship received very positive feedback from the children and young people.

New Additions to 3Generate

25. This year we introduced 3Generate TV, the 3Generate Big Weekender and the 3Generate Journal as new additions to support the work 3Generate does.

3Generate TV

26. This was set up for the duration of the event and was also used in the lead up to the Assembly. 3Generate TV was an exciting new way for children and young people and the event to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas on various topics and parts of the programme. It has also been used as a resource for young people to catch up on some of the things that went on at the event. 3Generate TV will now be used throughout the year to continue the conversations that happened at 3Generate and will be a resource that Local Churches, Circuits and Districts can use to start conversations with their children and young people in a local context. In addition to this, 3Generate TV will also be used by the elected 3Generate representatives to inform the children and young people how they have been representing them over the past year.

The 3Generate Big Weekender

27. The 3Generate Big Weekender was also set up this year to support the work that 3Generate does. It is recognised that many children and young people are either unable to attend or missed out on the event this year when tickets sold at a very fast rate. To combat this challenge we created the 3Generate Big Weekender resource to enable Local Churches, Circuits and Districts to host their own 3Generate that ran alongside the event. At 3Generate 2014 parts of the programme were live streamed to enable children and young people to be involved in 3Generate in their local context.

The 3Generate Journal

28. The 3Generate journal was introduced this year to support the delegates in their reflection on their personal journey. It also gave a hint into some of the things that would be coming up in the programme and what delegates could expect. The purpose of the journal was not only to give attendees relevant information prior to the event but also to give the children and young people an opportunity to write down things that impacted on them from the event.

Highlighted Areas for Action

29. The Children and Youth Assembly discussed a variety of topics and issues and more information on this can be found at www.childrenandyouth.org.uk/3Generate. They have asked that the following topics are highlighted:

Transgender

30. During the course of 3Generate the 18-23 age stream discussed the topic of transgender. This discussion was facilitated in an informative and sensitive way. The delegates of this age stream have called for more conversation to happen in relation to this topic in the Methodist Church as well as for understanding and acceptance. The young people recognise that more work needs to be done on this topic and that it brings into questions the wider understanding of inclusivity. The children and young people of the Methodist Church want to be able to talk about this and express their opinion and have a voice. The Children and Youth Assembly believes we need to start to address this issue and begin with conversation.

Authentic Worship for all ages

31. The Methodist Children and Youth Assembly discussed the topic of worship and would like to see the Methodist Church explore new ways of worshipping. Some suggestions included experimenting with the creative arts and craft activities in worship. 3Generate believes that worship should be accessible and applicable for all ages. There was also a call for worship to be more up to date.

Radical Christian

32. The view was expressed at 3Generate that young people want to engage more with community action and be a visible Christian presence. This would link into the theme of Generous Living and, as suggested, this theme will be explored further at next year's 3Generate. The children and young people want to formulate a response to living a generous life and how this can be carried out in our everyday lives.

Alcohol and Club Culture

33. This topic was discussed at length during 3Generate and the young people are calling for more discussions in church to happen on this topic. Alcohol is a wider issue and is something the whole church should be engaging with. Young people specifically wanted to know about attitudes towards alcohol, its effects and responsible drinking. The young people believe that the church should be informed about club culture and alcohol in order to support and advise people. The young people suggested that the church could invite their local Police Authority to come and inform them on this topic.

Contemporary Views of Sexuality

34. Delegates aged 16 and over had the opportunity to discuss the topic of pornography. There was a growing concern about the abusive view of sexuality in our society and a concern about the teaching of sex education in our schools. The Church needs to be more open and willing to discuss sex and everything that surrounds it. This is especially important for youth groups as the church needs to be providing important information for children and young people regarding sexual relationships as they may not receive the information from anywhere else. The Children and Youth Assembly therefore recommends that children and young people should have the opportunity to discuss Christian approaches to pornography and issues of power in sexual relationships.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

- 11/1. The Conference received the Report.

- 11/2. The Conference directed District Policy Committees to consider ways in which Youth Participation can be kept under review, paying particular attention to the way in which children and young people and participants in 3Generate are given opportunities to share in the life of the District.**

- 11/3. The Conference encouraged Districts, Circuits and Local Churches to find appropriate ways for all God's people to contribute to discussions of the issues raised in paragraphs 29-34 of the report.**