



From the Ambassador

I'm writing from hymn-writer Sabine Baring-Gould's former home, having spoken last night at the West Devon Filling Station in one of his old barns, now beautifully converted. It was a delight to see our Vice Chair Liz Miller and her husband David (Chair of the VMA Trust and Launceston Circuit Superintendent). We were able to share briefly about MET:Revive and had several promising conversations with local Methodists about membership.

Please pray for Methodist evangelicals in the very southwest of England. We met folk from Launceston, Tavistock, Peter Tavy and Coppleshorne, including the Pinhey family who featured on the BBC's 'Songs of Praise' on 21 September. Please also remember Plymouth Methodist Central Hall, currently without a superintendent minister after Gareth Higgs, our other Vice Chair, moved to Moorlands College.

I spoke on Isaiah 8:11-18, which seems particularly relevant to our times. During the Assyrian crisis, with an aggressive enemy on their doorstep, Isaiah confronted leaders panicking in the face of the threat. Astonishingly, they were considering an alliance with Egypt, the nation that had formerly enslaved them,

hoping to strengthen their position against approaching danger. Isaiah counselled, 'Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy, do not fear what they fear' (v. 12). Instead, they were to fear the Lord (v. 13).

Today, living in a culture reluctant to make anyone feel uncomfortable, we can be tempted to minimise the Bible's teaching about fearing God. Yet how else should we respond to the Lord? If the curtains were drawn back and we saw him for who he really is, we would be filled with fear! Think of Isaiah in chapter 6 crying 'Woe is me!' when he saw the Lord. Of course, the Lord doesn't leave his people frozen in fear. An angel touched Isaiah's lips with coal from the altar and spoke of forgiveness and atonement. There's a fear that drives us away, but another that draws us close.

With eyes now turned from conspiracies and fears toward the Lord in awe-filled reverence, Isaiah speaks of **a Promise, a Peril, and a Purpose**. **The Promise** is sanctuary (v. 14): 'He will be a holy place.' In a world of conspiracy and fear, the Lord himself provides refuge, even building us into the temple of his Holy Spirit, making his home in our midst.

The Peril is the stumbling stone, also in verse 14. The same cornerstone that provides security for those who seek refuge becomes a stumbling block for those determined to forge their own path, refusing God's offer of salvation. As darkness deepens, they stumble over this stone and fall into the hands of the real enemy.

The Purpose is to live as signs of the Lord's greatness and glory amid earth's turbulent events, just as Isaiah and his family were called to do (vv. 17-18). Even when the Lord 'is hiding his face', we wait for him

with confident hope. In dark times of conspiring and fear, we are called to be living symbols of the Lord's promise and presence in this world.

This call to be signs of the Lord's glory within the world is at the heart of the message burning within me as I travel across the Connexion this Autumn. In the coming weeks I'll visit Wigan and Hampshire for our Remember to Forget Tour, and Newcastle for ministers' gatherings for the Independent Methodist Connexion as part of our work with the Association of Wesleyan Evangelicals (AWE). Everywhere I go, I am deeply moved by the spiritual hunger I encounter among Methodist people on the ground.

Can you help spread the word about these opportunities? Please visit metrevive.uk/RTF for updates and either come to a venue near you or recommend it to people you know in the area. If we're not visiting your region, please contact Janet Walker (janet.walker@metrevive.uk / 07799 068 539) to explore what we could arrange in your area.

We live in times when encouraging one another in the Lord is vital. We find sanctuary in his promise, protection from all perils, and purpose as we live as signs of his glory and grace in our troubled world.

Thank you for your support of this ministry. It is a great privilege to serve in this way. I would deeply value your continued prayers!

REV DR DAVID HULL

David is a Methodist Minister and Lead Pastor of Freedom Church Bristol (findfreedom.org.uk), serves as MET:Revive's Ambassador and Chair of the Association of Wesleyan Evangelicals (AWE). His ministry focuses on encouraging evangelical Methodists across the Connexion, and seeking a rekindling of the Wesleyan flame.