

CLIFF

TODAY

2022

www.cliffcollege.ac.uk



CLIFF COLLEGE

Welcome to your 2022 edition of Cliff Today!

The past two years have been difficult for Cliff College, as they have been for many people – but God has been at work, sustaining us and encouraging us as well as giving us a fresh vision for the future.

We are excited for all that is yet to come for Cliff College, as you will read in these pages.

Amid all the changes and new things that are happening at Cliff College in these months, it is sometimes easy to miss the things that have remained the same.

But there are some things about Cliff that do not change: our commitment to training and equipping people for ministry; our daily rhythm of prayer and worship; our proclamation of 'Christ for All, All for Christ'.

If in the past 12 months you have walked with us on the Trek, studied with us on a course or worshipped with us at Cliff Festival, you will know that Cliff is as passionate about taking the gospel to the world as it has ever been.

As you read this edition of Cliff Today, please consider committing to supporting Cliff College in prayer and in giving. You can find details of these on the back pages. Thank you for your ongoing work to enable Cliff College to be all that it can be.

Rev Ashley Cooper, Principal
principal@cliffcollege.ac.uk



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CLIFF FESTIVAL

2022

Cliff Festival 2022 took place from 1–5 June, across the double bank holiday and into the weekend. After two years of Festival at Home, where we hosted celebrations, Bible studies and seminars online, it was a joy and a blessing to be able to meet in person on the Cliff site once again.

We had five days of worship and teaching, learning together, praying together and being together as church once more.

Following our theme of **Jubilee: Rule & Reign** we explored biblical themes of jubilee, justice and good news for all through worship services, Bible studies, seminars and workshops.

Our evening preachers included Eunice Atwood and Rev Dr Sahr Yambasu, President of the Irish Methodist Conference; our worship was led by Tom Smith and Soul Survivor, Philippa Hanna and Noel Robinson.

Children's and youth work is a key part of Cliff Festival, and this year was no exception. Our venues for children and young people were well attended and we saw large numbers of children and teenagers committing to follow Jesus and praying for one another.

One teenage boy who had injured his knee earlier in the week and was walking on crutches experienced physical healing through prayer and was able to walk unaided again.

As Festival took place across the Platinum Jubilee bank holiday weekend, we celebrated the Queen's jubilee together with the Big Cliff Lunch on Saturday 4 June, eating sandwiches and scones together to the sounds of Pantasy Steel Drum Band.

Other highlights from the Festival included a lunchtime ceilidh, a Cliff anniversary celebration with the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference and a final all-age worship and communion service on Sunday morning.

The next Cliff Festival will run from 26–29 June 2023, where our theme will be **Eden Restored**. Tickets are available now at www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/festival-2023





LIFE AT CLIFF

I'm Alice Young, and I'm about to finish my degree – I've been studying the BA Mission and Ministry programme, on the youth pathway. I'm also the Student President for the second year running, which doesn't usually happen, but because of Covid-19 I got a second year!

The job description for Student President is to work alongside students and to be a liaison between staff and students. I've had a unique two years as Student President – there have been many downsides to the pandemic for Cliff, but it's meant I've had a chance to do the job in a totally different way.

I love people and relationships and that's what my job is – journeying alongside people, both residential and non-residential students.

Through living on the College site I've built close relationships with our residential students, but I've gotten to know a lot of our non-residential students and hear about their lives too, whether that's face-to-face, during online learning or just connecting over Zoom and emails. I feel quite honoured to have been able to do that.

Cliff is a unique community, and I've really appreciated living with other Christians, developing together as disciples and holding each other accountable.



Of course, there are low points to that – just like any family relationship, you have your stressful moments! But it's such a special thing to do and I don't know when (or whether) I'm ever going to get the opportunity to do that again in my life. So I'll hold it very dear to my heart.

I'm an extrovert and love doing life with people, but that means sometimes I can neglect my solitary journey with Jesus, my quiet time. In this Christian community I have friends who will ask me, "When was the last time you encountered Jesus?" and I think when people ask you those questions you begin to ask them of yourself too. My quiet time is something I've learned to prioritise; if Jesus prioritised it, I should as well.

Cliff will give you as much as you give to it. I've put a lot in and gotten a lot out.

My course has given me really practical things to take away, but it's also given me a network of children's and youth ministers across the country! There's a gift in having people that you trust and have journeyed with through studying. I also feel like I'm going to have a place to come back to in Cliff – a place that I've called home and that will always be home in some ways.

There are people I've journeyed alongside, some for three years, who have incredible stories of transformation. People who came in their first year and said 'no' to so many opportunities have been transformed into people who will say 'yes' to everything! For others, even a year on they're doing things they never thought they could do.

I would say that I wouldn't recognise myself from my first year. I knew that I was called to Cliff for a reason, and now I can look back to Alice from 2019 and be amazed at what God has done. Seeing Jesus work in people's lives is what Cliff is all about, and we have so much more to come in that area!

Although Covid-19 itself was a really difficult time, through it I've gotten to see the College as my home. For most students, university is a temporary home where you live for eight months a year – but I've lived at Cliff almost constantly since my first year. That's meant I've gotten to form intentional friendships outside of Cliff as well; attending and serving at a local church, getting to know Christians in the area and people in the local community.

Over three years, I've found that Cliff will give you as much as you give to it. I've put a lot in and gotten a lot out; some practical things like having opportunities to preach and teach, but also understanding what it is to be a leader. How do we lead people to follow a life of faith while being authentic ourselves?

We need to be honest about how we are and allow people to see the messy parts of us, because we can't lead people out of a place of falseness. As leaders, we shouldn't be placed on pedestals – we're all just trying to follow a life towards Christ. Authenticity is key.



THE TREK



ESSENTIAL TREK SUPPLIES:
Bacon butties, tea, coffee,
cakes, sandwiches, Lancashire
hotpots, apple pies, raincoats,
sun cream, Covid test kits,
high-vis jackets and endless
amounts of blister plasters!

The 2022 Cliff College Trek, led by Paul Davis (Chair of the Lancashire District) started in Leyland on the Monday of Holy Week and finished 40 miles later at Morecambe seafront on Maundy Thursday.

Along the way, our group of Cliff staff, students and local people were welcomed by 11 Methodist churches who showed amazing hospitality and fuelled us with fantastic homemade cakes and treats.

It was a privilege to hear the stories of mission and engagement in their local communities, and for Cliff students to pray for their work. Each evening ended with a celebration service where we heard people's stories and memories of, and connections to, the Cliff College Trekkers.

Walking (or hobbling!) onto Morecambe seafront was a moment of joy and elation, with a real sense of shared pride. Concluding The Trek with an open-air service that passers-by could witness was the perfect way to end our week, and we were lucky enough to be joined by Ted, who shared the story of his own Cliff College Trek and what it had meant to him.



GLOBAL WORK

With international travel now more accessible, Cliff has been taking the opportunity to visit our global partners.

Ashley Cooper and Kathryn Young met with Bishop Patrick Streiff and David Field in **October 2021** in **Switzerland** to discuss the Methodist e-Academy's relationship with our online learning platform, TheologyX.

In **February 2022** Ashley was able to visit **Romania** and hear how the local church in Cluj were receiving Ukrainian refugees in the initial days of the war, as well as preparing the ground for the Cliff Year's planned visit in July.



Later that month, Ashley, Kathryn and Andrew Stobart met with the staff of the United Theological College and the Methodist Church in **Zimbabwe** to explore how we can best continue to support UTC and their training of ordained and lay ministers.

Early **April** found Andrew, Kathryn and Matt Hartley working with the Methodist Church in **Sierra Leone**, picking up strategy work created in partnership with All We Can to explore how Cliff College can support their training needs for ministers, lay pastors and local preachers.

May saw Ashley and Kathryn travel with three of our undergraduate students to Universidad del Centro Educativo Latinoamericano (UCEL) in Rosario, **Argentina**, to explore a possible partnership with Cliff. UCEL's theology school is delivered entirely online as distance learning, and it was great to hold conversations with the team there and to meet with the Bishop of Argentina, Americo Jara Reyes.



THE CLIFF YEAR

It has been a pleasure to lead the 2021–2022 Cliff Year cohort, who have grown in their Christian faith and developed their character and confidence.

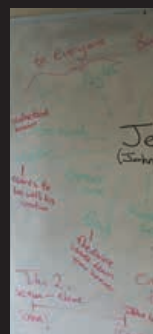
Over the year there has been time to invest in their own discipleship as they have studied the Bible together, learnt more about prayer and been pilgrims on the Peak Pilgrimage.

The cohort have been equipped for evangelism and encouraged to share their faith, which they did on the Cliff Trek in Lancashire, in delivering primary school assemblies and when leading the children's work at the ECG Conference.

They are valued members of the Cliff community and have taken responsibility for the technology in morning prayers and celebration services. They have led prayers, and hosted and organised the Christmas Cabaret evening in December 2021.

The Cliff Year concluded this year by serving at Cliff Festival, engaging in local mission opportunities and travelling to Romania. If you know someone interested in the Cliff Year, please do get in touch to find out more.

Tom Donoghue, evangelist and Cliff year leader



GOD LOVED THE WORLD SO MUCH THAT
HE GAVE HIS SON JESUS TO US
SO THAT IF WE BELIEVE IN HIM
WE SHALL HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.



Matt Hays

'I loved the Cliff Trek – it was encouraging to hear about how God was working in the lives of individuals and churches. Many people were open to hearing about our faith – I even got to pray with one family and ask God for healing.'

Bethan Heard

'This year has been amazing in so many ways, with lots of opportunities that have helped me grow as a person. It has been great to live in a beautiful place and with the College community who have invested in me and my walk with Jesus. I have grown so much closer to God through learning more about him and spending more time with him.'



Emma Clark

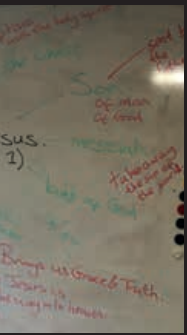
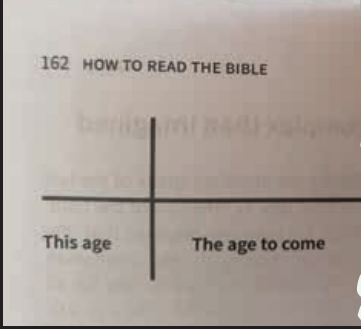
'This year I have really enjoyed living in the Peak District. It has been very rewarding to live in a beautiful part of the country – the walks and the views are great.'

It has been a brilliant way to connect with and grow closer to God through his creation, and seeing it change throughout the year has helped me reflect on how much I've changed as well.'



Mary Camfield

'Throughout the Cliff Year I have been nurtured and invested in. I have been provided with so many opportunities to put into to practice what I've learnt and develop my skills in mission and evangelism.'



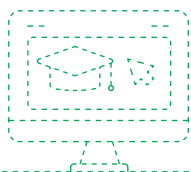


LEARNING AT CLIFF



Training and equipping are the main work of Cliff College and have taken many forms over the past century, as we have responded to the needs of the church and the contexts in which we find ourselves.

Students can choose to study on-site at Cliff College, online only, or in a combination of both to suit them.



Over the past two years, these contexts and needs have changed again, and Cliff is responding to this by making some significant changes to our programmes and courses. These include the development of new courses and the ending of others; but we're also changing some of the ways in which people can access Cliff's education and training.

Prior to 2020, we were already considering how we might enable people who were unable to come to the Cliff College site to engage in learning and training with us.

Alongside initiatives like our Cliff Local programme and our Global Partnerships, we had started work on an online learning platform which would make our courses available to more people.

This work was dramatically accelerated in the spring of 2020, when we had to quickly move to online learning for our existing courses due to the pandemic.

Recognising that this was an opportunity to move towards our goal of making education more accessible, Cliff invested significant amounts of money and work in creating a high-quality virtual learning platform and in the equipment we needed to enable online and hybrid learning.

This served us through the pandemic as we shifted between online and on-site teaching, but also enabled us to develop new courses and opportunities for learning. These include new online-only courses, such as our Introduction to Evangelism course led by Rev Dr Martyn Atkins, and our Foundations for Mission and Ministry programme, which is majority-online with the option of some in-person learning.

The biggest change to our course provision is the consolidation of our two existing BA programmes into a single programme, the new BA (Hons) Theology and Mission.





This degree will combine the theological and biblical grounding of the BA Theology and Ministry with the practical focus of the BA Mission and Ministry. Students can choose to study on-site at Cliff College, online only, or in a combination of both to suit them.

This will create a mixed classroom of in-person and online learners, encouraging a sharing of ideas and experiences from students across different contexts. We're excited about how this will broaden and challenge the perspectives of all our students and prepare them for mission in today's world.

Of course, these changes create their own issues and questions. Hybrid learning can be difficult to facilitate well, and we must ensure that our online and on-site students receive equally good learning experiences and opportunities. We are still exploring how we create community for our online students and what it means for them to belong to Cliff if they never visit the site.

These are exciting and challenging times to be involved in theological education and training. We step into them knowing that God is still using Cliff to train people for mission and listening for his guidance and wisdom as we continue to do his work.

Foundations for Mission and Ministry

A part-time course taken over two years, offering people engaged in practical church or parachurch ministry and mission an opportunity to learn alongside their work. Units include Pastoral Practice, Christian Theology in Outline and Growing in Leadership.

Offered online with the option of some in-person teaching three times per year.

Offered from September 2022.

BA (Hons) Theology and Mission

The new degree programme from Cliff College. Available on-site at Cliff College, entirely online or as a hybrid programme.

This programme will offer a thorough grounding in theology and biblical studies and practical missional engagement that encourages students to apply their learning to their work and bring their mission experience to their learning.

Offered from September 2023, subject to approval by the University of Manchester.

GRADUATION

2021



After our online graduation ceremony in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in November last year we returned to St John's Church in Tideswell to celebrate the Cliff College class of 2021.

Graduates of our BA, MA and PhD programmes were joined by students who had completed short courses and the Cliff Year as well as supportive family and friends.

The service, which included addresses from Professor Peter Scott from the University of Manchester and the chair of the Cliff College Committee Rev Loraine Mellor, was followed by refreshments and fellowship back at the College.

Graduation is always a joyous occasion, and we thank God for this opportunity to celebrate our students' achievements.



C



NEW TO CLIFF

Jeff Conklin-Miller

I started working at Cliff in early 2022 as the learning lead and tutor in evangelism and missiology. As well as participating in the teaching and delivery of our academic programmes, I am part of the Evangelism and Mission team, an amazing group of leaders engaged in different forms of mission, outreach and evangelism.



My work in this team is to ask, 'How can we bridge the work we do in the classroom and the practices of mission and evangelism?'. For me, theological education attends to the constant, dynamic engagement of theology and ministry, doctrine and practice, formation and mission.

We must continually ask ourselves how we do this well. For many years Cliff has focused on offering students opportunities to study in the classroom and to be engaged in practical ministry contexts, and we're continuing to explore that in new and different ways.

But that's just the first step in what needs to be a series of stepping stones that lead us in the direction of a more integrated whole. One way we're exploring this is through our new Foundations for Mission and Ministry

programme, particularly in relation to the education of local lay pastors in the Methodist Church. The students who participate in that programme will never not be in the practice of mission and ministry (as is already the case with many students on our other courses).

The question will not be, 'How do we attend to their practice?' but, 'How do we pay attention to that dynamic relationship between theology and ministry, between formation and mission?'. We trust that the goal here is the formation of faithful theological imagination for faithful mission and ministry.

My research has focused on the theology and practice of evangelism. Sometimes evangelism is seen as a strategy, a set of tactics; something we do that is seeking a particular end.



All are called to participate in the mission of God, and Cliff shares a commitment to supporting those who respond to that calling.

I want to teach our students that evangelism is not only a practice or a strategy, but that it's descriptive of all the things that Christians are always doing. Witness in this broader sense is part of what it means to be a Christian; and if evangelism is a constant component of our very Christian being, it becomes a conversation about everything! Our discipleship, our witness, our ethics, our service, our protest, our striving for peace and justice.

In all these things, we pursue the work of God in mission faithfully, which requires our capacity to discern well, to be literate and articulate when it comes to thinking about the Bible and the history of the church and the theological witness of the Christian tradition. This is why I think theological education is so important for all of us to participate in at whatever level we can.

One of the things that appealed to me about Cliff is its long history of forming people for lay ministry. Of course we train those who go on to ordained and professional leadership in the church, but we also pursue a special focus on forming people for the fulfilment of vocation in the world,

for Christian witnesses as farmers, cobblers, carpenters. All are called to participate in the mission of God, and Cliff shares a commitment to supporting those who respond to that calling. Alongside that, Cliff is a college of the Methodist Church, and in that sense, we are always connected to the mission and ministry of the church.

That alignment between the mission and purpose of the College and the broader church's call to serve in God's mission is incredibly appealing.

I'm excited about what the Methodist Church is hoping to do with its evangelism and mission strategy, 'God for All', and how the College is helping to shape that theological imagination in the broader church for evangelism and witness.

'God for All' is about renewing and recentring evangelism and mission, and Cliff gets to share in supporting, researching, learning from and teaching about that work. This participation and alignment with the Methodist Church makes this moment really exciting for us as Cliff College with our history and a church that wants to be committed to those same practices, goals and ministries.



'Mission and evangelism are Cliff's commission and calling – we stand on the shoulders of giants of faith. We're excited to understand what that calling looks like in today's world.'

RESEARCH AT CLIFF



Cliff College is a global centre for evangelism and missiology. Research in the areas of theory and practice is a key part of our identity as a learning institution, and Cliff College now has three research centres, each one representing core research and teaching interests within the life of the College.

The Samuel Chadwick Centre

With the strapline: 'Discerning the Spirit in the mission of the Church,' the Samuel Chadwick Centre gathers and distributes the fruits of research in the work of the Holy Spirit, particularly in the context of Wesleyan and Pentecostal-Charismatic church traditions.

Samuel Chadwick (Principal of Cliff College from 1913–32) showed a special insight into the importance of the Holy Spirit in the proclaiming of the gospel. The directors of the Centre are Dr Ben Pugh (a Pentecostal) and Rev Dr George Bailey (a Methodist), who are both Cliff College staff.

The annual Samuel Chadwick Lecture for 2022 will be held on the afternoon of Monday 17 October.

The keynote speaker delivering the lecture will be Dr James Pedlar, Donald N. and Kathleen G. Bastion Chair of Wesley Studies and Associate Professor of Theology at Tyndale University in Toronto. He will be speaking on 'The Holy Spirit, Christian Unity and Church Union: A Challenge from Samuel Chadwick'.

The formal response will be from Rev Dr George Bailey. This online event is free to attend, and you can book via the Cliff College website.

The Bible, Gender and Church Research Centre

This research centre launched in 2019, co-led by Dr Kirsi Cobb from Cliff College and Dr Holly Morse from the University of Manchester.



The centre has hosted several lectures on subjects, including how preachers can approach difficult passages of Scripture sensitively and the weaponisation of the Bible in domestic and home contexts, and has also led and supported short courses offered by Cliff College on women in the Bible.

In spring 2022, Dr Cobb and Dr Morse were awarded a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council to run several events as well as work on publications around the theme of 'Abusing God: Reading the Bible in the #MeToo Age'.

This project aims to provide a platform to connect academics, church, and charity practitioners, in order to develop new research into the intersection between Scripture and the lived experience of Christian survivors.

The first event from this series will be held on Saturday 10 September and will be on the theme of coercive control. Those interested can attend for free, either on-site at the University of Manchester or online; please see the Cliff College website for details.

Generation: The Centre for the Study of Youth, Children and Families Mission and Ministry

Generation aims to provide a space for research and conversations on evangelical approaches to ministry and mission among youth, children and families, including a focus on how these groups are integrated into the life of the church.

Cliff's newest research centre runs three forums per year on topics including children's spirituality and evangelism to youth, children and families in a secular age. This centre is led by Dr Gareth Crispin and Dr Ed Mackenzie, both from Cliff College.

The next Generation forum will take place on the morning of Monday 17 October, and is titled, 'How does class shape mission and ministry to youth, children and families?'.

Presentations on this significant question for mission and ministry will be given by Gemma Wraight and Erica Payne. This will be a free event hosted at Cliff College with the option to attend online, and booking is available via the Cliff College website.

Cliff College now has three research centres, each one representing core research and teaching interests within the life of the College.

MEMORIES OF Cliff

We sat down with our volunteer archivists, Russ Houghton and Clive Taylor, to ask about their experiences and memories of Cliff College...



What was your first involvement with Cliff?

Clive: The first contact with Cliff was around 1952 when two student evangelists visited my local church.

Then I came along to the anniversary weekend and volunteered alongside students, setting up beds and marquees for those who would come to visit.

Russ: My first contact was also through Cliff Missions – they visited my church when I was around 11, after which I also started volunteering for the anniversary and Derwent weeks.

After I retired, Howard Mellor asked me to come to Cliff and sort some old photographs out. I found out later that it was reported to the committee that Howard Mellor had appointed a part-time archivist!

In 2004, by which time I'd enlisted Clive's help, Cliff was expanding its archive to cover the whole of Methodism.

What sort of things have you acquired since then?

Russ: Various books, documents, photographs and items. The oldest thing we have is a 1577 translation of Luther's Psalms and Galatians.

In the initial days we received a lot of donations of items; Clive did some online research and found more items that way. We also have original manuscripts from the time of John Wesley, and fossils from Thomas Cook's missionary travels.

Clive: We also have craft items from all over the world, again from travelling Joyful News evangelists across China and Africa. Necklaces and trinkets and that sort of thing.

Do you have a favourite piece of archive history?

Clive: The items relating to Billy Graham's visit in 1954. That event caused chaos for the local area! They drafted in extra policemen to control traffic on the roads, there were several hundred coaches...



Russ: The coaches were queuing from Grindleford to Calver!

Clive: The visit to Cliff was one of the few events on the crusade that was not entirely organised by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), and the only one accepted from an individual body rather than a group of churches.

We think he was invited through a former student who had strong connections with the BGEA.

Russ: What I love about the archive is the connection between the history of the College and the ongoing work of the church. We have a letter from France from a Cliff student serving in the Armed Forces in 1917, who was using his Cliff training to bless and encourage his troop.

We've had people from Australia and Ireland research Cliff students and their influence on the work of the church in those countries. The impact of Cliff's training can be seen on and on through the decades.

What do you think makes Cliff such a special place?

Russ: The reliance on a Bible based, evangelistic approach, and on prayer. Cliff was born in prayer – they even prayed over the name of the newspaper that became Joyful News.

Clive: Cliff is the only academic theological college that is also evangelistic.

There are colleges that concentrate on evangelism and mission, and there are colleges that concentrate on the academic side. But Cliff has the distinction of being a combination of both – and that's not always easy, but it shows how God can work in such things as well.

What's your hope and prayer for the College?

Clive: That it may continue its evangelistic and missional witness.

Russ: More of God's grace and power, and that we never lose sight of the fact that we're dependent on those things.

We also have original manuscripts from the time of John Wesley, and fossils from Thomas Cook's missionary travels.



PROGRAMME REPORTS...

Cliff College Report – BA (Hons) Theology and Ministry

It's been a great privilege overseeing the BA Theology and Ministry programme this year, after taking on this role last September. After a period of online learning that resulted from the various lockdowns, it's been a real joy to be back together on site, teaching face-to-face and meeting in person rather than through screens.

We've also been joined this year by the addition of a new faculty member; Rev Dr Jeff Conklin-Miller. Jeff has taken up the post of Learning Lead and Tutor in Evangelism and Missiology and has been a great addition to the staff team on this programme as well as in other programmes at the College.

As usual, our course includes a number of 'core' and 'optional' units for each year, with core units including an Introduction to Theology (L4), Mission and Evangelism (L5) and the dissertation unit (L6).

The dissertation, at the end of the final year, is a fantastic opportunity for students to pursue topics that are of particular interest to them.

This year includes themes as diverse as engaging young people in the church, Christianity in the Simpsons, faith and the law in Galatians and the question of whether Christianity and yoga are compatible.

The community formed at the College is also a significant part of the student experience, and as a cohort we met in both semesters for some socials. Jennie, a second-year student, also shared with me how much she values the daily coffee times at Cliff.

As she put it, 'It's a great opportunity to chat to lecturers, other staff members and people who are on site for just the week'.

While the learning that we pursue and the community at Cliff are key parts of the student experience, we are also passionate about forming students in the way of Jesus.

Yvonne, who will graduate this November with her BA, shared with me how significant Cliff has been for her own spiritual formation: 'My faith has flourished, and I feel more confident in myself as a child of God...I feel I have grown so much.' It's this that we hope and pray will be true for all who study at Cliff!

While the learning that we pursue and the community at Cliff are key parts of the student experience, we are also passionate about forming students in the way of Jesus.

Dr Ed Mackenzie,
BA Theology
and Ministry
Programme Lead

Cliff Today – BA (Hons) Mission and Ministry

The BA Mission and Ministry (BAMM) programme trains students to engage with practice theologically and think theologically about practice. Let me introduce you to three of our wonderful students.



Joy Heard
(third year Youth Ministry student)

'I can't believe that my time at Cliff is nearly over – it's flown by! The past three years at Cliff have equipped me with the skills, knowledge and experience that I need to serve God in my ministry.

Reflecting back, I can see the ways that I have changed and how this has positively affected my ministry.

Throughout my time studying at Cliff, I have felt pushed academically to research and better understand important aspects of ministry that I had not previously thought about.

I can now see the great importance of equipping leaders with good biblical and practical knowledge.'



Sue Rockhill
(third year Family Ministry student)

'I made quite a lot of fuss about whether I would manage third year. Eventually, I realised that I wanted to continue because it is just such a privilege to learn more. This is about the foundations of my faith, after all!

I have really enjoyed being in the classroom with students of different ages and backgrounds. My school-based family support work is very practical and often solitary, and so being able to consider the important deeper stuff that lies behind it – with others – has been great.'



Richard Funnell
(first year Youth Ministry student)

'As a church leader, this programme has supported me tremendously.

I was originally worried that this commitment would detract from the mission and ministry I am already involved in; however, the flexible nature and the wealth of experience from the lecturers have made it anything but.

I have been challenged to reflect on the way I work, the person that I am and study how all this fits into God's wider purpose. This process has made me a better practitioner.

Although I don't have an academic background, the teaching, feedback and support has been great and I look forward to each of my teaching weeks.'

There are lows as well as highs for all BAMM students – and, therefore, for the staff who support them – but Joy, Sue and Richard show how important intentional practical theological education and reflection are.

Dr Gareth Crispin, BA Mission and Ministry Programme Lead

A large photograph at the top of the page shows two men in conversation. On the left, an older man with glasses and a blue jacket is looking towards the right. On the right, a younger man with a beard, wearing an orange long-sleeved shirt, is looking back at him with his hand near his chin in a thoughtful pose. They are in a room with large windows in the background.

PROGRAMME REPORTS CONT...

MA Mission

Another great year on the MA Mission, with students delighted to be back on-site again! A real strength of the programme is the lively blend of students from different cultural and ecclesial backgrounds, including a Salvation Army officer in the Midlands, a Methodist youth worker in Kenya, a charismatic church planter in Holland, a Scottish lecturer in Cumbria, an Australian missionary in Botswana, a Baptist pastor in Surrey, a Pentecostal preacher in Wales and an Anglican evangelist in County Durham. This certainly makes for some lively missional discussions, to say nothing of the prayer times!

It's wonderful hearing students tell us how much the MA is already bearing fruit in their missional contexts. Reza Jaffari, an Iranian convert from Islam, found our biblical theology units especially helpful for his ministry to train the many new Christian leaders emerging in Iran. Johnson Kadarkarai, who leads a missionary organisation in India facing significant persecution, has found in our evangelism units numerous insights to face those challenges with renewed vision.

Closer to home we have Shelley Logan, who said she'd never do an MA in a million years but is now halfway through a fascinating dissertation on Forest Church ecclesiology; and Bev Smerdon, who took our creative writing

course, saying how it's rekindled her love for reading and stirred fresh ideas for ministry.

To match our interesting range of students we also bring in some interesting visiting speakers. On our Leadership and Holy Spirit unit we heard from Jonathan Conrathe, whose incredible testimonies of supernatural healing and radical evangelism were stirring, challenging, and somewhat reminiscent of early Methodism.

This year we also ran a new unit, Preaching and the Digitised Mind, where we discussed the impact of the digital world on how preaching is practiced, imagined and heard (or not heard!). We had the likes of Pete Phillips reminding us of the great opportunities of digital mission, as well as other voices reflecting theologically on the deeper challenges of digital technology upon the future of preaching and the life of the Church.

Every now and then, I'm encouraged that former MA students get in touch to enquire about further postgraduate study. They often recognise the distinctive ethos of our learning environment which fosters deep academic reflection without compromising a living and vibrant evangelical faith.

Dr Aaron Edwards, MA Mission Programme Lead





Postgraduate Research

This past year and more have been an exciting time on the PhD programme, with higher than ever numbers of students completing and graduating, but also a bumper new intake.

Among our newer students has been the Anglican parish priest, Rev John Armstrong. He has got off to a fine start in his studies of the ideas of Lesslie Newbigin and how these might apply within local parish ministry.

He recently had this to say about his time at Cliff so far: 'I've discovered that doing PhD work part-time alongside parish ministry is a great way to deepen your passion for your topic.

However, it requires organisation and perseverance. Already I am grateful for the wise guidance of my two supervisors, Ben and Aaron.

If you are in my sort of position and are considering a PhD, I would recommend it. I would say that already my studies have brought a fresh dimension to my ministry. I've got a long way to go; but it's onwards and upwards.'

There are still spaces available on the programme; if you have an idea for an area of in-depth research that you think would be worth spending 3–6 years on (depending on whether you are full-time or part-time), do get in touch and we can see whether we can match your project to the right expert supervisor here at Cliff.

Dr Ben Pugh,
Research Programme Lead





PROGRAMME REPORTS CONT...

Short Courses

It has been great to welcome more students back to the Cliff short course programme in 2021–22. Not that we didn't have students already – hundreds of students have signed up to our online courses during the pandemic, with our Certificate in Parenting for Faith being especially popular.

Also, throughout the last few years, we have been supporting students across the country on courses delivered with Cliff College's partners at the Message Academy, School of Leadership and the UK Church Administrators Network (UCAN), as well as supporting students studying in local church placements. But in 2021–22 we have also welcomed back onto the Cliff site students on the Worship; Leading and Preaching in a Year course, our Certificates in Pioneer Ministry and Children's Ministry and many more. It was so good to see lecture rooms full again!

Weekend training has covered subjects such as Ministry Among Older People, Pastoral Care, a new Lent Creative Arts retreat and Women in the Bible. It was also good to see Godly Play training back on-site (one of the very last on-site courses we welcomed in March 2020). An online listening and trauma day was shared by over 40 participants and the Diploma in Children's Ministry course over in Denmark gathered another 20 students to learn and share together.

The last couple of months have included our Luke in the Holy Land study tour in Israel/Palestine and two summer schools. What about the year ahead?

Do have a look around the short course webpages, as we are always adding something new, and already have plans to add new courses to the existing list; lots of different opportunities!

'Thank you for a fantastic and superb week of learning, reflections, lectures and fellowship.'

Kerry, Pioneer Ministry course.

'Be prepared to grow in the Spirit.'
Graham, Worship; Leading and Preaching course.

'It was great to be on campus and absolutely enjoyed meeting everyone. I truly believe all church workers should have the chance at such an event.'

Patty Lou, Family Ministry course.

'I have got such a huge amount out of doing the assignment, it's been a real journey for me and has been very beneficial in my ministry to children and also in being a mum.'

Rachel, Children's Ministry course.

Ian White, Short Course Programme Lead

It was so good to see lecture rooms full again!



CLIFF FESTIVAL

PRESENTS

EDEN RESTORED

**FRIDAY 26TH - MONDAY 29TH
MAY 2023**

Bookings open Saturday 4th June 2022.

CLIFF COLLEGE

MISSION AND EVANGELISM AT CLIFF



Ali Johnson,
Mission and
Evangelism team
co-ordinator and
Digital Evangelist

What are your roles at Cliff?

Ali: I'm the Mission and Evangelism team co-ordinator and Digital Evangelist. I have a real interest in church communications and am passionate about digitally communicating what the church does and also spreading the gospel in a digital environment. This job allows me to do both of those things, which is super exciting.

Richard: My role is Young Evangelism Officer – it's a partnership role between the Methodist Church and Cliff College. Prior to this role I was working in a school on behalf of a football club, doing mentoring and coaching sessions. The young people I was working with found out that I was a Christian, and their questions prompted me to look for a job where I could speak with young people more openly about Jesus.

The Mission & Evangelism team is a new team – tell me about what it does.

Ali: Our dual role as a team is to equip others and to support one another in our own missional and evangelistic work. Within the team we have people involved with the Cliff Year, others involved in missional work with local



Richard Oppong-Boateng,
Young Evangelism Officer

churches; we also help oversee the ONE Programme (the Methodist Church's gap year programme, with 20+ year out opportunities for 18–30s in mission and evangelism), help coordinate Festival and contribute to the academic side of the College. It's a really varied spectrum of work but it's all centred around equipping people for and doing mission and evangelism.

Do you think that dual focus is what makes Cliff special?

Richard: Absolutely. What makes Cliff stand out to me is that we have the teaching element and the practical element.

We teach mission and evangelism, but we're not just teaching it – we have a department dedicated to doing it. That definitely drew me to this role.

Cliff's history is all about mission and evangelism – what do you think this looks like in our future?

Ali: Mission and evangelism are Cliff's commission and calling – we stand on the shoulders of giants of faith.

In many ways the future is no different to our history; we want to encourage and equip others to be sent out into the world to tell people about Jesus, because we think that is the foremost calling of the church. All our work – with young people, in digital, the Cliff Year, lecturing, Festival – is about bringing people together to teach them and to send them out into the world. That will continue to be Cliff's calling for its whole future, and we're excited to understand what that looks like in today's world.

Richard, what has your first year in post looked like?

Richard: It's been a lot of networking, meeting people and building relationships with organisations and churches. There have been opportunities to run workshops and to represent the College at events, including encouraging young people into evangelism and to explore training for that at Cliff.

It's exciting that we can be such a resource for the Methodist Church in stoking that fire for evangelism among young people.

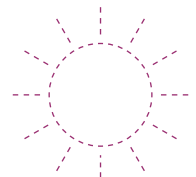
What are some of the other things going on in the team that people may not know about?

Ali: The ONE Programme is a really exciting part of what we do. It's an incredible thing to have young people out in communities doing mission and evangelism – and for the church to be excited enough and committed enough to pay them!

We're also reimagining College-wide mission, exploring how we can get people engaged in local opportunities that benefit them and the churches and organisations they work with.

And Festival is a huge part of our strategy. We see that as the place where people can come and be equipped and enabled to go back into their local environment to do mission and evangelism, and then come back and rejoice with everyone at what God is doing up and down the country.

In many ways the future is no different to our history; we want to encourage and equip others to be sent out into the world to tell people about Jesus.



MISSION PARTNERS

Among the Cliff residential community this year have been groups of mission partners and their families, who have been with us to train as they prepare to go and serve with partner churches across the world.

*Foxes have
holes, and
birds of the
air have nests;
but the Son
of Man has
nowhere to
lay his head.*

The mission partners themselves have come from a range of countries and backgrounds.

In autumn 2021, we hosted Ray and Karen Borg from Lancashire, who were preparing to move to the Limousin region of France; Melissa Newell, who was transitioning from her work as a language teacher in Northern Ireland to missionary work in Ecuador with the United Evangelical Methodist Church there; and Annekathrin and Matthias Buchold, along with their three children, from Leipzig in Germany, whose destination was Johannesburg in South Africa.

These mission partners stayed with us for three months, going on to their new homes and countries in December 2021 and January 2022.

Brad and Rosie Goddon-Smith, two recent Cliff graduates, also undertook their mission partner training with us this year, leaving with their six-month-old son at the start of the summer to serve the Methodist Church in Bavaria, eastern Germany.

More recently, we've been joined by Chris and Linda Haines, who are preparing to move to the island of Utila to serve with the United Methodist Mission in Honduras (UMMH), and Sarah Lowe, who is training for missionary work in Sri Lanka.





The presence of the mission partners at Cliff has been a real blessing to our residential community. They have been involved in many different aspects of our life together, contributing to worship, leading prayers and communion, helping to establish the Cliff choir and joining in our June pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

It has been humbling to journey with them as they have followed the strong sense of calling that they have, and to see the heart that each of them has to make Jesus known in their respective contexts.

Our mission partners remind us of the call to costly discipleship. The call to follow Jesus requires us to seek the kingdom above all else.

Matthew 8.19–20 reminds us that it can be easy to say, 'I will follow you wherever you go,' but much harder to confront the reality of leaving behind everything we know and hold dear.

The words of Jesus in reply to the scribe in Matthew pull us up short: 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head'.

As these individuals and families go out in the power of the Spirit to live and work to God's praise and glory, we ask our Cliff family to hold each of them in prayer. May they know God's protection and blessing on them and on their ministries, and may they run with perseverance the race that is set before them, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

It has been humbling to journey with them as they have followed the strong sense of calling that they have.

Dr Richard Saunders-Hindley,
Head of Vocation,
Formation and
Discipleship





Rev Ashley Cooper, Principal

CLIFF GOING FORWARDS



Cliff College, when it opened more than 100 years ago, was passionate about mission and evangelism. While we have adapted and changed over the years, responding to the needs of the church and the changing world around us, our central identity remains a passion for sharing good news with a world that needs to hear it.

Students don't just come to Cliff to study for degrees and qualifications, they come and engage with mission alongside and through that academic study. Through the expanding work of the College's mission and evangelism team, we're partnering with local churches in mission and supporting and equipping our students for mission.

We want to ensure that mission is at the heart of our academic offering as well as being something we enable across the country.

While the past two years have been challenging, and we haven't been able to offer some of our students the experiences they would have had in other years, this period has also prompted us to look forwards and ask how we position ourselves for the future of theological education.

I hear from ministers and leaders of churches that the last two years have accelerated things – changes that may have happened five or ten years down the line have had to happen now.

And that's the same for us at Cliff; we may have been talking about hybrid courses or developing our online learning platform, but we've had to very quickly do a significant amount of work in these areas. What may have taken us five or six years has instead been done in two.

We now have a first-class online learning platform that positions us for a hybrid learning space; enabling students in the UK to access our programmes in more ways but also enabling us to offer training across the world.

Over the last year we've also reviewed our relationship with the Methodist Church, examining what it means to be an institution of learning within the life of the church.

We've developed a shared mission plan and strategy for learning which will speak into the needs of the church right now. That includes offering training for local lay pastors, folk in leadership who need an undergirding in pastoral and theological training.

Of course, the training we offer will serve those beyond the walls of the Methodist Church as well. All denominations need training in pastoral care, evangelism, pioneering, and we're excited to be able to offer that across the whole breadth of the church.

In my fourth year as Principal of Cliff College, I find myself excited about the same things I was excited about on day one – especially now we're seeing them become reality. In the coming years you'll see some significant developments in Cliff's programmes as we respond to the needs of the church around the UK and across the world. This will mean changes in both what we offer and in how people access Cliff's education and training.

You'll also see Cliff on the ground across the church more. Ultimately it is local church that will change the world. Cliff's role is to train people to go into local churches and communities to bring that transformation, enabled by the power and the Spirit of God. That engagement with the local church is something I'm really excited about.

One of the things that makes Cliff unique is its heritage – we've maintained that same emphasis on mission and evangelism throughout our existence. Cliff is passionate about the same story: the story of a gospel of grace and love, a gospel of forgiveness and good news. Cliff is uniquely placed to tell that story and to train people to tell that story in a Wesleyan context.

The message that 'the gospel is for all and can be accessed by all and offers a welcome to all' is so important in the world in which we find ourselves; it's a story the church needs to tell, and it's a story we are ready to help the church tell in new and exciting ways.

Ultimately it is local church that will change the world. Cliff's role is to train people to go into local churches and communities to bring that transformation.



PRAYING FOR CLIFF

SUNDAY

- Pray that the College will continue to proclaim 'Christ for All, All for Christ' through every aspect of its expanding work and witness.
- Pray that the College will use its resources of people and finance well, so that we will continue to develop and grow active disciples and ministers of the gospel.

MONDAY

- Pray for all those who share in the oversight of the work of the College and especially for the Cliff College Committee with their important decision making, the principal and the senior leadership of the College.
- Pray for all our members of staff; the teaching faculty and programme leads, the pastoral, administration and support teams, mission and evangelism team, operations team and all who offer their skills in many areas to support and develop the work of the College.

TUESDAY

- Pray for our students who live on-site at the College – a mixture of BA Theology and Ministry, BA Mission and Ministry and Cliff Year students. Pray that they would know Christ more fully and follow him more closely as they live, study and worship together as part of our residential community.

WEDNESDAY

- Pray for our students who study remotely on our BA courses and our postgraduate programmes. These are full- and part-time students across the country and around the world; pray that as they engage with us online, their learning would translate to practice in the mission fields in which they live and work.

THURSDAY

- Pray for all participants and students on our training and development courses delivered on-site, online and around the UK, and for their lives, ministries, communities and churches to be developed and enriched by their studies.
- Pray for our conference and retreat centres, for our B&B and conference guests, and for those staff who look to offer hospitality and welcome to guests on site.

FRIDAY

- Pray for all the preparation involved in the planning for Festival 2023 and Festival at Home, and for our team as they work to make the event safe, accessible and engaging for everyone.
- Pray for our international work across the world and for our partners and students. Pray that God would bless and expand their ministries because of the training they receive.

SATURDAY

- Pray for our community outreach, that we would find open doors and hearts in our local area and that our neighbours would come to know Jesus and would be transformed by the Spirit through our outreach.
- Pray for those who engage with our online community through tuning in to morning prayers and celebration online or participate in Festival at Home, that God would be at work in their lives even though we may rarely or never see them face to face.

A GIFT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

At Cliff College we continually give thanks to God for the prayerful and generous support of our many friends and former students. This support comes in a number of different ways:

- **Volunteers, as evidenced by the work done at Festival and in archives**
- **Regular commitment to prayer**
- **Financial gifts and legacies**

In terms of financial support there are various ways to donate to the work of the College.

Single gifts can be made by responding to this article in Cliff Today or by visiting www.cliffcollege.ac.uk/donate

Regular monthly giving can be arranged by setting up a standing order with your bank. If you pay income tax, don't forget to complete a Gift Aid declaration to enable the College to claim an additional 25% of your donation from the government.

Legacies are an important way of supporting the future work of the College and can be made as a specific amount or as a percentage of your estate.

If you have not made a will, we advise using a solicitor or other qualified person as the process can be complicated and it is important to be accurate in specifying your wishes. An existing will can be amended by adding a codicil, which is an official alteration to your will.

For further information about making donations or to speak in confidence about how to include Cliff College in your will, please contact the principal, on **01246 584209**, by email at principal@cliffcollege.ac.uk or by writing to Cliff College, Calver, Hope Valley, Derbyshire, S32 3XG.

Thank you for your continuing support of the work of the College.

Rev Ashley Cooper, Principal

GIFT AID DECLARATION FOR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE DONATIONS

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If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return and ask HMRC to adjust your tax code.

We'd love to engage with you on social media too!

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CLIFF COLLEGE

Cliff College
Calver
Hope Valley
Derbyshire
S32 3XG

01246 584200

reception@cliffcollege.ac.uk

www.cliffcollege.ac.uk



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