



THE CHURCH MAKING CHANGE DIGITALLY

What would it look like to be an online presence for the gospel? Introducing the Change Makers Media project, a new digital Baptist missional resource to empower the wider Baptist family to be a part of the digital revolution

“We have to adapt to culture and community – and the biggest growing community is online,” says Hayley Young, Regional Minister Co Team Leader for the Southern Counties Baptist Association.

“53m people in the UK have social media. We’ve gone from paper to platform, scribes to selfies.

“How do we reach them?”

Hayley, Baptists Together President 2022-23, is part of a small team of creatives and digital enthusiasts behind the Change Makers Media project.

Through the production of high-quality films, a stock library relevant to a British Baptist context and appropriate training materials, Change Makers is seeking to aid churches and missional communities in creating and sharing content that inspires change.

Alongside Hayley are digital missionary Hannah Fleming-Hill, South West Baptist Association regional minister Carl Smethurst, and Baptist minister and filmmaker Andy Thomas, who leads The Fuelcast ministry.

They all share a mutual passion for using digital media to engage with social justice and gospel sharing, and want to help us be a missional and prophetic voice.

The website (changemakersmedia.uk) explains how Change Makers exists for three reasons:

- to embrace the digital revolution by providing a Baptist voice to local, national and global issues
- to provide teaching and training on producing and editing films that can be used for mission and ministry
- to engage with social media by being a social influence for the Gospel in a Baptist context

This means the project has several strands. The team are producing several film series that will each provide a Baptist perspective on a global issue. The first film explores the cost of living, while others on AI and the climate crisis are in the pipeline.

Accompanying each series are a set of resources, including conversation questions to help engage the local community in reflecting on the issues covered: what they mean and how Christ's presence can be seen in the situation.

The films can be used to stimulate conversation around social justice issues – issues that matter to a local community, explains Carl. It is hoped they will engage those beyond the walls of the church.

"We are praying that God by his Spirit may stir the hearts of those not yet of faith, that the heart of God is something they engage with," he says.

"Our absolute belief is that people's lives will be transformed."

Hayley adds: "There are two generations that haven't been brought up in church, so what we introduce them to online is so important.

"That's why we are creating these film series of issues that impact the community. They can be used online and help empower people in Baptist churches to become digital missionaries."



Another aspect is the empowering and supporting of others to create their own material in their own context to use for mission and ministry.

During production, the team is making a 'fly on the wall' documentary covering initial storyboarding and ideas, through to practical tips on filming, editing and how to be led by God while doing it. This behind the scenes look gives an insight into the film-making process, encouraging and equipping others to produce films. This will be part of a Church Video Training Hub, with plenty of other helpful film-making resources for churches, such as high quality stock footage and 'how to' guides.

'Creating films or short videos for your church can help tell

the story of who you are as an organisation, what you do as a community and the reasons why you do it,' the team states.

'This could be sharing testimonies from your church family, offering discipleship reflections or sharing the latest on your missional projects. It may be that you're creating content to share internally to your church family or externally to your local community.'

"We believe God is raising up digital missionaries," says Carl. "Over lockdown the Spirit of God started to inspire people to share their stories to challenge social issues. I sense God stirring the pot – people are being raised up – this is their gift. So we want to raise up and support digital missionaries who can communicate with people in their community."

"Digital gives us a new mission field," says Hannah, a Creative Content Strategist who helps churches get online.

"We're all connected with different forms of communications. God can truly work through different forms of media.

"Let's create content that stimulates, connects and inspires connection."





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Hayley Young is Regional Minister Co-Team Leader for the Southern Counties Baptist Association



Carl Smethurst is a Regional Minister for the South West Baptist Association



Hannah Fleming-Hill is a Digital Missioner and a Creative Content Strategist helping churches to get online



Andy Thomas is a Baptist minister and filmmaker, who leads The Fuelcast ministry