

Podcast – Season 2 – Clare Hooper

Season Intro

	Music
Jane	Hello, I'm Jane Day, Centenary Development Enabler for Baptists Together
Helen	And I'm Helen Cameron, Research Fellow at the Centre for Baptist Studies at Regent's Park College Oxford. Together we are the co-leaders of Project Violet.
Jane	Welcome to Season 2 of the Project Violet podcast. Project Violet is a research project investigating women's experiences in ministry whilst developing women ministers. We are trying to understand better the theological, missional and structural obstacles women ministers face and identify ways forward.
Helen	In this second season, we will introduce you to some of the women who have taken part in the project and the research they have done.
Jane	We hope that listening to these episodes will help you engage with the findings of the project which can be found on the Project Violet website.

Interview – Clare Hooper

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Helen and Clare	<p>Helen Cameron In this episode, I'm talking to Clare Hooper. Welcome, Clare. What is your current ministry role?</p> <p>Clare Hooper I'm a Co-Team Leader, with Haley Young, at Southern Counties Baptist Association. And I'm also the coordinator for children's youth and families learning at Bristol Baptist College.</p> <p>Helen Cameron How did you enter Baptist ministry?</p> <p>Clare Hooper So back in the day, there was a thing called youth specialists. And that's how I found my way into Baptist ministry. Because when I became a Christian, I always wanted to work with young people. And it's, I remember being like, in sixth form, saying that I wanted to get a Bible college. And that was just, yeah, I wanted to work with young people. And though, because they had youth specialism, I found my shape of ministry, and I – flicking back – gosh, if that wasn't there, I might, it might have been harder for me to find my way into Baptist ministry. So I'm really pleased that they had that sort of shape of ministry back in the day. So that's how I found my sort of feet. And I was</p>

worshiping or was belonging, part of a youth group in a Baptist church. So that's why the Baptists were obviously a very familiar kind of family for me.

Helen Cameron

What sort of training did you have to do then for that youth route? Was it different from the standard ministerial training?

Clare Hooper

When I started, I did JNC, which is your secular professional qualification in youth work. And the organization that was running that was called Centre for Youth Ministry – it's CYM and is still going. And I was the first cohort at the Oxford delivery centre for that. And then, because it wasn't a Baptist College, obviously, Bristol came in later, I had to go down the residential selection conference route, where I met people who I'm still friends with today.

Helen Cameron

What did you do for your research?

Clare Hooper

So it actually, it shifted a bit because originally, I was really like, I heard a woman say that she felt really celebrated by her association. And that really kind of struck me and I wanted, I wanted SCBA to be an association that celebrated women. And so to begin with, it was like, what does it look like for our association to celebrate women leaders, women ministers. But actually, it turns out that the women when I was chatting to them didn't really like that idea of being celebrated more than anybody else. And so it shifted to: What does affirming women leaders in our association look like?

Helen Cameron

And why was that important to you as a topic?

Clare Hooper

Well, I want everyone to know that there is a place for them to belong, and that they are valued and that they are loved – and any space that we create that enables that to happen, I wanted to be part of that. So I wanted to hear from women's kind of experiences. And I knew already on the grapevine that we hadn't always been so great. Even though we were trying our best, we haven't always been so great in some of the spaces that we held as an association. And so I wanted to listen and to hear, and to see what we might do differently.

Helen Cameron

What approach did you take to your research?

Clare Hooper

So it had like a couple of phases. And the first phase was making sure I got the language right. So that just involves running, like, small groups of women. And I asked them the same question and got some really great feedback, which I then brought into the second stage, which for me was slightly the more exciting one, because it was a bit more freestyle. And I used Lego. And so there's a method of using Lego called Lego Serious Play. And it's because it uses metaphor, and metaphor is such a great way of helping people kind of begin to articulate their

	<p>thinking because it's not just dependent on words, but you're creating something and that of that creation. The women could tell me a bit about what they were experiencing and what they were hoping for.</p> <p>Helen Cameron It's a long time since I came across a Lego brick so you're just going to have to unpack that a bit for me when you say Lego Serious Play. What's actually going on in the room when you when you do that?</p> <p>Clare Hooper There was a lot of Lego. One of the participants was absolutely lit up by this because she was a proper Lego freak. And in a beautiful way, not in a freaky way. And, I just asked them to – with that question of what does affirming look like for us, as an association – asked them to build something that modelled that. And we did some sort of stuff around metaphor. So we had a go playing with the Lego and getting ourselves familiar with it and used to it in that way. And then just asking them to speak to the model that they've created. And it was just, just so much stuff came out, it was brilliant.</p> <p>Helen Cameron Why do you want people to read your report?</p> <p>Clare Hooper I've been thinking about that a little bit. And for me we're all involved in hosting and facilitating spaces. Or if we're not, we're actually part of groups. And I think all of us have a part to play in how we hold those spaces well, and so maybe I'm hoping that by reading the report, it will provoke people to think about, actually, how am I facilitating the spaces that I find myself in? And what sort of group member am I? Because we can all be, we can all help with the culture of a group for good or for ill. And so I think it's quite practical in that way. So hopefully, everyone will be able to think, oh, what might I be able to do differently that enables more people to participate and more voices to be heard?</p> <p>Helen Cameron Thank you, Clare.</p>
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Season Outro

Helen	Thank you for listening to this episode of the Project Violet podcast. We invite you to go to the website and download the reports if you have not yet done so. www.projectviolet.org.uk
Jane	And don't forget to tell others about the Project Violet podcast. You can follow us on Facebook and X formerly Twitter.
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