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Youth faith groups have their say

Were you as surprised as I was when Dizzee Rascal's single "Holiday" topped the charts this week, replacing "Sexy Chick" by David Guetta and keeping the Black Eyed Peas off No. 1?

Is such a sentence evidence of a mature man who is young at heart? Or is it the writings of a deluded grey haired gent desperate to cling on to any credibility he may have fleetingly enjoyed with the Big Brother generation?

We talked a great deal to and about young people on this week's programme. I visited the Blackburn Diocesan Youth Conference to learn the 45 delegates were discussing some of the big issues facing the world today and mixing those deliberations with a healthy dose of worship, fellowship and visits to the pub for comedy and karaoke.

They seemed to be loving every minute of it and Craig Abbot, the Diocesan Youth Leader, told me the gatherings are vital to encourage young people to return to their churches and bring a younger influence to much of the work there.

Science and culture

We also heard many of the county's young Muslims would like more people to listen to what they have to say and for the media to take a more accurate view of them.

Sughra Ahmed is a young Muslim from east Lancashire who now works for the Islamic Foundation which is based in Leicester. Sughra has spent a year listening to the views of young Muslims and has written *Seen and Not Heard: Voices of Young British Muslims*.

It brings together the views, aspirations, and frustrations held by young British Muslims of over 15 different ethnicities in Britain.

In another item we learned that the rich legacy of Islamic advances in science and culture is available free to schoolchildren following plans by a leading educational foundation. 1001 Inventions is the brainchild of the Foundation for Science Technology and Civilisation - a network of academics dedicated to debunking the myth of the so-called "Dark Ages of Civilisation".

The foundation has campaigned for school curricula to acknowledge the scientific achievements of Muslim civilisation for more than a decade and aims to show that for 1000 years the religious and the scientific were comfortable bedfellows in the early Muslim world.

The project plans to deliver at least 3000 copies of the book to UK schools by the end of October.

Here I Am To Worship is the banner for new forms of worship at Wheatley Lane Methodist Church in Burnley and it has to be said that they are trying out a few things!

Comedic fix

The Reverend Gareth Higgs told us that for the next six weeks the congregation will worship in the style of high mass, café church, Quaker silence, worship in the Taize tradition, multi-sensory



Joe chats to Craig Abbot, the Diocesan Youth Leader

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worship.

On the Fylde, the Wyre and Central Lancashire the campaign is to "Walk With Me" as parishioners walk 20 miles a day to raise money to pay for projects which will get a better understanding of people with learning difficulties and to embrace them better into churches.



The Reverend Gareth Higgs is trying a few new things!

I mustn't forget the Chairman of the North Lancashire District of Methodists, the Right Reverend Stephen Poxon, who was asking that Methodists prayed and protested to help their colleagues in Fiji who are being suppressed by the Fijian government.

With The Edinburgh Festival just having come to a close, where thousands of performers attempted to turn laughs into profit at the largest arts festival in the world, you may be looking for somewhere to get your comedic fix.

Our main studio guest, the Reverend Mark Slaney, told us you can be funny, modern and feisty, without redress to a Chubby Brown wing in the comedic hospital. Mark supports the monthly Just Fair Laughs comedy night in Bamber Bridge where the comedy certificate is a cinema 12.

So a varied morning of discussion and debate. Whether you are of faith or not, it proved that spending a couple of hours with us on a Sunday morning at least keeps you young...ish!

Joe Wilson

Joe presents the faith programme on BBC Radio Lancashire from 6am each Sunday.

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