

Word in the City: Sharing the Bible with the Missing Generation

How do we get young adults who do not want to step foot in a church excited about studying the Bible? And is there any hope for getting this missing generation to church? In this workshop we will hear the story of the new model of bible study recently launched in Europe by Bible Study Fellowship (BSF). BSF is a global, in-depth bible study programme with 1,100+ locations worldwide and over 500,000 members, and its innovative Word in the City is designed to help 20-to-40-year olds of all backgrounds read the Bible, know God, serve the Church, and benefit the city (www.wordinthecity.org). We will focus on the journey of Word in the City so far in the UK and Ireland and its particular application to young adults.

Simon Lennox spent two years working with young people in North Belfast after achieving a MA in theology at Oxford University (2008). During this time his passion for people, fitness, and business grew, leading him into private equity for four years with a focus on attracting investment into Eastern Europe to alleviate financial, social, and spiritual poverty. It was this grounding in business and its transforming impact on people that inspired Simon to pursue his passion for the health and fitness industry, and in 2014 he founded BreakFit – a whole-person fitness coaching service for local communities, schools, and businesses. Simon is passionate about helping people read and study the Bible. He is the Director of Innovation at Bible Study Fellowship (www.bsfindernational.org) with the specific role of developing Word in the City (www.wordinthecity.org), an in-depth bible study programme designed to help 20 to 40-year-olds of all backgrounds read the Bible, know God, serve the Church, and benefit the City. Simon is married to Amy and lives in Northern Ireland.

I. Young Adults and the Bible

- A. The Missing Generation
- B. The Authority of Scripture
- C. The Cities of Europe

II. The Vision, Mission and Aims of Bible Study Fellowship

- A. Beginnings
- B. Global Impact
- C. BSF & Young Adults Today

III. The Story of Word in the City

- A. The Prayer of a Local Church
- B. Journey so far: 'keeping up with God'
- C. How it Works
- D. How it "Fits"
- E. Impact on the church and city

IV. Next Steps for Word in the City in Europe

- A. Global Reach
- B. UK, Ireland & across Europe
- C. City Launch Strategy

V. Conclusion

- A. An in-depth Bible study for all
- B. '*...looking for the city that is to come*' (Hebrews 13:14)

Suggested Readings:

A. Wetherall Johnson, *Created for Commitment: The Remarkable Story of the Founder of BSF* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1982)

Gregg and Deborah Shaw Lewis, *True to His Word: The Story of Bible Study Fellowship* (Biblica Publishing, 2010)

David Kinnaman (The Barna Group), *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith* (Baker Publishing Group, 2011)

George Barna & David Kinnaman (The Barna Group), *Churchless: Understanding Today's Unchurched and How to Connect with Them* (Tyndale House Publishers, 2014)

David Kinnaman & Gabe Lyons (The Barna Group), *Good Faith: Being a Christian when Society Thinks You're Irrelevant and Extreme* (Baker Publishing Group, 2016)