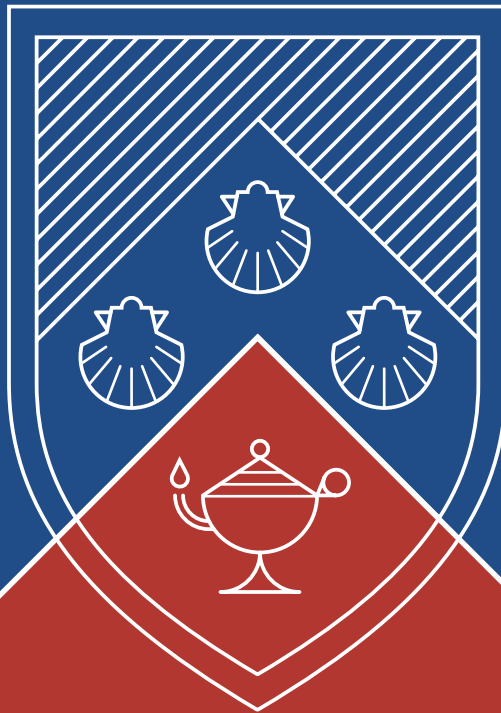


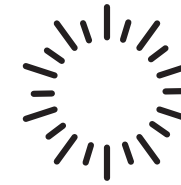
Southlands Methodist Trust

Research grants for the
University of Roehampton community



— S M T —





— S M T —

Throughout its 150-year history, Southlands College has been guided by its Methodist values of learning, service and the transformation of lives.

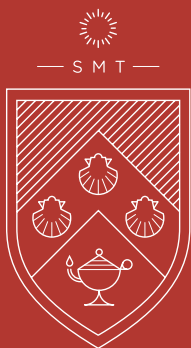
Today the **Southlands Methodist Trust (SMT)** continues to participate fully in the academic research and knowledge exchange (RKE) agenda of Southlands College, helping to shape academically rigorous, practical RKE activities across the University of Roehampton's departments, and especially focusing on work that most closely aligns with the priorities of the Methodist Church in Britain.

The charitable purposes of the Trust, its position within a collegiate university, and its reach into the broader learning life of the Church provide opportunities for creative and innovative interventions. Working so closely with institutions that share commitments to create meaningful change and transform lives, SMT interventions have the potential for significant impact on learning and practice.

This booklet highlights some of the innovative and transformative projects the Southlands Methodist Trust has supported over recent years, both through small grants and through the Susanna Wesley Foundation. These academic projects demonstrate collaboration with the University of Roehampton, the Methodist Church of Great Britain and other partners.



Southlands College
1872 150 years 2022



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Justice, dignity and solidarity in the Methodist Church

Exploring issues around diversity and inclusion is a continuing feature of the Susanna Wesley Foundation's (SWF) work. A 2018 project by Lia Shimada and Christopher Stephens explored diversity monitoring using free text boxes with the Methodist Church diaconate. Another project (2019) by Ermal Kirby looking at cultural diversity in the Methodist Church in Britain highlighted failings in racial justice. He organised a racial justice symposium in 2019 addressing the need for systemic change and drawing on methodologies around transformational change. The work has been extended to include other aspects of diversity and has included facilitation by Megan Seneque. A 2021 article in the Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change records a dialogue between those who have been working on these issues in the Methodist Church (jabsc.org/index.php/jabsc/article/view/1950/1647).

The Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Report, presented to the Methodist Conference in 2021, sets out how it intends to shift the culture and practices of the Methodist Church; the SWF community joined with many others in developing that strategy and are now taking a part in implementing it.

In 2022, the SWF is leading a piece of narrative research to track the journey of the Methodist Church into a more inclusive and equitable future, developing a process for collecting stories and equipping people to reflect on their experiences.

The Foundation also develops resources to encourage conversation and our booklet 'Diversity, Otherness and Privilege' and its supporting resources, produced by Communications and Resources Officer Emma Pavey, have been used in a range of faith contexts.

Researchers:



Dr Megan Seneque

Honorary Research Fellow,
Susanna Wesley Foundation



The Revd Ermal Kirby

Research Officer,
Susanna Wesley Foundation



Sue Miller

Director,
Susanna Wesley Foundation



Dr Lia Shimada

Senior Research Officer,
Susanna Wesley Foundation



Dr Christopher Stephens

Head of Southlands College





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Women imams in the “present”

This project consists of data collection, research and editing of the final chapter of my book *Women as Imams* (2020, IB Tauris), a highly original work based on primary (mainly Arabic) and secondary sources, including interviews and questionnaires. It is multidisciplinary, applying theological, historical and sociological approaches, and has a very specific focus on expressions of female ritual leadership and their link to social contexts. It critically examines the uses of the past to legitimise claims in favour of or against female leadership.

The last chapter specifically deals with present debates and practices in the Islamic world (Indonesia, Egypt, Malaysia, etc) and Muslim minority countries (Europe, USA, China, India). It also includes broader cases of female leadership such as women preachers, chaplains and educators.



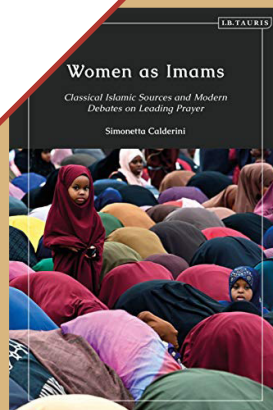
Researcher:

Dr Simonetta Calderini

School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Research Centre for Practical Philosophy,
Theology and Religion

“

The book has a very specific focus on expressions of female ritual leadership and their link to social contexts.



Narratives of masculinity: visual accounts of young men’s experience of fatherhood

This project aims to address the worrying rise of mental illness and suicide in young men between 18 and 35 in the UK. Greater understanding of the vulnerability of men is required to promote better adaptive strategies, expressiveness and help seeking behaviour in this population group, as well as to foster enhanced understanding in health professionals and the public at large. As such, this project innovatively examines an important developmental period in the formation of masculinity: when young men become fathers. It uses participatory methods, consultation and creative outputs towards achieving this objective, including image-generating workshops and audio reflections, art therapy-informed art-making processes and animation to present the findings.

Researcher:

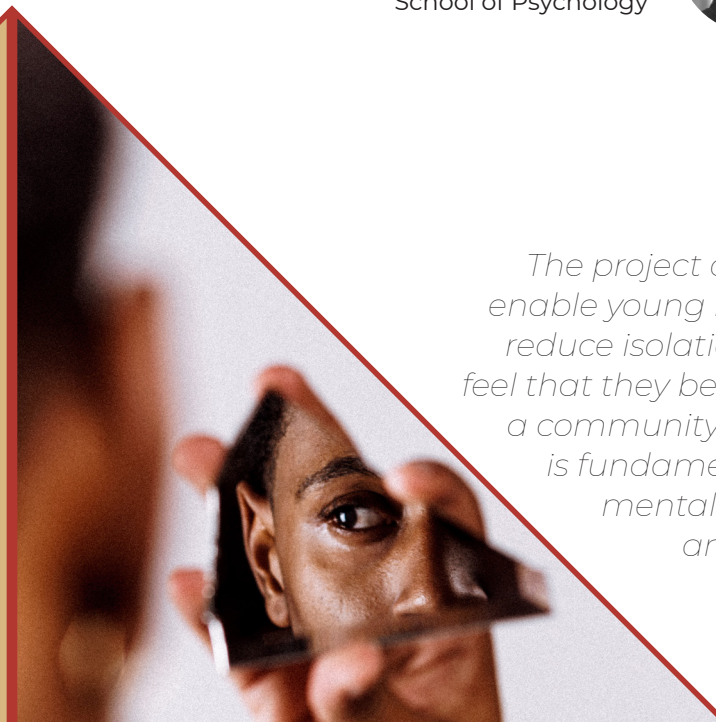
Dr Jonathan Isserow

School of Psychology



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The project aims to enable young men to reduce isolation and feel that they belong to a community, which is fundamental to mental health and well-being.



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Public engagement: diverse Shakespeare at Shakespeare's Globe

This project will enhance the dissemination and impact of the Engendering the Stage, a Leverhulme Trust research project into diverse early modern performers at Shakespeare's Globe (engenderingthestage.humanities.mcmaster.ca). The project involves designing, delivering and measuring the impact of four training workshops for Shakespeare's Globe tour guides, to empower them in their interactions with the general public; and for Globe Education Practitioners, to support them in delivering inclusive schools workshops as part of Globe Education outreach. This work will support the Globe's 'whole building' approach to inclusivity and anti-racism; it will aim to support the Globe in its ongoing challenge to the gatekeeping of Shakespeare; and it will broaden the constituencies who can claim this literary period as their own.



Researcher:

Prof Clare McManus

School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Research Centre for Literature and Inclusion



This project will create compelling materials to inform a broad range of people about the diversities that are so often written out of the history of the Shakespearean period.



Once more with feeling: a reinvention of hysteria using photography, performance and writing

This project consists of an art exhibition and a series of corresponding satellite events including a workshop inviting members of the public to generate a wall of their own responses to the themes of the exhibition. Over the year, events and exhibitions will be held both at Roehampton and external institutions such as The Freud Museum (London) and the Royal College of Art (RCA). The project is premised on my practice-based PhD research at the RCA and aims, through art practice, to generate public engagement concerning societal frameworks, historical and contemporary, of the repression of women.

Researcher:

Sharon Young

School of Arts



I'm interested in what it might look like to revisit hysteria today. I have a hunch it has not gone away, even though medically the term is not in use.



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*We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.*

Extract from the Nicene Creed

Researchers:



Dr Ash Cocksworth

School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Research Centre for Practical Philosophy,
Theology and Religion



Dr Clare Watkins

School of Humanities and
Social Sciences,
Research Centre for Practical Philosophy,
Theology and Religion



Dr Andrew Rogers

School of Humanities and
Social Sciences,
Research Centre for Practical Philosophy,
Theology and Religion



Dr James Butler

School of Humanities and
Social Sciences,
Research Centre for Practical Philosophy,
Theology and Religion

Faith long lived: experiences of saying the creeds

The 'Faith Long Lived' project is a practical theological project seeking to investigate the experience of saying creeds in the context of Christian worship among 'older' Christians in some of the churches in Roehampton, London.

Led by a research team based at the University of Roehampton, and through empirical and theoretical research methodologies, the objective is not to understand what individuals might know about the issues usually covered by existing literature on the creeds: the historical events and controversies that led to their formation, the technical doctrinal issues expressed, the 'official' role they play in either the worship service or more broadly in the life of the church, and the particular creeds used in the context of worship.

Instead, the primary interest is in exploring the experiences and feelings individuals have, and have had, when saying creeds, and how these experiences have shaped their life and faith (or not) over the course of several decades of church involvement. The project aims to help individuals in their local faith communities understand more about a religious practice that has fundamental importance in the lives of many Christians. At the same time, research participants will be given the opportunity to recognise their own distinct and valuable contribution to the development of theological understanding as they reflect on their lived experience. The project's focus on 'older' Christians may also remind individuals and congregations of the gifts and wisdom of older people.

Dr Clive Norris, SMT trustee and research historian specialising in Methodism in Britain, is accompanying the project as an External Collaborator.



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The potato teeth project: a comparison of classroom and garden-based educational interventions for oral hygiene in primary school pupils

This project will involve a series of garden-themed activities for primary school pupils, designed as intervention packages to support their health and wellbeing. The aim is to reinforce correct oral hygiene techniques, as well as educate pupils on healthier alternatives to sugary foods to reduce their risk of tooth decay. The project will investigate the relative benefits of two similar, garden-themed packages, in conjunction with the Growhampton Student Union. One will take place in local schools, while the other will bring pupils (under teacher supervision) to perform the activities *in situ* at the campus' garden plots.



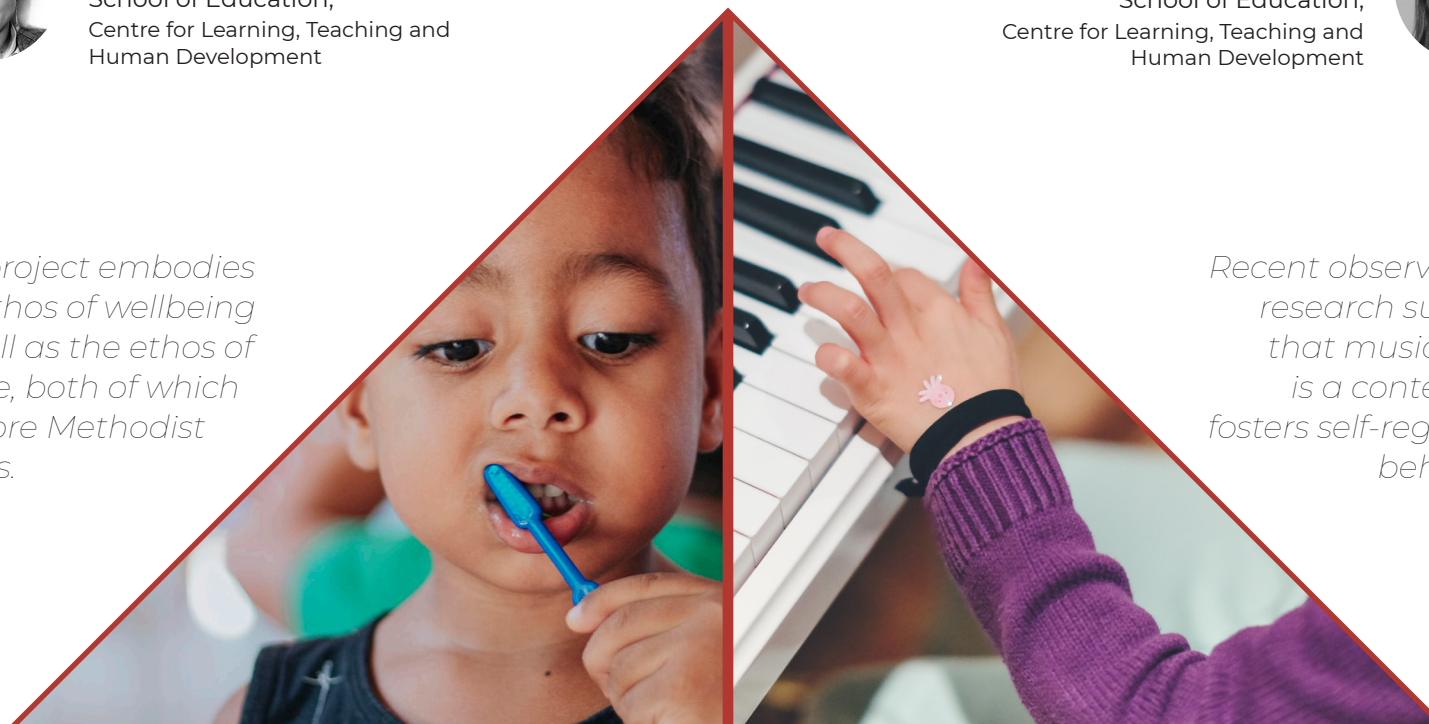
Researcher:

Dr Melissa Jogie

School of Education,
Centre for Learning, Teaching and
Human Development



This project embodies the ethos of wellbeing as well as the ethos of justice, both of which are core Methodist values.



Exploring the effects of a musical play intervention on young children's self-regulation

There is a lack of rigorous experimental research looking at the effects of musical play interventions on children's self-regulation. This project explores whether introducing musical play as an intervention in schools could have beneficial effects on children's self-regulation. At the start of the academic year, children from an experimental group and a control group will be assessed for self-regulation. The experimental group will then participate in a year-long set of weekly musical play sessions and the change in their self-regulation scores will be compared to the change in the control group. This study aims to pave the way for future studies examining the effects of musical play in education, contributing to the understanding of young children's development.

Researcher:

Dr Antonia Zachariou

School of Education,
Centre for Learning, Teaching and
Human Development



Recent observational research suggests that musical play is a context that fosters self-regulatory behaviour.



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Researcher:

Dr Alison Waller

School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Research Centre for Literature and Inclusion

1. Lifelong reader: new stories

'Lifelong Reader: New Stories' investigates a new creative form of life review for older adults living with early-stage dementia. The project recognises the significance of early reading and childhood books, and explores how far such stories – and shifting memories of them – might act as a starting point for rethinking narratives of ageing identity.

A children's literature specialist (Principal Investigator), a creative writer and a book artist will work with individuals in a care setting to co-create bespoke 'fictional life-review books' based on meaningful childhood stories interwoven with autobiographical fragments. These artefacts will be used by participants, their families and carers, and will represent rich data sources for understanding aspects of ageing identity via narrative and memory. The grant will support a workshop and exhibition.

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The project respects human dignity at all stages of life and amongst a community of individuals who may be disadvantaged and are not always given a distinct voice.



2. Reading4Normal book club: an online reading group scheme

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the mental wellbeing of many young people, who have had to navigate a 'new normal' and find different ways to connect with each other. The Reading4Normal Book Club is an online reading group scheme that aims to bring together young readers to discuss young adult (YA) novels.

This impact initiative recognises the value of reading for teens who have struggled with isolation and disruption during the pandemic. It provides the structure and space for them to reflect on their own routines, relationships and environments through the lens of fiction. It also offers a valuable way for keen readers to make connections with other individuals at a similar life stage across the UK.

The initiative builds on existing research funded by The British Academy. It will facilitate a nine-month Reading4Normal Book Club at six schools (two in the Wandsworth area linked to four across the UK), including an author event. It would also support the creation of a website and social media programme. It will therefore have an impact on youth local to Roehampton and nationwide. It will also work alongside Cheltenham Festival's 'Reading Teachers: Reading Pupils' programme to provide development for teachers or other educational professionals.

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The online reading-group structure reflects the Methodist Church's ethos of nurturing belonging and growth through small groups, and of building community.



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Forming collaborative learning communities for discipleship and mission

This theological action research project has been looking at the way collaborative, community learning is being experienced in the Methodist Church in Britain. Sponsored by the Susanna Wesley Foundation and carried out in partnership with researchers at University of Roehampton, the project has explored various sites of learning within British Methodism, using participative qualitative research methods, and methods of reflecting on data developed in theological action research.

The research seeks to understand how people learn and hand on their faith, how we grow in that faith, and how such growth as a disciple – a learner – is best enabled. Attending to the realities of community, learning, church and mission in real, focused contexts, and bringing together theological traditions and thought with the practices of these learning communities, is the hallmark of this project.

The project began with two congregations and has expanded to include two training institutions, a regional learning network, an organisation supporting learning ecumenically, a learning circuit, and the Church's new local preachers' and worship leaders' training programme.

Various themes have emerged, such as theological questions around agency, and the relationships between human work and God's work in learning. There are also interesting dynamics to be explored in how people learn. So much significant learning seemed to take place away from the formal practices of the church.

Researchers:



Dr Clare Watkins

School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Research Centre for Practical Philosophy,
Theology and Religion



Dr James Butler

School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Research Centre for Practical Philosophy,
Theology and Religion



Sue Miller

Director,
Susanna Wesley Foundation



The Revd Graham Jones

Learning and Development Officer,
Yorkshire North and East Methodist District



The Revd Dr Stan Brown

Superintendent Minister,
Kingston on Thames Methodist Circuit

Real faith-learning and growth in relationship with God is taking place in all sorts of apparent nooks and crannies of church life. Perhaps I knew it before I learnt it here. But the vividness of its reality in the real-life situations has brought about a more profound change in the way I think of teaching, writing and learning.

Dr Clare Watkins



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Makerspaces: supporting digital inclusiveness in urban communities

Over the past 20 or so years, the idea of a “digital divide” between those who have access to the benefits of digital technologies and those who are excluded has emerged. The context of this research is on the latter, urban communities, which are often blighted by unemployment and de-skilled workers. The purpose of this research project is to investigate the extent to which Makerspaces can assist such communities through providing access to modern digital fabrication equipment (and the training to support its use), and through the support that is offered by Makerspaces for nascent entrepreneurs.

Makerspaces are community based, usually not-for-profit organisations, where private citizens meet to make things and share knowledge. Their central purpose is to democratise access to specialised equipment and knowledge for people who could not normally access such things. Makerspaces can play a vital role in helping disenfranchised communities: empowering individuals to be creative and productive allows them to make use of their talents.



Researcher:

Dr Declan Scully

Faculty of Business and Law

“

Makerspaces offer citizens opportunities to be more productive and creative, and allow them more scope to create value through their work.



Growth outlook for family businesses under uncertainty: an exploratory study of the local business community in South West London

An estimated five million family businesses in the UK are under serious risk of market exit following the double-edged uncertainty of Brexit and the pandemic. The research project aims to understand the resilience of (small) family businesses in South West London and their complex interaction with their external environments. With its rich and diverse socio-cultural community, South West London is a natural empirical testbed to investigate how these businesses are adapting to the new challenges while value-preserving their traditional socio-emotional wealth.

Researchers:

Dr Mamata Parhi

Faculty of Business and Law,
Centre for Sustainability and
Responsible Management



Dr Gabor Sarlos

Faculty of Business and Law,
Centre for Sustainability and
Responsible Management



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The project commits itself to building relationships with and within the community.



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Understanding emotional journeys: the emotional impact of commuting and campus-based learning during the era of COVID-19

This research will explore the experience of students commuting during COVID, both physically travelling to campus and accessing e-learning. It will employ a multi-method, qualitative, participatory approach that includes visual methods, conceptualising the emotional experience of these students through photographs and drawings. This will enable participants to engage with their 'journey' as an affective experience, improving their emotional literacy and developing key employability skills such as problem-solving, communication, creativity, and self-management.



Researcher:

Dr Caitlyn Knight

Department of Humanities,
Centre for Equality, Justice and Social Change

“

Commuting can negatively impact on student engagement, which is a key issue in being able to successfully complete a degree.



The effect of COVID-19 lockdown on the learning journey of commuter students

During COVID-19, the Faculty of Business and Law has rapidly transitioned to more home and digitally based teaching and learning. The research proposed will explore the effect of the changes on the learning journey of commuter students who are the majority in the department. A literature review, interviews and focus groups based around dialogue and reflection will provide evidence-based information for interventions offered by Southlands College to the Faculty of Business and Law's large majority of commuter students in this "new normal" era. The research will also strengthen a learning culture linked to outcomes for the Business students, such as satisfaction and motivation for learning.

Researcher:

Prof Sunitha Narendran

Faculty of Business and Law



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The project is aligned to an ethos and belief in welfare, and active engagement with the world, focused on student success so that they can lead responsible and fulfilling lives.



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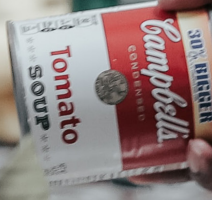
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'Though we may not think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may.'

John Wesley



This project has used both theological action research and narrative inquiry to explore how Methodists and Catholics engage together in social action. It has become clear that Methodist and Catholics recognize a common motivation and desire for social action in each other and find engagement together both natural and mutually enriching. The research has therefore looked at the gifts and charisms they share and explored how they engage together in social action. Among the many themes and findings are the perceived value of communal prayer; the place of lay involvement and leadership; the significance of friendship and relational engagement; the recognition of value in the other and of knowing God through another's difference; and the prime importance of community, communion and fellowship.

As regards attitudes to normative tradition and formal theology, there was evidence of some suspicion of theologians and a sense that tradition is irrelevant to 'what we do', suggesting a strong ecumenism of practice and action rather than the more doctrinal approach of ecumenical dialogues and commissions. These are areas for further reflection and conversation, with questions around the place of denomination and ecclesial tradition in ecumenical practice and the normativity of practice for ecumenical dialogue. Also being explored further is the relationship between ecumenical social engagement and other approaches to, and aspects of, ecumenism.

Methodist-Catholic social action

Researchers:



Dr Clare Watkins
School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Research Centre for Practical Philosophy,
Theology and Religion



Dr James Butler
School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Research Centre for Practical Philosophy,
Theology and Religion



Dr Helen Cameron
Centre for Baptist Studies,
Regent's Park College



Dr Christopher Stephens
Head of Southlands College



Dr Andrew Orton
Department of Sociology,
University of Durham



Dr Catherine Sexton
Centre for Catholic Studies,
University of Durham



The Revd Dr Jonathan Dean
Director of Learning for Ministry,
Methodist Church in Britain



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An investigation into social control by neglect

The research investigates social control by neglect; that is, the absence of institutional control and social support in the lives of certain groups, with impacts ranging from malign institutional indifference to criminally negligent manslaughter. Theories of social control have normally been cast in terms of types of institutional control such as surveillance or incarceration. This project investigates the withdrawal of the state and its institutions, examining the failure to care for certain groups through indifference, underfunding, deprivation and abandonment. Four case studies in the areas of criminal justice, disability welfare, homelessness and migration will illustrate the conceptual parameters of the theory involving key informants in the four sites. The aim is to read the experiences, fears and expectations of the interviewees in this project as indicators of the withdrawal of social control.



Researcher:

Dr Natasha Du Rose

School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Centre for Equality, Justice and Social Change



Values of creating a society that centres the poorest and that welcomes the stranger and a world that shares a single planet fairly, form the basis for this research.



Productivity and food safety improvements for women in community mechanised palm oil processing

Palm fruit processing into palm oil has become a source of livelihood for women in some communities in Ghana. Recent processing activities have seen a switch from manual production to the use of locally manufactured processing machines to increase productivity. However, there is limited attention to health and safety, and a disregard for the physiology and psychology of the women who operate these machines. Focusing on the Ejisu Juaben Municipality, Ashanti Region, Ghana, this project aims to explore technological, gender and food safety issues, to be shared with stakeholders through workshops and focus groups.

Researcher:

Dr Ellis Osabutey

Faculty of Business and Law,
Centre for Sustainability and
Responsible Management



Despite having a huge role to play in palm oil production, women have little input in the design of machines for agricultural processing in the developing world.



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Montserrat and Methodism: slavery, abolition and resistance

This project uses archival research – predominantly in the (Wesleyan) Methodist Missionary Society Archive (MMS) at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) library – to examine the influence of Methodism on the British Overseas Territory Montserrat. It includes holding a sustainable exhibition at the University of Roehampton and the Montserrat National Trust to commemorate 250 years of Methodism on Montserrat, starting with the St Patrick's Day failed slave uprising on 17th March 1768. It also includes exploring Methodist mission work on Montserrat around abolition, emancipation, and post-plantation, socio-political and economic upheavals in the nineteenth century as well as Methodist support during natural disasters (hurricane, earthquake and ongoing volcano crisis) in the 20th and 21st centuries. The project also includes a database reviewing archival resources.



Researcher:

Dr Jonathan Skinner
School of Life and Health Sciences



This project examines the influence of Methodism on the British Overseas Territory Montserrat through an exhibition and research database.



Signs of wonder: iconography and aesthetic practices of New Black Majority Churches in the London Borough of Southwark

Signboards and banners for new Black Majority Churches (nBMCs) are displayed in shop fronts, warehouses, railway arches, businesses, industrial units, community centres and shared / reused churches. Signs of Wonder aims to investigate the theology embedded in these visual expressions, including other important nBMC aesthetic practices such as their architecture, websites and media products. Interviews inform a more nuanced understanding of nBMCs and their congregants for a range of publics, including other Christian denominations, and so also ecumenical relationships.

Researcher:

Dr Andrew Rogers

School of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Research Centre for Practical Philosophy,
Theology and Religion



The high concentrations of nBMCs in a number of London boroughs pose ecumenical questions for many historic denominations, including Methodists.



Themes

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Encouraging the arts
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Partners

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The Methodist Church
The Susanna Wesley Foundation

2017-18

2018-19
2019-20
2020-21
2021-22
Ongoing



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Dhaka and Mongla: on climate change and urbanisation in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is situated on top of the Bay of Bengal, on the largest river delta on the planet, formed by the confluence of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers. Two thirds of its population are rural farmers whilst three quarters of its land is less than five metres above the sea level, making it extremely vulnerable to floods during the rainy season. The already visible effects of climate change such as cyclones, sea-level rise, and salinity intrusion, are major factors driving people out of their homes and off their farming fields.

Bangladesh is also the world's most densely populated country and even though it emits only 0.1% of greenhouse gases it is amongst those worst affected by climate change. Displacement of large numbers of people is a trend very likely to continue in the coming decades, with most of the displaced very likely to move to Dhaka. Bangladesh already has the world's best flood early warning system, excellent evacuation capacity, and is a world leader in community-based adaptation. Although a significant amount of research has been done in the fields of science, not a lot of work in the field of arts has been produced to deal with this subject. Addressing this gap, this project involves photography and film documentary.

In its second year, the project extends beyond Dhaka to look at coastal areas that will be affected, and specifically Mongla, one of the cities targeted by Bangladesh's Building Climate Resilient Migrant Friendly Towns strategy.

A photography exhibit at the University of Roehampton in early 2022 showcases the project. The work can also be found on [instagram.com/ismaruzeirovic/](https://www.instagram.com/ismaruzeirovic/)

Photo by Ismar Uzeirovic



Researcher:

Ismar Uzeirovic
School of Arts

The two grants from the Southlands Methodist Trust allowed me to spend a couple of months working as a Visiting Researcher at the International Centre for Climate Change and Development in Dhaka. During this time I completed two phases of my documentary photography project on the rapid urbanisation of the city of Dhaka and climate-driven migrations in Bangladesh. I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to work on my ideas, produce a body of work, and gain valuable professional experience.



Photo by Ismar Uzeirovic



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Latin American professional women and men in the UK: a critical exploration of the workplace experiences and career trajectories of an understudied immigrant group

Employing qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews and focus groups with Latin American women and men in professional occupations in London, this study will examine Latin American professionals' strategies of integration into the workplace and of career advancement. It will also identify the ways in which Latin Americans construct their professional identity in the British workplace. Finally, it will consider how Latin Americans' own gendered, raced and classed practices, as well as current contextual factors such as Brexit and Covid-19, influence their career choices and trajectories.



Researcher:

Dr Mayra Ruiz-Castro

Faculty of Business and Law,
Centre for Sustainability and
Responsible Management



This study will expand our understanding of the lived experience of Latin Americans in London, the presence and contribution of a largely unnoticed immigrant community.

Bridging the ethnic minority gap between educational development and doctoral supervision: social justice and inclusivity

Recent research has highlighted the importance of networking opportunities for students undertaking doctoral research, and for doctoral pedagogy. This is particularly so for global majority students, who are often subject to detrimental judgments of their capabilities. This project will produce a Doctoral Supervisor Resource Pack to assist supervisors in promoting relational, networking skills for global majority doctoral students. It will address aspects of culture, environment and vocational aspiration with a focus on how student values align with their doctoral programmes.

Researcher:

Dr Alaster Douglas

School of Education,
Centre for Learning, Teaching and
Human Development



Entry into the Academy for ethnic minorities remains problematic with regards to access and opportunities.



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“

Life be in my speech.
Sense in what I say,
The bloom of cherries on my lips,
Till I come back again.

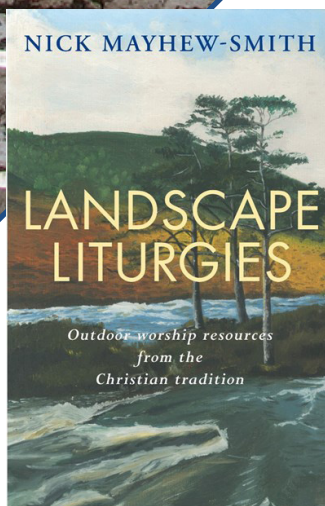
Extract from a Prayer for Travelling,
Landscape Liturgies



Researcher:
Dr Nick Mayhew Smith
Deputy Head of Southlands College

“

*Project mission statement:
To help communities and
the environment flourish
by inspiring creative and
productive relationships
between people and
place.*



New creation: sustainability and the Church

The New Creation Project was set up in May 2020 to look at creative ways in which church and church communities can engage productively with the natural world. Funded by the Susanna Wesley Foundation and the Southlands Methodist Trust, it draws direct inspiration from the early, pioneering phase of the Methodist Church itself, when John Wesley took to the parks, fields and churchyards to inject new life and energy into the Christian message.

The programme is led by Nick Mayhew-Smith, a researcher in Celtic spirituality. Its first project has been to compile a practical handbook of outdoor liturgies and rituals drawn from the rich heritage of Christian traditions, everything from early medieval blessings of water courses and crops through to complete outdoor services improvised by Methodist preachers. The book includes a focus on engaging children and schools, nurturing a sense of the sacred that spills out into the wider landscape. The title is *Landscape Liturgies*, published by Canterbury Press in 2021, with co-author Dr Sarah Brush.

Although planned long before the coronavirus pandemic closed our buildings, this impulse towards outdoor worship has gained new relevance and urgency, a creative expression of faith that is also firmly rooted in tradition. The mission statement of the New Creation project captures the spirit and purpose of this fresh look at the natural world: to help communities and the environment flourish by inspiring creative and productive relationships between people and place.



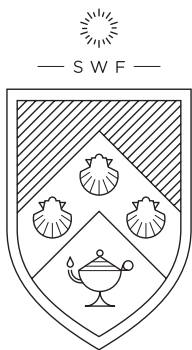
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southlandsmethodisttrust.org.uk
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