

Faith in Action

Hope for the Future

Jo Musker-Sherwood

SCM

Hope for the Future

Ten years ago I decided to take a gap year to volunteer with the Church in Peru. I wanted to experience more of the global church and see what God is doing around the world. I was away from all my friends and family and sometimes working in tough conditions, but I felt God's love through the wonderful hospitality of the Peruvian church. For the first time I began to trust that wherever you are in the world, God is always close.

I experienced very strong reverse culture shock when I came home and started University. I also struggled to find a church but to my surprise I felt closest to God when I joined one of my University's social justice societies. Through this work I could connect with my experiences in Peru, and integrate it with my life at home. I gained a growing sense of calling to minister to international communities through striving for greater social justice in the UK.

I took a year out of my studies to join SCM as a Faith in Action intern working with asylum seekers and refugees. After several months, I found myself so overwhelmed by the suffering of people seeking asylum in the UK that I began questioning my calling to social justice in the first place. I couldn't understand how God could let this happen to so many people, many of whom who were also people of faith.

SCM encouraged me to think about the faith of others' whose ministry had been costly, such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was executed while resisting the Nazis. I began to realise that it was not my job to 'fix' suffering in the world, but simply to be a part of what God is doing to transform it. Experiencing burn out also taught me the importance of caring for myself and investing in my own healing in order to better help others.

Climate change is an increasing driver of forced migration through resource shortage, natural disaster and military conflict so shortly after leaving University I helped with the setting up of a new climate change charity, called Hope for the Future.

Hope for the Future has now grown into a leading specialist in training citizens to lobby MPs on climate change. Our work is to help the climate movement find better ways of communicating climate change with politicians by learning how to building

constructive working relationships. It has been an amazing journey over the last four years.

I hope that by sharing my story so far, others who are putting their faith into action can be encouraged to keep going when the journey is costly. Don't be afraid to take the time out you need for yourself, and remember that it is God's work you are doing so the responsibility does not all rest on your shoulders!

If you would like to learn more about how you can get involved with Hope for the Future go to www.hfft.org.uk, or you can email Jo at info@hfft.org.uk.

Jo is the Director Hope for the Future, specialists in climate lobbying training.