

FROM OUR MINISTER

Freya India is, for me, one of the most important cultural voices of our day. A twenty-something, in her blogging on Substack and her recent book 'Girls' she writes about the challenges facing her generation. As a father of two twenty-somethings myself, I need to listen to people like her.

She writes about the immense mental health challenges her generation faces. She talks about how, in the wake of tragic family breakdown, therapists have replaced good parenting and a strong family for many. And as good as the therapists are, they can never do what a good family can.

She writes about the dangers of over-reliance on technology, and the way that is contributing to the difficulties younger people have in forming relationships. Within that context, she writes about another tragedy; the way many of her generation avoid commitment and vulnerability in relationships. And it was that thought that led me to mention her in this issue, traditionally 'wedding season.'

I can understand a fear to commit in the wake of marriage breakdown. So many have been raised by heroic lone parents. But is the answer a lower level of commitment?

Fifteen years ago, a research centre at Cambridge investigated the question of long-lasting relationships. In an age where so many assume that you should move in together before getting engaged, the couples whose relationships lasted the best overall were those who married without living together first. Those who married after living together first were 60% more likely to divorce, and those who lived together but never married were 100% more likely to split up.

Commitment pays off - but it needs to be the right kind of mutual commitment. We could amend the famous words of John F. Kennedy to say, 'Think not of what your spouse can do for you. Rather, think of what you can do for your spouse.'

Or, as the Methodist marriage service puts it, ' Marriage involves the giving of a man and a women wholeheartedly to each other. Christ in his self-giving comes to our help, for he loves us and gave himself for us.'

Jesus, who lived as a single man, shows us the way; let both parties be willing to give themselves to each other.

If you're getting married this, I wish you not only a memorable wedding day but more importantly a long and loving marriage.

Reverend Dave Faulkner