

### What did the work tell us about the place of the Bible in the life of the Church?

In the 2012 report [Deep Engagement: Fresh Discovery](#) the Steering Group for the BILC project drew a number of broad conclusions from the work undertaken by the Regional Groups since 2009. These conclusions may not be surprising, simply as they are stated, but the way they present themselves region by region does give us a window into worlds often very different from our own, thus adding colour to the general statements. From the [Regional Reflections](#) the Steering Group concluded that:

1. [Across the Communion there is clear evidence of the impact made on the lives of our communities and individuals by engaging with Scripture.](#)

*The Regional Reflections offer snapshots of at least three kinds of impact:*

- finding Scripture speaking about issues that participants had never explored in it previously;
- being directed to sections of Scripture which participants had never encountered before;
- simply being involved, with others, in an exercise that encouraged and helped participants to engage with Scripture at a deeper level.

2. [Across the Communion there is a wonderful diversity of ways of what “engaging with and interpreting Scripture” looks like.](#)

The Regional Reflections offer illustrations that ‘the way we read Scripture’ includes not only the meaning that comes from that reading but the very process of reading itself. For some, Scripture was seen to be ‘read’ in all the encounters of daily life - everyday exchanges in the street, in the house or the workplace are drawn on to interpret, explain and bring insight to whatever those conversing are facing. They know large sections of their Bible or had captured it in song; they ‘read’ it to one another in their own specific contexts. For others, the way Scripture is read is more formal - in the liturgy, in study groups or classes, in individual study.

3. [Across the Communion it is clear that the context in which the engagement takes place generates further diversity in the approach to and application of Scripture.](#)

The Regional Reflections all offer insights from observations of an engagement that had as its starting point the same issue and core Scripture passages. Yet each set of reflections have strong contextual elements that mark them out as different from one another. Even where the main facilitation is being offered from someone outside the context of the participants – notably in Southern Sudan – the reflections that emerge are deeply rooted in the place of engagement.

4. [Across the Communion there is also evidence of ‘gaps’ between what might be called the ‘received wisdom’ of the Church in relation to our engagement with and interpretation of Scripture and what actually happens in practice.](#)

The Regional Reflections and more particularly the Regional Reports [see [Archive Materials](#) on the web or memory stick] from which they are drawn show that the way Anglicans actually engage with and interpret the Bible might not always be the way we say we should or aspire to do so. Following the first Case Study, the Steering Group identified a number of these possible ‘gaps’ as captured in the November 2010 meeting notes. Further work has done on this subsequently, and some of the resources address these issues.



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Three particular groups of 'gaps' were identified by the Steering Group:

- Between the 'academy' and the 'pew', between the 'scholar' and the 'ordinary Christian'. How do we draw on the insights of the academy or scholar in a way that those in the pew both understand and are enriched in their Christian living? (Clergy who have academic training often find it very difficult to bridge this gap, and find themselves stuck uneasily in the middle.)
- Between seeking meaning from individual verses or passages of Scripture and how these speak to and are spoken to by other parts of Scripture. In a similar vein the 'gap' between the use we make of more 'popular' or accessible parts of Scripture (e.g. the Gospels) and those parts that are forgotten or ignored (e.g. parts of the prophets or Revelation).
- Between the 'fruits' of our engagement – what we believe the passage is saying – and the 'process' of that engagement – the tools we might use to discern these fruits and be fed by them.

If you have ever travelled on the London Underground system in Great Britain, you will have heard or read on the platform the phrase 'mind the gap'. To 'mind' something, in English, means both 'to take care' as in not falling between the train and the platform and 'to look after, to nurture' as in a 'child-minder' or 'minding the store'.

The Steering Group wishes to encourage greater discussion on what these 'gaps' might be saying to us. These 'gaps' need minding in both senses above; the resources listed below seek to help us do this in one way or another.

See also:      [What issues lie behind the BILC project?](#) In the *For more information about the work of BILC* section  
                  [What challenges do we face as we encourage a deeper engagement with Scripture?](#) In the *Topic – what is the resource about?* section

