

## **UNREACHED: Growing churches in Working-class & Deprived areas**

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Tearfund 2007: Churchgoing is middle-class. Often Estate churches attended by non-residents.

Under-resourced, don't feel good enough, entertainment opportunities, not targeted, 'growth' uses networks not locality, social lift,

1982: Roy Joslin *Urban Harvest* – dated now (assumes industrial base, etc).

Discussions on winning poor only say 'Run social projects'.

Urban ministry unlikely to produce writing. Projects point to our good works rather than saving poor. We portray them as victims not responsible adults.

Problems of labelling (deprived sounds heavy) 'Social Lift and Leave' but also 'Social Drop' of those who don't join the success culture any more.

**WORKING CLASS:** (but care that each is a person)

1. Traditional employed: LP Unions etc. These guys now retired.
2. Self-employed: builders, plumbers, electricians. Not poor but we identity.
3. Ethnic immigrants: everything done on basis of knowing someone.
4. Benefit class: short-term low paid contracts & benefits. Skills no longer required. Miserable existence, no future. Housing benefits subsidize landlords
5. Defer to MC leadership. (professional, diarized, educated)

1. Anti-authoritarian
2. Entitlement mentality
3. Reputation (be somebody and look cool)
4. Life is the Struggle
5. Victim mentality
6. Limited aspirations (I'll just fail)
7. Assets are Relational
8. Thinking in concrete
9. Live in the now (no diaries)

**Ruby Payne Framework for understanding poverty.** [care here she has faced academic criticism of classism etc)

- 1, background noise;
2. Personality (humour)
3. Significance of Entertainment
4. relationships key
5. Matriarchal structures
6. Oral
7. Survival orientation
8. men are lover/fighter
9. women are rescuer/martyr
10. non-verbal communication
11. people owned by their culture
12. tendency to be negative
13. discipline is not about change
14. Belief in fate
15. Binary thinking
- 16 attract with body
- 17 Time is present flexible.
- 18 Humour valued.
- 19 lack of order
20. reactive.
21. money is for spending
22. food – did you have enough?
23. Clothes to express person
24. world is local

### **So we need to find evangelism to suit:**

Passion not objectivity (cf Wesley, 'I submitted to be more vile.' Spurgeon: 'we have had quite enough polite preaching.')

Open honesty about ourselves. But don't probe it feels like interrogation.

Lament. Story telling. Don't like eating in formal invites.

Get to know your area: Dress, role models, music, self-descriptors, travel, typical home, employment, gender roles, likes and dislikes about their culture.

Free time, fears, dreams/aspirations, shop, culture/ films /TV. Spirituality.

who trust, what's right and wrong?

### **What are Barriers? What are Bridges for the Gospel?** Duncan Forbes

Clothes: class marker. My Struggle – parson does not look like he knows.

Respect: main goal in life, but conversion loses cred. Models: where are they on estate? Music: so out of touch. God: there but not interested in helping.

Accent: belonging. Offensive: debates difficult, keep to sermons. Moaning: victim is our idol. Authority: can't trust pastors – just repeat other's stuff.

Alcohol: too tempting in the pub. Social action: expect constant help,

Christians are community workers.

Mapping: get residents to draw what's important to them.

Walk streets with eyes open (Flaneurs; 'transect walking') Jesus does this.

Died for us. "While we were yet sinners" Scared of Church.

### **GOSPEL THEMES:**

Fatherhood of God: difficult but at last a loving father. 'Father to fatherless'.

He welcomes, seeks you out, cares for, treasures, loves, He disciplines.

Family of God: if you don't have a loving family

Sovereignty of God: can bring good out of bad. Suffering is for our good.

Grace of God: but Christianity is about being good or being religious?

Justice of God: violence and hurt – no need for revenge. Jesus went to cross.

New creation: struggle will be over

Purpose of life: a new idea

Freedom to change: low aspirations?

Futility of self-righteousness: at least I don't take drugs.

People don't feel guilt but feel trapped – 'slave to sin'. Truth will set you free.

Know how God must feel when we're unfaithful.

### **DISCIPLESHIP:**

Following Jesus before respectability. Jesus was not considered respectable. Regularity and punctuality? Home group will not be natural. Open displays of anger (years of repressed anger and guilt) Behaviour change alone is legalism. Do not adopt parental tone (Transactional Analysis is helpful) Attitude and direction of travel more important than change (drugs etc) Middle class expect change possible but it's more difficult for WC. Told they are sinned against does not help them take control. [?] WC sins apparent, MC hidden. Offer place to belong and new spheres of influence. Expect them to lead! (Gospel disciples) Indigenous Church important for WC. Long haul.

**NON-BOOK CULTURE:**

Church leaders usually bookish people. Speaking in 'casual' not 'formal' register. 400-800 word vocab, no syntax, non-verbal supports. Learning by apprenticeship, experience valued, stories pictures, UNLOCK Jesus teaches in response to situations. Shared life is prerequisite. Hermeneutic of obedience.

RESOURCES: no money. Raising a family difficult, are working class sins worse to pick up than middle class ones? Prosperity gospel dangerous.

CHURCH GROWTH: not numbers but changed lives. Jesus had small church who all ran away.

Make a name for Christ not ourselves.

*I Cor 1:*

*26. Consider, brothers, how you were called; not many of you are wise by human standards, not many influential, not many from noble families.*

*27. No, God chose those who by human standards are fools to shame the wise; he chose those who by human standards are weak to shame the strong,*

*28. those who by human standards are common and contemptible, indeed those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing all those that do count for something,*

*29. so that no human being might feel boastful before God.*

*30. It is by him that you exist in Christ Jesus, who for us was made wisdom from God, and saving justice and holiness and redemption.*

*31. As scripture says: If anyone wants to boast, let him boast of the Lord.*