

Church at the Margins

To nurture
new Christian
communities
amongst
economically
marginalised
people



I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo.

"So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide.

All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.

J.R.R. Tolkien, The Fellowship of the Ring

OUR CALLING

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the Gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.

We are called to be a **growing, inclusive, justice seeking, evangelistic church** of diverse people who speak of, listen for, and live out the goodness of God so that new people become disciples of Jesus.

What is the
gospel?

What is the good
news?



New Places for New People alongside existing places for existing people.

- 1. Church at the Margins**
- 2. New Towns and Housing Developments**
- 3. Students, Young Adults and Universities**
- 4. Families with Children**
- 5. Replants and Second Plants**
- 6. OTHER**



Vision

To nurture new Christian communities amongst economically marginalised people.

Belief

We are not taking God to the margins. We believe God is present with and in all people, in all circumstances, and indeed favours people experiencing marginalisation.

Question

Why should Christians care about people experiencing poverty?

Why.....a biblical imperative

1. Prophetic tradition emphasises the need to care for the widow, the orphan, the stranger and those in need.
2. Justice *and* righteousness embrace.
3. Incarnation: Jesus became marginal.
4. God revealed to us in Christ announces good news to the poor, and freedom to those held captive.
5. God is present in (and of) the poor.

Why..... a biblical imperative

The poor will always be with you *Matt 26 v11*

Text in Matthew is a **Quote** from Deuteronomy

Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth,
I therefore **command** you, open your hand to the poor and
needy neighbour in your land *Deut 15 v 11*

Why...distinctive nature of the Methodist Church

- a. Engaging with marginalised communities is part of our DNA, our History and Birth Story of a Methodist movement which became a church.
- b. Four All's of Methodism
- c. Connexional Principle:
Belonging, Interdependence, Mutuality
- d. Reaffirming Our Calling

Theological Foundations

1. God's preferential option for people in poverty
2. The good news of Jesus Christ
3. **Evangelism AND social justice**
4. Interdependence
5. Inclusion



Core Values

1. Seeking justice
2. Prioritising the **LIVED** experience of people who are economically marginalised
3. Sharing and transforming power
4. Celebrating inclusion and participation
5. Enabling local leadership.



Some BIG questions

1. What is poverty?
2. Why does poverty exist?
3. Where does poverty exist?
4. How should we respond?

Questions

Where and what are the signs of people experiencing poverty in your community?

Who is responding to people experiencing poverty in your community?

Context of UK Poverty

14.6 million people living in poverty *

2.4 million people are destitute: i.e., Unable to eat, stay warm and dry, and keep clean

4.3 million children living in poverty

BAME families 40% more likely to be in poverty

60% of people living in poverty are in **work**

*Income below 60% of average earnings

- Fuel, energy costs
- Food
- Housing
- Data
- Rising debt

Fuel, energy costs

Problem

Big increase in global fossil fuel prices have resulted in an energy price rise of 54% - **Greatest impact on poorer families**

Impact of fuel poverty

Physical and mental health issues increase by 50% when people are living at low temperatures and are unable to access warm food and hot water.

Causes of fuel poverty

- Low income
- High energy bills
- Energy inefficient homes
- Lack of options e.g., rural communities

Food Poverty: Trussell Trust report May 2021

95% of people referred to a food bank are destitute

62% working age people referred to a food bank in early 2020 had a disability and mental ill health.

2.5 million Trussell Trust food parcels distributed between April 2020- March 2021

3 KEY factors

1. Insufficient income from benefits
2. ill health from adverse life experiences
3. Lack of formal and/or informal support

Impact of UK Poverty in 2021: Life on the Breadline research

Foodbanks

Homelessness

Rough
Sleeping

Not enough
money to
live on

Long-term
deprivation

Unemployment

Low Pay

Suffering
from poor
health

Poor quality
housing

Insecure jobs

People experiencing poverty feel.....



Disconnection and distance



One great reason why the rich in general have so little sympathy for the poor is because **they so seldom visit them.**

Hence it is that one part of the world does not know what the other suffers.

Many of them do not know, because they do not care to know they keep out of the way of knowing it and then plead their voluntary ignorance as an excuse for their hardness of heart.

John Wesley's sermon on visiting the sick



How can we respond.....

1. Vision - know your why
2. Connect with new people
3. Build a team

praying, listening, connecting, reviewing, praying

Examples of district NPNP projects: seeds being planted

- 1. Birmingham –Street Homeless**
- 2. Shetland-Recovery community**
- 3. Manchester- 10 new missional communities**
- 4. Hartlepool- Replanting**
- 5. Yorkshire NE – Kairos circuit**



Time to dream.....

I will pour out my spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
Your young men will see visions,
Your old men will dream dreams.

Acts 2 v17

What is your hope, dream, vision for a new Christian community amongst people experiencing poverty?



Our HOPE.....

- Every district and circuit to include Church at the Margins as part of their mission action plans by 2025
- Establish a new Church at the Margins community in every circuit by 2030
- Church at the Margins communities challenge, disrupt and lead the Church's understanding of poverty and God's justice.

**Take a step...
one small step**

**What is the ONE thing
you, your local church
or circuit will do?**



**If we want things to be different we have to
do things differently**