



Practicing Inclusion

- Matthew 15 and Mark 7
- John 4 v 7 – 26

Ann Morisy



**First: Thank you
from the bottom of
a Liverpudlian's
heart**

**Jurgen Klopp
Manager Liverpool FC**



Inclusive Church: Usual headlines

- Gay friendly
- Disability friendly



Inclusive theology

- All have sinned and fallen short ... And need a Saviour
- Emphasis on Jesus saving us by **showing us how to live** and not just by dying for our sins
- Mature discipleship:
 - i. Calls us to embrace 'struggle' i.e. to question ideas that our society encourages us to 'take for granted'
 - ii. Acknowledges ever present vulnerability
 - iii. Is confident in the reality of abundance and not bewitched by the dominant story of scarcity

Jesus struggles with inclusion

- Jesus and the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15 and Mark 7)



Matthew 15 and Mark 7

- **Jesus and his disciples where in Tyre. Perhaps taking a break after their bruising ministry at Galilee and wanting some anonymity.**
- **A woman arrives insisting that Jesus heal her daughter. The disciples want to send her away because she was making such a commotion, they feared their cover might be blown. When she was eventually allowed to see Jesus, he gave her verbal abuse.**
- **He called her a dog because she wasn't a Jew, and his ministry was first and foremost to the Jews "It's not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs".**



You naughty puppy! No, sorry, too easy!

- The term 'dog' even today is the supreme insult in the east.
- Biblical scholars have tried to minimise the offensiveness of Jesus' language to this woman.
- Scholars fluent in ancient Greek, the language in which the Gospels were written have been quick to point out that in the original Greek the word puppies or pup is used rather than 'dogs'. This would turn the encounter between Jesus and the woman into something more akin to friendly banter.
- But Jesus spoke Hebrew and Aramaic - not Greek. There is no word for pup or puppy in Hebrew and Aramaic. We have to face the fact that Jesus was racially abusive to this Canaanite mum who was desperate to save her daughter.

- **The woman, perhaps the only person in the gospels to use repartee* to engage Jesus, replied “Yes Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from under their master’s table”.**
- **Jesus responded “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish”.**

*** repartee: a quick and witty reply**



- How do we square the racial abuse which Jesus hands out to this Canaanite woman with the fundamental assumption that Jesus lived his life on earth without sin?
- The options are stark: either racial abuse is not a sin or Jesus did commit a sin.

If we face this fact we get some important insights:

- Jesus, in calling the woman a dog, was thinking and acting as his roots had conditioned him to do so. As the Son of God, born of Mary and living as a Jew in Nazareth, he could do no other than think and act as a Jew. Our experience is always mediated or affected by prevailing cultural values and assumptions that we have grown up with.**
- The essence of dialogue is that each person who is party to the communication is open to the possibility of being changed by the testimony of the other. Jesus was prepared to be changed by the passionate commitment of this Canaanite mother.**
- From this point onwards in his ministry Jesus recognises that he had come as Saviour to both the Gentiles and the Jews. That 'repartee' from the desperate Mother made Jesus see things in a completely different way.**
- It is also the moment when Jesus discovers that it is more helpful to ask questions than assert himself by making statements.**

But did Jesus sin – or is racial abuse not a sin?

There is an honest way of resolving this paradox and it highlights the importance of dialogue and conversation to our human condition:

- Jesus thought and acted as a Jew when he was confronted by this desperate mother. It is not a sin to have thoughts and attitudes, which are a product of our cultural background. We can do no other than interpret the world from the perspectives given to us from our culture.**
- The sin that Jesus risked was to refuse to ‘hear’ this woman. If Jesus had failed enter into dialogue with this woman he would have missed the insight which she revealed.**
- Jesus, by the grace of God, was engaged by this mother’s refusal to trade insults with him or to be deferential when confronted by elitist Judaism. He was willing to be changed by this encounter; He was open to the possibility of being changed by the manner and wit of a Gentile woman.**



Jesus practices inclusion

- Far from being inaction, it is often through conversation that we change the way we view the world - and embark on changing the world itself. Through conversation we turn around our ideas and experiences with each other.
- Conversation involves myriad tiny, tiny ‘micro-actions’ – mostly taken for granted, but with extraordinary power to build-up or to pull-down.
- These powerful tiny ‘micro-actions’ are on show in the conversation that Jesus has with the woman who comes to draw water from Jacob’s well.

John 4 v 7 – 26: This conversation with a Samaritan woman is the longest recorded conversation that Jesus has with anyone...

- It is a conversation across ethnicity and across religions.
- Jesus came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, Jesus, wearied from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. (Midday)



A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (John the Gospel writer carefully notes

for us in v.9 ‘For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.’)

Nine 'micro-actions' in this conversation

- First micro-action = a conversation where the supposedly powerful – a Jewish man, speaks from a position of vulnerability (John 4 v 8, 9)
- Second micro-action = Jesus steps outside the restrictions of tribalism

There follows some friendly banter* between Jesus and the woman about water that never runs out, saving all the hard work of drawing the water from a very deep well.

- Third micro-action = mutual commitment to sustain the encounter

** banter: Playful and friendly exchange of good humoured remarks*

Jesus says “Go, call your husband and come back.” (John 4 v 16)

- **Fourth micro-action = Sensitivity by Jesus to the impossibility of sustaining the conversation whilst the woman is by herself.**

Custom made a sustained conversation between a woman with a male stranger hugely inappropriate and would bring damage to the woman’s reputation.

The woman says “I have no husband” (John 4 v 17)

- **Fifth micro-action = risk taking: the woman feels confident enough to make a disclosure**

Jesus suddenly understands her situation: how she has been passed from pillar to post (5 men have married her and divorced her, and the bloke who has taken her in this time isn't prepared to give her the status of wife).

Furthermore, Jesus can now make sense of why she comes to draw water in the heat of the day: she is so excluded and disparaged by her neighbours that she finds it preferable to draw her water in the mid-day heat when no-one else will be at the well. (John 4 v 18)

- Sixth micro-action= a compassionate 'ah ha'; i.e. a sudden insight into how it is for the other person**

The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.” The woman recognises the potency of Jesus and tries to change the direction of the conversation (John 4 v19, 20)

- Seventh micro-action = A retreat into tribalism as the woman says that her religion is different from his**

Jesus explains the possibility of a God of truth whom everyone can worship in Spirit (John 4 v21 – 24)

- Eighth micro-action = An offer of a new inclusive paradigm**

The woman recalls that she knows something about this, and that a Messiah will explain things to us (John 4 v 25)

- Ninth micro-action = personal experience and knowledge coalesce**

Jesus declares “I who speak to you am he” and the conversation continues until the disciples return

- **So the woman left her water jar, and went away into town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”**
- **We read that many Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days when he departed for Galilee**
- **It is clear that the conversation at the Jacob’s well was as significant for Jesus as it was for the woman (John 4 v 31 – 38).**

Conversation and mission

Conversation – the give and take of communication that is unique to our species. It has to be accomplished in microseconds and subconsciously, so that our consciousness can give priority to attending both to the content of the conversation and to ‘the other’.

Being open to conversation means receiving each other, our new-born insights and ideas, with openness and care.

We have to trust that patience and generosity of spirit will be found in the other, as we distil in their presence what we are coming to know.



Conversation is an extraordinary achievement

Conversation requires:

- mutual commitment to traverse the vast and multitudinous differences between one universe of consciousness and that of another.
- an exceptional degree of trust because there can be no guarantee that what one tries to convey will be met with willing understanding, or be understood in the manner in which it was intended.
- subliminal signs that indicate commitment to sustain the conversation.

All this has to be accomplished in microseconds and subconsciously, so that our consciousness can give priority to attending both to the content of the conversation and to 'the other'.



Why conversation is vital to mission

Through conversation learning takes place because:

- It is helpful to be able to 'hear' oneself think
- The prompting of an interlocutor and framing of an issue by another can extend ones internal, private ponderings
- The subliminal invitation to 'please come with me', provides the stretch which enables one's own insights to flow and be scrutinised – both by those party to the conversation and by oneself.

Far from being inaction, it is often through conversation that we change the way we view the world - and embark on changing the world itself.

Some questions that follow

- 1. How have you come to see things differently? What have been the main contributions to this new way of seeing?**
- 2. Are you bold enough to own-up to those areas where you are not (no longer) open to have changed?**
- 3. “We naturally narrow our field of vision to the comfortable, reduce our conversation partners to those we can speak to easily, and live life in splendid isolation from those whose views or lives are very different from ours” Discuss (Krish Kandia “Faithism” p.79)**

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Inclusive Mission

Ann Morisy

Features of our social and political environment in the UK

- Place = space + flows
- Each and every place will have its own distinctive and specific flows (always think 24/7 and 365 days a year)

E.g. Street Pastors

- Those limited to the single place – risk a restricted view of the world and a narrow horizon of possibility
- In the context of global flows religious people are increasingly viewed as disruptive to social cohesion



When religion... has become a toxic brand

- We need to acknowledge that religion like any powerful phenomenon has the capacity for good and ill
- We need courage and ability to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy religion



*"Look—couldn't we just say
we agree to disagree?"*

Healthy Religion ...

- Does not indoctrinate, but helps people think for themselves e.g. Adam and Eve a story about the human condition
- Invites humility about what we think we know
- Invests in what it is for and not what it is against

The hallmarks of healthy religion

Healthy Religion:

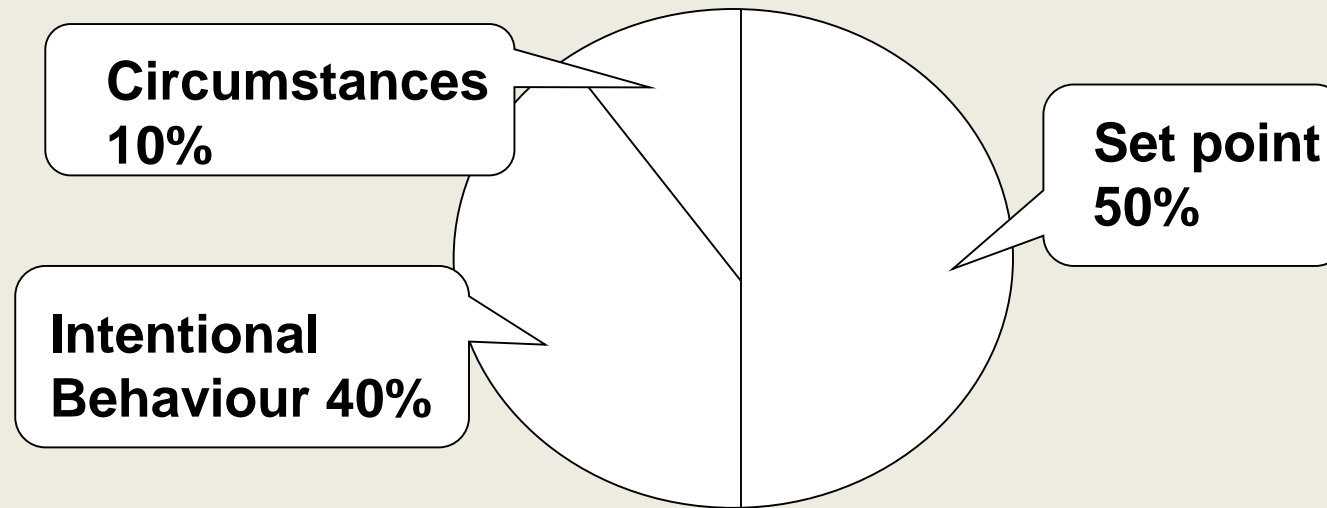
- **enlarges the imagination via Gospel stories**
- **teaches and encourages wisdom and holiness**
- **opens us to the new and helps people to change... for the better**
- **deepens our sympathies**
- **fosters resilience**

How does faith transform?

Embracing faith impacts on our attitude to our circumstances.

When our attitudes change so too do the micro-actions in which we engage.

Now that three generations have benefited from the welfare state we are prone to overestimate the impact of circumstances on our lives and *underestimate* the scope we have for ‘intentional activity’.



S. Lyubomirsky, K M Sheldon, & D Schkade (2005) "Pursuing Happiness: The Architecture of Sustainable Change," Review of General Psychology, Special Issue: Positive Psychology 9 (20: 111-131) **NB subsequent research suggests circumstances may have an impact nearer to 20% but the scope for intentional behaviour remains significant - and under appreciated**

Victor Frankl:

“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances.”



Transformation?

Transformation means shedding the perceived constraints of circumstance and taking up intentional activity both individually and corporately.

Transformation involves new ways of seeing and a new way of organising.

NB Addiction saps our best intentions, closing the door on other possibilities for life.

- Early Methodism was transformational: perhaps an extraordinary achievement of the species Homo sapiens?
- The Salvation Army invited those damaged by circumstances to positions of responsibility i.e. that is to become sufficiently free of addiction to be able to embrace purposeful, intentional activity.

What did early Methodism do?

- **Gave people the chance to hear themselves think... Conversation matters**
- **The Methodist Class: helped people embrace intentional behaviour i.e. rising above circumstances ... Solidarity in the struggle (think Alcoholics Anonymous or even Weight Watchers!)**
- **Generous (inclusive!) theology**
- **A belief or confidence in people being 'transformed'... Holiness (follow Jesus)**

It happened in Sinfin



Sinfin: Suburb of Derby in the English Midlands

- **Basic church in a hall**
- **A modest range of community activities hosted by the church**
- **Vicar valued in the community and encouraged people to pray**
- **Mums gathered in hall after dropping kids at school and over coffee shared their anticipated struggles (smoking too much, swearing too much, picking on one of the kids, rowing with partner...) that day and then they prayed for each other.**
- **The following day they would check in with each other how they had got on (with their positive intentions) and there was much laughter as well as prayer**

One aspect of work at local level, especially in neighbourhoods undergoing change, is to identify ways in which the *radius of trust* between people can be extended.

Remember: Those whose experience is limited to the single place in the context of rapid global flows risk a restricted view of the world and a narrow horizon of possibility and heightened anxiety

Positioning for local creativity

The burdens of a faltering market economy are being disproportionately carried by the poor – precariousness (precarity) is mounting

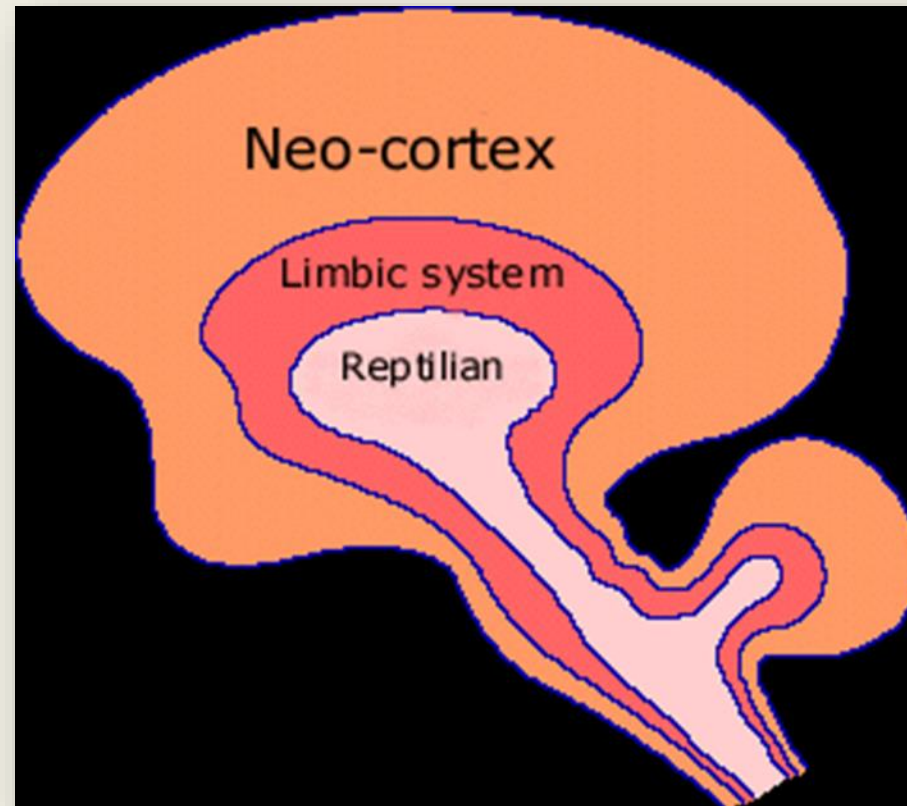
The Precariat (Guy Standing)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnYhZCUYOxs>

Heightened anxiety (precarity) makes for:

- **Reacting rather than responding**



Heightened anxiety makes for:

- Scapegoating and blaming “Them!”
- Distancing and herding i.e. taking on the hurts of others (social media)

NB An anxious church is very unattractive and anxious people forget how to have fun (Messy Church is an antidote)



Countering anxiety

- **Hold fast to the mental discipline that problems have multiple and interrelated causes**
- **Use fun and play**
- **Practice being a 'non-anxious presence' by logging your own anxiety and 'parking' your own anxiety – softening our eyes.**



Re-neighbouring i.e. Enabling people to have something to say after they have said hello!

Re-neighbouring An emerging concept within the social sciences and regeneration theory

Project work such drop-ins, community cafes, pot-luck suppers etc. are often disparaged as just a ‘sticking plaster’, especially when there are so many issues of justice in areas of high mobility and high poverty.

However ...

Project work contributes significantly to *re-neighbouring* because it provides a structure and opportunity through which people can increase their range of acquaintances and at an unforced pace, gain trust in their new acquaintances.

‘Gentrification with Justice’: An Urban Ministry Collective and the Practice of Place-making in Atlanta’s Inner-city Neighbourhoods by Katherine Hankins and Andy Walter

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Andy Walter is in the Department of Geosciences, University of West Georgia, 1601 Maple Street, Carrollton, Georgia, 30118, USA. E-mail: awalter@westga.edu.

Abstract

Scholars and policy-makers have increasingly sought to understand the relationship between poverty and place in the inner city. This paper examines the spatiality of an anti-poverty strategy called ‘gentrification with justice’ and implemented by an urban ministry collective in three neighbourhoods in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. This place-based approach centres on the movement of middle-class ‘strategic neighbours’ into impoverished neighbourhoods as a way to transform the local socio-spatial dialectic of poverty. The urban ministry collective draws upon notions of diverse community, social justice, the ‘where’ of faithful practice and a faith-governed market in seeking to redevelop neighbourhoods. Based on archival analysis and semi-structured, in-depth interviews with leaders and members of the urban ministry collective, this paper provides a deeper understanding of the place-making role that faith-motivated actors play in local contexts of poverty.

doi: 10.1177/0042098011415434 *Urban Stud* May 2012 vol. 49 no. 7 1507-1526

**From needs to
assets:**

**Is this just
naïve**

hopefulness?

Growing emphasis on 'assets'

- **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)** a term coined by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann at the [ABCD Institute](#) in Evanston, Illinois. ABCD is an approach that recognizes the strengths, gifts, talents and resources of individuals and communities, and helps communities to mobilize and build on these for sustainable development.
- Recommended route into the debate is via 'What Works Scotland' [*whatworksscotland.ac.uk/tag/abcd/*](http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/tag/abcd/)
- From a local church perspective follow Al Barrett [*thisestate.blogspot.com/*](http://thisestate.blogspot.com/)



Asset based community development (ABCD)

3 key principles:

- Everyone has something to offer others.
- Flourishing communities cannot be built from the top down but only from the 'inside out'.
- Relationships are absolutely key to making change happen.

<http://www.cuf.org.uk/research/theological-reflection-asset-based-community-development>

“For Good: The Church and the Future of Welfare” by Samuel Wells, Russell Rook, David Barclay

- **Beveridge and the Welfare State have for 75 years focused on wants (needs or deficits)**
 - **There is also scope to cultivate assets (goods / good things)**
 - **Eradicating want, idleness, ignorance, disease and squalor (Beveridge’s 5 great evils) is a worthy aim for the State but not for churches!**
 - **What churches are often better placed to do is to cultivate flourishing, fulfilment, inspiration, blessing and hope.**
- ‘Churches are invariably better placed than the State to cultivate society’s assets – its social goods that can be apparent in adversity as much as comfort, and as absent in places of splendour as much as of squalor.’ p.17**

The five 'goods' (to be cultivated)

- 1. Relationship – communal relations of mutual dependence; reciprocity; companionship; a solace in adversity; being with**
- 2. Creativity – overcoming adversity; making, crafting, planning, shaping**
- 3. Partnership – collaboration around a common goal; working with; enables dignity to surface; involves an essential humility: i.e. we need the help and commitment of others**
- 4. Compassion – solidarity with those less fortunate; 'the single most poignant place of our encounter with God' (p.16)**
- 5. Joy – Enjoying the things that God gives us in plenty; 'a joy found in Jesus' desiring and a love that never lets us go' (p.17)**

A new theology? A theology of resilience

- Vulnerability is our natural state – not just for the poor!
- Vulnerability can be a ‘thin-place’ where only a tissue separates us from an awareness of God
- Gratitude and generosity (Grace) are embraced and practiced
- Confidence in the economy of abundance
- Understands the potential of ‘indignation’ i.e. This won’t do! - including the ‘shadow’ side of indignation
- Recognises the need **to church** if we are to be resilient in our complex and troubled times

Rudolph Bahro:

“When the forms of an old culture are dying, the new culture is created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure.”

Books by Ann Morisy

- **Beyond the Good Samaritan (1997) Bloomsbury**
- **Journeying Out: A new approach to mission (2004) Bloomsbury**
- **Bothered and Bewildered: Enacting hope in troubled times (2009) Bloomsbury**
- **Borrowing from the Future: A Faith-based approach to Intergenerational Equity (2011) Bloomsbury**

7 steps to furious religion (based on Maajid Nawaz of the Quilliam Foundation's analysis of Islamism):

- **Otherisation** Theological permission to distinguish between 'them and us' based on we who live and believe the right way and those who live the wrong way (a binary world view)
- **Collectivisation** everyone is different from us i.e. self-definition of being special is created and given energy by negative stereotyping by the 'other'
- **Narrative of oppression** a story of how the 'other' is out to get us, not just today but through history
- **Collective guilt** 'others' are all guilty
- **Supremacism** We are superior to the 'other' and we have a duty to promote that superiority
- **Self-defence** We suffer at the hands of those who resist or deny our supreme way, and our way must not be allowed to be subdued
- **Violence** We justify violence because there is no other way to promote the right way of living and believing given the oppression and resistance we face.

A comment made by an imam in Batticaloa: He was talking about how his son should behave at school following the bomb attack at Zion church on Easter Day 2019.

He told him, 'I want you to show love in your life, and to be hopeful not fearful because it only took two people to change the way people in our town think about Islam - and it's for the worse - so you need to be part of the far greater number of Muslims who show good.'

Key points of learning for missionaries to promote:

- The hazards of generalising
- The importance of appreciating and recognising 'metaphor'
- The art of contextualising

Inclusive Mission Ann Morisy

Features of our social and political environment in the UK

Place = space + flows

Each and every place will have its own distinctive and specific flows (always think 24/7 and 365 days a year) E.g.

Street Pastors

Those limited to the single place – risk a restricted view of the world and a narrow horizon of possibility

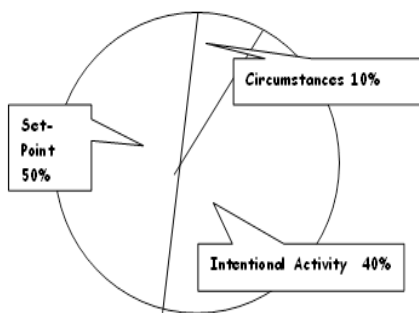
In the context of global flows religious people are increasingly viewed as disruptive to social cohesion

When religion... has become a toxic brand

- We need to acknowledge that religion like any powerful phenomenon has the capacity for good and ill
- We need courage and ability to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy religion

Healthy Religion ...

- Does not indoctrinate, but helps people think for themselves e.g. Adam and Eve a story about the human condition
- Invites humility about what we think we know
- Invests in what it is for and not what it is against
- enlarges the imagination via Gospel stories
- teaches and encourages wisdom and holiness
- opens us to the new and helps people to change... for the better
- deepens our sympathies
- fosters resilience



How does faith transform?

Embracing faith impacts on our attitude to our circumstances and when our attitudes change so too do the micro-actions in which we engage.

Now that three generations have benefited from the welfare state we are prone to overestimate the impact of circumstances on our lives and *underestimate* the scope we have for 'intentional activity'.

S. Lyubomirsky, K M Sheldon, & D Schkade (2005) "Pursuing Happiness: The Architecture of Sustainable Change," Review of General Psychology, Special Issue: Positive Psychology 9 (20: 111-131) NB subsequent research suggests circumstances may have an impact nearer to 20% but the scope

for intentional behaviour remains significant – and under appreciated.

Victor Frankl:

"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing, the last of human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances."

Transformation?

Transformation means shedding the perceived constraints of circumstance and taking up intentional activity both individually and corporately. Transformation involves new ways of seeing and a new way of organising. NB Addiction saps our best intentions, closing the door on other possibilities for life.

- Early Methodism was transformational: perhaps an extraordinary achievement of the species Homo sapiens?
- The Salvation Army invited those damaged by circumstances to positions of responsibility i.e. that is to become sufficiently free of addiction to be able to embrace purposeful, intentional activity.

What did early Methodism do?

- Gave people the chance to hear themselves think... Conversation matters
- The Methodist Class: helped people embrace intentional behaviour i.e. rising above circumstances ... Solidarity in the struggle (think Alcoholics Anonymous or even Weight Watchers!)
- Generous (inclusive!) theology
- A belief or confidence in people being 'transformed' ... holiness (follow Jesus)

Sinfin: Suburb of Derby in the English Midlands

- Basic church in a hall

- A modest range of community activities hosted by the church.
- Vicar valued in the community and encouraged people to pray
- Mums gathered in hall after dropping kids at school and over coffee shared their anticipated struggles (smoking and swearing too much, picking on the kids, rowing with partner...) that day and then they prayed for each other.
- The following day they would check in with each other how they had got on (with their positive intentions) and there was much laughter as well as prayer



One aspect of work at local level, especially in neighbourhoods undergoing change, is to identify ways in which the *radius of trust* between people can be extended. Those whose experience is limited to the single place in the context of rapid global flows risk a restricted view of the world and a narrow horizon of possibility and heightened anxiety.

The burdens of a faltering market economy are being disproportionately carried by the poor – precariousness (precarity) is mounting. To see Guy Standing in action: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnYhZCUIYXs>

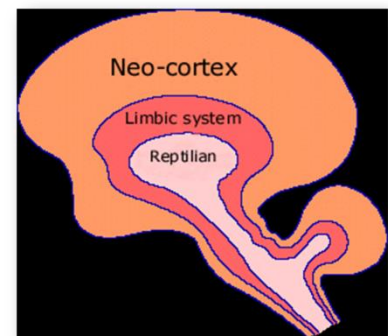
Heightened anxiety (precarity) makes for:

- Reacting rather than responding
- Scapegoating and blaming
 - “Them!”
 - Distancing and herding i.e. taking on the hurts of others (social media)

NB An anxious church is very unattractive and anxious people forget how to have fun (Messy Church is an antidote)

Countering anxiety

- Hold fast to the mental discipline that problems have multiple and interrelated causes
- Use fun and play
- Practice being a ‘non-anxious presence’ by ‘parking’ our own anxiety – softening our eyes.



Re-neighbouring i.e. Enabling people to have something to say after they have said hello! Re-neighbouring: An emerging concept within the social sciences and regeneration theory

Project work such drop-ins, community cafes, pot-luck suppers etc. are often disparaged as just a ‘sticking plaster’, especially when there are so many issues of justice in areas of high mobility and high poverty.

However ... Project work contributes significantly to *re-neighbouring* because it provides a structure and opportunity through which people can increase their range of acquaintances and at an unforced pace, gain trust in their new acquaintances.

‘Gentrification with Justice’: An Urban Ministry Collective and the Practice of Place-making in Atlanta’s Inner-city Neighbourhoods by Katherine Hankins and Andy Walter

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Abstract

Scholars and policy-makers have increasingly sought to understand the relationship between poverty and place in the inner city. This paper examines the spatiality of an anti-poverty strategy called ‘gentrification with justice’ and implemented by an urban ministry collective in three neighbourhoods in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. This place-based approach centres on the movement of middle-class ‘strategic neighbours’ into impoverished neighbourhoods as a way to transform the local socio-spatial dialectic of poverty. The urban ministry collective draws upon notions of diverse community, social justice, the ‘where’ of faithful practice and a faith-governed market in seeking to redevelop neighbourhoods. Based on archival analysis and semi-structured, in-depth interviews with leaders and members of the urban ministry collective, this paper provides a deeper understanding of the place-making role that faith-motivated actors play in local contexts of poverty. doi: 10.1177/0042098011415434 *Urban Stud* May 2012 vol. 49 no. 7 1507-1526

From needs to assets: Is this just naïve hopefulness? A growing emphasis on 'assets'

- Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) a term coined by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann at the [ABCD Institute](http://www.abcdinstitute.org/) in Evanston, Illinois. ABCD is an approach that recognizes the strengths, gifts, talents and resources of individuals and communities, and helps communities to mobilize and build on these for sustainable development.
- Recommended route into the debate is via 'What Works Scotland' whatworksscotland.ac.uk/tag/abcd/
- From a local church perspective follow Al Barrett thisestate.blogspot.com/

Asset based community development (ABCD)

3 key principles:

- Everyone has something to offer others.
- Flourishing communities cannot be built from the top down but only from the 'inside out'.
- Relationships are absolutely key to making change happen.

<http://www.cuf.org.uk/research/theological-reflection-asset-based-community-development>

"For Good: The Church and the Future of Welfare" (2019) by Sam Wells, Russell Rook, David Barclay

- Beveridge and the Welfare State have for 75 years focused on wants (needs or deficits)
- There is also scope to cultivate assets (goods / good things)
- Eradicating want, idleness, ignorance, disease and squalor (Beveridge's 5 great evils) is a worthy aim for the State but not for churches!
- What churches are often better placed to do is to cultivate flourishing, fulfilment, inspiration, blessing and hope. 'Churches are invariably better placed than the State to cultivate society's assets – its social goods that can be apparent in adversity as much as comfort, and as absent in places of splendour as much as of squalor.' p.17

The five 'goods' (to be cultivated)

1. Relationship: communal relations of mutual dependence; reciprocity; companionship; a solace in adversity; being with
2. Creativity: overcoming adversity; making, crafting, planning, shaping
3. Partnership: collaboration around a common goal; working with; enables dignity to surface; involves an essential humility: i.e. we need the help and commitment of others
4. Compassion: solidarity with those less fortunate; 'the single most poignant place of our encounter with God' (p.16)
5. Joy: Enjoying the things that God gives us in plenty; 'a joy found in Jesus' desiring and a love that never lets us go' (p.17)

A new theology? A theology of resilience

- Vulnerability is our natural state – not just for the poor!
- Vulnerability can be a 'thin-place' where only a tissue separates us from an awareness of God
- Gratitude and generosity (Grace) are embraced and practiced
- Confidence in the economy of abundance
- Understands the potential of 'indignation' i.e. This won't do! - including the 'shadow' side of indignation
- Recognises the need to church if we are to be resilient in our complex and troubled times

Rudolph Bahro: "When the forms of an old culture are dying, the new culture is created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure."

Books by Ann Morisy

- Beyond the Good Samaritan (1997) Bloomsbury
- Journeying Out: A new approach to mission (2004) Bloomsbury
- Bothered and Bewildered: Enacting hope in troubled times (2009) Bloomsbury
- Borrowing from the Future: A Faith-based approach to Intergenerational Equity (2011) Bloomsbury