

URBAN LIFE

TWO YEARS ON...

Welcome to the second annual report from *Urban Life*. Since it was launched in June 2014 *Urban Life* has grown in its capacity to develop and deliver learning and research opportunities in a range of key areas. We hope that the report will inspire you to find out more about how *Urban Life* might be of help in your own situation.

We would welcome personal enquiries and these can be made by contacting Mike Pears, the director of *Urban Life*, at mpears@urbanlife.org . We also send out a regular email news update and you can sign up for this on the homepage of the website www.urbanlife.org

With thanks,



Mike Pears

- ◆ *Urban Life provides practical, local and accessible training to Christian groups, intentional communities and churches in challenging urban areas and in neighbourhoods that have been pushed to the margins*
- ◆ *Urban Life brings equipping, training and research to your own local context that relates to your own situation and the challenges you face*

LEARNING JOURNEYS

These are tailored learning experiences delivered to groups based in tough contexts. These are being developed by a steering group of 4 people and we are currently delivering 3 pilot courses in **Leeds**, **Stockport** and **Birmingham**.

The steering group consists of:



Andrew Grinnell



Anna Ruddick



Mike Pears



Carmel Murphy

THEOLOGY-TO-GO

This course consists of 8 three hour sessions spread through the year with a curriculum in practical theology, contextual missiology and ethnography for practitioners. The format is small group conversational approach and is of interest for people working in projects, small incarnational communities, ministers and other professionals. Four groups are running in 2016: **Glasgow** (11 people), **Dundee** (9 people), **Leeds** (10 people), **Birmingham** (5 people) with a further group due to start in **East London** in September. Five people are coming together as a core team to develop the content and delivery of TTG and expand the potential to deliver in other cities from 2017 onwards.

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS



By introducing basic research methods that can be used in daily life, this project aims to introduce new depth to the way we listen to others in our day-to-day encounters. In doing so, we hope to foster a deeper understanding and sense of connection with those who find themselves marginalised so that we might become better neighbours.

The project, which works in collaboration with *Pioneer Leadership Training*, has sponsored 2 people to work on conversational projects in a prison situation and in a multicultural urban area. We have hosted 3 research gatherings each of about 20 people and are developing a network which will explore the use of conversation in mission and marginalisation. The project has recently been invited by *Common Awards (Durham University)* to submit a substantial funding application to develop the work.

TAILORED LEARNING AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

We are developing ways of supporting practitioners in using research in their own context to critically review and develop their practices, deepen their understanding of issues faced and nurture ongoing theological reflection. We currently support 4 researchers with funding and supervision: 2 are related to Creative Conversations and just completing their research (funding from *Durham Seedcorn Grants*); and 2 are just starting research process in key issues facing support for migrants in the *Calais* camps. Research findings are delivered in a variety of sensitive and ethically appropriate ways. We have just received a further £10k in grants for this kind of research and are in the process of applying for 2 further grants.



ONLINE RESOURCES

- ◆ Website, blog and Facebook pages are being developed as a resource.
- ◆ Free webinars and online seminars about key aspects of mission (600 estimated views).
- ◆ Support pages for projects and courses such as *Creative Conversations* and *Theology-to-Go*.

BOOK SERIES: MISSION IN MARGINAL PLACES

Six books drawing on theology and social sciences to explore key issues in mission and marginality:

- ◆ *Mission in Marginal Places, The Theory* (2016)
- ◆ *Mission in Marginal Places, The Praxis* (2016)
- ◆ *Mission in Marginal Places, The Stories* (2017)
- ◆ *Exploring Spiritual Landscapes* (2017)
- ◆ *The Peaceful Way* (2018)
- ◆ *Locating the Powers* (2018)



Book Launch Events:

- ◆ *Ecclesiology and Ethnography Conference* (5-6th September, Durham)
- ◆ *Urban Expression Community Weekend* (15-16th October, Birmingham)

RESEARCH DEGREES

Masters Modules: Development of four new modules which explore the key developing areas for mission in marginalised urban contexts. The aim is to deliver these in context, initially in **Birmingham** and **Bristol**, in partnership with *IMC*. We will deliver 2 modules each year starting in 2016-17. The modules are:



- ◆ Theology and Mission in Contemporary Urban Contexts
- ◆ Practical Theology and Ethnography
- ◆ Theological Perspectives on Place and Power
- ◆ Christian Responses to Marginalisation, Social Exclusion and Deep-Rooted Deprivation

PhD research degrees: We are in the process of developing a research supervision team in order to develop a more dynamic and lively environment for advanced studies in the areas of practical theology and contextual mission. Our intention is to enable people to study whilst staying in their own context with particular focus on developing deeper understanding about Christian responses to exclusion and deprivation.

RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUAL PIONEERS, ASSOCIATIONS, COLLEGES & MISSION ORGANISATIONS

- ◆ Learning support for groups, individual pioneers living in deprived contexts
- ◆ Resources for students, Newly Accredited Ministers and Continuing Ministerial Development
- ◆ Contributions to events such as *Inhabit/New-Parish Conference*; *Incarnate* weekend (**Bradford**); *National Church Planting Forum*, etc.