

Urban Monastery – House of Prayer and Mission to the Broken

"Some wish to live within the sound of Church or Chapel bell;
I want to run a Rescue Shop within a yard of hell."
- C.T. Studd.

Introduction

This document is an expression of my heart on paper. Over a period of 7 years, God has laid this vision on my heart – it is my life's ambition and life's purpose. I have a vision to see broken communities transformed by the gospel in a culture increasingly unreachable and disenchanting by the established church settings. A band of men and women committed to incarnational ministry amongst and to the poor bringing wholeness, redemption and hope and inviting people into the adventure.

Inspired by the vision that early Celtic and monastic communities and the 24/7 prayer movement, to build a missional community operated from (not only in) buildings which operate as a hub for mission in the world. These places were places of prayer, mission and hospitality...refuges for all. This would be a 'High Street Monastery'.

VISION: "establish a centre for prayer, mission and hospitality."

Prayer

We want our spirituality to be missional and to that end we want a shop front to be a house of prayer.

- we will establish a dedicated prayer room accessible to all
- we will proactively offer prayer ministry
- we will help train and teach people in the discipline of prayer
- we will help train and teach people to develop as disciples
- we will host regular prayer days, weekends and weeks
- we will take prayer to the streets

Mission

We view our shop front as much less of a 'church' and more of a mission centre. As such:

- we will be a centre of training and equipping for mission

- we will be a centre from which community engagement happens
- we will be a centre creating appropriate contextual expressions of 'church' for the poor and marginalised

Hospitality

We want our space to be a place of hospitality and service to our community. Most of all, we want to be a safe place of sanctuary in a broken world. We would host regular community meals as a focus of gathering people into an inclusive family and operate a 'kettle always on' policy.

Values

This missional community, this urban monastery, would live out 4 key values:

- **Missional-Incarnational Ministry**
- **Transformational Experiences**
- **Good News to the Poor**
- **Building Community**



The vision is to build a contextualised missional community who flesh out these four key values by engaging in a variety of mission practices as outlines further below. But first, an expansion and exploration of those values.

Values Expanded

Good News to the Poor

Key Scripture: Isaiah 61:1; Matthew 27:31-46

- practically alleviating poverty
- pursuing social justice
- proactive engagement with local issues
- 'pure religion'... right worship

Transformational Experiences

Key Scripture: Romans 12:1-2; Isaiah 61, Ephesians 1:7-10

- bind up the broken hearted
- freedom for captives
- comfort in despair
- rebuild, restore and renew people, lives and community
- transformational prayer and worship
- holistic gospel of the Kingdom
- showing mercy, ministering grace

Building Community

Key Scripture: Acts 2:42 - 47

- gathering faith community as well as active engagement with wider community
- inclusive and contextualised
- authentic relationships
- intentional gathering
- people before programme
- learning - generosity
- sharing - eating
- praying - growing
- Spirit-led - Jesus-focussed

Missional-Incarnational Ministry (Going out, Going Deep)

John 1:14; Philippians 2:6-11

Presence: *establishing physical, emotional and spiritual presence in the community*

Proximity: *accessible, available, active engagement with the community*

Powerlessness: *not claiming power, status or privilege, becoming humble servants*

Proclamation: *inviting people into the Kingdom*

Seeking in everything to be obedient to the call of God.

Mission Practices

Together with the key participants in the potential missional community, we the community would formulate key missional practices to help us flesh out our vision, values and mission. We would have a set of community practices and a set of personal practices which we encourage everyone who is part of our community to engage in together as below.

Community Practices

spontaneity : : flexibly : : frequently : : intentionally : :



Personal Practices

The purpose of these personal practices is to give formation to what we would mean by discipleship in our local setting. The best way of becoming a disciple is to act ourselves into new ways of thinking.

Transform	Contribute	Participate
<i>to become more like Jesus</i>	<i>to the world by joining God in His Mission</i>	<i>in Christian community</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">Regular engagement with scripture</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Regular patterns of prayer (personal & corporate)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Actively exploring spiritual disciplines (fasting, simplicity, spiritual gifts, study, worship etc)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Formation and commitment to a 'rule of life' of discipleship</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Actively live locally (shop locally, socialise locally)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Adopt a 'third place' (spend time in a place people regularly gather)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Get involved in local groups</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Build relationship with not-yet-Christians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - emerging relationships - established relationships - advanced relationships <p style="text-align: center;">Seek out 'people of peace'</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Share meals</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Communicate the gospel (making Jesus and the Kingdom regular themes of our conversations)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Gather regularly as a community (cells, social events, gatherings)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Engaging in shared mission with others</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Learn with others</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Support one another</p>