Towards a Practical Ecclesiology for Urban Scotland

Harry Martin John Johnstone
M.A. (Edinburgh) B.D. (Aberdeen)
M.Th. (Aberdeen)

A Thesis presented for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Arts
at the University of Glasgow

February 2005

ProQuest Number: 10391099

ProQuest 10391099

Table of Contents

For Susan

Robbie & David

whose love, wisdom and joy

give me life and hope.

Abstract

This research is praxiological in nature, arising out of committed action and leading to more informed urban ecclesiological practice in Scotland. It acknowledges the current haemorrhaging of membership and influence facing the Church of Scotland – felt most acutely in the poorest parts of the country – and seeks to plot a practical urban ecclesiology which takes seriously both the urban context and also the gospel priority towards the poorest and most marginalised.

Chapter One provides an autobiographical backcloth to the research and highlights the three core principles underlying it: a preferential option for the poor; an understanding of knowledge as situated; and a commitment to an abductive research process.

Chapter Two outlines the research methodology and, in particular, justifies the use of Case Studies, with Focus Groups and semi-structured Interviews, as an appropriate research model.

Chapter Three focuses on the nature of the post-industrial city. It highlights globalisation, environmentalism and the collapse of western-style democracy as three of the key issues in the current urban context. It considers post-war urban regeneration, highlighting the failings of a model substantially dominated by buildings and a top-down strategy.

Chapter Four is concerned with the nature of poverty in Scotland today, including how such poverty can be defined and measured. The causes of poverty are understood structurally and a particular critique of *New Labour's* social inclusion policies is offered, based on an analysis of their underlying political philosophy of communitarianism and the Third Way.

Chapter Five draws on the different theological and ecclesiological responses to the urban and to poverty and, in particular, upon Latin American Liberation Theology and Urban Theology in Britain since 1985. Through an exploration of Pentecostalism, it highlights the need to develop appropriate ecclesiological models which take the nature of *rooted hybrid spirituality* more seriously.

In *Chapter Six* the focus of the research narrows down to look at Glasgow, giving consideration to both the effectiveness of the city's place-marketing strategy and also some of the patterns of church life in the city.

Chapter Seven focuses upon four Case Studies. These affirm and inform the conclusions reached in previous chapters, highlighting the failure of urban policy to adequately address poverty and the need of the Church to move beyond a 'project-based' response. The research also highlights the importance of church buildings as places of sanctuary and of the 'cultural sectarianism' which continues to pervade the culture of west central Scotland.

Chapter Eight represents an attempt to return to informed practice, highlighting how some of the key concepts and findings within the research are informing the developing strategy and practice of the Church of Scotland's *Priority Areas Committee.*

Chapter 1

Towards a Self Portrait

Introduction

This research, in common with a great deal of other research (Mason 2002:17), has arisen out of the researcher's life. It reflects not only a number of my past interests and activities: (Liberation and Urban Theology (Johnstone 1990); the UK context of poverty (SEA 2001); and church-based community development); but also my ongoing concerns and responsibilities as the Church of Scotland's Priority Areas Support Worker. Although a national post, at a congregational level this work is heavily focused in the west of Scotland and, in particular, in Glasgow. Of the fifty four parishes on the Church of Scotland's Priority Areas List (NM 2004), thirty six (two-thirds) are in Glasgow. Given these circumstances, it is useful to preface this study with a series of brief autobiographical episodes. In a concluding section I will seek to elucidate a number of key theological, ontological and epistemological positions upon which the research is based.

Some Key Moments

As I look back, I can identify some key events where my horizons have been broadened and my understanding of matters of faith have been deepened.

In the early 1980s, in my late teens, I left school and spent a year between school and university working in a mission catering for the single homeless in Edinburgh's Grassmarket. I went there to test my calling. If God wanted me to work in the Church, from my relatively comfortable middle-class background, I reasoned that this was the worst place I could ever be called

to. One of my primary tasks was making the soup and serving it. One particularly hot day (it was always hot serving the soup) one of the customers fell out with me. Cursing and swearing he threw a bowl of boiling soup at me. Had it hit me I would have been badly scalded. However, before I was able to react, two other men in the queue jumped in front of me and took the full force of the boiling soup. Yes, their heavy overcoats largely protected them. But I realised that few, if any, of those I knew in my home community would have acted in such a sacrificial way. It was the start of my conversion to the victims of poverty, an opening of my eyes and heart to the reality that, rather than this being the worst place God could ever call me to be, this was instead a holy space.

I had, at the time, no theological or epistemological language to articulate this dawning realisation. The next few years – spent at Edinburgh University – saw little change. It was only when I moved to Aberdeen to study theology and to live in a council flat in one of the poorest parts of the city (Tillydrone) that my horizons began, once again, to expand. I began to discover the excitement of Third World Liberation Theology – the 'liberation of theology' (Segundo 1991) – and to observe, at first hand, some of the inequalities in Scottish society.

On completing my undergraduate studies I spent a year living and working in Castlemilk (Glasgow) as the assistant minister in Castlemilk East Parish Church. Although this year gave me hope for the local church, at the same

time it further enforced my sense of disaffection towards the institutional church.

> *It was the time of the introduction of the Community Charge – the Poll Tax – into Scotland. The matter was due to be discussed at Glasgow Presbytery. There was a sense that such a discussion might be divisive, although there was no doubt for me where God stood. Through a complex procedural movement, some Presbyters succeeded in getting Presbytery to depart from the matter without discussion. I could not believe it. At a time when the Government was introducing hated legislation, which favoured the rich at the expense of the poor, the Church decided not to discuss it for fear that its discussions might appear divisive.*

At the end of my time in Castlemilk, although I looked at a few parishes – including one later described to me as an 'ecclesiastical black hole' from which I would probably never have re-emerged, I returned to university to study the methodology of Liberation Theology and its relevance for the Church in Scotland. I had thoughts at the time of undertaking a doctorate but I quickly realised that I could not teach what I had not lived and that living was more important than teaching. The central thesis of what was written up at the time as a Masters Degree was that while there was much that was untransferable between the very different contexts of Latin America and urban Scotland, the methodology of Liberation Theology was a transferable key which offered the churches in the housing schemes the opportunity of new insights and praxis.

In September 1989 I was ordained to the Church of Scotland charge of Bellshill: Orbiston linked with St. Andrew's and began to try to make some sense of what doing theology in a local place really meant.

Not long after I arrived in Bellshill a young couple came to see me about getting married. They asked if I was willing to marry them despite the fact that they weren't members of the church. I explained that it didn't matter to me, but I was interested in why it was important to them to be married in a church if they didn't feel that they wanted to be a part of it. At that point the doorbell rang and I went off to answer it. On returning, they told me that they had something else they wanted to tell me. They were expecting a baby. Did that matter? Again, I replied that I did not see any reason why this mattered, but I was still interested in why they wanted to be married in church. There was silence, which I took initially as embarrassment on their part but quickly realised was ignorance on mine. 'Church is the natural place to be married,' stated the groom to be. 'Yes,' added his fiancée. 'After all, we know we can only do this with God's help. Without God, we're nothing.'

Again and again, through the years, I have heard people outside the church, particularly people struggling with ill-health and poverty, express their sense of God in wonderful, amazing and powerful ways.

There were many hard times in Bellshill, and many things I am sure that I would have done differently given half a chance. There were times when I felt an almost complete failure in everything that I touched. But I also found

myself amongst a group of people, many of whom were willing to go on a journey without the need to feel certain about where we would end up.

I had resolved to spend the first years simply listening to what people were saying but within a relatively short period of time, it became clear that there was a group of people who were asking penetrating and searching questions about the meaning of faith and the purpose of the Church in our local context. Some of these people, along with others, formed our Theology Group. Although unsure of what we were often about, the Group was a genuine attempt to do theology in a liberative key in the Scottish context. Kathy Galloway was later to describe its work as the first real attempt to explore Liberation Theology in Scotland (Galloway 1998). It did not seem that way at the time. Often we felt that we were groping around in the dark, unsure of what we were about. Yet a picture and vision gradually emerged. Over the course of some three years we were changed from a group of individuals into a group who cared deeply for each other and who wanted our community to feel that God loved them (including us) in practical ways. Through this group the plans for a Neighbourhood Centre were born. In 1995 Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre was opened, utilising the premises of Orbiston Parish Church.

In those early days of the Theology Group none of us could have imagined what Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre would become. Perhaps that is just as well for had I known, I doubt very much whether I would have had the courage to begin. By 2004 the Centre was serving over twelve hundred people

13

of all ages every week with a range of activities from film making to elderly day care. Utheo Ltd (the charitable company established to manage the Centre) employs twenty one members of staff and has an annual budget of almost six hundred thousand pounds. Along with the amenity housing complex next door to it, which the organisation enabled to be built, there has been some five million pounds of inward investment into the local community since 1995. Yet the Centre, and its related activities, should be understood as more than just another community centre. It has been an attempt to be Church in a culturally relevant way – a Church seven days a week, addressing the issues of local people, with local people. Its ongoing intension has been to try to live in a new space, not simply the space between Church and community, but that space which endeavours to be both Church and community.

Although there is much to celebrate about the life of Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre, and I remain convinced that it offers important insights for the future shape of the Church in urban communities, some of which will be considered in more detail within this research, it is not without its flaws. With hindsight, I am aware that we may have settled for being a service provider, where we both created dependency (rather than encouraging empowerment) and became dependent upon our fund providers (making it increasingly difficult to engage in critical dialogue with those public sector bodies who substantially meet the running costs of the Centre). The passion to change the world somehow became dissipated by the necessity of running an organisation.

The desire to want the best for our community may well have meant that we became too heavily reliant upon paid staff and external professionals rather than building up the resources and confidence of people in our local churches and community. I also sense that we settled too easily for providing for those whose needs were most easily manageable, those whose quality of life could be improved with just a little extra support rather than seeking to work alongside people struggling with complex and multi-layered levels of exclusion. I continue to be challenged by the comments of one of the many researchers who visited the Centre over the years, who pointed out that there were an awful lot of new cars in the car park (Williams 2000).

If, however, there was only one thing that I could change about Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre it would be its Daily Worship. Every other activity was developed in response to local needs and built around local insight and understanding. Although our worship reflected the issues facing our community – issues identified by the Theology Group – the format continued to be substantially determined by the traditions of the Church. It is a matter of immense satisfaction to me that worship happens every day within the Centre, a sort of constant thread of faith which runs through its daily life, and that it is led by lay people from virtually every Church in the town. However, I do wonder whether the worship would be more relevant and more appealing if local people outwith the established Church had not only helped to shape the topics for worship, but also its format and language. If worship is at the very heart of the calling of the Church, I have the increasing sense that we need to

learn from those who express faith but find the language of the Church stifling, inappropriate and nonsensical.

Throughout the years in Bellshill my own interest in Liberation (and Urban) Theology in general, and Latin American Liberation Theology in particular, continued, further nourished by the liberative theology that we were developing within our own context. In 1997 my wife and I had the opportunity, along with our two young sons aged three and one at the time, to spend three months in southeast Brazil listening to what people across the churches, from academic theologians to church leaders and ecclesial base community (CEBs) members, were saying and doing. We were in South America at a time when Liberation Theology had disappeared off the front pages of theological journals and national newspapers, and where an explosive growth in some of the new Pentecostal churches was leading some commentators to conclude that the age of Liberation Theology was over.

Yet that was not our experience. Our experience was rather that the movement was changing – as surely contextual theology must – partly as a result of the changing economic and political framework in which it was operating, and partly in response to the changing ecclesial and social culture. Many in the base communities commented that during its heyday, the communities had been captive to the macro-political vision of the politicians and professional theologians. Now local people could get on with the job of building the new future in their local place. I was taught that street lighting is more important to local people than a new government. This chimed well with our increasing

sense in Bellshill that the micro was more naturally the place of our operation and empowerment, albeit we needed to recognise the impact of global decisions on our local context and that structural injustices have constantly to be addressed at the local, national and international level.

In Brazil, I learnt a great deal about colour and creativity, and began to break out of my dull Presbyterianism. I also learnt something about hope.

Among the many interviews of local people, church leaders and professional theologians I carried out, a conversation with a middle-aged woman in the Sao Bernardo favela on the outskirts of Sao Paulo continues to stand out (and perhaps to grow in importance each time I relate it). One of the questions I always asked was what people in Brazil felt they could offer to the churches in Scotland. This woman, living with her family in conditions of appalling squalor, replied simply. 'We can give you hope.' I must have looked incredulous. After all, how could anyone living in a broken-down shack with an open sewer running past it — or through it when it rained – offer us hope? She must have noticed my confusion. 'Martin,' she pointed out, 'you have to recognise that hope is not the same as optimism. Here there are no grounds for optimism, but still there are grounds for hope. For hope comes from God.' I still cannot pretend to understand fully what she meant, but I know that she is right and that barely a day passes when her words do not challenge and inspire me.

In February 2000, after ten incredibly invigorating and challenging years, I left Bellshill to take up the post of Urban Priority Areas (UPA) Adviser with the

17

Church of Scotland's Board of National Mission. I knew that I would find the transition difficult and I have, missing not just a daily involvement with people but also the chance to work out the gospel in a local context.

And yet there are rewards. I am consistently inspired by the ways in which churches and communities are working at making things better. I sense a fresh willingness within parts of the central structures of the churches to find new models of working, models which recognise the relational and local nature of the Church and which may be prepared to take risks. While the Church of Scotland, in line with many other mainstream denominations in the First World, has talked of change for many years, there seems to be a growing willingness to actually embrace it. The 2001 publication of the 'Report of the Special Commission anent Review and Reform' (Special Commission 2001), more popularly known as 'Church Without Walls,' was both an indication of that desire and a catalyst to its ongoing development.

In 2002, the Church of Scotland General Assembly approved a major report about the needs of many of the Church's poorest parishes and committed the Church to making the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable 'the gospel imperative facing us all' (NM 2002). The report had been three years in the making and had involved a qualitative survey of all churches serving UPAs, a series of regional hearings at which a number of churches shared their experiences of struggle and opportunity, and a national consultation, attended by representatives of people from churches in our poorest communities, during which the final report was drafted.

Since its unanimous acceptance by the Church of Scotland General Assembly, a major part of my work has been to develop, along with others, mechanisms which can more adequately address the depth of crisis facing many congregations in our poorest communities and can put flesh on the report's aspirational imperative. Although there are many major hurdles to overcome, there are a range of emerging opportunities: the development of links between poor communities in Scotland and overseas, and of partnerships between different sorts of churches in Scotland; work with others agencies and denominations to consider major new building and community empowerment initiatives; and the possibility of the major spending boards and committees of the Church of Scotland working collaboratively to focus their resources more effectively towards those communities of greatest need.

At the 2002 General Assembly Tricia spoke of how she had been stabbed and then of how she visited in prison the person who had nearly killed her. In her words and actions, I was acutely aware of the presence of Jesus. I have an ever deepening sense that the future of the Church depends upon the degree to which we are prepared to identify ourselves alongside the Jesus who chose to become poor. This is to move from being a Church of the rich (which claims to be a Church for all) through being a Church for the poor (where the Church speaks for the poor and provides services to address their most basic needs) to becoming a Church of the poor (which is then capable of announcing the challenging gospel of good news to poor and rich alike).

I understand this study, drawing upon a range of disciplines, as well as upon the insights of people from churches in some of Scotland's poorest urban communities, to be a contribution to this wider, ongoing process.

Underlying Principles

In the concluding section of this introductory chapter, I highlight three broad and inter-related principles (which I would classify as broadly theological, epistemological and ontological) upon which this research is based, each of which can be drawn from the autobiographical detail above, and which will be expanded more fully in subsequent chapters.

Theologically this study is based not only upon Liberation Theology's understanding that God has made a 'preferential option for the poor' (Gutierrez 1988) but also upon the understanding that those who experience poverty have a critical and privileged locus from which to understand the world.

> When we enter the continent of the poor and try to think through their eyes and from their social position, we discover their strength, their courage, their resistance, and their creativity. It then becomes clear that the society in which they live and suffer and from which they are marginalised has to be fundamentally transformed. From the position of the poor the urgency of liberation is beyond doubt (Elizondo & Boff 1984:x).

This principle, which I will discuss more fully in *Chapter Five*, is broadly similar to that taken by a range of other conscientising movements that have developed in recent decades (Freire 1996, Haraway 1991), and is not to be confused with an uncritical acceptance of the perspective of people living in poverty. Such a position would be methodologically weak, based as it is on the

false assumption that unified and literalist interpretations are possible (Hollway & Jefferson 2000:3, Silverman 2000:177) and that a single homogeneous group of people who can be identified as 'the poor'[1] exist (Nagle 1997:24). In *Chapter Four* I will discuss the nature of poverty in Britain today, and in the preceding chapter (*Chapter Three*) the urban context particularly in post-industrial Britain.

A second principle underlying this study is the understanding that knowledge is situated and contextual. This is neither an abandonment of the need to strive for a 'situated objectivity' (Haraway 1991:188) nor a descent into the banal which 'suggest[s] that everything can be valid for someone, sometime, somewhere' (Gergen & Gergen 2000:1032). According to Haraway:

> The 'eyes' made available in modern technological sciences shatter any idea of passive vision; these prosthetic devices show that all eyes, including our own organic ones, are active perceptual systems, building in translations and specific *ways* of seeing, that is, ways of life. There is no unmediated photograph or passive camera obscura in scientific accounts of bodies and machines; there are only highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed, active, partial way of organising worlds. All these pictures of the world should not be allegories of infinite mobility and interchangeability, but of elaborate specificity and difference and the loving care that people might take to learn how to see faithfully from one another's point of view, even when the other is our own machine (original emphasis, Haraway 1991:190).

My own 'situated knowledge' (based on twenty years of experience and engagement with the research topic) is a legitimate contribution not only to this study's formation but also to its tentative conclusions. At the same time such knowledge (and, in particular, my association with the four case studies I

---

[1] Throughout this study I resist the tendency to describe those who experience poverty as a single, defined group of people, preferring instead to describe people as 'experiencing poverty,' 'living in poverty' or 'struggling against poverty.' For more details, see *Chapter Four*.

will use in *Chapter Seven*) must be open to rigorous examination to ensure that it is not guilty of subjective bias (Denscombe 1998:209). In *Chapter Two* I will outline the methodological steps which I have taken to seek to ensure that my work is transparent, and that the engagement with the literature and data upon which it is based, is open to scrutiny.

A third broad principle on which this study is based is that knowledge and understanding are generated through ongoing interpretative and reflexive engagement (Kvale 1996:3, Silverman 2000:193). To these categories I would add the importance of committed engagement (Johnstone 1990:53-55). Understanding, as such, is not an objective reality which exists 'out there,' capable of being gathered but is generated in the ongoing cyclical process between two (or more) parties. This engagement may be with literature, but it is also crucially developed in episodes and through relationships. My research is consequently based upon a qualitative methodology and upon an inductive, or more accurately, abductive, dialectic between theory and data.[2] May points out:

> [A]ny distinction between theory on the one hand, and empirical data through neutral observation on the other, must be challenged for we mediate our observations through concepts acquired in everyday life. ... This emphasis recognises that we are part of the world we study; that we bring to any setting our own experiences; and that there is a constant

---

[2] Jennifer Mason distinguishes between three different approaches to the place of theory in social research. These are: theory comes first and it is tested (deductive); theory comes last, broadly corresponding to the work of 'grounded theory' developed by Strauss and Glasser, and arises out of the data (inductive); and, drawing upon the work of Blaike, that theory, data generation and interpretation are developed simultaneously (abductive). She concludes: 'I would argue that researchers with widely different theoretical orientations do actually engage in the practice, associated with abductive reasoning, or moving back and forth between data, experience and wider concepts, whether or not they always explicitly recognize this as part of their research strategy' (Mason 2002:181).

interaction between theory and data and that these issues cannot be separated from each other (May 2001:171).

It is to a more detailed study of this methodology to which I now turn.

Chapter 2

Towards a Method

Introduction

At the heart of the design of any piece of qualitative research lies what Mason describes as an 'intellectual puzzle' from which clear research questions are drawn (Mason 2002:13). This puzzle is shaped by broader epistemological and ontological principles, without which 'the researcher risks assembling an untidy bag of methods with little logic, and with little hope of sensibly integrating the products into a coherent analysis or explanation' (Mason 2002:34). At the same time, however, the adoption of specific methods for research should be based upon the extent to which these methods are able to address the intellectual puzzle and to answer the resulting research questions. In doing so it is legitimate to draw upon the wide range of methods and approaches that exist within the broad 'bricolage' (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:4) of qualitative research.[1] According to Gerson and Horowitz:

> It is surely counterproductive to try to assess which method is 'better.' The pertinent questions always remain: which approach is most appropriate to answer the question being posed? And how best can the chosen method be carried out? Qualitative researchers choose the method that best fits their theoretical concerns and personal strengths and then strive to enact it as carefully and thoroughly as possible. ... The 'best' method is the one that is carefully conceived and well executed. The qualitative findings and analysis will then be rich in theoretical potential (Gerson & Horowitz 2002:221-2).

---

[1] Commentators are in agreement that qualitative research is difficult to define. According to Tesch there are twenty six different kinds of social research which fall under the broad heading of 'qualitative.' Bryman similarly identifies a number of streams, including naturalism, ethnomethodology, emotionalism and postmodernism, as well as those who would seek to define it in terms of what it is not (i.e. quantitative). Silverman and others would, however, wish to distance themselves from any understanding of qualitative which draws too sharp a dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative research methods. The diversity of approaches and the lack of any overarching philosophy is primarily regarded as a strength. (Bryman 2001; Coffey & Atkinson 1996; Denscombe 1998; Silverman 2000).

After outlining the 'intellectual puzzle' which this study is seeking to address, I will then consider its structure (moving from broad to particular, from global to local), its strategic approach (using case study), the specific research methods used (literature review and analysis, focus group and semi-structured interview) and the methodology of analysis of the qualitative data (primarily coding) that has been adopted. The rationale behind these approaches will be considered, as will the steps which have been taken to ensure validity, reliability and the appropriate generalisability (or transferability) of findings.

The potential for reaching generalisable conclusions from qualitative research has been sharply contested, particularly by anti-positivists (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). The drawing of generalisations is difficult within any piece of research, quantitative or qualitative (Mason 2002:199) and particularly given the specificity of context, which is a characteristic of qualitative research, broad generalisations should be avoided (Hollway & Jefferson 2000:118). However, with the proper procedures more moderated generalisations are possible and desirable (Williams 2002:139).

> I do not think that qualitative researchers should be satisfied with providing explanations which are idiosyncratic or particular to the limited empirical parameters of their study. ... Qualitative research should produce explanations which are *generalizable* in some way, or which have a wider resonance (original emphasis, Mason 1996:6).

Whilst the movement from the specific and local to the general is fraught with potential difficulties, during which some aspects will almost inevitably be lost (D. Harvey 2001:173), such a movement is important in a work of this nature, which

27

is seeking to contribute to practical theological and ecclesiological development at a Scottish level.

Focus and Structure

The greater the level of clarity which it is possible to gain at the design stage of the research, the easier it will be to keep track of its key elements in the midst of the vast quantities of data which qualitative research customarily creates. Miles and Huberman's advice is to 'begin with a foggy research question and then try to defog it' (Huberman in Silverman 2000:68).

Mason identifies four broad categories of intellectual puzzle:

- developmental (How and why has a particular phenomenon, or set of phenomena, developed?);

- mechanical (Why does something work in the way that it does?);

- comparative (What can we learn by comparing different situations to one another?); and,

- causal/predictive (What impact does one set of circumstances have on another? What is the likely future impact of a set of circumstances?) (Mason 2002: 18, 175).

Intellectual puzzles, and the subsequent research questions which result from them, may fall into a single category, or a range of categories.

My puzzle, which has gone through a series of revisions for clarification, and which has been sharpened and focused during the dialectical research process, is

both mechanical and predictive. *What is the particular nature of the urban church in Scotland today? To what extent has the wider context of poverty shaped that church? What is the future shape of the urban church?*

The substantive chapters seek to address the key research questions which comprise key elements of this puzzle. In *Chapters Three* to *Five* I am concerned with the broad context in which the study takes place. *What is the place of the city in a global world? What is the position of the poor, particularly in the United Kingdom, who live in our cities? What insights, ecclesiological and theological, are available through the various strands of theological enquiry specifically concerned with the maintenance and development of the life of faith within the city and/or among the poor?*

In *Chapters Six and Seven* 'the lens zooms in' (Silverman 2000:69) on to the specificity of Glasgow, Scotland's largest city and home to over three-quarters of its poorest citizens. I focus on four Church of Scotland congregations, operating within some of the poorest communities in and around the city. I am concerned here both with questions which I bring to the data (based on the insights which have arisen through the preceding chapters) and those questions that emerge out of a careful analysis of the data. *Does the church have a future in these communities? Why are buildings regarded as such a necessity? Is partnership and collaboration desirable or possible? Why are the people in greatest economic and social need apparently disproportionately absent from these*

churches? How do urban churches engage more effectively with popular religiosity and urban spirituality?

As this is a praxis-based piece of research, concerned not simply with a greater understanding of the context but with the desire to change it, in *Chapter Eight* I attempt to demonstrate how some of the conclusions of this study are impacting upon the practice of the strategic development of Church of Scotland in priority area parishes, an area of work for which I have a central responsibility. Such a movement from theory to practice is problematic but essential to the nature of this study. For such a movement to be legitimate I need to demonstrate that the methods[2] I have adopted for intellectual enquiry, data generation and analysis are appropriate, that they are a coherent fit with one another, and that the project has been systematically and transparently constructed in what Seale calls a 'fallibilistic' approach (Mason 2002:187).

Throughout this study I am adopting the methodological approach associated with Liberation Theology (Johnstone 1990) in which reflection follows committed and faith-inspired praxis[3] from the side of the poor and in which social analysis provides the raw material for subsequent traditional theological reflection (C. Boff 1987:31) and action. L. Boff summarises this method as: 'seeing

---

[2] Here I am utilising the language of Silverman, who draws a distinction between: models (concerned with the overall ontological and epistemological framework); methodology (the general approach used to address the research data); and methods (specific research techniques) (Silverman 2000:77).

[3] Praxis is a technical term which has its roots in Marxism and was subsequently developed by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. According to Bevans: 'It is a term that denotes a model or method of thinking in general, and a method or model of theology in particular. ... It is reflected-upon action and acted-upon reflection – both rolled into one' (Bevans 1992:71 & 72).

analytically, judging theologically, and acting pastorally or politically, three phases in one commitment in faith' (L. Boff 1988: 12).

Methods of Enquiry

In the initial chapters I will draw on a wide range of literature (both published and unpublished) from a spectrum of disciplines (theological, philosophical and sociological), as well as upon my own experiences of urban church engagement.

In *Chapter Five* I will make very limited use of a series of semi-structured interviews (or more accurately semi-structured conversations) which I undertook in southeast Brazil from March to June 1997. These augment the wider academic literature as well as giving some insight into the ways in which Liberation Theology continues to be experienced in Latin America.

In a number of other chapters, particularly *Chapters Four* and *Six*, I make use of a range of quantitative data in discussing the nature of poverty in Britain today and the specific issues facing the city of Glasgow. I also use quantitative data in outlining the case studies in *Chapter Seven*. The use of this data is not intended to 'triangulate' the research (Bryman 2001:274), a substantially flawed mechanism for making validity claims, given that qualitative and quantitative data are substantially measuring different aspects (Mason 2002:33; Silverman 2000:177). It does, however, help to place the specificity of this research within a wider context and provides some rationale for the selection of the Case Studies. The

31

need for effective sampling remains a largely underdeveloped aspect of qualitative research, but Mason is clear as to its significance:

> I want to suggest that sampling and selection – appropriately conceived and executed – are vitally important strategic elements of qualitative research which have direct implications for whether and how generalization is consequently possible (Mason 2002:120).

Case Studies

'Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied' (Stake 2000:435). That choice is made on the basis of a number of theoretical and pragmatic considerations (Silverman 2000:106-107). The primary consideration ought to be the extent to which the Case Study (or Studies) can offer insight into the 'intellectual puzzle' and core research questions. Although it is inappropriate to choose case studies primarily, or exclusively, on the basis that they are broadly 'representative' of a set of phenomena under investigation (Mason 2002:131), in studies which seek to offer some generalisable conclusions, the case studies should be carefully chosen to support the potential of generalising the findings. This can be achieved by choosing contexts which are broadly typical, atypical (or deviant), or by a combination of both (Denscombe 1998:33-34).

In this study, four Case Studies have been chosen. All of them are Church of Scotland congregations serving UPA parishes (under the 1995 classification) and three out of four are also present on the Priority Area Parishes List (NM 2004).[4]

---

[4] For a break down of the 1995 and 2004 classifications, see *Chapter Six.*

Three out of four are also located within the boundary of Glasgow City Council and the Presbytery of Glasgow. The fourth, Orbiston, comes under North Lanarkshire Council and the Presbytery of Hamilton. The location of the Case Studies was influenced by the fact that Glasgow and Hamilton Presbyteries have the highest number of Urban Priority Area (UPA) parishes in Scotland, and in any study focusing upon urban ecclesiological models it was essential to draw from those areas. I am interested in the extent to which people experiencing poverty, and the social fragility which is a product of it, has shaped the ecclesiology and missiology of these churches.

In each Case Study the local church has sought to find appropriate ways of engaging with the wider community, although the ways in which they have done so has varied widely from context to context. I am interested in the impact of these different approaches on congregational life and their potential for the future. All of the Case Studies also raised particular issues in relation to their buildings. This is entirely to be expected given that the critical state of ecclesial buildings in priority areas has been a central concern of recent reports to the Church of Scotland's General Assembly and the stimulus for the 2002 'Sharing the Pain – Holding the Hope' Report (NM 2002). Again, however, there is considerable diversity over the state and usage of these buildings. I am interested in how people, in these different contexts, view their church buildings.

Any choice of Case Studies is limited. I did not choose a 'deviant case study,' for example, a church not in a UPA context. Although such an example would have

been interesting to the extent that it would have given some insight into how the aspirations of churches in poor communities differ (or are broadly similar) to those in other communities, such a question was not at the heart of this study. Equally, I did not seek experiences and insights about faith and the Church from people experiencing poverty outwith local congregations. Again, such an approach may well have proved to be fascinating, and important in the development of an appropriate urban ecclesiology among the those struggling against poverty,[5] but my concern was primarily those who are currently involved in church life within Glasgow housing scheme and inner city congregations.

More significantly, all of the Case Studies are from the Church of Scotland, a significantly potential weakness in any study that seeks to make even the most tentative of generalisations beyond that denomination, particularly given the continuing high level of sectarianism identified in all of the Case Studies. Significantly, however, the importance of ecumenical working also arose during each of the Focus Groups and all are working, in different ways, across the denominations as did the continuation of what I have classified as 'cultural sectarianism.' The choice of Church of Scotland congregations was largely a pragmatic one. It is the denomination with which I have the most immediate relationship and where, significantly, I have the greatest opportunity to ensure

---

[5] I am aware of doctoral research (University of Edinburgh) currently being carried out in this area by the Rev Malcolm Cuthbertson, Church of Scotland minister in Easterhouse: St. George's & St. Peter's, Glasgow (Cuthbertson 2000).

that the research outcomes can play a part in the ongoing development of strategy.

I had also been previously involved in each of the case studies although to significantly varying degrees, ranging from meeting the minister, offering support in the development of a community project, and leading very occasional Sunday worship, to having lived and worked in two of these communities (Castlemilk and Bellshill). Although such involvement, particularly in the case of Orbiston, could, in the opinions of some, undermine the objectivity of the study, I decided to include it both on the basis that it has been identified 'as a model for other communities around the land' (Galloway 1998:preface), and also because such neutrality is neither possible nor appropriate within the research process.

> Particular ideas of neutrality, such as the maintenance of objectivity through positioning the researcher as nothing but a passive instrument of data collection, are now exposed as falsehoods that seek to mask the realities of the research process. The knower (as researcher) is now implicated in the construction of the known (the dynamics and content of society and social relations) (May 2002:2).

At the same time, I have taken a number of steps during the data generation and analysis processes to reduce potential distortion as a result of personal involvement.

At each of the Focus Groups an independent assistant moderator was present and was responsible for taking fieldwork notes and presenting a summary of the group's conclusions towards the end of meeting. This summary was then open to verification and expansion by the group members. In addition, I held a debriefing

interview with the assistant moderator to highlight any areas of concern and to offer suggestions both as to how the process could be improved at future meetings and who I should subsequently interview. In Orbiston, the minister who succeeded me as parish minister attended the Focus Group. The use of Focus Groups as one of the principal methods of research also helped to reduce my own potential significance (Barbour & Kitzinger 1999:18). At the level of interpretation and argument building I have also endeavoured to be self-critical in the development of my conclusions.

The use of Focus Groups and Semi-Structured Interviews

Focus groups and semi-structured interviews have become the primary sources of data generation within the qualitative study. Their increased popularity as methods of social research – the use of focus groups in academic research has grown three-fold in recent years (Barbour & Kitzinger 1999:1) and semi-structured interviews have been referred to as 'the gold standard of qualitative research' (Mason 2002a:225) – means that the case for using them, as opposed to other methods of research (for example, participant observation) requires to be made theoretically (Silverman 2000:295) rather than simply for practical purposes.

According to Kitzinger & Barbour:

> Focus groups are group discussions exploring a specific set of issues. The group is 'focused' in that is involves some kind of collective activity... Crucially focus groups are distinguished from the broader category of group

36

interviews by the explicit use of group interaction to generate data. Instead of asking questions of each person in turn, focus group researchers encourage participants to talk to one another: asking questions, exchanging anecdotes and commenting on each other's experiences and points of view. At the very least research participants create an audience for one another (Barbour & Kitzinger 1999:4).

The development of Focus Groups can be traced back to Merton and Lazarsfeld's 'focussed group interviews'[6] created to assess the effectiveness of the American Government's propaganda wartime radio programmes in the early 1940s (Bloor *et al* 2001:2; Merton & Kendall 1946, Vaughn *et al* 1996:3-4). During the 1960s the use of Focus Groups became particularly prevalent in market research and subsequently in the not-for-profit and public sectors (Krueger & Casey 2000). Since the early 1990s, governments, both in the United Stated of America and in Europe, have been heavily influenced by the use of Focus Groups in shaping public policy (Barbour & Kitzinger 1999:1). Although initially sceptical of their suitability, the use of Focus Group methods in academic research has grown significantly from the 1980s onwards, with some of their principles particularly attractive to those interested in group interaction and participatory research (Krueger & Casey 2000:159-62).

Although they are capable of generating a considerable amount of high quality and accessible data, particularly in relation to how people make decisions within social or group settings, Focus Groups are not without their theoretical and

---

[6] Robert Merton highlights the fact that in the original monograph of his work, 'focussed' was spelt with two 's' and that this remains his preferred spelling. In a 1987 address to the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), Merton is critical of the lack of triangulation procedures within Focus Group research, which he contrasts strongly with his own earlier work (Merton 1987:556).

practical difficulties. At a practical level, the role of the group moderator/facilitator is an extremely arduous one, responsible not only for careful observation and noting of group dynamics, but guided routeing through the focused questions and activities, whilst ensuring that audio equipment, essential for proper academic research, is decipherable for transcription. With careful planning and skilful facilitation skills, however, these problems can be substantially reduced.

At the theoretical level more substantial problems remain. Focus Groups are not the 'Voice of the People' that they are sometimes depicted to be: 'they are simply one more research method, problematised by difficulties of recruitment, conduct and analysis' (Bloor *et al* 2001:15). Indeed, while methodologically they remain strongly associated with the field of market-consumer discourse, where the emphasis is upon elucidating information to allow those in authority to retain control 'there is a danger that their uncritical use will lead to the reproduction of, rather than challenges to, existing social relations' (Cunningham-Burley *et al*:1999:186).

While Focus Groups are able to track decision making processes, and to observe how people's opinions are influenced and changed within a group discussion, they can both limit the quality of participation by some, unwilling to take a position contrary to the prevailing view of the group (Kitzinger 1995:300), while encouraging others to disclose intimate details that they would not normally have chosen to so do within a group environment (Bloor *et al* 2001:16).

Despite these limitations I decided that the use of Focus Groups was a legitimate research method in this study. I was particularly interested how, in a number of the research questions (for example, around the use of church buildings and community involvement) the issues were addressed by groups of church members where I suspected that there was some strong divergence of opinions.

I sought to overcome some of the practical difficulties by using high quality audio recording and transcribing equipment, the support of an assistant moderator (who took responsibility for monitoring the recording equipment and making fieldnotes), the use of a visual exercise to encourage non-verbal participation (Mason 2002:78), and my own skills as an experienced facilitator. In the interest of encouraging an appropriate level of disclosure and to counteract some of the difficulties which can be encountered when there are potentially superior-subordinate relationships within a group (Krueger & Casey 2000:84) the parish minister did not participate in the Focus Group (except in the case of Orbiston where I felt that it was appropriate to involve him and where he also helped to balance my own involvement as the previous parish minister). The ministers were invited to listen to the summary towards the end of the group meeting and were subsequently interviewed.

I chose to combine the Focus Group meetings with a number of semi-structured interviews, held three weeks later and after initial analysis of the data had taken place. At these interviews, I was able to follow up a number of leads that I had missed during the initial meetings, and to explore sensitively those areas where I

39

suspected under or over disclosure had taken place. Michell employed a similar schema in research carried out among teenage girls (Michell 1999:36-46) and there is strong support in academic research for the use of Focus Groups in combination with other methods (Bloor *et al* 2001:8).

In the field of social research there is a broad continuum of what constitutes an interview, from a highly structured, survey-based interview at the one end (associated with quantitative research) to a totally flexible unstructured one at the other (although it is debatable whether such a method is possible 'not least because the agendas and assumptions of both the interviewer and interviewee will inevitably impose frameworks for meaningful interaction' (Mason 2002a:231)). In most interviews a range of different sorts of questions will be asked (May 2001:121).

I chose to use semi-structured interviews. Their use complements that of Focus Groups and helps to give added depth to the Case Studies (Seidman 1998:11). They take seriously the contributions of both participants to the research process and are compatible with my wider epistemological principle that knowledge is generated through an ongoing dialectical process rather than excavated – the traveller as opposed to the miner (Kvale 1996:3).

According to Mason semi-structured (or qualitative) interviews have four main characteristics.

> [T]he interactional exchange of dialogue ….; a relatively informal style …; a fluid and flexible structure … [and]; the perspective that knowledge is situated and contextual, and therefore the job of the interviewer is to ensure that the

relevant contexts are brought into focus so that situated knowledge can be produced (Mason 2002:62).

Although the interviewer will have specific areas of interest that s/he will wish to explore during the course of the interview (Gerson & Horowitz 2002: 204), s/he is flexible about the structure, happy to follow the pattern laid down by the interviewee and prepared to be taken down apparently tangential routes. Questions should be open-ended (Hollway & Jefferson 2000:35) but with a focus specific on the local context (Mason 2002a:227). Stories, which elucidate experiences, are particularly valuable (Seidman 1998:72).

I undertook a total of fourteen interviews. These included interviews with the parish ministers in Castlemilk East and Colston Milton. I did not interview the minister in Orbiston (who had participated in the Focus Group) and St James' Pollok was vacant at the time when the study was carried out. In determining who else to interview, I undertook an initial analysis of the Focus Group data and took the suggestions of the assistant moderator into account. I was particularly interested in those people who had expressed strong and, on occasions, contrasting opinions around my key research questions, as well as those whose initial contributions had suggested that they had, or were, experiencing poverty.

Qualitative research acknowledges the important part which the interviewer plays within the process of the interview and does not claim that neutrality is possible (Hollway & Jefferson 2000:31). At the same time steps should be taken to reduce the controlling influence of the interviewer (Hollway & Jefferson 2000:79),

moving into what Seidman identifies as an 'I-Thou' relationship bordering upon a 'we' relationship (Seidman 1998:80).[7] It is important for the qualitative interviewer to constantly remember that 'the people [we] are talking to are more interesting than the people asking the questions' (Spencer in Mason 2002:5).

In a number of the interviews that I undertook as part of this study I was interviewing colleagues and close personal friends. This made it particularly important that I took reasonable precautions to ensure that the data generated was not unreasonably distorted. I sought to follow clear protocols in my interviewing procedure (Hollway & Jefferson 2000:31; Mason 2002:75) and to minimise verbal (and non-verbal) comment. The interviews were taped and subsequently transcribed. By listening to the tapes of the early interviews immediately after I had recorded them I was able to become more critically aware of the occasions when I had strayed from the interview setting into that of a mutual conversation. Listening to the tapes during the interview process also aided me in the identification of ongoing themes which were emerging through the course of the study. Coffey and Atkinson point out:

> The process of analysis should not be seen as a distinct stage of research; rather it is a reflexive activity that should inform data collection, writing, further data collection, and so forth. Analysis is not, then, the last phase of the research process. It should be seen as part of the research design and of the data collection. The research process, of which analysis is one aspect, is a cyclical one (Coffey & Atkinson 1996:6).

---

[7] Seidman draws on the work of the Alfred Schutz. In his 1967 work (Schultz, Alfred (1967) *The Phenomenology of the Social World*. Illinois, Evanston) he identifies the 'Thou' as a separate human person rather than an object. The interview, as such, is a relationship between two people, rather than the interviewer treating the interview as an object of enquiry.

The process of data gathering and initial coding also took place within the context of the wider study. As a result it fed upon and informed the wider research programme enabling an appropriate dialectical relationship between the particular focus on Glasgow and the broader research area.

Analysis and Interpretation

The choice of analytical methods, in common with all other aspects of the research project, is determined by the extent to which these methods can help to answer the central questions of the study and the extent to which this choice is consistent with the study's underlying ontological and epistemological principles (Mason 2002:179).

Primarily I have analysed the data generated through the case studies by coding, the traditionally most popular method of analysis in qualitative research (Seidman 1998:107). Such coding (or cataloguing) of material can never be a neutral process (Mason 2002:171). In this case my initial codes arose out of my research questions and from the wider study (*Chapters Three* to *Six*) as well as from the data generated through the Case Studies. These codes were consistently altered and refined, as were the hypotheses arising out of them, during the course of the project as part of an ongoing process of reflective interpretation (Mason 2002:194; Silverman 2000:79).

The process of coding, described by Krueger and Casey as 'basically cutting, sorting and arranging [data] through comparing and contrasting' (Krueger &

Casey 2000:137) is not without its limitations. Principal among these is the problem that by breaking the data down into a series of themes and categories, it is difficult to retain a sense of the wider context in which the data was originally situated.[8]

In this study I have chosen to deploy a basic coding framework across each of the four Case Studies whilst adopting a narrative approach within them. This combined coding and narrative system, developed and revised as a result of the wider research programme, enables me both to draw some generalisable conclusions to my research questions, while also highlighting the diversity which exists between (and within) the Case Studies.

My coding systems were more basic than, for example, would have been the case had I used discursive or conversational analysis techniques (for which I did not have the quality of transcripts or the professional expertise) or had I used one of the increasing range of qualitative data analysis software packages which are increasingly available. I have nonetheless sought to avoid the temptation of putting forward simple answers to an extremely complex set of circumstances. According to Coffey and Atkinson:

> We are familiar with the characteristic novice response to a field research project: 'It all comes down to' power, patriarchy, bureaucracy, or whatever, or 'It's just a question of ...' Such reductive arguments are always distressing, given the variety and complex organization of social worlds. They reflect

---

[8] Hollway and Jefferson's research (2000) on the fear of crime, based upon a psychoanalytical method of analysing the individual interviews (and comparing the responses of different family members to the same set of circumstances) is a good illustration of how keeping the data together can help the researcher to gain insights that are likely to be missed through coding.

mentalities that cannot cope with the uncertainties and ambiguities of social research (Coffey and Atkinson 1996:15)

During my analysis I have sought to draw upon some of the core principles of both analytic induction (Bryman 2001:389) and grounded theory (*ibid*:390) as useful and extremely influential methodologies. In doing so I avoided the temptation to ignore data which did not fit with my hypotheses. Instead I sought apparently contradictory evidence in an effort to increase my understanding of the issues (Hollway & Jefferson 2000:100). My approach to the relationship between data and analysis is abductive rather than inductive (that is, that there is an ongoing dialectical relationship between theory and data from the outset of the study, and a recognition that the suspension of theory-building until the end of the process of analysis is not possible). At the same time I make use of grounded theory, with its understanding that data coding has to be broken down and reassembled until the study's conclusions can be drawn from all the data as a useful working principle, which I have endeavoured to follow. During the period in which I was carrying out my analysis of the Focus Group meetings, through to the completion of my analysis phase, I sought to maintain a research diary to track the shifting directions of the project. Its use is part of my effort throughout the research project to produce a study which is valid, reliable and from which limited more generalisable conclusions can be drawn.

Conclusion: Towards a Valid Methodology

In this chapter I have outlined the 'intellectual puzzle' (and subsequent research questions) which lie at the heart of this study and have sought to demonstrate how they are compatible with my theological, ontological and epistemological principles put forward in *Chapter One*. I have sketched out its structure and sought to demonstrate how *Chapters Three* to *Five* seek to address particular research questions, and how they also feed into the most substantive piece of the study (*Chapters Six* and *Seven*) leading to changed practice as outlined in *Chapter Eight*.

I have indicated that the study has two main foci. In *Chapters Three* to *Five* I am concerned with the wider context of urban poverty, and the theological and ecclesiological response to it, drawing particularly upon Latin American Liberation Theology and that element of Urban Theology which is particularly concerned to operate within a liberative key. In *Chapters Six* and *Seven* I focus on the Glasgow context, using data generated through a series of Focus Group meetings and semi-structured interviews held in four Case Studies in Church of Scotland congregations serving UPA parishes in and around Glasgow. I have attempted to give a rationale as to why these specific Case Studies were chosen, as well as for the methods of data generation and analysis that I have employed.

It is important that any piece of research can stand up to wider public scrutiny, and that its conclusions are both valid and reliable. In qualitative research, validity and reliability are substantially determined by the extent to which the

researcher demonstrates why specific methods were adopted and how particular

conclusions have been reached.

> Unless you can show your audience the procedures that you used to ensure that your methods were reliable and your conclusions valid, there is little point in aiming to conclude a research dissertation. Having good intentions, or the correct political attitude, is unfortunately never the point. Short of reliable methods and reliable conclusions, research descends into a bedlam where the only battles that are won are by those who shout the loudest (Silverman 2000:175).

Chapter 3

Towards an Understanding of the City

Introduction.

As recently as the late 1960s, there was a sense that the coming age of hyper-technology and global communications would increasingly render the need for cities obsolete (Webber 2000:536). The opposite has proven to be the case and it is clear that we are entering a global phase in history where the 'world ... has become in many practical aspects a city' (Hall & Pfeiffer 2000:3).

While predicting future population and distributions levels at a global scale can only, at best, be a guesstimate (Clark 2000:581; Byrne 2001:6), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) anticipates that in 2003, for the first time in history, the majority of the world's six billion people will be living in cities, and that by 2025 sixty one percent of the population will be urban dwellers (Hall & Pfeiffer 2000:3). Others estimate that the process of urbanisation will be even more rapid and that seventy percent of the world's population will be living in cities by 2010 (Green 2001:1). The vast majority of this growth will take place in the countries in the South where urbanisation is becoming increasingly disconnected from the processes of industrialisation and economic development which marked the relatively more gradual growth of cities in the North (Davis 2000:7).

While the processes of urbanisation, urban growth and urbanism in the south are of global significance, given the scope of this study, in this chapter I am primarily concerned with the urban context in the UK and, in particular, with the post-industrial city or, more accurately, those parts of the city most severely disadvantaged by the collapse of heavy industry (Byrne 1997).

This chapter is divided into two sections.

In *Section One* I will look at the development of the city, focusing on the industrial and post-industrial cities of the developed world.

In *Section Two*, I will consider some of the macro-level challenges to city life, including post-modernity and globalisation, the environmental risk posed by and to cities, and the perceived collapse of democracy in many city neighbourhoods.

From an anti-poverty perspective, in *Section Three* I will evaluate the effectiveness of urban regeneration policy in Britain over the last thirty years, focussing in particular upon the performance of the New Labour Government since its election in 1997.

The particular case of Glasgow – Scotland's largest city and responsible for thirty four percent of its Gross National Product (GNP) (Bailey *et al* 1999:1) – will be considered in more detail in *Chapter Six*. Throughout, my focus is upon the impact of the urban context on the poorest within the UK.

Section 1: The Evolving City: 'Man is a creature who lives in a *polis*' (Aristotle).

The philosopher Wittgenstein writes:

> If we think of the world's future, we always mean the place it will get to if it keeps going in the direction we see it going in now and it doesn't occur to us that it is not going in a straight line but a curve, and that its direction is constantly changing (Wittgenstein in Bell & Haddour 2000:233).

Any historical analysis of the city, as such, must seek to avoid both simplistic or generalist notions of development including the notion of linear

51

development. Today's cities are the product of diverse contexts and histories.

According to Harvey:

> The long geographical history of human occupancy of the earth's surface
> and the distinctive evolution of social forms (languages, political
> institutions, and religious values and beliefs) embedded in places with
> distinctive qualities has produced an extraordinary geographical mosaic of
> socio-ecological environments and ways of life. This mosaic is itself a
> 'palimpsest' – made up of historical accretions of partial legacies
> superimposed in multiple layers upon each other, like the different
> architectural contributions from different periods layered into the built
> environments of contemporary cities of ancient origin (D. Harvey 2000:77).

The Early City.

The earliest true cities developed in Lower Mesopotamia around the Tigris

and Euphrates rivers between 4000 and 3500BCE. Although the Greek and

Roman Empires were both important in laying the foundations of the modern

city – at political, cultural and architectural levels – they were relatively

recent. Even then, Europe remained almost exclusively rural until the collapse

of feudalism and the rise of the mercantile towns of central Europe in the early

Middle Ages (Pacione 2001:46).

Archaeologists and urbanists have produced a range of theories to explain the

rise of the ancient city. These include: the development of irrigation schemes,

the importance of trade, the need for defence against enemies and the

development of urban sites around temples and shrines. While all of these

factors were of importance, and some more important than others, Pacione is

correct that:

> It is doubtful if a single autonomous, causative factor will ever be identified
> in the nexus of social, economic and political transformations that resulted
> in the emergence of urban forms of living. A more realistic interpretation is
> generated if the concept of an 'urban revolution' is replaced by the idea of

an *urban transformation* involving a host of factors operating over a long period of time (original emphasis, *ibid*:39).

While the history of the ancient city is interesting and insightful, it is clear that with the industrial revolution, and the philosophical, religious and economic change that surrounded it, cities entered a different dimension. According to LeGates and Stout:

> The capitalist city, especially the city of the Industrial Revolution, created an entirely new urban paradigm and established the physical, social, economic and political conditions of all that was to follow. With the Industrial Revolution, we see the emergence of the modern city (LeGates & Stout 2000:19).

The Modern City.

Although Thrift is right in cautioning against a labelling of a particular time – particularly the present – as epoch changing (Thrift 2000:233), there can be no doubt that the Industrial Revolution changed the world. The Marxist historian Hobsbawm writes:

> To imagine the modern world without these words [industry, middle and working classes, railway, etc.] (i.e. without the things or concepts for which they provide names) is to measure the profundity of the revolution which broke out between 1789 and 1848, and forms the greatest transformation in human history since remote times when men invented agriculture and metallurgy, writing, the city and the state (Hobsbawm 1977:13).

What is clear, however, is that the preconditions necessary for the industrial advances of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Europe in general, and Great Britain in particular, pre-date that period. Primary among these were the Enlightenment and the Protestant Reformation, which according to Weber, created the necessary 'work ethic' and capitalist

infrastructure in which technological advances could be incubated (Pacione 2001:46-47).

One of the most striking consequences of industrialisation was the rapid growth of towns and cities – the steep line in Davis' 'attenuated S-curve' (K. Davis 2000:7). In 1801 only a tenth of the population of Britain lived in areas of 100,000 or greater whereas a century later over forty percent of the population lived in cities (*ibid*:6). Almost all of the growth in Britain's population during the nineteenth century was absorbed into the new towns and cities.

> The population of Birmingham increased by 271 percent between 1801 and 1851 from 71,000 to 265, 000, Manchester grew from 75,000 in 1801 to 338,000 in 1851 (a growth of 351 percent), and Glasgow from 84,000 to 350,000 over the same period (an increase of 317 percent) (Pacione 2001:47).

This period of urban growth led to overcrowding in many of the cities, so graphically portrayed by the young Engels during his years in Manchester. Engels' methodology mixed reporting on the conditions he witnessed with structural analysis (Engels 2000).

The new industrial cities became much more socio-economically polarised than had been the case in the pre-industrial cities. The spatial geography of the industrial city to a great extent inverted that of the ancient or mercantile city. The wealthy fled from the squalor and pollution of the core and took up residency on the outskirts, in an increasing and burgeoning suburbia. Frank Lloyd Wright's utopian 'Broadacre City' plan (LeGates & Stout 2000:397) became urban sprawl in much the same way as Le Corbusier's visionary

planning of high density housing (2000:339) resulted in the disastrous building of high-rise blocks of flats.

The growing division within the city was not accidental. Whereas this division was regarded as inevitable by proponents of market capitalism (Pacione 1997:158), structuralist and poststructuralist thinkers have clearly identified market capitalism as the root cause of the spatial divide within the capitalist/industrial city.

> The view of many economists and geographers is rather that 'poor places' are a structural property of capitalism, arising in all societies with the economy organised around the competitive production of commodities for consumption at market. Within capitalist societies the geography of poverty is thereby seen as *necessarily* uneven, in that the innermost workings of capitalism compel it to generate spatial concentrations of capital and resources ('rich places') set apart from areas where capital and resources are more thinly spread or even non-existent ('poor places'). Many theories have emerged in this respect, often linking back to Marx's statement that 'capital grows in one place to a huge mass in a single hand because it has in another place been lost by many' (original emphasis, McCormick & Philo 1995:8).

Although the industrial poor often had to live in appalling and degrading conditions, real living standards continued to rise for all and there was the potential for a degree of social mobility. According to Byrne:

> The point is that the real personal dynamics of Fordist industrial capitalism were dynamics of degree. There were very poor people living in appalling conditions in the industrial cities but for most people the middle range of experience was the norm and most people saw a prospect of upward mobility for themselves or their children. Crucially throughout this period the incomes of those in the bottom half of the income distribution improved relative to those in the top 10 percent of that distribution (Byrne 1999:126).

However, with the collapse of the industrial base upon which the cities had been built, the prospect for many individuals and communities diminished considerably. Sedgwick writes:

... the social reality of urban Britain is very sick indeed. If you compare those who were poor a century ago, and the percentage and location of those poor today, there is a striking continuity. But that misses the whole point. Culturally these regions were rich a century ago, and economically they supported the comfortable lives of the late Victorian men and women. Now these areas are culturally in a state of shock, and economically they are written off. That is enormous discontinuity. That is not ... a judgement on the culture of such areas. It is simply to argue that there is a manifest feeling of crisis, and loss of identity, in the culture of inner urban areas (Sedgwick 1995:xiv).

The Post-Industrial City.

According to Savage and Warde there are fives categories of contemporary city – Third World cities, global cities, older industrial cities, new industrial districts and socialist cities (Savage & Warde 2000:267-268). They point out that, while useful as categories, it is important to avoid over simplification and any suggestion that the development of these categories should be seen as linear (*ibid*:268). LeGates and Stout give a number of illustrations where cities operate across a range of categories (LeGates & Stout 2000:264) and Byrne emphasises the need to focus on micro-spatial divisions within cities as opposed to macro differences between cities, regions or even continents.

> ... the actual expression of the consequences of global restructuring in advanced capitalism is expressed not among places but within them. ... [S]tudies which emphasise the distinctiveness of localities, and especially of whole city regions, have been using too long a ruler, and ... we need to look within cities, at intra-, not inter-urban differentiation if we are to find the expressed consequences of what is certainly a phase state change. This gets us away from the absurdities of Lash and Urry's identification of Newcastle as a post-industrial welfare city – contradictions of daily experience ought to be challenged. The point is ... that there is no longer one Newcastle, even understood as a torus attractor, but at least two and possibly many Newcastles (Byrne 1997:56).

Post-industrialism began in the 1930s – although it was masked by the impact of the Second World War and the rebuilding process in the years that followed

it – and has become more pronounced in the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism (Pacione 1997:3). The most notable feature of post-industrialism is the collapse of the heavy industrial base of the economy – 'the rent paid to muscle power has sunk nearly to zero' (Hall & Pfeiffer 2000:22) – and the parallel rise in high technology and the service industry (Comblin 1998:70). This process of 'tertiarization,' identified by Clark (1940) is becoming increasingly pronounced in the highly urbanised nations of the north. According to Hall:

> Although there are significant differences between the major advanced economies – the United States and the United Kingdom being more highly 'tertiarized' than Germany or Japan – it is nevertheless true that in all such countries more than 60 percent of the workforce are now engaged in service industries, and in some the proportion is approaching 70 percent. Further, this proportion is even greater in the major cities. Manufacturing now employs fewer than 15 percent of the employed population in New York City and London, and it is confidently predicted that by the early twenty-first century the proportion will have fallen to between five and ten percent (Hall 1996:15).

Increasingly cities reflect these changed circumstances and what Therborn and others identify as a tri-partheid division between the super rich, an increasingly squeezed and potentially vulnerable middle class and a large and disenfranchised poor (Byrne 1999:64). Cities are multi-centred, reflecting less labour intensive industries, an attempt to overcome the traffic gridlock in the old city centres (Rogers & Power 2000:97), and the decision of the new super rich and, to a lesser extent, middle classes to abandon the inner city to the poor (M. Davis 2000:197). Planners and urban strategists are also much more conscious about their success in developing high-profile regeneration vis-à-vis other cities and in the city's image. The point is well illustrated by Manchester City Council's bid to stage the 2000 Olympic Games.

Endorsement of the Olympic bid in 1993 ... was the most blatant symptom of acceptance [by the local authority] of the prestige model of urban regeneration. The sports facilities were conceived as the flagship developments which would re-present the city. Heightening the city's profile in the global marketplace, as an 'International City of outstanding commercial, cultural and creative potential' (Manchester City Council 1994) has become a criterion of successful local management. Of necessity the 'back-stage' neighbourhoods of the city [Moss Side and Hulme] have been relegated on the policy agenda in return for uncertain long-term benefits to that abstract value – the city's image. How much this is worth without the social investment to make the city a comfortable place to work, do business, live and bring up children, is not openly debated (Mellor 1997:62).[1]

The centrality of advanced technology, and particularly of information technology, is also having a dramatic impression on the nature of society (Hall 19996:16) and, consequently, of the city (LeGates & Stout 2000:557). Claims that the burgeoning non-spatial environment of the Internet would lead to the collapse of the city appear to be unfounded, and there is increasing evidence that the importance of cities is growing because 'they are command points, global marketplaces, and production sites for the information economy' (Sassen 2000:212). Politically and organisationally, cities are also set to become more significant, not only because they are nodal entry points into the global (Sharma *et al* 2001:12), but also as the process of subsidiarity and the growth of what Castells identifies as the 'network state' (Castells 2000:155) continue.

Paradoxically, in an increasingly global economy and with the rise of the supranational state, local governments appear to be at the forefront of the process of management of the new urban contradictions and conflicts. ... And because the tradition of European cities as city-states leading the pace to the modern age in much of Europe is engraved in the collective memory of their people, the revival of the city-state could be the necessary

---

[1] In 1997 I visited Rio de Janeiro just after the International Olympic Commission (IOC) were visiting the city to judge the city's (unsuccessful) bid to host the 2004 Olympics. Local church workers told us how in the weeks immediately prior to the IOC's visit, the streets were 'cleaned of the street children,' many of whom had not returned.

58

complement to the expansion of a global economy and the creation of a European state (Castells 2000a:566-567).

Castells' trilogy on the network society (Castells 1996, 1997 & 1998), however, is far from optimistic. In the third volume he 'identifies three touchstones [his "black holes of informational capitalism"] on which the global networked society will stand judged – Africa, where a continent is living in poverty; the urban ghettos of the developed world – standing in sharp contrast to the extraordinary levels of wealth elsewhere in the city; and the exploitation of children (Davey 1999:384).

Although the existence of poverty at the heart of the city is by no means restricted to the old industrial cities (M. Davis 2000:194) it is often there, and in the old inner cities or post war peripheral housing schemes built to house the working classes, many of whom have now been without work for two generations, that the reality is most pronounced. Mooney and Danson's picture of Liverpool is typical of many:

> The residents of its hurriedly constructed and under-serviced outer estates, like Kirkby, Speke and Halewood, were decanted from the inner city as part of the Fordist process of urban restructuring during the long boom. They now live lives in which many are deprived both from a livelihood in the capitalist economy and support from a welfare economy devastated by the effects of the urban fiscal crisis (Mooney & Danson 1997:77).

The overspill housing schemes and inner cities are not a monochrome picture of despair (*ibid*) and more poverty exists out with those areas in Scotland currently designated as 'Social Inclusion Partnerships' (SIPs) than in them (Holloway 2000:6), cautioning against an uncritical description of post-industrial cities as 'dual cities' (Byrne 1999:112). Nonetheless, many cities are deeply divided and the poor are excluded and blamed for their poverty in a

virtually unparalleled way. According to the 2001 *Child Poverty Action Group* (CPAG) report: 'As poverty and inequality grew during the 1980s and 1990s, people on low incomes became more concentrated in poor areas, with the gap between richer and poorer wards widening' (Howard *et al* 2001:183). People's future life chances are significantly determined by where they live and the increasing spatial inequality characteristic of the post-industrial city condemns future generations of families currently living in severely disadvantaged communities to future poverty. In many ways the post-modern city has become the 'revanchist' city (Smith 1996), where the poor are excluded and regarded as having no value.

> There is an urgent need to rethink the discourse of 'value.' In the post-justice city, the meaning of value is narrowly defined in accordance with the realisation of surplus value, profit, and commodity production and circulation. But unlike vacant property, which ... is often perceived as a space with a potentially high value, in the post-justice city, the question of 'potential value' does not extend to ... marginalized groups (MacLeod 2001:17).

Section Two: The City Under Siege: "Divided We Move" (Bauman 1998:85)

According to LeGates and Stout, there is a range of macro-issues that will have a major impact on the urban (and wider societal) landscape. These include: the impacts of globalisation; increasing environmental concerns; and the breakdown of democracy and a parallel increase in social and racial conflict (LeGates & Stout 2000:532).[2]

Globalisation.

Since the publication of Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (Polanyi 1957),

the current era has increasingly been thought of as a period of transition, from

past certainty and stability to a currently uncertain future. This transition is

characterised by the whole range of 'post-isms' which form part of current

thinking, under the umbrella of post-modernity (Byrne 2001:27-38). Post-

modernism, with its emphasis on diversity and the rejection of a meta-

narrative has helped to expose some of the ideological flaws of positivism and

structuralism, particularly Marxism, in relation to urban studies (Bridge &

Watson 2000:103). According to Pacione:

> ... [c]ritics have [rightly] attacked [in Marxism] the emphasis attached to
> class divisions in society to the neglect of other lines of cleavage, such as
> gender, ethnicity and sexuality, all of which cut across class boundaries and
> which exert a significant influence on urban lifestyle and the processes of
> urban restructuring (Pacione 2001:29-30).

However, it has to be recognised that post-modernity is, in part, what it claims

to disparage – a meta-narrative (D. Harvey 2000:11-12) – and that, more

significantly, it is primarily a western driven meta-narrative of the powerful

(King 1998:5; Bauman 1998:101). At the same time as the postmodernists

have dismissed the possibility of any over-arching grand theory, neo-liberal

globalisation – primarily serving the powerful – has become the new meta-

narrative (Rennie-Scott & Kim 1999:3; Bessis 1995).

The rise of *Third Way* politics, typified by the New Labour government in

Britain, illustrates the acceptance of globalisation by former socialist

movements. The task of government is understood primarily as creating the

---

[2] They also identify a fourth trend, that of the emergence of a far-flung suburban ring of development.
Although this is an important development, it is outwith the remit of this current study, where the

opportunities for individuals to participate as fully as possible within the global market rather than seeking to regulate the market itself. According to Dawson:

> Swimming with rather than against these globally generated currents, 'third way' government does the best that it can to equip its citizens with the knowledge and range of skills necessary to survive and exploit the seemingly irresistible pressures of the now globalized market-place. Unable to stem the tide of change, political pragmatism looks to the next best option, that of equipping its citizens with the most appropriate buoyancy aids available to prevent them sinking in the global sea of unbounded competition (Dawson 2002:160).

The acceptance of the forces of globalisation as inevitable has considerable implications for New Labour's urban and anti-poverty strategies (see *Section Three* and *Chapter Four*).

Although globalisation has only been part of common language since the 1970s (D. Harvey 2000:13), in its economic and strongest strand,[3] it has a very long history – at least dating back to the end of the fifteenth century and colonial expansion (D. Harvey 2000:21). What marks out this new phase of market capitalism, however, is that capital and production now happen on a global scale (Castells 2000a:560), and the spatial disparity inherent in capitalism (Pacione 1997:7) now creates global and more extreme divisions (L. Boff: 1999:4).

This 'uneven geographical development' – Harvey's preferred term for globalisation (D. Harvey 2000:68) – results not simply in divisions between the North and the South, but also internally to nations, regions and cities,

---

focus is primarily upon urban poverty.

[3] Globalisation operates on a number of different levels, including the social, political and cultural as well as the economic. However, the impact of economic globalisation is the most pervasive and tends to dominate the other levels. As a result cultural and social globalisation, for example, tend to result in the spread of the culture and social activity of those nations which are economically strongest.

leading to what Therborn identifies as the 'Brazilianisation' of advanced capitalism (Byrne 1999:64).

> Globalisation has given more opportunities for the extremely wealthy to make money more quickly. These individuals have utilised the latest technology to move large sums of money around the globe extremely quickly and speculate even more efficiently. Unfortunately the technology makes no impact on the lives of the world poor. In fact, globalisation is a paradox; while it is very beneficial to a very few, it leaves out or marginalizes two-thirds of the world's population (Kavanagh 1996:).

There is a need to develop the necessary tools not only to analyse this injustice but also to postulate future means of overcoming it. It is clear that initially many radicals both uncritically accepted globalisation (Byrne 1999:131) and dismissed the ongoing relevance of Marx as a useful interpreter (Kirk 1989:26). Harvey, while not uncritical of Marx, argues that he has become more relevant than ever and that his writings, in many ways, more accurately reflect the current context of a truly global market and deindustrialisation than they did the mid-nineteenth century (D. Harvey 2000:52). In the 'Manifesto of the Communist Party, Marx and Engels wrote:

> The need for a constantly expanding market chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere ... the bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. ... All old established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are being destroyed by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations (Marx & Engels 1952:46-47).

Harvey states: 'If this is not a compelling description of "globalization" as we now know it then it is hard to imagine what would be' (D. Harvey 2000:25).

In recent years, particularly since the fall of communism, globalisation has acquired the dominance of a belief system (Leech 1997:150) and, in the current climate, (despite a recognised imbalance in capitalism and a growing popular sense that capitalism is the root of major democratic and environmental risks (Taylor 2000)) it is difficult to imagine what form the new socialism might take (Comblin 1998:xv). What is clear is the need to take into account both the insights of post-modernist urban thinking, with its emphasis on different readings of the same context, and the real difficulties involved in building effective social solidarity in a global economy in any attempt to understand the urban landscape today.

> The political and economic gap between the most affluent workers, in say Germany and the United States, and the poorest wage workers, in Indonesia and Mali, is far greater than between the so-called aristocracy of European labour and their unskilled counterparts in the nineteenth century. This means that a certain segment of the working class (mostly but not exclusively in the advanced capitalist countries and often possessing by far the most powerful political voice) has a great deal to lose besides its chains (D. Harvey 2000:45).

The picture is further complicated by the need to build solidarity amongst a panoply of the excluded, including an increasingly feminised workforce, different racial groupings and a jobless stratum[4] who are feeling increasingly marginalized from wider society.

Harvey suggests a dual dialectic both between the local and the global ('the choice of spatial scale is not "either/or" but "both/and" even though the latter

---

[4] By referring to this group as 'jobless' as opposed to 'workless,' I am seeking to highlight the fact that many people who are not in paid employment nonetheless make a significant contribution through work that they undertake as a carer, or on a voluntary basis.

involves confronting serious contradictions' (D. Harvey in DeFilippis 2001:371)) and between the current harsh reality of the existing structures and the utopian impetus to continue to search for alternatives. Within this second dialectic he draws upon the metaphor of the architect. '"Doing architecture" is an embedded spatiotemporal practice. But there is, nevertheless, always a moment when the free play of the imagination – the will to create – must enter' (D. Harvey 2000:204). Within this dialectical utopianism – Harvey draws upon Williams' notion of 'militant particularism' – the success of the local cannot be seen as an end in itself, but only as part of a wider and yet to be fully realised struggle.

> Williams suggested [in his concept of "militant particularism"] that the whole history of socialism has to be read as a series of militant particularisms, which generated what he described as the extraordinary claim that there is a different kind of society, called socialist, which would be a universal kind of condition to which we could all reasonably aspire. In other words, in this view, foundational values and beliefs were discovered in particular struggles and then translated onto a broader terrain of conflict (Harvey 1997:25).

Friedmann and others are right to warn that focusing on the particular is insufficient and on the need to generate wider networks across communities (Myers 1999:102). However, a pre-occupation with the global has, on occasions, blinded groups both to the potential of and necessity for change at the local level. According to DeFilippis, writing about the anti-globalisation movement: 'For the protests to become a truly transformative social movement requires an explicit re-evaluation of local politics and the role of local struggles in producing the global political economy' (DeFilippis 2001:371).

65

Massey points to the fact that there are two aspects to globalisation – the spread of neo-liberalism and the potential for increased global contact (Massey 2000:136).[5] The second of these offers the potential for the new models of social solidarity in the face of economic globalisation, the collapse of the international labour movement and the endorsement of market capitalism by many local community development organisations (DeFilippis 2001:368). Although the difficulties involved in enabling people struggling against poverty in different contexts to meet and learn from one another's experiences are considerable (Pacione 2001:24), the future of cities (and of society in general in an urban world) will be tied up with the extent to which local people are empowered to affect change and that empowered communities are able to inter-relate with one another. According to Harvey:

> We should not wait for some great political revolution to tell us how to reorganise our cities in a socialist or eco-feminist or some other way. No what we have to do is work on the nature of the social relations in the cities. If there is going to be a revolution, it is going to be a long revolution, located within the urban process. That long revolution of social relations is going to have to comprise a steady working out, over a long period of time, of transformations. Here, I think again, community mobilisation and the transformation of militant particularism have a vital role to play, enabling us to find the universal concerns that exist within a realm of difference. There is a certain dialectic here of unity and difference, universal and particular, which has to be worked out. We should not retain the notion of particularity or difference. We have to transcend these particularities and look for a negotiation of universalities through which to talk about how the cities of the future should be (D. Harvey 1997:26).

Both Harvey (reflecting at a global level) and Byrne (focusing on empowerment within Britain) identify the potential role which the churches –

---

[5] In a 1997 interview I had with the Latin American bishop Dom Pedro Casaldaliga, he referred to this process as "mundialisation" to distinguish it from the economically driven globalisation of the north. (Johnstone 1997).

operating at a series of spatial levels – can play in the development of this new

democratic politics of solidarity (Harvey 2000:51; Byrne 1999:132-133).

Concern for the Environment.

Rogers' 1995 *Reith Lectures* opened with an evocative picture of the earth

viewed from space:

> In 1957 the first satellite was launched into orbit. It gave us a vantage point
> from which we could look at ourselves and signalled the beginning of a new
> global consciousness, a dramatic change in our relationship with the planet.
> Seen from space, the beauty of the earth's biosphere is striking – but so also
> is its fragility. The plumes of pollution, the wounds of deforestation, the
> scars of industrialisation and the sprawl of our cities are all evidence that in
> our quest for wealth we are systematically plundering every aspect of our
> life-support system (Rogers & Gumuchdjian 1997:3).

The projected doubling of the urban population over the next twenty-five

years has led urbanologists and environmentalists to raise serious questions as

to whether cities in the future are sustainable, both in themselves and in

relation to the future of the planet (Byrne 2001:15). Although the cities of the

North are generally more sustainable than their counterparts in the South (Hall

& Pfeiffer 2000:30) many of the world's wealthiest cities also have the largest

'ecological footprints' (Hasselberg 1997:227). London is one of Europe's least

sustainable cities. According to Giradet: 'Although London contains only 12

percent of Britain's population, it requires an area equivalent to all the

country's productive land to service it – though this extends to the wheat

prairies of Kansas, the tea gardens of Assam, the copper mines of Zambia and

other far-flung places' (Giradet in Rogers & Gumuchdjian 1997:111-112).

Environmental concerns have forced the issue of sustainability back onto the

agenda of urban planners (Rogers & Gumuchdjian 1997:16). Part of the

problem, however, is the impreciseness of the science with which scientists and ecologists are working and a considerable diversity of opinion as to what 'sustainable development' means. The most widely recognised definition is that of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), also known as the Bruntland Commission: '[Sustainable development is] development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED 1987:43). A more personal definition of sustainability is given by Castells:

> In more practical terms, a sustainable city is one in which the conditions under which I live make it possible that my children and the children of my children will live under the same conditions. It's a very personal matter. It's not an abstract, utopian ideology. It's maybe difficult to reach but the meaning is extremely precise and it goes to the heart of our own blood and flesh. ... So, what is a sustainable city? A sustainable city is a city which will allow Molly, who is seven, to grow up happy (Castells 2000b:118 & 122).

Castells, in common with many other urban thinkers (Clark 2000:582-583), recognises social inclusion as an important dimension of sustainable development (Castells 2000b:119). The *Human Development Report for the UK* recognised not only that people living in poverty are more likely to be victims of pollution but also, that while some of the best practice in sustainable regeneration comes from people struggling against poverty, they are the most likely to be excluded from decision making processes (Seymour 2000:105).

The greatest threat to the environment does not come from poverty – or from those living in poverty – but rather from the desire for wealth, and a capitalist system where profit is central (Rogers & Gumuchdjain 1997:67). According to Pacione, 'the goal of sustainability is not an integral element of market

capitalism and will encounter opposition from entrenched interests' (Pacione 2001:176). More critically Harvey writes: 'Much of the extraordinary transformation of the earth's surfaces these last 200 years reflects precisely the putting into practice of the free-market utopianism of process and its restless and perpetual reorganisations of spatial forms' (D. Harvey 2000:177-178). Boff calls for an alternative economic model:

> We need a different economy, one built around production in sufficient quantity for all, human beings and other living beings in creation. The present ruling economic model, of ever-increasing linear growth, does violence to the Earth, is scarcely participative, and so unjust. But we shall only achieve a new political and economic order once a different scale of values predominates. As opposed to personal and collective egoism and individual and company profit, solidarity, participation and sharing have to prevail. Under the current models of competition and the struggle of the strongest, only one side wins. All the others lose. In the new – dreamed-of and possible – model, everyone wins, and no-one loses or is a victim of exclusion, since everything will be structured around synergy and co-operation. Then we shall indeed have a co-operative globalisation and societies in which there is room for all (L. Boff 1999:9).

Weizsacker *et al* (1997) argue, from strict economic principles, that it is possible to develop an economic system to produce twice the outputs while using only half the imputs by shifting the focus from labour productivity to resource productivity. He, too, concludes with a recognition of the limitations of economics.

> Public life offers myriad recent examples of basic confusions between the creation of wealth and the pursuit of human happiness; between profit opportunities and basic rights; between private gains and public goals. After all, economic efficiency is only a means, not an end. Markets are meant to be efficient, not sufficient; greedy, not fair. Markets were never meant to achieve community or integrity, beauty or justice, sustainability or sacredness – and they don't. If markets do something good for whales or wildness, for God or Gaia or grandchildren, that is purely coincidental. Markets, if allowed to work properly, are very good at achieving their stated goals, but those goals are far from the whole purpose of a human being. It is to seek that fuller purpose that we have politics, ethics and religion; and if we ever suppose that these greatest achievements of the

human spirit can be replaced by economics, we stand in peril of our souls (*ibid*:299).

Democracy in Crisis.

While there are commentators – including some of those historically sympathetic to capitalism (Soros 1996) – who would question the long-term viability of global capitalism (Thrift 2000:248) there is an even greater concern that the increasing levels of uneven development resulting from it are causing political instability and undermining western-style democracy (Byrne 1989:161). According to Gray:

> [W]e stand on the brink not of the era of plenty that free-marketeers project, but a tragic epoch in which the anarchic market forces and shrinking natural resources drag sovereign states into ever more dangerous rivalries... Global market competition and technological innovation have interacted to give us an anarchic world economy. Such an economy is bound to be a site for major geo-political conflicts. Thomas Hobbes and Thomas Malthus are better guides to the world that global laissez-faire has created than Adam Smith or Friedrich von Hayek; a world of war and scarcity at least as much as the benevolent harmonies of competition (Gray in D. Harvey 2000:70).

The breakdown of democracy and the potential for violence and social disorder in the north is felt most acutely in poor urban communities (Galloway 1999:39), what Jordan refers to as 'the internal colonies for capitalist exploitation' (Eisenschitz 1997:156). It is here that the traditional political parties and labour organisations seem not only increasingly remote (*ibid*:163), but also often uninterested in the plight of the urban poor (Keating 1988:196). According to Sachs-Jeantet:

> Whereas the city was once the cradle of democracy, a synonym of democratic sociability, a social place of learning about and respecting others, too often today – in an inversion of values – [it] is a synonym of exclusion, indifference, isolation, hostility and violence. Citizenship and city life once went together but no longer do. We might even ask if the

great cities have not become anti-models of civic values and democracy. Even though the crisis of democracy is often a question concerning a whole nation or a community in a country, it finds its strongest impression in cities, the potential loci for its renaissance (Sachs-Jeanet 1996:130).

The development of new forms of participatory local governance, based upon the principle of subsidiarity (Pacione 1997:339), such as the model of 'participatory budgeting' developed in Porto Allegre (Sharma *et al* 2001:32-36) or the Shorebank Community Bank in Chicago (Leadbeater 1999:184) are integral to any effective response to globalisation. While Hall and Pfeiffer are optimistic that this trend towards subsidiarity will continue (Hall & Pfeiffer 2000:36-37), it is clear that the democratisation of decision-making at city and regional levels in Britain has fallen behind other nations in the north (Rogers & Power 2000:106). Their overall analysis may also be unduly optimistic.

> [E]ven democratically elected governments are hesitant to part with power to local bodies, and the real extent of devolution varies greatly from country to country. In many countries, a certain level of autonomy has been granted to local authorities. But they are frequently not given the power to raise independent finances, which remains under the control of the provincial/state or central government. As a result, most cities are heavily dependent on grants from the central government (Sharma *et al* 2001:28).

The recent establishment of the Scottish Parliament and Legislative Assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland,[6] as well as the election of a London mayor are evidence of a willingness on the part of central government to endorse subsidiarity in theory. However, the ongoing tensions that exist between central and local government, as well as the reluctance of New Labour to introduce powerful regional assemblies in England, are evidence that practice is still falling someway behind the political rhetoric and that governance remains overwhelmingly concentrated at a national level.

While the voluntary sector has an important part to play in the delivery of community services, community empowerment (Robinson 2000:51) and local democracy (Graham 2000:97), Friedmann is correct that new models of citizen participation will require significant public investment (Friedmann 1996:168). Byrne, with particular reference to work in the North East of England, highlights the need for local government to fund empowerment organisations and employ community workers, particularly he argues, at a time when control is more and more reserved within central authorities or unelected quangos (Byrne 1989:164-165).

Over the last ten years there has been a considerable increase in partnership working, which, particularly since 1997, has sought to increase the level of involvement by local people. This could be seen, and is often articulated, as an attempt to promote greater community involvement (ODPM 2003). However, although 'there is now broad consensus among the main political parties and practitioners that partnership is now the only basis on which successful urban regeneration can be achieved' (Edwards 1997:829), it should be remembered that its introduction in the early 1980s was less designed to empower local communities than to introduce market forces and to bypass intransigent local authorities (*ibid*) and that the distribution of power within local partnerships remains heavily weighted in favour of the statutory sector (Atkinson 1999:59). There is a confusing variety of understandings of the meaning of partnership, ranging from community consultation to community empowerment (Carley 2000:282). The potential for misunderstanding between members is well

---

[6] At the time of submission, the Assembly in Northern Ireland had been suspended.

illustrated by Collins' etymological analysis of the breakdown of relationships between the public sector and community partners in the Ferguslie Park (Paisley) Partnership, one of the four *New Life for Urban Scotland* Partnership Areas. Collins writes:

> The rub is that different groups with radically different points of view share a single language. Yet, when they speak, their characteristic evaluations can produce quite different meanings within the same words. The result is that the singular nature of the language can serve to mask the multiple and conflictual meanings which different groups realise when they speak (Collins 1999:76).

While greater clarity of definition might help to safeguard against the unrealistic raising of expectations, it will be insufficient to overcome the current crisis in urban democracy. For this people will require to be more fully involved in decision-making and power-sharing within their local neighbourhoods. Byrne has correctly identified the complexity of such a task given the lack of homogeneity within neighbourhoods as well as the high level of mobility which exists even within the poorest areas (Byrne 1999:128).

Arnstein, Chief Adviser on Citizen Participation in the US Department of Housing and Public Development' Model Cities Programme[7] in the late 1960s, suggested an eight-rung ladder, measuring the level of local participation in decision-making (Arnstein 2000:244). This ranges from 'manipulation' and 'therapy' at the lowest rungs of the ladders to 'delegated power' and 'citizen control' at the top.

While Arnstein acknowledges some of the potential dangers of delegated power and citizen control, she is correct that although 'these arguments are not

---

[7] The Model Cities Program sought to strike a balance between the excessively top-down model of urban regeneration, which characterised much of the physical regeneration of North America's inner

73

to be taken lightly ... neither can we take lightly the arguments of embittered advocates of community control – that every other means of trying to end their victimization has failed' (*ibid*:252). Although Arnstein's analysis is now over twenty years old, it remains highly relevant today (Lewis & Walker 1998:3). It is clear that the problems faced by poor urban communities will not be resolved without the involvement of people living in poverty (Davey 2000:150), and that any reinvigoration of democracy will need to show clear evidence of strong community involvement.

Carley parallels Arnstein's work in the United States in the late 1960s highlighting the range of meanings that community participation has in current British urban policy (Carley 2000:282) and emphasising the need for greater empowerment of local people if such policies are to deliver effective change. 'Phrases like "community capacity building" are used by public agencies without a full understanding of the processes involved. There is little recognition that community empowerment ought to produce a transfer of power to those currently powerless' (*ibid*:288).

Indeed, there is clear evidence from communities such as Ferguslie Park, one of four housing schemes chosen in 1988 to pilot the Scottish Office's new partnership strategy *New Life for Urban Scotland*, that despite the rhetoric of partnership, the capacity of communities was deliberately reduced by central government when it ran counter to its own neo-liberal strategy to cut down dependency upon the public sector and develop closer links between disadvantaged communities and the private sector. In Ferguslie Park the active

cities during the 1950s and early 1960s and President Johnson's 'war on poverty' programme, which often resulted in poor local management of resources.

community-led Ferguslie League of Action Groups (FLAG) was first of all marginalised by the Partnership and then replaced by a new and less locally representative organisation (Ferguslie Park Community Forum). According to Collins and Lister:

[T]he rhetoric of 'local involvement,' 'community participation' and even 'empowerment' which was, and is, so central to the language of partnership was ... disingenuous. It represented an attempt to establish a model of participatory democracy which could justify the by-passing of local government (and its representative democracy) in establishing the partnership projects. On the ground this translated into the need for a pliant community which could, when required, be displayed to the world as the supposed driving force and democratic legitimation behind the Partnership. Beyond that, however, the partnership's strategy, based as it was on attracting private sector investment and competing for economic prosperity, would not tolerate the unwanted distractions which would be created by outsider group activity (Collins & Lister 1996:5).

Although there was clear evidence that the partnership approach developed in Ferguslie Park and the other three pilots had had limited impact (Mooney & Johnstone 2000:176) the strategy was extended to other areas in Scotland in 1996 under the *Programme for Partnership*. The scheme was renamed and extended by the incoming New Labour Government in 1997 (Taylor *et al* 2001:52) as part of a major investment in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods but the underlying economic and political principles which have driven urban regeneration policy since the 1970s have not significantly changed (Chatterton & Bradley 2000:100). According to Hoban:

Blair rightly acknowledges that success depends on people having power to improve their own lives. However, spending large sums of money on managers, technocrats and more government agencies may not be the best way to bring residents to 'the heart of neighbourhood renewal.' What has not happened is a serious and inclusive debate about what a real empowering approach might entail. It is imperative that those who are committed to exploring a new approach should begin this process. It is also essential that the people who live in poor areas are an integral part of this debate (Hoban 2001:521).

Section Three: British Urban Regeneration Policy: "At least we know how not to do it" (Peter Shore).

Although local government and particularly the European Union have played significant roles in the shaping of urban policy in Britain since the 1970s, policy has been primarily developed at the level of central government (Edwards 1997:827). Over this period there have been a range of nuances, each of which reflects the prevailing ideology of central government (Hutchinson 2000:168). Pacione (2001) identifies five distinct phases of British urban regeneration policy since the end of the Second World War: *physical redevelopment* (1945-1970); *Social Welfare* (1970-1979); *entrepreneurial* (1979-1990); *competition-based* (1990-1997); and *New Labour* (1997-).

The election, in 1997, of New Labour has resulted in the introduction of a wide range of new area-based initiatives (Chatterton & Bradley 2000:100) designed to improve both the quality of urban life generally (Urban Task Force 1999) and, in particular, to reduce the inequalities inherent in Britain's cities with the expressed aim 'that within ten to twenty years no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live' (SEU 2001). Particularly since 2000 (ODPM 2003),[8] these policies represent a revitalised commitment to urban regeneration not present within government policy since the publication of the 1977 White Paper 'Policy for the Inner Cities' (DoE 1977). At the same

---

[8] For the first two years of government, New Labour had agreed to abide by the spending plans laid down by the previous conservative administration. As such, many of the new policies were only initiated from 2000 onwards.

time, however, New Labour has continued to focus extensively upon the encouragement of entrepreneurial and competitive policies at an area level (Taylor *et al* 2001:46) albeit with a relative shift towards recognising the 'inter-relationship between the economic and the social dimensions of urban policy' (Pacione 2001:170), and a commitment to longer-term, more people focused initiatives (Hutchinson 2000:178).

While there have clearly been shifts in emphasis over the last fifty years – for example, in the shift from 'welfare to enterprise' in 1979 (Pacione 1997:28) and the more proactive attempt to address poverty which has characterised policy since the election of New Labour in 1997 (Howard *et al* 2001:1) - there have also been a number of enduring features, particularly since the election of the first Thatcher Government in 1979 (Carley 2000:274). Ongoing characteristics of urban policy include: the continual focus upon physical regeneration; the emphasis on relatively short-term local area initiatives; and the unwillingness to significantly target other areas of public sector funding to the benefit of those living in greatest poverty within the poorest communities. Underlying all of these assumptions is the lack of any analysis of the structural causes which lie behind the increasing spatial division within Britain's cities, and the largely uncritical acceptance of the inequality implicit within free-market capitalism (Oatley 2000:87). As such, far from urban regeneration policy decreasing the polarity between rich and poor communities, it has, in fact had precisely the opposite effect. According to Byrne:

> The trajectories of space are in large part the product exactly of urban policies in interaction with the effects of other social policies. The evidence is that urban regeneration, far from reintegrating and empowering the dispossessed poor, has in general made their situation worse precisely

because it has been a crucial constitutive process in the creation of the post-industrial social order as it is lived by people in post-industrial cities. Exclusive development is meant to exclude after all (Byrne 1999:111).

Focus on the Physical

The almost exclusive focus on physical regeneration following the end of the Second World War is easy to justify, both in response to the acute need for improved housing conditions for many inner city residents and the general optimism that the long Fordist post-war boom and dependent Keynesian-based welfare system could be maintained (Pacione 1997:24). Nonetheless, the often low quality of construction and materials, the building of largely untested models of housing, and the lack of amenities and infrastructure all served to sharpen the urban crisis caused by increasingly rapid de-industrialisation, the shift to a post-Fordist economy, and the general downturn in the world economy. According to Shaw and Robinson:

> [Post-war urban housing policy] also generated problems and produced policy disasters: 'streets in the sky,' 'dump estates' and 'concrete jungles.' By the late 1960s, certainly by the mid 1970s, it was clear that these solutions were inadequate, sometimes irrelevant. New problems were identified, or just like poverty 'rediscovered'; it began to be realised that Britain's inner cities were in serious trouble. Research showed that the trouble was not simply superficial – just requiring new infrastructure and cosmetic physical planning – but complex and systemic (Shaw & Robinson 1998:50).

The need for a more structuralist approach to the problems facing Britain's cities was advocated in the 1977 White Paper on Inner Cities (Pacione 2001:168), but remained unimplemented as a result of the strict monetary conditions placed upon Britain by the International Monetary Fund and the election of a Conservative Government in 1979. Instead, there was a sharpened focus upon physical regeneration and the need for urban

regeneration to be generated by market forces, exemplified by the regeneration of the London Docklands.

In the Docklands, in a scenario typical of many waterfront developments during the 1980s and 1990s (Jones & Watkins 1996:1126), the focus switched from seeking to generate manufacturing-based employment into building office, warehousing and retail complexes. Housing development was targeted towards the private sector with the proportion of owner-occupied housing rising from five percent to thirty six percent, while local authority tenancies fell from eighty three to forty four percent (Pacione 2001:314-316). The new prosperity, however, was not equally shared and in the mid-1990s unemployment remained at substantially the same levels as fifteen years previously (Leech 1995:67). The picture mirrors the growing inequality across London and many other cities over the period. According to Kleinman:

> Despite the boom, inequality and social exclusion increased in London. The position of those at the bottom of the earnings ladder worsened. In 1979 the bottom 10 percent of male earners earned 64 percent of median earnings, but this had fallen to 54 percent by the 1990s. The number of adult residents in receipt of income support rose from just over 500,000 in 1979 (11 percent) to almost 1 million in 1994 (17 percent) (Kleinman 2000:52).

Despite sharp criticism of the policy in 1989 by the House of Commons' Public Accounts and Employment Committees (Jones & Watkins 1996:1130), as well as the collapse in the property market of the late 1990s, the focus on private sector housing displacing previously socially rented accommodation has continued. The Church of England Urban Bishops' Panel was sharply critical of the continued focus on gentrification within the Government's 1999 Urban Task Force and subsequent Cities White Paper (Urban Bishops' Panel 2002). In a comprehensive review of gentrification strategies since the 1960s,

Atkinson has highlighted its past limitations and warned the government to be cautious in its continual use as a central part of its urban regeneration strategy (Atkinson 2002:20-22).

In recent years the focus on physical regeneration has also been associated with the attempted re-branding of many post-industrial cities through the construction of a range of high-profile culture, leisure and retail facilities. Examples of this form of regeneration include the Glasgow Science Centre complex along the city's River Clyde, the building of the Royal Armouries in Leeds,[9] the attempted regeneration of East Manchester through the creation of a raft of new facilities to host the 2002 Commonwealth Games and the Millennium Dome on London's Greenwich peninsula. Although each has played a significant part in the redevelopment of land and has raised the profile of their respective cities, their long-term impact in terms of improving the quality of life of the cities' poorest residents is likely to be limited and some evidence suggests detrimental (Seo 2002:115). Kleinman writes:

> Flagship projects and major public/private investments have a key role to play in regeneration. But the linkages to wider social and economic benefits have to be carefully thought through and implemented on a *local* basis. There is no single blueprint for this. Too often, the assumption is that a 'training scheme' or some 'community sponsorship' can be bolted on to an investment project, and the benefits will automatically flow into the local economy. They won't. As countless examples have shown, jobs and revenue can simply wash into and out of an area, leaving behind very little. It doesn't have to be like this, but making it different takes time, commitment, nerve and – as a result – money (original emphasis, Kleinman 2000:56-57).

The focus on physical regeneration, particularly when combined with the more entrepreneurial and competition-based approaches to urban funding over the

last twenty years, also results in successful bids from less deprived communities. Edwards points out that in the first two rounds of *City Challenge* funding 'there was no correlation between ranking on the deprivation index among the 57 [English local] authorities and the amounts of prize money received' (Edwards 1997:826). Although the competitive approach to area-based funding was introduced in Scotland later, and to a more limited extent, than in England and Wales, the process is now accepted by government in Scotland as well as south of the border (Taylor *et al* 2001:46, 51).

While the physical improvement of communities is clearly an important factor in their wider regeneration (Forrest & Kearns 1999), urban policy has too often focused upon physical improvements, which are easier to achieve and to quantify, than on wider social and economic problems. The focus on high design quality and physical regeneration evident in the final report of the *Urban Task Force*, and the subsequent *Cities White Paper* are evidence that while New Labour is committed to a broader regeneration policy, a focus on the physical remains high on the political agenda (Chatterton & Bradley 2000:102). The result is that despite the physical improvement of many areas, the wider problems of poverty and social exclusion remain deeply entrenched (Shaw & Robinson 1998:52).

The Area-Based Approach.

The attempt to target resources towards particular geographical areas of multiple deprivation has been a constant feature of urban regeneration policy

---

[9] During a visit to the Royal Armouries by those attending the 2001 *UK Urban Mission Congress*, the Master of Arms, Guy Wilson, indicated that while the new £68 million museum was built as part of a

since the 1960s (Alcock & Craig 2000:56). The focus within the relatively short-lived Education Priority Areas (EPAs) and Community Development Projects (CDPs) as well as in the General Improvement Areas established as a result of the 1969 Housing Act was on 'positive discrimination' towards the poorest urban communities and owed much to the development of similar strategies within the United States during the same period (Hutchinson 2000:168). Although short-term, area-based approaches to regeneration have been sharply criticised (Seymour 2000:52), they have been a central element of urban policy since the mid 1960s and remain a fundamental part of current policy (Hutchinson 2000:168). The area-based approach continues to be justified on the basis that:

> [T]here is a collective deprivation in some inner areas which affects all the residents, even though individually the majority of people may have satisfactory homes and worthwhile jobs. It arises from a pervasive sense of decay and neglect which affects the whole area ... The collective deprivation amounts to more than the sum of all the individual disadvantages with which people have to contend (Pacione 2001:310).

The Conservative Government's lack of an integrated strategy to area-based urban regeneration was severely criticised by the Audit Commission, which referred to it as 'a patchwork of complexity and idiosyncrasy' (Edwards 1997:826). The raft of new policy initiatives which followed the 1997 election victory of New Labour has resulted in what has been referred to as 'zoneitis' or 'policy silos' indicating that, even despite their wider limitations, area based policies continue to be less effective than they could be with more effective targeting and greater co-ordination. According to Carley there is a need for:

wider regeneration strategy in South Leeds, its impact on the local economy had been very limited.

a streamlining of existing regeneration programmes and their merger into a block regeneration grant which would allow for a considerable degree of innovation at the local level. The block grant from central government could be co-ordinated and carefully monitored at the appropriate regional or city-wide level ... and implemented through needs-based city-wide and local partnerships (Carley 2000:287).

While it is possible to address many of the criticisms of specific area-based initiatives, there are more structural problems associated with the focus upon specific areas (to the exclusion of other areas) and upon places (rather than excluded groups of people) (Chatterton & Bradley 2000). These are partially problems associated with the drawing of boundaries. Different indicators of poverty often result in different areas being identified (Hutchinson 2000:165), and despite the development of increasingly sophisticated measurements of deprivation at a local level, there remains a serious time lag between measurement and policy decisions. As a result areas are included or excluded from area-based initiatives on the basis of data gathered some years previously which takes little or no account of ongoing change.[10] Boundary lines are also frequently drawn up with little appreciable difference between those households included and those excluded.

> In large part poverty profiling is concerned with the relative advantages, or disadvantages, of people living in different areas and localities. It is therefore concerned with the drawing of boundaries between areas. Invariably, however carefully they are drawn, there is likely to be an element of (historical) arbitrariness in the placement of boundary lines; and this is likely to be revealed most markedly where it is also most politically sensitive, at the margins – the line down the middle of the street separating the residents on one side (perhaps those in a local action zone) from those on the other (who are not) is the graphic example of this. Boundaries inevitably operate to include, but also to exclude (Alcock & Craig 2000:72).

---

[10] In Bellshill one part of the town (the Jewell scheme) continued to receive additional funding through Urban Programme funding despite major capital refurbishment in the area, while the neighbouring area (Thorndean), where no money was available for basic housing repairs, received none. The result was that Thorndean deteriorated from lack of funding well below the level of housing and amenities in Jewell scheme but it remained impossible to redirect funding for as long as the area-based initiative was in place.

It has been recognised since the late 1970s that, while there are clear spatial divisions within cities, the majority of people who are poor do not live within the poorest communities and that the majority of those who live within deprived communities are not, in themselves, poor (Townsend 1979; McCormick & Philo 1995:68). This further undermines an area-based approach to regeneration, given that the majority of those who are poor do not benefit from it. Byrne also indicates that even within the designated area, those most likely to benefit are often those in least need of additional support and that when they have received additional training are likely to move out of areas which are often 'negatively labelled' (Alcock & Craig 2000:73) as a result of their designation as areas of priority need (Byrne 1999:121). The impact of area-based investment is further reduced as an anti-poverty strategy by the fact that funding committed to an area often leaks out to other communities, for example, through the employment of people who do not live locally in initiative-funded projects and the profits of construction companies (Seymour 2000:52; Ward & Lewis 2002).

> The boundaries of targeted areas are permeable to the economically successful. Mobility of people is a key issue for spatially targeted interventions as population turnover will thwart initiatives where there is no geographical community that binds people to a place. [Research has shown that] ... the Community Development Act in the USA, which was designed to improve poor neighbourhoods and reduce the income disparities within cities, was in fact increasing income disparities as areas became gentrified and higher income groups took advantage of the area improvements (Hutchinson 2000:174).

The increasing predominance of a competition-based approach to funding since the late 1980s is another factor weakening the case for area-based regeneration. As a result of limited funding, poor communities are often

forced to compete against one another for limited resources, where the eventual winners are often determined on the basis of innovations as opposed to need. 'To require that the needy (or those "acting on their behalf") compete for what they need with other needy people and for the results of the competition to be decided with barely any reference to need itself seems perverse' (Edwards 1997:838). The process is further undermined by its potential for political manipulation as was the case in the Scottish Office's 1996/97 bidding process for *Programme for Partnership* status. Turok and Hopkins point out that the final winners, including bids from Aberdeen and Ayrshire where there were sitting Conservative MPs, appear to have been determined neither on the basis of the level of deprivation within their areas nor the quality of the bid that they submitted (Turok & Hopkins 1998:2042-2046).

Despite its considerable limitations, an area-based strategy for urban-regeneration remains a legitimate policy (Pacione 2001:310), as long as it is sufficiently funded and targeted to ensure that the areas where funding is most needed are appropriately resourced, and where such funding is part of a far wider strategy of urban regeneration which recognises that the real causes of poor communities and people living in poverty lie largely outside the control of those areas and individuals (Alcock & Craig 2000:74).

The increased funding since 1997 has gone some way to ease the tensions caused by the harsher competitive principles of the previous twenty years. However, New Labour, despite rhetoric to the contrary, has yet to effectively deliver a more integrated anti-poverty strategy, which addresses the needs of

the very poorest in British society (see *Chapter Four*). The government also remains firmly wedded to the principle – which has run through area-based regeneration strategies since their inception (Pacione 2001:168) – that the solutions to poverty reside substantially in poor communities and among disadvantaged citizens. Such an understanding fails to take sufficiently seriously the fact that spatial and economic inequality is an essential characteristic of capitalism, especially in its globalised form and that the government's aspiration of 'opportunity for all' can only be achieved through redistribution (Lister 2001:433).

Urban policy since the late 1960s has focused almost exclusively upon area-based initiatives. While such initiatives are essential to those geographical areas where poverty is particularly concentrated, their overall effectiveness has been limited by the lack of wider policy initiatives and the failure of central government to address the wider global and national causes of spatial inequality.

The Need to Bend the Mainstream.

The level of funding focused on area-regeneration is extremely limited by comparison to the more general public-sector funding spent within a designated area. In the London Borough of Newham, for example, Smerdon estimates that ninety eight percent of public funding in the area 'is spent on mainstream maintenance programmes, such as the welfare and housing budgets, while only two percent is dedicated to regeneration' (Smerdon 2000:70). Area-based initiatives, as such, have a relatively limited impact

unless they are part of a wider commitment to ameliorate poverty (Townsend 1979:564).

The need for a more integrated approach to urban policy was first recognised in the 1970s in the Urban White Paper (Wilks-Heeg 1996:1278) and has become a focus of New Labour policy since 1997. The Scottish Executive's 2002 Community Regeneration Statement (Scottish Executive 2002) identifies the improvement of mainstream public services and the better co-ordination of local, regional and national initiatives as central to its overall strategy for improving the quality of people's lives within Scotland's poorest communities.

Areas of deprivation tend to have proportionately higher levels of public spending than other areas. Research carried out in 1998 by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) into three pilot areas (Liverpool, Brent and Nottingham) indicates that public spending is on average seventeen percent higher in poorer as opposed to wealthier communities (varying between four to seven percent in Brent and Nottingham and thirty percent in Liverpool) (DETR 1998). An exercise in community budgeting carried out in 1999-2000 by Edinburgh City Council indicated a similar bending of mainstream funding (SE 2002:10). However, there is a wide diversity in the level of additional spending between different poor communities and a significant proportion of extra main-line public expenditure can be accounted for in terms of the greater overall needs of people living within areas of multiple deprivation (Bramley & Chapman 2000:93).

The ability of central government to deliver a more integrated urban regeneration strategy is still uncertain. The Social Inclusion Partnerships, introduced in 1997, with the expressed intention of helping to bend mainstream funding have largely failed to deliver as the large public sector bodies continue to seek to protect their overall budgets and to access regeneration funds to provide additional services in poor communities (CEA 2001:iv). Although the broader community planning processes currently under development would appear to mark a greater commitment to a more integrated strategy, it will not be possible to evaluate their potential success for a number of years.

In other respects, public sector funding, clearly runs counter to the policy of targeting resources towards the poorest communities. Bramley and Chapman note that: '[t]here are significant services which deliver more benefits to the most affluent (non-deprived areas), notably higher education, roads and rail subsidies, some local environmental services and state pensions' (Bramley & Chapman 2000:93). This targeting of resources towards proportionately more affluent neighbourhoods is further exacerbated by the ongoing use of competition-based strategies, where those seeking funding are likely to submit proposals where outcomes are easier to achieve (Hutchinson 2000:172). This is a continuation of the market-driven policies of the 1980s and 1990s which, because their focus was on wealth creation as opposed to wealth redistribution, served to widen the gap between rich and poor communities rather than narrow it (Haralambos *et al* 2000:336).

Pacione comments:

Justification for the market-led approach to regeneration centres on the concept of 'trickle-down,' which argues that ... an expanded city revenue base created by central area revitalisation provides funds that can be used to address social needs. Nowhere has a substantial trickle-down effect been demonstrated. ... Private sector investment decisions are founded largely upon self-interest and not philanthropy. The privatisation of urban development inevitably means accepting a policy of triage and concentrating on areas of greatest economic potential – with adverse consequences for other areas (Pacione 2001:322-323).

For the government to succeed in bending support towards the most impoverished communities requires not only effecting a change of mindset within its own conservative institutions and structures (Leadbeater 1999:206), but a commitment to redress the inequalities which flow from market capitalism. New Labour's largely uncritical acceptance of the inevitability of globalisation makes this more radical attempt unlikely.

Conclusion

The impact of the city stretches across the globe, affecting even the most rural communities. The future of the planet will be determined by cities, and in cities. That future, however, is far from certain. Long cherished political and social structures are under threat and the increasing spatial inequality and instability within cities, as well as across regions and nations, are resulting in increasing levels of poverty and the potential breakdown of western democracy. These problems are caused and compounded by the inherent instability of market capitalism, which, since the end of the Second World War has risen to the status of a substantially unchallenged ideological meta-narrative. Firmly wedded to the principles of market capitalism, British urban policy, although it has improved the quality of life for many, has also left

increasing numbers of people impoverished and disenfranchised. New Labour has invested heavily in Britain's cities but, despite the rhetoric to the contrary, this investment has been largely on the same trajectory as that of previous governments with a focus on area-based solutions dominated by competition-based partnerships and an inability (or unwillingness) to bend the wider resources of the state towards people living in poverty in the country's poorest communities.

> The government seems keen to learn the lessons of the past, but in the face of rising poverty and persistent unemployment, inequality, violent crime, failing families, and environmental deterioration, debate seems unable to move beyond blaming past political opponents and promoting the same old ineffectual solutions. Until and unless we develop policy approaches that engage with the root causes of poverty, unemployment, and disabled and alienated communities, we will be destined to relive the policy failures of the past (Oatley 2000:96).

In the next chapter I will look in more detail at the nature of poverty in the UK and at New Labour's response to it.

Chapter 4

Towards an Overcoming of Poverty

Introduction.

There is nothing inevitable about poverty. According to the *Child Poverty Action Group*:

> [U]nemployment, sickness, disability and caring responsibilities frequently result in poverty: but it is not *necessary* that this should be so. Income maintenance policies, the way in which black people are treated and even employment patterns are not natural disasters like earthquakes or floods: they are created in one way or another by human economic and social activity. Given the political will, problems can be solved and poverty can be prevented (original emphasis, Howard *et al* 2001:8).

Despite this, at a global level two-thirds of women live in poverty (Seymour 2000:37) and the death of a child during the first year of life is up to twenty times more likely in central Africa and parts of Asia than it is in Europe and North America (Chiavacci 1999:33). In Britain, despite improvements since 1997, almost one third of children grow up in poverty (the highest figure in the European Union) (Scottish Poverty Information Unit (SPIU) 1999:14), 7.5 million people are too poor to visit family and friends or to attend family celebrations (Levitas 2001:451), and those on low income (in households with less than sixty percent of the median income after housing costs) remained at an historic high of 13.3 million in 1999/00, an increase of 6.2 million since 1979 (Howard *et al* 2001:30). The growth of poverty has been faster in Britain than any other country in the European Union (Geddes 1997:207). Inequality also – which is closely connected to poverty – has continued to grow during the early years of the New Labour government (Maxwell & Kenway 2000:7), and Britain has the widest health inequalities in Western Europe (Maxwell *et al* 2000:8; SE 2003).

93

While rural poverty remains an important and frequently neglected dimension to poverty, both at a global (Clark 2000:581) and national level (Johnstone 2001:25), the problem of poverty is primarily, and increasingly, an urban one.[1] According to Pacione: 'In the UK most of the disadvantaged live in cities, large areas of which have been economically and socially devastated by the effects of global economic restructuring, the deindustrialisation of the UK economy, and ineffective urban policies' (Pacione 2001:289).

In this chapter I am concerned not only with how poverty in the UK is defined but also with the current policy steps which are being taken by the New Labour government to tackle it. Based upon the underlying principles outlined in *Chapter One*, I am interested not simply in an understanding of poverty but in the struggle to overcome it, particularly from the perspective of those who are its victims (Merrifield 2002:172).

The chapter is divided into three sections.

In *Section One* I look at a range of definitions and measurements of poverty and at the need to involve people experiencing poverty both in poverty research and policy making arising out of that research.

In a relatively brief *second section*, building upon previous work with which I have been involved (Johnstone 2001; Church & Nation 2004), I highlight some of the struggles of those most susceptible to poverty as well as the causal relationship between poverty and wealth.

---

[1] In June 2004, the Scottish Executive published an updated Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. According to the report of the poorest five percent of people living in Scotland, 70.9 percent of them are living in Glasgow (SE2004).

Section Three focuses upon the performance of the New Labour Government in tackling poverty in Britain. Here I am less concerned to explore the impact of individual policies than to consider some of the key ideological concepts which underpin New Labour policy: the *Third Way*, communitarianism and its narrow (or weak) understanding of social exclusion.

Throughout this chapter (and the wider study) I seek to resist the use of the category 'the poor' to describe those whose lives are blighted by poverty, preferring instead to refer to people as 'living in poverty,' 'struggling against poverty' or 'experiencing poverty.' This is, in part, to avoid the often perjorative use of the term which distinguishes a sector of people as distinct from mainstream society on account of their poverty (Corden 1996:18). Leech notes that the Church has been particularly guilty in this regard.

> The Churches have a long record of concern for 'the poor.' They have done good for 'the poor.' They have campaigned on behalf of 'the poor.' They have been advocates for 'the poor.' But 'the poor' have always remained 'out there.' … The relationship between the Church and poor people has mainly been an 'I-It' relationship. This is more than a semantic quibble. Indeed, it is becoming more serious as the years go by. We are increasingly labelling whole sections of society by the use of terms such as 'the poor,' 'the underclass,' and so on. It is a dehumanising mechanism with built in elements of condescension and at times contempt. It destroys human relationships and encourages the worst kinds of paternalism (Leech 1997:101).

At the same time, however, I do continue to use the term 'poverty' despite some evidence that a significant number of people experiencing what academics describe as poverty themselves resist ascribing such a definition to their own situation (Lister & Beresford 2000:298; Bennett & Roberts

2004:46). Among people on low incomes, poverty is frequently ascribed to those who are worse off, either in the Third World (Forrest 2000:41) or other, particularly vulnerable groups, such as the homeless (Roker & Coleman 2000:278). At the same time, however, the majority of people experiencing poverty do refer to themselves as poor (Gordon *et al* 2000:27), certainly in relationship to the rest of British society (Lister & Beresford 2000:299) and a number of anti-poverty groups continue to use the term in preference to social exclusion, which is in constant danger of masking the primarily economic roots of poverty (Stanton 1999:17).

> In the end, ... we cannot get around the reality that poverty exists and millions of people in the UK live in poverty. Avoiding the word may be too much like avoiding the problem (Dundee Anti-Poverty Forum in Bennett & Roberts 2004:47).

Section One: 'Poverty is the biggest scar of a civilised society' (John Reid)

In the United Kingdom, despite the increased acceptance by parliaments at both Westminster and Holyrood that poverty (as well as social exclusion) continues to exist, the introduction of a range of new policies to tackle its causes and symptoms, and the production of annual reports at both Scottish and UK levels (SE 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002a; DWP 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002) measuring the effectiveness of these policies, there remains no agreed definition of poverty nor, consequently, any level of agreement about how poverty ought to be measured. Although New Labour has made a regular commitment to involve people living in poverty in the debate about its causes, and how to overcome it, there remains relatively little practical commitment to

involving people struggling against poverty in appropriate research and policy development.

Defining Poverty

Any understanding of poverty is largely determined politically: the left adopts a broadly structuralist definition; the right defines poverty largely in absolute and individualist terms; and the political centre adopts a poverty-line above which it seeks to lift deserving groups and individuals (Burden 2000:44). According to Eisenschitz:

> Attitudes to deprivation depend on the politics of the enquirer. For the Right, the poor present problems of social stability and economic efficiency if they become too detached from the mainstream and require too much state support. To the political centre, anti-poverty policy is essential for modernisation because of the impact of class divisions on economic performance. The Centre is most strongly associated with disadvantage because of its sensitivity to what it labels as deserving groups. For the Left, poverty is symptomatic of the crisis-ridden nature of capitalism, but its concern is with developing class-consciousness, developing class relations and the international division of labour (Eisenschitz 1997:158).

Another distinction frequently made in the debate about poverty is that between absolute (primary) and relative (secondary) poverty. This distinction stems from Seebohm Rowntree's pioneering work in mapping poverty in York at the end of the nineteenth century (Rowntree 2000). According to Rowntree, absolute poverty can be defined as the conditions which exist when a family's 'total earnings are insufficient to obtain the minimum necessaries for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency' (Rowntree in Pacione 1997:40). As such, absolute poverty is meant to be measured against a set of determined minimum standards and not against the level of income/expenditure enjoyed

by others. When Rowntree repeated his survey in 1936 and 1950 he found that, based on the criteria laid down within his primary definition, poverty had largely disappeared (Haralambos *et al* 2000:293-294).[2] This led a number of commentators and politicians to conclude that poverty had been largely eradicated. This, however, is to misunderstand the distinction that Rowntree had made from the outset between primary and secondary poverty. While those recorded as living in secondary poverty were regarded as above the threshold required for physical survival, Rowntree still regarded them as being poor. In 1941 he wrote:

> My primary poverty line represented the minimum sum on which physical efficiency could be maintained. It was a standard of bare *subsistence* rather than *living*. The diet I selected was more economical and less attractive than was given to paupers in work houses. I purposely selected such a diet so that no one could possibly accuse me of placing my subsistence level too high. (original emphasis, Davey-Smith *et al* 2001:xxix).

By the 1960s, partly as a result of the general downturn in the world economy, the onset of post-Fordism and deindustrialisation and partly as a consequence of an increased understanding of the concept of relative poverty – which measures poverty in relation to the standard of living available to others within a particular society – poverty in Britain was 'rediscovered' (Haralambos *et al* 2000:294). According to Townsend, one of the pioneers of understanding poverty in relative terms:

> Individuals, families and groups of the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by

---

[2] Between the 1899 and 1950 surveys the percentage of people identified as living in primary poverty fell from thirty three percent to one point five percent.

the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities (Townsend 1979:31).

Relative poverty, as such, recognises the importance of inequality in relation to an understanding of poverty. It also recognises that the consequences of poverty are more than economic, but involve the wider inability to participate fully in society as a result of low income (Burden 2000:44-45). In this regard, it mirrors some of the understanding of the increasingly popular term, social exclusion, although the latter can attribute exclusion to aspects other than economic, and can place responsibility for inclusion upon those who are currently excluded. Relative poverty, by comparison, has a more structuralist understanding.

The attempt to draw a sharp distinction between absolute (primary) and relative (secondary) poverty is recognised as increasingly sterile by a number of commentators. It is largely determined by a debate and context which is now over one hundred years old (Howard *et al* 2001:19-20). More seriously, it is recognised that all poverty is relative. According to Bradshaw:

> Basic needs are what philosophers call categorical needs – needs which must be met in order for human beings to function. There is no doubt that food, clothing (at least in all European countries), shelter and fuel for heating (at least in most/all European countries) are categorical needs. However, any attempt to represent them as baskets of goods and services immediately opens up the impossibility of avoiding relative judgements. Choices about what to include in a dietary, in a wardrobe, the form of shelter and type of heating are all inescapably determined socially – by the societies we live in, and therefore relatively. Minimum subsistence is a relative notion (Bradshaw 2001:4).

Bradshaw also highlights some of the weaknesses of relative definitions of poverty, not least of which is their inability to inspire politicians and societies to take the causes and consequences of poverty seriously (*ibid*:3-4).

Despite these limitations, the distinction between absolute and relative definitions of poverty remains. At an ideological level, the Right frequently defines poverty in absolute terms and has, as such, 'effectively defined it out of existence' (Atkinson 2000:1037). More generally major treaties have continued to draw a distinction between different levels of poverty with, for example, the United Nations (UN) seeking to distinguish between 'absolute' and 'overall poverty' (Seymour 2000:5). Both definitions, however, define poverty in relative terms (Bradshaw 2001:9).

Definitions of poverty – since Rowntree – have been substantially compiled by researchers and academics living comfortable lifestyles. As a result, the connection between wealth and poverty has often been ignored and the important insights into poverty which arise out of experience have been missed. According to Killeen: 'Everyone it seems is an expert on poverty, except for those who experience it' (SPIU 1999:9). Organisations and networks such as the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), ATD Fourth World, the Poverty Alliance, Church Action on Poverty and Glasgow Braendam Link have played a significant role in seeking to redress this imbalance at European, national and local levels. In recognition of the principles enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[3] they

---

[3] 'Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself (*sic*) and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and

have taken a predominantly human rights approach to poverty (Lister 2001a:105). While groups of people living in poverty are not necessarily any more likely than middle-class academics to reach consensus on what poverty is (Lister & Beresford 2000:298-299), they bring critical insights into its nature and a commitment to eradicating poverty which is often lacking from other definitions. 'ATD Fourth World laid its foundations on the three points that those living in poverty fight against most strongly, however silently – the fight against the notion that poverty is inevitable, resistance to the idea that poverty is the fault of those who experience it and anger at the waste in terms of human energy and spirit that is engendered by a society that chooses to ignore the experience that its most excluded members can offer' (ATD 1999). The attempt by ATD Fourth World's Institute for Research and Training to bring together academics and people living in poverty in a two year research project based in France and Belgium (*ibid*) and CPAG's *Poverty First Hand* report (Beresford *et al* 1999) both represent attempts to harness the insights of people in poverty and academics in an approach which should lead not only to more effective definitions and measurements of poverty, but also to more effective policies to overcome it.

Measuring Poverty

Although sixty percent of the median income after housing costs is increasingly used as the preferred measurement of poverty in Britain (Howard

---

the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age and other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.' Article 25(1) United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948). Copy available on www.un.org/Overview/rights.html.

et al 2001:2), there is still no official poverty standard as advocated by Atkinson and others (Atkinson 1998; Bradshaw & Lister 2000:293). Instead there continues to be a wide variety of methods employed in measuring poverty levels, each of which consequently record different numbers of people living in poverty (and potentially advocate different solutions to overcoming it).

Some of the main methods for measuring economic poverty are:

- Using consensual/social indicators in which 'socially perceived necessities are chosen democratically on the basis of (a) identifying goods and activities common in society, and (b) inviting the public to identify those they regard as necessary' (Gordon, Adelman *et al* 2000:72). This model, pioneered by Townsend (1979), is employed extensively within the *Breadline Britain* (Mack & Lansley 1985; Gordon & Pantazis 1997) and *Poverty and Social Exclusion* (Gordon *et al* 2000) reports, where surveys were used to identify what goods/resources people in Britain regarded as essential and then further research is carried out on what percentage of people lack two or more of these necessities. The social indicators method of measuring poverty gives an accurate indication of the number of people perceived to be living in poverty by the standards set by a cross section of the population as well as a means of measuring the depth of poverty and susceptibility to it. It is, however, rarely used by government as a current means of measurement.

- Subjective measures, also known as the income proxy method (Veit-Wilson 1987) is the most democratic measurement of poverty. Subjective measures are developed by asking people to identify a subjective threshold under which they would consider themselves to be living in poverty, which tends to result in a higher poverty-line being set. 'Indeed, using this measure has produced poverty incomes so high that some economists have not liked to accept them as "real" poverty, which they prefer, for whatever ideological reasons, to see as much greater hardship than the population's own definition' (Howard *et al* 2001:24). There is also evidence that the subjective rate for poverty rises as the income of a household/individual increases.

- Budget standards, is the method of measuring poverty where those living in poverty are identified as living below an agreed budget determined by the cost of a range of absolutely or relatively necessary goods (Howard *et al* 2001:8). This was the method used in Rowntree's pioneering surveys and by Beveridge in the establishment of the post-war Welfare State. It involves identifying an agreed list of necessary goods and then agreeing an appropriate budget to purchase these goods. Although still employed, the budget standards method is highly labour intensive and the budget tends to fluctuate over time. Using budget standards, the *Low Cost but Acceptable* standard for a family of two adults and two children was set in 1998 at thirty nine pounds per week above the level of Income Support (Holman 1999:13).

- Income thresholds areset either at a fixed level (such as benefit levels) or a variable one (in relation, to example, average income). Using income thresholds is the most popular method of measuring poverty in Britain, and the one most regularly used by government, which has tended to use *Half and Below Average Income* (HBAI) or more recently sixty percent or below the median income after housing costs. While the measurement of poverty in terms of income is relatively easy to calculate, and is, as a result, extensively used, the method has serious weaknesses. In using income to measure poverty, it does not necessarily take into account the actual cost of living. For example, *Income Support* (based on an income threshold) was twenty two percent of the average income in 1999, at a level which, according to virtually any other measurement, is significantly below the poverty-line.

Other ways of measuring poverty include attempts to measure empirically the extent of social exclusion in Britain (Gordon *et al* 2000:54-67) and work carried out by the United Nations to measure levels of poverty in developed countries (Seymour 2000:33). Whatever measurement is used, however, all the figures agree that there has been a substantial increase in the number of people in Britain living in poverty since the mid-1970s (Haralambos *et al* 2000:309). According to Seymour:

> As we enter the 21st century, the UK is a society with greater disparities in absolute wealth than at any time in history. ... [T]he long-term trend towards greater equality in income and wealth, which had been evident in the UK since the 15th century, has been reversed during the past 20 years, at least temporarily (Seymour 2000:49).

While Bradshaw and others are correct to advocate a more integrated approach to the measurement of poverty (Bradshaw 2001:11), (such as is now used in the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's annual *Poverty and Social Exclusion* reports), there is an even greater need to develop models which measure the intensity of poverty rather than simply recording the numbers living below a single threshold.

The New Policy Institute (NPI) has measured poverty in terms of depth rather than simply breadth. It calculated during the New Labour Government's first term of office (1997-2001) that: '[w]hile the *breadth* of poverty (the numbers below the threshold) declined, the *depth* of poverty (the amount by which people fell below the threshold) did not' (original emphasis, NPI 2002:1). It accounts for this by suggesting that while the Government's anti-poverty measures did have an impact for many on low income, they were primarily targeted towards those just below the poverty threshold and had little, or even a negative, impact upon the estimated eight million people who were fifty pounds per week or more below the threshold (*ibid*:2). As a consequence, while the numbers of people living in poverty has reduced, the numbers living in greatest poverty has, at best, remained static, and the disparity of wealth between the richest and poorest has continued to grow (Brewer *et al* 2004:2). Osberg, who advocates the need to measure poverty intensity as opposed to a single poverty rate, suggests that for the depth of poverty to be reduced, some level of redistribution of wealth will be required – 'if only 10% of the income gains of the top decile of the UK ... had been transferred to the bottom decile,

poverty in ... 1994/95 would have been substantially lower than in 1979, instead of substantially higher' (Osberg 2002:2).

Involving the Poor

Any attempt to move beyond defining and measuring poverty towards seeking to overcome it must involve people experiencing poverty within such a process. According to Wresinski: 'As long as people living in poverty are not listened to, as long as the planners of communities do not learn from those who experience poverty and the world they live in, the measures taken to alleviate their situation will be erratic, superficial and opportunistic' (ATD 1999:23-24).

Lister advocates the need to move beyond the traditional models of poverty research, which 'have generally counted the poor, told us where they live, how they live, i.e. the impact of poverty on their lives and how poor they are' (Bradshaw & Lister 2000:294), to a more participatory model in which people living in poverty are active participants (*ibid*:296). People struggling against poverty are more likely to include a range of qualitative indicators in measuring poverty than traditional researchers, recognising, for example, the importance of dignity, respect, independence, hope and participation in any definition of what it feels like to be poor (Bennett & Roche 2000:26).

Illustrations of this more participatory approach to poverty research, which has been developed primarily in the South (Bennett & Roberts 2004:20), includes work carried out at an international level by the United Nations Development

Programme (UNPD 1999), the World Bank (Narayan & Petesch 2002) and ATD Fourth World, and in Britain by CPAG (Beresford *et al* 1999), the National Commission on Poverty, Participation and Power (CPPP 2000) and Church Action on Poverty (CAP) (Galloway 2002). In these approaches the ongoing contribution and significance of academic researchers is acknowledged (Lister & Beresford 2000:286), but people living in poverty are also recognised as having unique and vital expertise *(ibid)*. What happens, at best, is a fusion of different sorts of knowledge to create a new, more emancipatory knowledge for all, a 're-cognition' (ATD 1999:26). Although there is no single template to participatory research, and it operates along a continuum of involvement, it is recognised as a growing and potentially significant development into poverty research, offering as it does not only the potential for high quality information but also the opportunity for people experiencing poverty to inform policy and practice (Bennet & Roberts 2004:57).

As well as the need to involve people experiencing poverty in research about it, there is an even greater need to involve this group in the closely related field of policy-making. However, despite clear evidence of the value of such an approach in the developing world (strongly supported by the Government's Department for International Development [DfID]) (Lister 2001a:104), its enshrinement within a number of international treaties of which the British Government is a signatory,[4] and its own commitment to involving people in

---

[4] For example, the UN World Summit on Social Development (1995) and the EU Community Strategy for Combating Social Exclusion (2000).

government, the New Labour Government has shown a reluctance to involve people with first hand experience of poverty in its anti-poverty policy making processes (*ibid*:103-104). For example, none of the members of the Government's Social Exclusion Unit has actual current experience of living in poverty. While for a period the situation appeared more favourable in Scotland, with representation on the Scottish Social Inclusion Network, this network was disbanded in 2003 and an alternative mechanism for people experiencing poverty to engage with the Scottish Executive has not been forthcoming (Poverty Alliance 2003:1). There is a widespread sense, both in Scotland and in the rest of Britain, that people struggling against poverty are still being excluded from the rest of society. According to the Fabian Society:

> It is high time to face up to the contradiction of a social inclusion programme that excludes people in poverty from its deliberations. Unless the insight that people in poverty have into their own situation is given proper weight, the stage may be set for a repeat of the mistakes of the 1960s: well-intentioned reforms imposed 'from above' delivering solutions (e.g. on social housing) that within a decade came to be seen as the very problem itself (Howarth *et al* 2001:23).

In models to involve people in research, policy-making and practice a distinction can be drawn between a model of involvement which will graft people into a continuingly unequal system and an empowerment model in which people experiencing poverty help to shape future society. Byrne advocates the latter and what he terms 'conscientising community development' (Byrne 1999:125). He draws heavily upon the work of Freire, and in particular his concept of participatory research, in which co-learning takes place between those in poverty and those who choose to act in solidarity

with them. He indicates that there is a potentially critical role for churches within this process.

> Within the UK and Ireland the bodies with the clearest understanding of the real character of the issues are the Christian churches. It is necessary to impose a particular obligation upon the churches for two reasons. The first is that given the clarity of their analysis, they are under a logical imperative to move towards some action on it. The second is that they represent not just a moral authority – in fact I am rather reluctant to cede any special moral authority to them – but also a considerable resource base. When we turn to issues of empowerment, a crucial problem will be that of seed funding, and in particular seed funding which is independent of the state. The churches will have to put up initial cash and other organisational resources (*ibid*:132-133).

Section Two: A Divided Nation: The Realities of Poverty and Wealth.

Just as certain areas and groupings of people are more likely to stay (or become) wealthy, so people from other groups and areas are more susceptible to poverty and social exclusion (Johnstone 2001). According to the *Scottish Poverty Information Unit*:

> The risks of poverty are not spread evenly but are dependent upon a range of factors. These include: discrimination; the ability to meet the extra costs of a child, or those imposed by disability; unequal access to the labour market; geographical location; age and gender. In addition, the likelihood of experiencing poverty varies across the life-cycle and over time (SPIU 1999:42).

The susceptibility of particular places and groups of people to poverty should not lead to the creation of a simplistic causal link between the two – as the proponents of the New Right frequently do, blaming the poor for their poverty (Murray 1989). Nor should it be assumed that membership of a particular group means that a person will inevitably live in poverty. In that case, all children growing up in single parent households, even members of the Royal

family, would be poor (Northcott 1995:141). The majority of people in vulnerable groups may well escape poverty, just as the majority of those who live in geographically defined deprived neighbourhoods are not individually poor. Nonetheless, certain groups of people are more susceptible to becoming or remaining in poverty. These include: women, particularly lone parents and their children; people who are long-term sick or disabled; the elderly; local authority or housing association tenants; ethnic minorities; and the unemployed and low wage earners (Johnstone 2001). The likelihood of a person being forced into poverty increases the more categories that she (or he) falls into, in what Vincent identifies as a circle (or spiral) of deprivation (Vincent 2000:13). Once people are living in poverty they (and their family) are more likely to remain poor, at best only managing to raise their standard of living narrowly above the poverty threshold and prone to falling back into poverty when their own circumstances change, or when there is a more general downturn in the local or national economy. The poorest members of society tend to remain poor throughout their lives, and their life circumstances are likely to cover future generations as well. Walker and Walker note:

> The evidence suggests that there is movement at the bottom of the income distribution, but it is very often of the revolving door kind – from unemployment to low pay to unemployment again. ... Lone parents and pensioners [are] least likely to be able to move from the lowest levels of income in contrast to households with someone in employment or self-employment or in receipt of disability benefits. Not surprisingly, the chances of moving up the income ladder decrease with the length of time spent at the bottom of the income distribution (Walker & Walker 1997:21).

These are the people who bear the marks of poverty in their bodies. 'The statistics of such health risk and deprivation in the UPAs are well documented, but coming face to face with it is another matter' (Green 1995:110).

The Faces and Voices of Poverty

While the overall standard of living in the UK has risen dramatically over the last fifty years, this increase has been shared unequally. According to Carr-Hill & Lavers, based on research which mirrored the earlier work of Rowntree, 'present-day families dependent on social security have a standard of living no higher than those enjoyed by similar families in 1950' (Carr-Hill & Lavers in Lupton 2003:207). Basic benefits continue to be set at historically low levels. Income support for couples fell from thirty percent of average earnings in 1983 to twenty percent in 1999. In Scotland, this figure is slightly higher (twenty two percent) as a result of a lower average wage (Johnstone 2001:33). Although the figures have reduced since the New Labour Government was elected, in 1997, 851,000 (16.6 percent) of people in Scotland lived at or below the basic income support level (SPIU 1999:22), forcing families like Jean's to make constantly difficult choices.

> Between me and my husband we don't have much. And I've got a sixteen year old boy to look after as well. And we've got to work out what we owe ..., and then work out your messages, and then you're only left with what £7 - 8. You've got to live on that. There's no very much left for extras.
> If I had more money I would like to get stuff for the house. And for the boys, but I'm not managing that. I'm struggling to get them stuff. Sometimes I get them stuff out of *Pound Stretcher* and just get the stuff. I get clothes for 99p (Church & Nation 2004:para3.3).

111

Unemployment is the major cause of poverty in Britain today (SAC 2000:xvii) and much of the government's anti-poverty strategy has consequently focused on increasing the number of people in paid employment. As a result of successful government policies and, critically, a buoyant world economy, recorded unemployment levels are at their lowest for a generation. In Scotland 5.8 percent of the working age population were unemployed in 2000, a fall of 2.7 percent since 1997. Similarly, the percentage of lone parents in employment has risen from forty two percent in 1997 to fifty three percent in 2000 (SE 2001:7). However, despite this, the number of long-term workless remains high. In Scotland, around 230,000 working age households have had no one in paid employment for over two years (Kenway *et al* 2002:51) and across the UK 4.5 million people who would wish to be in paid employment are out of work, a figure which has remained fairly constant over the last ten years (Rahman *et al* 2001:7). Low pay and constant job insecurity - Byrne's *chômage d'exclusion* (Byrne 1999:127) – means that paid employment does not necessarily lift people out of poverty (SPIU 1999:31).

> We were definitely better off when neither of us were working. Since the two of us started working we've just never had any money. I mean we weren't well off before but the rent got paid for us. And the Council Tax. No, I don't think we've been worse off. And even with the Child Tax Credit. That's twelve pounds a week we get. But we're not entitled to Working Tax Credit because our combined incomes are too much. I just think it's terrible (Church & Nation 2004:para3.5).

The experiences and expertise of people struggling against poverty, despite the limited increase in participatory research, are overwhelmingly absent from the

public and academic debate about the causes of and solutions to poverty (Holman 1997:114).

> People living in poverty face many barriers when it comes to taking part in decision making. Not enough money. Not enough information. Not enough confidence. The list goes on.
> But that's not the main problem. The main problem is that too often people experiencing poverty don't feel respected. Too often they aren't respected (CPPP 2000:1).

Without the involvement of people living in poverty the complexity of poverty in the UK will remain only partially understood (Barham *et al* 2004:7) and practical solutions to address it will have only limited success (Bennett & Roberts 2004:59).

The Other Side of Poverty: The Rich Life

While there have been people who have plainly suffered as a result of the prevailing system of market capitalism, there are many others who have benefited. 'It is impossible, as R H Tawney saw, to deal with poverty apart from wealth. What thoughtful rich people call the problem of poverty, he noted, thoughtful poor people called the problem of riches' (Leech 1997:97). A similar point is made by Lupton: '[S]ocial exclusion has to be seen as a dual process, in which the voluntary exclusion of the rich contributes to the involuntary exclusion of the poor' (Lupton 2003:151).

In his Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association in 1864, Marx noted that, despite the unparalleled development of industry and commerce in the period from 1848, 'the misery of the working masses [had] not diminished' (Marx 2001:90). In the period from 1979 to 1996, the wealth

of the richest ten percent of the population grew from a fifth to a quarter of the nation's overall wealth (Seymour 2000:43) and the UK had the highest levels of inequality in Europe (Hocking 2003:235). In 1996 the wealth of the richest fifty people in the UK was equivalent to that of the poorest 5.5 million, and in Scotland almost half the country is owned by just five hundred people (Mooney & Johnstone 2000:156). In times of economic downturn and recession, the pain is felt most acutely by the poorest. However, in times of economic expansion and boom, without effective management of the economy, people living in poverty are likely to benefit least. If growth is to create inclusion then that growth has to be redistributive in favour of the poor (Seymour 2000:13). Marquand has stated that, given the increasing gulf 'between the winners and losers in the global marketplace ... no project for social inclusion will work unless it captures some of the winners' gains and redirects them to the losers' (Marquand in Lister 2001a:98).

New Labour, while it has actively promoted a strategy of social inclusion, has consistently shied away from advocating policies of redistribution, focusing upon those at the margins of society who are excluded rather than the powerful who can choose to exclude themselves, and increasingly do so. According to Lister:

> What is not yet acknowledged is that genuine equality of opportunity and recognition of 'the equal worth of all our citizens' is incompatible with the savagely unequal society that Britain has become. In a pre-election BBC interview with Jeremy Paxman, Blair repeatedly refused to comment on the acceptability of the widening gap between rich and poor. Instead he attempted to turn the question to focus on those at the bottom rather than the top and argued 'the most important thing is to level up, not level down' (Newsnight, 5th June 2001). The goal remains the more limited one of

raising the social floor and promoting equality of opportunity rather than addressing wider inequalities (Lister 2001:438).

Such a position is flawed if, as I have demonstrated, there is a relationship between inequality and relative poverty.

Section Three: New Labour: 'Mrs Thatcher Without a Handbag' (Giddens 2000:8).

Since its election in 1997, policies to tackle poverty and to promote social inclusion have been a central feature of the New Labour Government (Howarth *et al* 2001:11). In Scotland, the need for social justice has formed a key element of the Executive's overall economic and social strategy (SE 2001). For the first time since the late 1970s there is an acknowledgement on the part of government that poverty exists and its causes as well as symptoms have to be addressed (Howard *et al* 2001:1). It has commissioned research which is helping to identify more effectively and more accurately the causes and levels of poverty and social exclusion and has opened up the effectiveness of its policies to closer public scrutiny by the publication of annual reports, in which performance is measured against a set of clearly identified milestones.[5]

A number of its policies have proven to be effective. According to the New Policy Institute, the number of people in households with incomes less than sixty percent of median household income fell by a million during the

---

[5] The Social Justice reports of the Scottish Executive, for example, have laid out thirty one milestones against which the effectiveness of its policies should be measured. However, the high profile publication of Social Justice Annual Report has been largely jettisoned by the Executive in 2003, while at the same time, there is an increasing disquiet that the indicators are actually measuring the most stubborn characteristics of poverty in Scotland.

government's first term in office (from 13.9 to 12.9 million) and the number of children in poverty fell from 4.4 to 3.3 million over the same period (from thirty four to thirty percent) (NPI 2002:1). These figures are likely to show an ongoing improvement as the Government's various tax credit schemes are implemented. These substantially target households where the level of income is just below the poverty threshold. As a result, while they are likely to assist people just below the poverty line to rise just above it, they are not designed either to tackle the problems faced by the poorest, or to ensure that those who are helped are able to remain permanently above the poverty threshold.

Other aspects of New Labour policy have been more sharply criticised as regressive by anti-poverty groups, social commentators and people living in poverty. According to Williams, these include: 'the demonisation of asylum seekers; the cutting of lone parent benefits; the negative representation of people on benefits, especially disabled people on incapacity benefits, and of people with mental health problems; and miserable increases for pensioners (until challenged)' (Williams 2001:467).

In addressing the 2000 Social Policy Association, Hutton began by claiming that 'he alternated between thinking he should be grateful for New Labour and sheer despair' (Lister 2001:425). This apparent ambiguity between policies of the traditional Left and the New Right can be illustrated by reference to New Labour's understanding of the concepts of communitarianism, social exclusion, and the political ideology which integrates them, the *Third Way*.

The *Third Way* has been described variously by its critics as: 'mix and match politics' (Charles Kennedy) (Jones 2000:199); a 'lingerie store [where] customers mix and match to meet their personal taste' (Roy Hattersley) (Harries 2001:25); and an attempt to give political credibility to 'people whose principles are as flexible as the markets they want us to accept' (Seddon) (*ibid*). Certainly it is an ideology which seeks to hold together a number of apparently conflicting strands and has arisen out of the collapse of state socialism and the widespread popular acceptance of central elements of the New Right's philosophy. Bevir notes that during the 1980s, inflation, the acceptance of the notion of an underclass and the changing structure of the British working class all represented major philosophical and practical challenges to traditional socialism, making it highly unlikely that the Labour Party would ever be capable of being re-elected while promoting its traditional policies (Bevir 2000:287).

Even its proponents frequently define the *Third Way* more in terms of what it is not – old style socialism and neo-liberalism – than in terms of what it is. According to Blair:

> The Third Way stands for a modernised social democracy, passionate in its commitment to social justice and the goals of the centre left, but flexible, innovative and forward looking in the means to achieve them ... It is a Third Way because *it moves decisively beyond an old left* preoccupied by state control, high taxation and producer interest; *and a new right* treating public investment, and often the very notions of 'society' and collective endeavour, as evils to be undone. It is about traditional values in a changed world (new emphasis, Harries 2001:26).

He goes on to identify these traditional values as equal worth, opportunity for all, responsibility and community (*ibid*).

Some of the central elements of New Labour policy can be clearly seen within these values: the focus upon education to improve the potential of each person to compete within the labour market; the shift from policies which were designed to narrow income inequality to others which seek to promote equal opportunity; the strong emphasis on responsibilities within the New Deal and other social welfare policies; and the frequent references in New Labour rhetoric to the obligations of individual citizens to contribute effectively to wider society. Underlying all of these values, however, is the pledge of Blair to 'accept globalisation and work with it' (Holden 1999:531). The task of government is consequently redefined as preparing people to compete within the global economy rather than, as within traditional socialism, to seek to shape the economy to more adequately address the needs of people.

> Certainly there is no doubt that New Labour has an ideological commitment to the free market that was not shared by previous Labour administrations. It firmly believes that future economic success will be achieved only by those nations ... which respond positively, rather than defensively, to global economic change. It wants to foster an entrepreneurial culture and create a tax system that rewards those who work hard and takes risks. It no longer has any desire to tax the rich as a matter of principle. ... New Labour accepts that it has the responsibility of enhancing the employability of citizens through education and training programmes but, unlike previous Labour administrations, rejects the notion that the government should be an employer of last resort (Page 2001:513-514).

This largely uncritical acceptance of market capitalism is an illustration of what Powell and others have identified as the twin pillars which underlie the

118

Third Way: pragmatism and populism (Powell 1999).[6] While the acceptance of market capitalism despite its structural inequalities, represents, in part, a shift in mindset in New Labour's philosophy, that mindset is affected both by its sense that there is no alternative (pragmatism) and its reluctance to challenge the powerful (following public opinion rather than leading it) (Lister 2001:431). As such, the movement is to be understood less as a coherent overarching ideology and more as a loose holding together of some general historical, social, democratic principles by what is possible and acceptable (Powell 2000:57). *Third Way* politics remains committed to many of the values of traditional socialism (Dawson 2002:162), but is prepared to jettison or even contradict these values when they run counter to public opinion, or are regarded as unrealisable.

> [O]ne would be mistaken in regarding the *realpolitik* of 'third way' thinking as no more than a reflex pragmatism founded on a one dimensional reading of contemporary empirical transformations. Rather, scrutiny of 'third way' thought brings to light a number of values at play. Regarded as mutually exclusive by received wisdom, these values are given fresh political flesh through their incarnation within a theoretical framework motivated more by the pragmatic principle of 'Does it work?' than the ideological question of 'Is it part of our canon?' (*ibid*).

New Labour's attitude towards asylum seekers and welfare claimants further illustrates this tendency to adopt a pragmatic and populist approach. During the 2001 General Election the debate on asylum was characterised by the two main political parties apparently vying with one another over who would be the tougher in their treatment of asylum seekers (Lister 2001:429). Similarly,

---

[6] In recent years a clear distinction needs to be drawn between New Labour's domestic and foreign policy. In the decision to side with the United States of America over Iraq, Blair adopted a policy position which was unpopular both within New Labour and the country at large.

its acceptance of the underclass theory – and its frequent labelling of many on welfare as part of a dependency culture – is, in part, determined by public perception as permeated through the prism of the *Daily Mail* and other sections of the tabloid press. According to Lister:

> What we have here is a reading of public opinion as conservative and reactionary, which seeks to be pandered to rather than challenged. This acts as a break on the government's progressive policies... [and] leads to exclusionary policies ... (Lister 2001:429-430).

This position can also be identified in relation to New Labour's attitude towards redistribution in general, and direct taxation in particular. In *Third Way* politics there is a movement away from *actual* equality (based on a desire for greater equality of outcome) to *formal* equality (based on the intention of creating a greater equality of opportunity) (Dawson 2002:165). This movement can be illustrated by the debate which took place between Hattersley and Brown shortly after New Labour came to power in 1997. While Hattersley criticised the Government for its failure to promote policies to reduce inequality, Brown responded with the claim that 'equality of outcome [was] neither desirable nor feasible' and promoted instead a form of equality which was based on equal opportunity (Brown 1997). In actual fact, Hattersley – hardly a figure from the hard left – was not arguing for complete equality of outcome, but rather that greater redistribution was necessary because the existing levels of socio-economic inequality were such as to make equality of opportunity a practical impossibility (Levitas 1998:135).

New Labour's reluctance to make the case for redistribution can be understood by its reluctance to challenge the perceived wisdom that the British electorate

has become unwilling (Beresford 2001:498) to pay higher taxes in order to reduce inequality (Lister 2001:437).[7] This perception has, in actual fact, been undermined by a number of reports which suggest that most people feel that the current levels of inequality are too great and that government has a responsibility to reduce it (*ibid*). The increases in National Insurance announced in the 2002 Budget may represent a movement towards using direct taxation as a means of redistribution, but this particular increase was specifically promoted as targeting greater investment in the largely universal services of health and education. As a result the case for higher direct taxation to promote greater equality has still not been made. This is, in large measure, because New Labour remains unwilling to take the risk of losing support from the middle and high earning brackets that helped to elect it. According to Leech:

> The Labour Party, at least at the official level, seems more concerned with cultivating the middle class vote, and can no longer be regarded as a movement of poor people. ... It is a dangerous and unhealthy basis for a social agenda which is meant to represent poor and oppressed people (Leech 1997:105).

In actual fact during Labour's first term its measures were mildly redistributive, although not significant enough to reduce the overall levels of inequality between the richest and poorest in a market system where capital attracts capital (Lister 2001:436). Even those steps that were taken, however, were rarely acknowledged by the government, which did not want to be seen

---

[7] According to the Commission on Taxation and Citizenship, within the prevailing political culture, taxation has come to be regarded as 'fundamentally *illegitimate*' (original emphasis).

to be promoting greater equality for fear that this would prove unpopular (Lister 2001b:66).

These policies – the refusal to accept the connection between equality of outcome and equality of opportunity and the unwillingness to make the case for redistribution through direct taxation, or even to acknowledge where redistribution has taken place – indicate how, in its domestic policy at least, New Labour continues to govern by responding to public opinion, rather than seeking to form it, and that it makes policy on the basis of what works rather than what is most capable of continuing socialist aspirations. It also illustrates that New Labour, in its pre-occupation not to offend the electorate, is primarily concerned with those who would lose in any wide-scale redistribution of resources rather than those who continue to lose as a result current policy. As such, its policies to address poverty are likely to be limited and to have consequential limited success (Lupton 2003:217).

Communitarianism.

As well as the *Third Way*, New Labour politicians, and in particular Blair, have been heavily influenced by the political philosophy of communitarianism most closely associated with the North American writer and social thinker Amitai Etzioni (Etzioni 1995, 1996). According to Blair, in his speech to the Women's Institute in June 2000:

> At the heart of my beliefs is the idea of community. I don't just mean the villages, towns and cities in which we live. I mean that our fulfilment as individuals lies in a decent society of others. My argument to you today is

that the renewal of community is the answer to the challenges of a changing world (Blair in Hale 2002:191).

Communitarianism, like *Third Way* politics in general, is an attempt to forge a new direction distinct from both neo-liberalism (where the market is central) and traditional socialist thinking (where the central focus is on the regulating authority of the state) (Etzioni 1997:7). Etzioni has compared the predicament to that of a three-legged stool, where two legs are too long (the state and the market) and the third ('the things people do for one another as members of families and neighbourhoods, as friends and co-workers') is too short (Etzioni 2001:25). The task of communitarianism is, therefore, to be understood as developing measures which increase the capacity of people to be more responsible to each other in order to create a more stable, market-driven society where the worst excesses of neo-liberalism are countered by individuals voluntarily assuming greater responsibility both for themselves and for others. According to Etzioni:

> Communities are social webs of people who know one another as persons and have a moral voice. Communities draw on interpersonal bonds to encourage members to abide by shared values... *Communities gently chastise those who violate shared moral norms and express appropriation for those who abide by them.* (fresh emphasis, Etzioni 1995:ix).

It has been argued that this is a deeply conservative understanding of community, which has strong moral and authoritarian undertones associated with it (Levitas 1998:90). Etzioni refers to a 'moral deficit' among many young people, which has become more pronounced since the 1960s. He attributes this decline to an increasing failure on the part of parents to provide appropriate moral education and behavioural patterns to their siblings,

criticising single-parents and emphasising the importance of children growing up in traditional two-parent households (Levitas 1998:90).

Etzioni's communitarian thinking has been sharply criticised on a number of fronts, including its largely uncritical acceptance of free-market capitalism and the need for individuals and communities to operate and compete within it (Leech 1997:145); the limited obligations which it places upon wealthy individuals and rich neighbourhoods by comparison to the duties and responsibilities expected of those living in poverty (Byrne 1999:27); its strong emphases on individualism and utilitarianism (*ibid*); and the imprecision with which it uses the term community (Levitas 1998:89). Although some of these criticisms are, in part, unwarranted with specific reference to Etzioni's writings – who advocates, for example, the need for some limited redistribution of resources in favour of the poor (Etzioni 1995:251) – they are legitimate criticisms of the more populist version of communitarianism promoted and implemented by New Labour. Ironically many of these criticisms would have been overcome had New Labour's form of communitarian thinking more closely resembled that of Macmurray, the Scots philosopher to whom Blair attributes his own initial interest in the concept (Hale 2002:191-192).

Macmurray, for example, was much more precise in his definition of community than either Etzioni or New Labour. For him community arises out of 'spontaneous and intrinsic' personal relationships between people. These relationships, in Macmurray's thinking, cannot be forced (*ibid*:193-194). New

Labour, however, frequently advocates coercion against those who refuse to comply with its community norms, for example, those benefit claimants who fail to prove that they are willing to accept work. Graham suggests that what New Labour claims to be community may, in actual fact, turn out to be the state telling local places and people what is good for them (Graham 2000:83). The influence of communitarianism upon New Labour can be clearly seen in the widespread introduction of community wardens and the legitimising of local curfews in particular neighbourhoods and even revaunchist policies designed to keep city centres attractive to visitors (MacLeod 2002). There is little recognition within New Labour's understanding of community that, as well as encouraging greater social cohesion, the concept of community can also be dangerous and excluding. According to Harvey:

> The darker side of ... communitarianism remains unstated. The spirit of community has long been held as an antidote to threats of social disorder, class war and revolutionary violence. ... Well-founded communities often exclude, define themselves against others, erect all sorts of keep-out signs (if not tangible walls), internalise surveillance, social controls and repression. Community has often been as a barrier to, rather than a facilitator of, social change (D. Harvey 2000:170).

Harvey subsequently points outs that communitarian thinking is used to justify the development of closed and gated communities to protect the powerful while, at the same time, abdicating responsibility to the residents of poor neighbourhoods to improve their own areas (*ibid*:240).

The clearest illustrations of New Labour's adherence to communitarianism can be seen in frequent policy initiatives, such as the New Deal, which have a strong emphasis on the responsibilities of individuals to contribute more

effectively to society through paid employment, as well as in its substantially uncritical acceptance of underclass theory as advocated by Murray and other thinkers of the New Right (Lund 1999:452).

The notion of a permanent underclass in Britain began to emerge during the 1980s. It is not, in itself, a new concept, following closely in the tradition of a number of individualistic understandings of poverty, which place primary responsibility upon the poor, and which are determined more as a result of moral as opposed to economic rationale (Byrne 1999:20). Dahrendorf described the underclass as 'a cancer which eats away at the texture of societies' (Dahrendorf in Lister 1990:25). Murray associates it with groups of male criminal delinquents, single parents, and those who would prefer to depend upon benefits rather than work (Haralambos *et al* 2000:323-324). According to the editorial which marked Murray's visit to the UK in 1989 and the publication of his article in the Sunday Times, the underclass:

> ... is characterised by drugs, casual violence, petty crime, illegitimate children, homelessness, work avoidance and contempt for conventional values... The underclass spawn illegitimate children without a care for tomorrow and feeds on a crime rate which rivals the United States in property offences (Murray 1989).

There is substantial empirical evidence to counter the claim that there is a permanent underclass in Britain. New Labour, however, following media-led public opinion and adhering to the more authoritarian and moralistic aspects of communitarianism often continues to adhere to the attitude of the previous Conservative Government of blaming the victims of poverty. According to Stepney *et al*:

The notions of 'underclass' and 'dependency culture' are unhelpful to the extent that they emphasise stigmatising labels without adding to our understanding of the process of personal experience of poverty and exclusion. ... In social-scientific terms the only meaningful use of the term 'underclass' might be to connote the disadvantage and exclusion of a loose-knit group of people, relative to the rest of the community, who do not seem to matter to contemporary politicians ... until that is, they begin to throw things – in other words, a groups who have no stake in the economic institutions from which mainstream households benefit (Stepney *et al* 1999:113).

Social Exclusion

Although the term social exclusion began to become an established part of political language in Britain during the early part of the 1990s – in large measure because the then Conservative government refused to accept that poverty still existed (Burchardt *et al* 2002:3) – it has become an increasingly important concept since the election of New Labour. Blair has described social exclusion as: 'A shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown' (DWP 1999:23).

Although its historical roots date back to Weber (Burchardt *et al* 2002:1), it is generally agreed that the modern roots of social exclusion originated in France in the 1970s, as a description of those who had slipped through the social insurance system (Atkinson 2000:1039). During the 1980s and 1990s, its usage became increasingly popular across the European Union (EU), partly as an attempt to describe the spatial and social inequality which was becoming increasingly apparent within post-industrial Europe, partly under the tutelage

of the then EU president Jacques Delores (*ibid*:1040), and partly in an attempt to find a common political language which would be acceptable to the range of political positions held by the various European governments at the time (Burchardt *et al* 2002:3). From the outset, then, social exclusion has meant different things to different groups, a factor which has made it notoriously difficult to define (Watt & Jacobs 2000:15). According to Levitas:

> There is no monolithic pan-European definition of social exclusion; rather there are a range of national discourses which use the idea of exclusion in different ways. As exclusion becomes an increasingly prevalent term, so there are competing discourses of exclusion within individual countries, as well as within Europe (Levitas 1998:2).

The ability of the term social exclusion to provide a common language for dialogue between those who hold a range of understandings of the causes of poverty is part of what makes it attractive. It is also what makes it possible to hold conflicting positions about how social exclusion is caused and ought to be addressed while sharing an apparently common language of concern.

Byrne (1999:4-5), acknowledging the work of Veit-Wilson, draws an important distinction between what he describes as 'strong' and 'weak' definitions of social exclusion. Veit-Wilson writes:

> In the 'weak' version of this discourse, the solutions lie in altering these excluded peoples handicapping characteristics and enhancing their integration into dominant society. 'Stronger' forms of this discourse also emphasise the role of those who are doing the excluding and therefore aim for solutions which reduce the powers of exclusion (Veit-Wilson 1998:45).

According to Byrne it is Veit-Wilson's weak understanding of social exclusion – 'a discourse deliberately chosen for closure ... and to depoliticise poverty *as far as income redistribution was concerned*' (original emphasis, *ibid*:97) –

which has become the prevalent one, not only as it developed in France during the 1980s, but also in the usage of social exclusion by New Labour since it began to emerge as a political force from the mid-1990s. He argues that it is not possible to address social exclusion at the bottom of society without being prepared to address inequality (Byrne 1999:5). A similar position is taken by Barry:

> The upshot of this is that a government professing itself concerned with social exclusion but indifferent to inequality is, to put it charitably, suffering from a certain amount of confusion. ... [I]n any society in which the great bulk of goods and services are allocated through the market, and in which even those provided publicly can also be bought privately, there must be a close connection between inequality and social exclusion (Barry 2002:29).

Levitas identifies three distinct political philosophical strands within New Labour's understanding of social exclusion, each of which has been emphasised, to varying degrees, in the government's rhetoric and policy (Levitas 1998). These are:

A redistributionist discourse (RED), based upon a structuralist understanding of the causes of social exclusion, and therefore with a corresponding emphasis upon the need for a substantial redistribution of wealth and power across society;

A social integrationist discourse (SID), which identifies paid employment as the key element required to lift people out of poverty, and to enable them to contribute more fully to wider society; and,

A moral underclass discourse (MUD), in which the excluded are regarded as morally and behaviourally delinquent and held personally accountable for their own condition.

Although New Labour has introduced a number of policies which have had a mildly redistributive outcome (Lister 2001b:66), a focus upon the redistribution of wealth towards those in poverty has been largely absent from the thinking of New Labour, in sharp contrast even to the policies that it was advocating in its 1992 General Election manifesto.

> In contrast with 1997, the 1992 manifesto had proposed the introduction of a new top rate of income tax of 50 percent … and adjustments to personal allowances which would exempt 740,000 people from paying tax. It also promised … to replace the Social Fund; to restore benefit rights to 16 and 17 year olds; and to increase pensions. These commitments were notably absent from the 1997 manifesto. Labour was hardly recognisable as the party which five years before had insisted that 'the most effective way to reduce poverty quickly it to increase child benefit and pensions and take low-paid people out of taxation' (Levitas 1998:129).

New Labour policy instead focuses primarily on a social integrationist understanding of social exclusion and, in particular, upon a set of policies designed to move people from benefits to paid employment – 'work for those who can, security for those who can't' (Darling 2002:v). In this New Labour is part of a general trend in many European countries to equate social exclusion with unemployment and, in particular, long-term unemployment (Burchardt et al 2002:3).

There can be no doubt that New Labour's policies in seeking to move people from welfare to work have had a substantial impact. According to the 2000 Annual Social Justice Report in Scotland, unemployment has dropped by

twenty five percent since 1997, with male unemployment down by almost fifty percent (SE 2001:42). However, the number of people long term unemployed has barely altered over the same period (Rahman *et al* 2001:54) and according to the New Policy Institute: 'the officially unemployed now account for only 10 percent of those living below the low income threshold' (NPI 2002:2) clearly indicating that poverty and social exclusion cannot simply be tackled through social integrationist policies.

The employment-focused route out of poverty has been heavily criticised on a number of grounds. These include: its failure to address the structural inequality of the prevailing order in which those in poverty are most susceptible to labour market shifts, with many low-paid regularly moving in and out of employment (Byrne 1999:97) and forced into competition with one another (Holden 1999:537); an assumption that full employment is possible (Graham 2000:86); a failure to value non-paid employment, in clear contradiction of the government's communitarian philosophy (Powell 2000:49); and, evidence that the policies are heavily dependent upon a relatively buoyant economy, and are unlikely to be sustainable if there is a long term downturn in the employment market. According to Prideaux, who has looked carefully at similar functionalist policies in the United States:

> Given that the prerequisite for an effective welfare-to-work programme is an extensive support network that enables the participants to carry out their designated tasks without undue hardship, then it is not surprising that they are extremely expensive to run. Significant expenditure 'in child care, transport, supervision and running expenses' alongside a bureaucratic need for an increase in individual caseworkers renders the cost of workfare 'probably 60 percent more than the simple benefit system.' In effect, this

131

higher cost per case may not be sustainable if the economy hits a downturn and unemployment figures begin to rise again (Prideaux 2001:105).

As well as a movement away from a redistributionist to a social integrationist approach to tackling poverty, New Labour's 'positive welfare' policies also represent a prevalence towards describing social exclusion in terms of a moral underclass discourse – blaming the victims. Its introduction of the new welfare system, tying benefits to compulsory interviews, was variously described by representatives of the government as symbolising 'the end of a something for nothing welfare state' (Blair 1999) and 'the strongest ever attack on the workshy' (Brown 1999). According to Levitas:

> [A]s social exclusion entered public political discourse, it did so in conjunction with references to the underclass – with Blair himself repeatedly referring to an underclass excluded from the mainstream. ... Where it is used in conjunction with the underclass, social exclusion is at risk of co-option into a highly problematic discourse [which] ... presents the underclass or socially excluded as culturally distinct from the 'mainstream' [and] ... focuses on the behaviour of the poor rather than the structure of the whole society (Levitas 1998:20-21).

New Labour's policies to overcome social exclusion, influenced by its understanding of the *Third Way* and communitarianism, have made a positive difference to the lives of many people living in poverty. However, its continued acceptance of New Right thinking both in terms of the value of economic globalisation and underclass theory, along with its unwillingness to challenge the wealthy is likely to mean that the impact of its policies will be limited and many of the economically poorest will remain in poverty. If poverty is to be adequately addressed there is the need to develop a much

stronger understanding of social exclusion, one which is committed to economic redistribution.

Conclusion

Millions of people in Britain today are living and dying in poverty, excluded from the increasing prosperity enjoyed by the majority, and often stigmatised in the process. The causes of poverty and social exclusion are complex but at their root lie the inherent inequalities of the free market. To really begin to tackle poverty, it is clear that there will have to be a far greater commitment to economic redistributive measures. It is also clear that those living in poverty have a major and active contribution to make, and that without that contribution, Britain is a poorer country (in all senses of the term).

New Labour has made a start, but its policies are limited by their largely uncritical adherence to global capitalism, their continuation of the policies of the Conservative Government which blames the victims for their own poverty, and their apparent unwillingness to promote redistributionist policies, preferring to follow rather than lead public opinion.

Any future strategy to tackle poverty will have to place the experiences and expertise of people struggling against poverty at its heart, will require to be both international and local in scope, and willing to challenge the rich rather than blame the poor. It will need to move beyond a strategy which advocates paid employment as the route out of poverty to one which recognises the value of each human being regardless of his/her ability to contribute economically.

The Church has a role to play in the development of such a future strategy and

it is to an analysis of urban ecclesiology that I now turn.

Chapter 5

Towards an Appropriate Urban Ecclesiology

Introduction

In the previous two chapters I have been concerned with the context, both of the city (*Chapter Three*) and of poverty (*Chapter Four*). In this chapter, as the study begins to 'zoom in' (Silverman 2000:69, see *Chapter Two*) on the intellectual puzzle which lies at its heart – the necessary shape of the church in urban Scotland – the focus of my enquiry shifts from the broader canvas to the more specific issue of the development of an appropriate[1] urban ecclesiology.

Although the early Church was clearly urban in character and strategy (Gornik 2002:210; Green 2003:21-22), from the fourth century onwards Christian theology and ecclesiology has been marked by a prevailing anti-urbanism (Gorringe 2002:141) even amongst many of those committed to remaining in the city (Davey 2003:93). Despite the overwhelmingly urban character of twenty first century Britain, rural patterns continue to dominate church life in terms of governance (Shanks 1995:4), popular perception (Warren 1995:2) and strategic thinking. According to Davey:

> The dilemma the Church faces is how it can overcome such antipathy and engrained prejudice as it responds to some of the most acute dangers about the nature of and changes in human community that have ever been faced. Whatever our theological background, our effectiveness as Christian disciples depends on our awareness and understanding of the social processes in which we are all caught up. Our urban experience cannot be an acceptance of being shaped by external forces, or thinking that we can withdraw unaffected into our Christian enclaves, but must be the determination to enter the struggles to be

---

[1] Appropriate in this case is an ecclesiology which relates to the core cities of the developed world to which the substantive part of this research relates.

the new protagonists in the shaping of communities and settlements (Davey 2003: 96).

Any such attempt at a practical ecclesiology must take the current reality as its starting point. Although it is accepted that the trajectory of secularisation in Europe is now much more nuanced than was previously thought to have been the case (Davie 2002), the process of institutional decline among churches continues unabated. In Britain the Christian Church, particularly in the mainstream denominations, is in apparently irreversible decline with no rational grounds to suggest that this position is likely be reversed (Bruce 2003:61). Based on current trends, it is estimated that the Church of Scotland will cease to exist by 2033 (NM 2003). Brown states:

> This is not the death of churches, for despite their dramatic decline, they will continue to exist in some skeletal form with increasing commitment from decreasing numbers of adherents. Nor is it the death of belief in God, for although that too has declined, it may well remain as a root belief of people. But the culture of Christianity has gone in the Britain of the new millennium. Britain is showing the world how religion as we have known it can die (Brown 2001:197-198).

The situation is even starker in the economically most disadvantaged urban areas where there exists what Atherton classifies as 'the double whammy of marginalized churches in marginalized communities' (Atherton 2003:xiii). Despite high levels of belief in God (Ahern & Davie 1987) and a continued affinity to the local church,[2] people struggling against poverty in Britain are overwhelmingly absent from churches, leading a number of commentators to

---

[2] The 2001 National Census indicated that the majority of people continue to think of themselves as members of the Church even although they no longer attend worship on a regular basis.

question whether institutionally the urban church can survive (Atherton 2003, Baker 2004, Garner 2004). It was in recognition of this crisis that the Church of Scotland's Board of National Mission reported to the 2002 General Assembly that:

> [w]ithout action and a critical realignment of resources over the next five years many of the churches in Scotland's poorest communities will die. If these congregations are allowed to perish through a lack of resources, the whole Church of Scotland will be critically, and perhaps irredeemably damaged. If we cannot announce 'good news to the poor,' who can we announce good news to? (NM 2002).

The chapter is divided into three main sections.

In *Section One* I draw upon some of the central insights of Latin American Liberation Theology — its ecclesiology, methodology and preferential option for the poor. Although it is less high profile than it was a generation ago, I still consider Liberation Theology to be seminal in any attempt to construct an ecclesiology among those in poverty.

Section Two, which begins with an appraisal of the 1985 *Faith in the City* report (ACUPA 1985), looks at some of the key elements of an evolving Urban Theology in the United Kingdom. I focus attention particularly on the appropriateness of the development of 'project-based models' of church engagement in the city, its need to engage with the spirituality of an urban population largely absent from mainstream churches, and of the continuing significance of church buildings in urban ecclesiology.

In *Section Three*, I am concerned primarily with how the urban church can engage more effectively with folk religion and popular spirituality in the urban culture, and how such engagement might lead to new forms of political activity and organisation. In this I draw extensively upon the dramatic growth of Pentecostalism, particularly in the Third World but also, to a lesser extent, in Britain.

Throughout the chapter my intention is to draw together strands of an urban ecclesiology which can operate within the post-Christendom and marginalised context which I understand to be the current environment of the Urban Church in Scotland.

Section 1: Liberation Theology: *'The Liberation of Theology'* (Segundo 1976)

Whilst some of the anticipated outcomes of Latin American Liberation Theology[3] – both in terms of the radicalisation of the Church and the wider societal struggle to overcome oppression – have failed to fully materialise,[4] the impact of the Liberation Theology movement still represents a paradigm shift in the location and substance of theological enquiry (Morisy 2004:128; Phan 2000:40). According to Rowland:

---

[3] I see Latin American Liberation Theology as part of a broader development of a range of theologies of liberation including Black Theology, Feminist Theology and Minjung Theology (Hennelly 1995; Bevans 2002:77-78).

[4] The impact has, nonetheless, been considerable. In Brazil, for instance, the *communidades ecclesial de base* (CEBS) were a critical focus for opposition during the years of the dictatorship and provided a critical training location for many opposition politicians, particularly from the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*) (Tombs 2002:174).

We are dealing with a movement whose highpoint as the topic of discussion on the agenda of every theological conference may now have passed, but whose influence, in a multitude of ways, both direct and indirect, is as strong as ever. The issues which concern liberation theologians today are more inclusive and extend to questions of race, gender, popular religion and, more recently, the environment, and have taken root in other situations and religions apart from Christianity. So when the leaders of Roman Catholicism can proclaim that liberation theology is dead, sentiments echoed by some who hitherto have been exponents of liberation theology, they miss the enormous impact that this way of setting about the theological task continues to have in many parts of the world, not least in the citadels of Catholicism itself. ... In thinking of it as a mere epiphenomenon of the radical social movements of the 60s and 70s, we miss the extent of its impact (Rowland 1999:248).

Critics of Liberation Theology have accused the movement from the outset of an uncritical equation of Christianity with socialism and, in particular, of an over reliance upon Marxism (Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1984, 1986). As such, they have linked the currently reduced impact of Liberation Theology with the collapse of state-sponsored socialism in Europe from the late 1980s onwards. Mainstream liberation theologians, however, were never dependent upon Marxism (Bradstock 1995:93) although, in common with other movements committed to liberation, they have had to rethink their strategy in the light of the apparent hegemony of neo-liberal global capitalism (Schreiter 1998:103). Of greater significance, however, have been the development of western-style democratic governments[5] in the region – 'depriv[ing] liberationists of their clearest enemy' (Nagle 1997:17) – and the inability of the movement to engage effectively with either the rapidly developing urban context (Berryman 1996:159) or the economically poorest members of Latin American society (who

[5] I would wish to draw a distinction between western-style democracy and the radical forms of community-based democratic governance developed, for example, in Port Allegre.

141

have, in recent decades, been increasingly moving into the burgeoning mega cities of the region) (Kee 2000:37). Both at the level of the base communities, as well as in the more formal writing of liberation theologians, insufficient attention has also been paid to popular religion (Comblin 1998:166) and to spheres of human life other than the political (*ibid*:197).

> [W]hen a person died in battle he is a hero. You can talk with the mother: 'Your son was a hero! He gave his life as a service to the liberation movement.' But when the son died because he was sick, what can you say to the mother? That is the problem. You can talk about the lack of a social health programme, but what use is that to the mother, to the family? They have a problem and your understanding of the social context is not an answer to their question. That is the problem of liberation theology.
> Frei Betto said many years ago that liberation theology appealed only to the brain, and that it looked only at the human being from the neck up and did not see the whole person with all his problems: sickness, sexuality, cultural and the rest. That was right at that moment. It was the social moment. But anyone looking for the liberation of the person, must look to more than the social (Interview with Paulo Garcia, Sao Paulo, 1st April 1997).

As I will demonstrate in *Section Three*, because of its assimilation of many aspects of popular religiosity into its worship, Pentecostalism has been more successful than Liberation Theology in engaging with those living in urban poverty.

From the outset Liberation Theology was heavily dependent upon the Roman Catholic hierarchy for its support (Berryman 1996:66). The silencing by the Vatican of a number of the movement's most high profile theologians during the 1980s and early 1990s, along with the replacement of bishops supportive of the movement with more conservative appointments, had a significant impact (Comblin 1998:167). At the same time, many of the local animators – the

'organic intellectuals' (Oakley 2004:450) who provided leadership within the base communities and who were drawn extensively from the religious orders – were either forced to move or to adopt a more traditional ecclesio-centred agenda. This led not necessarily to a reduction in the number of base communities but to a change in their ethos whereby they came to be understood as a part of the wider Church rather than its local expression (Ottmann 2002:46).

The evolving shape of Latin American Liberation Theology is more modest and nuanced than it was during the heyday of external interest in the movement (Vigil 1997:3). However, the need for such a movement is arguably more urgent than ever (Ruether 1993:16). According to Sobrino:

> Poverty is increasing in the Third World, the gap between the rich and the poor countries is widening, there are wars – more than a hundred since the last world war and all of them in the 'Third World.' ... Oppression is not a fashion. ... God goes on hearing these cries, condemning oppression and strengthening liberation. Anyone who does not grasp this has not understood a word of liberation theology. What I ask myself is what theology is going to do if it ignores this fundamental fact of God's creation as it is. How can a theology call itself 'Christian' if it bypasses the crucifixion of whole people and their need for resurrection, even though its books have been talking about crucifixion and resurrection for twenty centuries? Therefore if those doing liberation theology are not doing it well, let others do it and do it better, but someone must keep on doing it. And for the love of God let's not call it a fashion (Sobrino 1990:50-51).

'The Preferential Option for the Poor' (Gutierrez 1999:143)

All theology is contextual (Bevans 2002:7), partial and involves taking sides (Kee 2000:32). For Liberation Theology its starting point is the context of the 'non-

person' and the commitment to engage in the liberation struggle which leads to freedom.[6]

> The question we face, therefore, is not so much how to talk of God in a world come of age, but how to proclaim God as Father in an inhuman world? How do we tell the 'non-persons' that they are the sons and daughters of God? These are the key questions from a theology that emerges from Latin America, and doubtless for other parts of the world in similar situations (Gutierrez 1999a:28).

As such, C. Boff states that: '[t]he radical originality of liberation theology lies not in the topics it treats (oppression, struggle and so on), nor in its language (prophetic and utopian), nor in its addressees (the poor and their allies), nor even in its final cause (social transformation) ... [but] in the *insertion of the theologian in the real life of the poor*' (original emphasis, C. Boff 1996:7). At all levels of the movement there is a commitment on the part of theologians, whether pastoral or professional, to live alongside those struggling against poverty and to engage in that common struggle. This commitment has resulted in the martyrdom of a number of Latin America theologians and priests (Teixeira 2002:41-42).[7]

Liberation Theology firmly roots the preferential option for the poor in the character and activity of God as revealed in Scripture and throughout the history of the Church (Pixley & Boff 1989:242). As such it is based not upon a notion

---

[6] Liberation has always been about much more than political liberation as the earliest works of Gutierrez, with his focus on integral liberation, clearly demonstrate (Gutierrez 1974). Comblin has nonetheless recognised that freedom was an aspect of liberation that was perhaps under-represented within the earliest works of writers, partly because of a desire to avoid too close an assimilation with European political theology (Comblin 1998).

[7] Most well known among these martyrs have been the assassination in March 1980 of Archbishop Oscar Romero while he celebrated Mass in the Roman Catholic cathedral in San Salvador and the murder of eight priests working for the Central American University (including Ignacio Elacuria) in November 1989. Martyrdom should be understood as one of the characteristics of the Latin American Church in recent years. When visiting Brazil in 1997 I was struck by the banners in many of martyrs that hung around the walls of some of the buildings where the base communities met.

that those in poverty are naturally more righteous but instead upon the graciousness of God.

> God loves the poor with special love because they are poor and not necessarily because they are good. The Beatitudes tell us more about the goodness of God than about the goodness of the poor. They reveal a *Go'el* God, defender and protector of the real life poor, those deprived of what is necessary to live as human beings (Gutierrez 1983:116).

For the Christian, it is argued, that there is no choice other than to opt for the poor (Russell 2001:270). Nickoloff highlights an ambiguity about how the phrase *optar por los pobres* ('to opt for the poor') is translated into English.

> 'To opt for the poor' ... means to make a free decision to side with the oppressed and powerless in their fight for justice and to stand against all persons and structures that oppose their liberation. Perhaps, then, English-speaking Christians might best think of the 'option' as 'a decision to make a commitment.' Taking sides with the poor transforms the world into a place of justice; in the process, of course, it transforms the lives of the poor *and* the lives of those (poor and non-poor) who make this choice (original emphasis, Nickoloff 1996:13).

In his writings Gutierrez also emphasises that the 'preferential option for the poor' does not constitute an exclusive option but rather the theological and epistemological location from which it is then possible to demonstrate God's universal love.

> I have often met people who find it strange to use the term 'preference.' Would it not be better to say simply 'option for the poor' since preferential sounds too gentle? I do not agree. Preference implies the universality of God's love, which excludes no one. It is only within the framework of this universality that we can understand the preference, that is, 'what comes first.' ... The rejection of the preference means failing to grasp that we must combine the universality of God's love with God's preference for the poorest. ... As Christians we cannot say, 'Only the poor count.' Such an attitude is not Christian; neither is claiming to love everyone while in fact loving no one. Holding the two aspects together

145

– universality and preference – is not easy. It is a great challenge (Gutierrez 1996:145).

Although it is not possible (or appropriate) to uncritically transfer elements of Latin American Liberation Theology from their roots in the struggle for liberation in a Third World context to the Fourth World (Johnstone 1990:53; Turner 2000:71), Liberation Theology has demonstrated that the 'preferential option for the poor' is not context-dependent but rather lies at the heart of the Christian gospel and in the midst of 'crucified peoples' is the only position from which to demonstrate God's universal love. As such, it is integral to the development of an appropriate urban ecclesiology in a British context (Green 2003:85-86). While it is understood 'today [as] an integral part of the self-understanding of the universal church' (Palacio 2002:74) – an indication of the global impact of Liberation Theology over the last thirty years – the 'preferential option for the poor' continues to be substantially regarded as only one of a series of potentially competing options. According to Linden:

> In the radical light of the Gospel, the demand that the option for the poor should be 'more central' or 'higher on the agenda' is a form of collusion in a profoundly false notion of the nature of the Church's mission. ...
> As a school of solidarity ... and a community of disciples travelling the path of God's justice, the Church need only have one goal: the full acknowledgement that the poor are at the heart of the Church's life. This has many implications. The poor will occupy the same place in the Church's worship and mission. Worship that does not have justice and the option for the poor at its heart is not true worship. Mission that does not have the option for the poor and justice at its heart is not true mission. They are simply a misunderstanding of God's purpose for worship and mission, and, in a Christian sense, a waste of time (Linden 2000:27-28).

'Reinventing Theology as the People's Work' (Fraser 1988)

Along with its preferential option for the poor, Gutierrez regards its particular method of doing theology as foundational to the movement (Gutierrez 1983:200). Liberation methodology arises out of the theology's spirituality, or more accurately, its spirituality is its methodology (Gibellini 1987:37). It rejects both any dualism between the secular and sacred realms of history – salvation is worked out in and through history - and any absolutisation of political (historical) liberation as salvation (Dussel 1979:211). As such, the starting point of liberation methodology is both a commitment to the historical processes of liberation, which it recognises as a part of salvation history, and a faith commitment which always believes that the Reign of God is beyond any realised historical liberation (Gutierrez 1996:263). It holds together these polarities, recognising them as a single entity, in the faith and practice of Jesus (Bevans 1992:75).

> Let me quote a famous Uruguayan theologian that I consider the most brilliant theologian that we have in Latin America: that is Juan Luis Segundo. He said that, as Christians we must have the faith of Jesus Christ. Most people in Latin America have faith in Jesus Christ, but not faith in what Jesus was committed to. And this is our spirituality when we are committed with Jesus' cause. ('Theology Today,' Dom Pedro Casaldaliga, Campinas, 16th April 1997.)

In liberation methodology, therefore, the more specific task of theological enquiry can only arise out of action and faith – 'theology can no longer be done as work during the day, but it must now be done as reflection at the end of the working day' (Elizondo 1981:ix). Although carried out, on occasion, by individual academic theologians, Liberation Theology should also be understood as being

primarily located within the church context[8] and as a communal activity. Faith sharing and celebration are increasingly understood as integral parts of the methodology of Liberation Theology, particularly at a grassroots level (L. Boff 1986:40).

> [W]hen theology is conceived in terms of expressing one's present experience in terms of one's faith, the question arises whether ordinary people, people who are in touch with everyday life, who suffer under the burden of anxiety and oppression and understand the joys of work and married love, are not the real theologians – with the trained professionals serving in an auxiliary role (Bevans 1992:18).

As a second act, Liberation Theology has three inter-relating mediations, corresponding to the practice of the Catholic Action groups out of whose practice the methodology developed (Richard 2002:385). The first mediation is socio-analytical, which makes extensive use of the social sciences in order to increase the theological community's understanding of their context (Vidales 1979:39). As the aim is not simply to understand the context but to transform it, extensive, although critical, use has traditionally been made of Marxist dialectical structuralism (Gutierrez 1996:45).

The second mediation – hermeneutical – corresponds with the more traditional schema of theological enquiry with the important distinction that it is life experience rather than Scripture or doctrine which operates as the '*locus theologicus*' (Mesters 1984:205) albeit while the Bible continues to function as a *norma normans* (C. Boff 1987:150).

---

[8] Although Boff and others draw the helpful distinction between three different levels of the theology: the professional, pastoral and popular, at all three levels the theology emerges out of the communal practice of faith (L. Boff & C. Boff 1987:12; C. Boff 1996:8).

148

We need not, then, look for formulas to 'copy,' or techniques to 'apply,' from scripture. What scripture will offer us are rather something like orientations, models, types, directives, principles, inspirations – elements permitting us to acquire, on our own initiative, a 'hermeneutic competency,' and thus the capacity to judge – on our own initiative, in our own right – 'according to the mind of Christ,' or 'according to the Spirit,' the new, unpredictable situations with which we are continually confronted. The Christian writings offer us not a *what*, but a *how* – a manner, a style, a spirit (*ibid*:149).

The third – practical – mediation is concerned with re-engaged praxis in the light of reflection. In this third element, in particular, it is recognised that the movement remains at an early stage of development (C. Boff 1987:158) and that the professional theologian often lags behind the wider Christian population in faith-filled committed action.

The [professional] theologian of liberation cannot simply teach, but has to be taught, by the grassroots theologians. The marginalised become the makers of history when they begin teaching us theologically not only about their hopes and pains, but how it is that they continue to hope against hope in a world of misery (Persaud 1987:359)

What is envisaged throughout the methodology is an ongoing hermeneutical circle (spiral) in which action/faith and social analysis/theological reflection act upon and inform one another, leading to more informed activity and faith.

Liberation theologians, particularly those who have reflected extensively upon its methodology[9] have acknowledged the dangers within each of its dimensions (C. Boff 1987).

We are without doubt on controversial and slippery terrain. The risk of reductionism (or of expressions which can be interpreted as reductionistic) is

---

[9] Segundo (1976) and C. Boff (1987) are the two liberation theologians who have paid particular attention to the development of a rigorous methodology. C. Boff's *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations* is particularly significant. It was written after the initial works of Liberation Theology and sought to articulate the methodological and theoretical schema underpinning the theology.

thus limiting and threatening. It is easy to be absorbed by the emotional aspects of the situation, to experience a certain fascination with something new, or to overestimate the value of the social sciences. ... All this leads us to see that the effort to capture new realities theologically has to be constantly clarified. Imperfections of language must be overcome, and inexact formulations must be corrected by concepts which do not give rise to errors in matters concerning the doctrine of the faith. Indeed, theological reflection always carries the imprint of the moment and of the circumstances in which it is formulated (Gutierrez 1996:273).

The key to an ongoing deepening of liberation methodology depends upon the continuous dialectical relationship between its three primary areas of inquiry – the socio-analytical, hermeneutical and practical mediations – within the wider context and community of faithful living and committed action. It must also continue to develop its hermeneutics of suspicion, questioning authenticity when it too easily corresponds with the preferred route (C. Boff 1987:152). It is this hermeneutics of suspicion which is leading some theologians to broaden their use of the social sciences (Ribeiro 1999:312) and biblical materials (Schreiter 1998:108) to more adequately reflect the changing conditions and aspirations of people living in poverty in Latin America today. This is an important development if Latin American Liberation Theology is not to become what it rightly accuses traditional western theology of being: dogmatic and blind to its own changing context (Kee 2000:38).

If today's imagery has profoundly changed with the events of the past few years [the collapse of the socialist alternative and the growth of global neo-liberalism], it is logical that these changes will be reflected in the texts of the last decade. It is the price that LT [Liberation Theology] has to pay – and willingly – for the privilege of being a theology incarnated and for life. Evidently, the new LT creations, faithful to the permanent charism of the incarnation of this theology, should frame its references in the new imagery

150

that is evolving, and should contribute to its creation, but it cannot stop being a living theology full of practical and theoretical references (Vigil 1997:3).

Liberation methodology has been used effectively in a number of United Kingdom urban contexts over the last twenty years[10] (Green 1987; Hinton & Price 2003) and it remains the critical methodological basis for the development of an indigenous urban theology.

> Provided sufficient safeguards are put in place, and it is not borrowed uncritically, liberation methodology may well prove to be the most pertinent contribution which Latin American liberation theology has to make to the development of indigenous theologies of liberation among the oppressed of the developed world (Johnstone 1990:74).

'Church, Charism and Power' (L. Boff 1985)

In many respects both the scale of the *base eccelesial de communidades* and their capacity to act as a catalyst for the global renewal of the church from the base of society were over-estimated during the formative years of Liberation Theology. Although their impact was (and remains) remarkable, particularly in Brazil, where their numbers were largest, even at the height of their popularity only about two percent of a fiercely religious and affiliated population were involved. The leadership of the communities was heavily dependent upon a sympathetic hierarchy (Berryman 1996:66), a regular, committed stream of animators and pastoral agents (Berryman 1998:ix) and the particular socio-political and cultural conditions which resulted in the Church being one of the few environments in

---

[10] As I indicated in *Chapter One*, the work in which I was involved in Bellshill Urban Theology Group drew heavily upon liberation methodology.

which those committed to political opposition could congregate and organise with comparative safety.

Despite a few 'pinpricks' (C. Boff 1986:8) there are limited examples of the widespread development of base communities in Europe in general, and in Britain in particular. Where they have developed, they have often developed outside traditional ecclesiastical structures (Fraser 1990; Hinton 1999; Walsh 1997)[11] and have been dependent upon high levels of commitment from key animators (Galloway 1998; Summers 2003). According to the Anglican report *Mission Shaped Church*:

> In South America there exists lay theological and community development training that resources a 'pastoral agent.' S/he helps the BEC reflect in the light of Scripture on their experience, and to coordinate and develop the life of the community. ... The lack of pastoral agents in the UK may explain why the BEC model is seldom evident in Anglican churches. It is also true that much English leadership training demands an enculturation into middle class values, which is either alien to, or serves to alienate, leaders from UPA society (Archbishops' Council 2004:49).

If base communities are to form a part of the future urban landscape in Britain, significant attention will have to be paid to how they can be adequately resourced and equipped.

The real significance of the communities, however, lies neither in their numerical strength nor their direct applicability in contexts other than Latin America but in the model of church that they advocate. While they can rightly be understood as

---

[11] Examples of this would include the development of the East Pollokshields Columban House (Bert) which has operated in the south of Glasgow since the 1970s, the Neighbours in Northampton, and Hope Community in Heath Town, Wolverhampton. Although each of these communities draw their membership from among those who are (or have been) involved in traditional church life, none of them are connected into any denominational structure.

part of a broader development of small Christian groups across many parts of the Church (Hinton 1995; Pelton 1997),[12] *communidades ecclesial de base* are distinctive in that their overall[13] claim is not that they are a local expression of the wider Church but rather they constitute the Church in its entirety at the local (or base) level.

> These are not parish instruments for reaching out to the poor. They are an entire church, with resources of word, sacrament, structure and mission, at grassroots level. This is to say that the poor, abandoned by the institutional church, began to meet, first around the word and then, bringing several Bible-study groups together, beginning to form small communities. They embody the true definition of the church, as a community of the faithful. They are bringing about a new way of being the church, characterised by communion and sharing. Ministries and services arise, and leadership is collegial and taken in turn. In place of formal rites, life as a whole is celebrated, expressed in rich symbolism typical of popular culture. A type of church with the face of the people is emerging, one that adopts the culture of the poor and incorporates the dreams of new men and women of another type of society in which human beings can deal humanely with one another and welcome each other as brothers and sisters (L. Boff 2002:80-81).

Here the Church is understood less as an institution and more as an event, the coming together of a people of faith who are struggling against oppression and injustice (L. Boff 1985:126). It was this advocacy of a way of being church that was primarily concerned with societal transformation, the authority for which was drawn from within the community rather than from the hierarchy of the Church, which has brought L. Boff and others into conflict with Church authorities,

---

[12] According to research carried out by *Churches Information for Mission* (CIM) sixty four percent of English church goers were also involved in small groups (Cameron 2003:116).

[13] One of the problems of the base communities is that it is impossible to treat them as a homogenous group. In addition, since the appointment of a number of more conservative bishops, many of the communities have been reformed into more traditional Bible Study and catechism groups (Berryman 1996:83).

particularly when they exposed the ecclesiastical structures to the same rigorous analysis as had characterised their broader work and equated the prevailing clergy-dominated structures of the Roman Catholic Church with market capitalism (*ibid*:112-113).[14] This continues to be a tension in the movement's relationship to the wider Church.

> If we look at liberation theology as a means of getting in touch with the social problems then we can say that most of the Catholic Church, or the Catholic Church as a whole, accepts the theology. But if we look at liberation theology as a way of feeding a democratic social action inside the church, then there is not a lot of acceptance inside the Catholic Church. The Catholic structure is hierarchical and so, in a way, they are afraid of creating a democratic structure inside the church (Interview with Pe. Paulinho, 17th March 1997).

In one other significant respect the base communities inform the development of an urban ecclesiology in the Scottish context. They are a minority movement operating at the margins of Church and society. Segundo draws a distinction between two models – Christendom and liberative – of church. In his liberative model, the church is always a minority institution, functioning as leaven and salt in its relationship to wider society (Segundo 1973:86). The challenge he poses is particularly relevant to the often tiny communities of faith struggling to live out the gospel message in the post-Christendom (and post-church) environment of Scotland's urban landscape.

> When the Church was aiming primarily to preserve the faith of people who never underwent a serious conversion, who therefore never had to go through the essential process, the life of the Church wore a different aspect. There were certain things to do. Faith was easy to understand. It could stand firm against all objections and it had solutions for every problem. To move from such a

---

[14] Although L. Boff's critique is aimed primarily at the Roman Catholic Church, I believe that it is also apposite in the Reformed tradition.

154

brand of Christianity to the one offered here is to have a certain feeling of anxiety. Now Christianity must be lived as a creative principle; open to dialogue, sensitive to new problems, obliged to offer new formulations. Such anxiety is a necessary partner for any and all liberation (*ibid*:135).

Section 2: Urban Theology: *'Church for the City'* (Blakebrough 1995)

The development of British Urban Theology as an organised movement has been traced to a gathering of some of its key protagonists and authors at Hawarden (North Wales) in September 1974 (Green 2003:35).[15] Although drawing on a range of historical antecedents including Christian socialism, the City Mission movement, the establishment of the Salvation Army, the Oxford Movement and the development of the East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York (Livezey 1998:1176), Urban Theology can be understood legitimately as part of the global flow of praxis and community-based theology (Duffield 2003:268) of which Latin American Liberation Theology is the primary example.[16] At the same time, Urban Theology does not seek to copy Latin American Liberation Theology but to learn from it (Davey 1995:62).

> Urban theology that is engaged and committed must be part of the movement that is associated with liberation theology as it takes as its subject, its defining concern and draws its authority from the communities of the poor. That position must attest that it is orientated towards change, towards a *different future* for those who find themselves in poverty, excluded or the victims of racism and violence (original emphasis, Davey 2001:11).

---

[15] The meeting drew together a range of individuals from across a wide theological spectrum. The attempt to operate within a broad ecumenical framework has continued to be a characteristic of much of British Urban Theology over the last thirty years. Significantly, however, to the best of my knowledge, the meeting included no one from a Scottish context.

[16] For a more historical survey of the development of Urban Mission, see Garner (2004).

Since its publication in 1985, the Church's response to the urban context has been dominated by *Faith in the City* (ACUPA 1985). Unanimously approved by the General Synod of the Church of England, selling an unprecedented twenty four thousand copies, the report caused a furious political outcry at the time – the then British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, reputedly referring to it as 'that wicked report' (A. Harvey 2001:19) – leading to a period of exceedingly strained relationships between Church and State (Taylor 2003:123-124). According to Robinson:

> The Report's 38 recommendations to the church and 23 to government and nation drew prophetic attention to the gap between rich and poor, gave a stimulus to new forms of urban ministry, focused the liturgical needs of urban congregations and enabled the empowerment of the urban church through the setting up of the Church Urban Fund. In retrospect *Faith in the City* was a defining moment in the history of the church's engagement with the modern urban context (Robinson 2003:84).

The report has also been subject to considerable criticism, however, and not simply from the political right. Although it clearly identified the symptoms of poverty in Britain's inner cities, it failed to provide any detailed structural analysis as to their causes.[17] The report was similarly blind to the increasing fragility and inappropriateness of the institutional Church in Urban Priority Area parishes and indeed to the dramatically changing shape of the increasingly post industrial and post-modern city (Ward 2000:51). By focusing on the weaknesses

---

[17] According to Harvey (A. Harvey 2001), some Commission members did favour the presentation of a more radical social analysis but the decision was taken to adopt a more pragmatic and inclusive format on the basis that it would then be more likely to win widespread approval. The fact that the final report was still accused by the government of being Marxist in tone, while it was approved without dissent by the General Synod suggests that a more robust presentation would have been appropriate.

and problems facing inner city communities and churches, the report also continued to treat the non-urban as normative and to presume that the problems could be addressed by greater investment on the part of government and Church.

> The overall picture of the Report laboriously stresses the weaknesses of UPAs whilst making scant mention of the strengths. Whereas wealth and professional expertise of the rest of the church and nation form the backbone of recommended future action with their weaknesses hardly mentioned. This image leads to the inevitable assumption that UPAs have all the needs and non-UPA churches have all the answers. Such an image must be firmly repudiated before it becomes subconsciously accepted as the right basis for future decisions and actions. Otherwise the Report might just be interpreted as calling for the achievement of suburban living and church standards in UPAs through the injection of money and professional expertise (Paget-Wilkes 1986:11-12).

Although the report claimed to have 'found faith in the city' (ACUPA 1985:360), little attention was paid to the strengths of inner city churches, their liturgy, spirituality and models of Christian discipleship (Garner 2004:32). The report similarly resisted the temptation to articulate a theology for the city, preferring instead to advocate for the development of local, contextual theologies (ACUPA 1985:69). The result of this, however, is to give the impression that whilst there may be local variations, the overall method of classical theology is still normative in the inner city. Small wonder then that one commentator on the report described it as 'a 22-ounce-weight exercise in the powerful talking to one another' (Miller 1986:17).

'Salvation by Project' (Runcie in Taylor 2003:130)

Despite the increasing fragility of many urban congregations, the contribution which churches (and wider faith communities) make to the development of social capital and community cohesion is being increasingly recognised (DETR 1997; LGA 2002; CRU 2004). Key assets include: buildings (Farnell *et al* 2003:21), professionally trained staff (clergy and other church workers) living locally; small but highly motivated congregations; and an ability to engage with traditionally hard to reach individuals and/or groups (CHF 2004:24) and to respond rapidly to a crisis on account of their extensive local network (Lewis & Randolph-Horn 2001:16), high level of trust and sense of permanence within the local community (Farnell *et al* 2003:22). According to the *Merseyside and Region Central Ecumenical Assembly* (commenting on Manchester):

> Local churches (nearly 200) meet many of the City's regeneration objectives through their day to day pastoral work and by encouraging their members to take responsibility for each other and their neighbourhoods through involvement in community building activities. They play a major part in providing the 'glue' for local communities and, to the extent that they have a presence in all parts of the City, they contribute to social cohesion more broadly. In disadvantaged neighbourhoods, where clergy are very often the only professionals living as well as working in the area, they provide a key local facility. They give a round-the-clock social service. They take on many associated leadership roles and are a focus for advocacy about local needs (quoted in Garner 2004:72)

Flint and Kearns estimate that almost two-thirds (sixty five percent) of Church of Scotland congregations are involved in the provision of direct services and facilities to local people and of these over seventy percent are catering for a majority of non members (Flint & Kearns 2004:14-15). They also identified that

thirty percent of church members were involved in volunteering in another (non-church) community organisation by comparison to a national average of twenty percent.

> On this comparison, congregation members appear to be proportionately more likely to be involved [in a community or voluntary organisation] than the general population. Coupled with the fact that four in ten of the congregation members who reported being members of other community groups were office-bearers in these local organisations, this suggests that members of congregations play a prominent role in the institutional infrastructure of their local communities (*ibid*:12).[18]

Much of this work is small-scale, voluntary and self-generated by local congregations or individuals of faith, raising serious questions as to whether it is sustainable in the future as church affiliation, particularly among the young, continues to haemorrhage (Farnell *et al* 2003:23).

One of the most far reaching consequences of the *Faith in the City* report was the proliferation of a huge array of more professionally based and structured church-related community projects – '[i]n time, rarely was there an urban church without a project' (Green 2003:39) – part funded by the *Church Urban Fund*, which was established as one of the report's central recommendations (ACUPA 1985:161-165).[19] At their best these projects have not only improved the quality of life for significant numbers of people living within the economically poorest regions of the country, but they have also informed and influenced the pattern of local

---

[18] These figures are based on the average across the whole of Scotland. However, the figures are higher in deprived urban communities (Flint & Kearns 2004:10-11).

[19] Similar funds were set up by many of other mainstream denominations, including in 1995, the Church of Scotland's *Priority Areas Fund* in 1995. I served for three years on the Fund, including a year (1999-2000) as its convener.

church life (at both an individual and collegial level), including increasing awareness of the structural causes of poverty and increasing inequality in Britain (Galloway 1998; Green 1987; 1990). However, in many cases the initiation of such work has either remained out with the reach of the most fragile congregations or its development and maintenance has significantly skewed the energy of local church leaders, reduced the function of the local church to that of a welfare organisation (Pityana 1989:105) and diverted the energies of congregational members away from a broader involvement in community affairs. In some instances the employment of a professional member of staff – often from out with the local community – has resulted in a further sense of disenfranchisement of local people (Addy 1989:75).

> Social audits without social analysis lead to projects. Projects without critique leads to incorporation and quietism. Furthermore, the projects we create are often operating 'instead of' the whole church and are not informed by, nor do they inform our theology (*ibid*:80).

With increased pressure on virtually all denominational finances and the growing desire on the part of the New Labour government in particular,[20] to involve faith groups (in effect, principally churches) in their community regeneration strategies (Blair 2001), the need for the church to develop a more sustainable and transformative model of community engagement is one of the most urgent tasks

---

[20] Commitment to the involvement of faith groups in community regeneration strategies has tended to vary from region to region (CSM 2001:6). While active discrimination against faith communities is probably relatively limited, the suspicion remains within some sectors that faith communities are primarily proselytising organisations. Effective communication between faith communities and the broader regeneration sector is also, on occasions, difficult because of the differences which exist within the faith sector (CHF 2004:19). In Scotland, the Executive has tended to be more reticent in acknowledging the role that the faith communities can play, although there are some indications that this is changing with the advent of regular meetings between representatives of the faith communities and Executive staff.

facing urban theologians. Not only has the prevailing 'project-based model' failed to energise or inform its praxis (Beckford 2004:116) but the Church is increasingly susceptible to engaging in partnership with those who, despite some successes, have maintained a historically flawed notion of 'cosmetic regeneration' (Baker 2004:3), which has: blamed the victims for their poverty and excluded them from effective participation (see *Chapter Four*); encouraged competition among disadvantaged communities for scarce resources; and has linked regeneration primarily to physical improvements (*Chapter Three*).

> The radical missionary activity of the Church cannot, like liberal, secular, social policy, aim at the transformation of the poor. In the new adaptive zone we have entered, the aim must be the transformation of the secure, the well-meaning and the well-endowed of this world. The processes that Jesus teaches and demonstrates invest potential in the most unlikely, not in the well resourced. Focusing on 'needs meeting' is at odds with the coaching and urging that we receive from Jesus to take seriously the reality of Gospel reversals. The ways of Jesus are not the ways of the world, but they are not a fairy story either. The challenge is to have the imagination, trust, expectation and capacity to facilitate situations where the upside-down nature of God's kingdom can prosper (Morisy 2004:28).

Reacting against the professionalisation of church-based community work which 'repeatedly benefit[s] the professional cadre more than they do the needy' (*ibid*:30) Morisy puts forward a model of community ministry which is lay, collegial and seeks to provide space for theological reflection on practice (Morisy 1997; 2000). Moving beyond the conventions of bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam 2000), she advocates the necessity for structures to support what

161

she identifies as 'brave social capital' or 'venturesome love' (Morisy 2004:61 & 62).[21]

> This category is needed if we are to distinguish between the generalized reciprocity that develops into bridging social capital and the commitment to work for the well being of those who are not just different, but who are conceived as carrying a threat or a menace. Such commitment, I believe, should be distinguished from bridging social capital, and warrants the label brave social capital (*ibid*:60-61).

Several of the examples of 'brave social capital,' which Morisy cites, include those involved in support for the homeless in winter night shelters, those who chose to live in 'hard-to-let' housing schemes, people who open their homes up to homeless strangers and a group of women from the *Mothers' Union* in Kent who chose to deliver sewing machines they had gathered for a women's project in Zimbabwe in person.

Morisy's model of 'community ministry,' and her advocacy of the principle of 'brave social capital,' could leave her open to the accusation that she has focused primarily upon a pattern of engagement concerned with those who have power. However, unlike in Latin America and other parts of the Third World, those living in poverty in urban Britain are overwhelmingly absent from the Church.[22] As such, in the short term at least, it is unrealistic to think of the institutional Church as having the potential to be a *Church of the Poor*. In addition, based on

---

[21] To use more traditional theological language, brave social capital might usefully be thought of in terms of costly discipleship (Bonhoeffer 1959).

[22] It also seems apparent to me that Liberation Theology is primarily concerned to a 'preferential option *for* the poor' rather than a 'Church of the Poor,' despite some of the rhetoric about the base communities in particular. It is only with the Pentecostal movement that we begin to move substantially from the desire for the Church to become more focused with the cause of the poor tot eh potential of a Church shaped by the wisdom and experience of those living in poverty.

her premise that engagement with those in poverty leads to a fresh experience of God, she articulates an understanding that people struggling against poverty already have a sense of the numinous in their midst (*ibid*:38).

'Imagining Differently ... Praising Open' (Ford & McFadyen 1995)

In *Faith in the City's* call for action and more effective community engagement, the basic necessity for the urban church to worship was largely marginalised (Garner 2004:119). And yet worship lies at the heart of what it means to be a Christian community. According to Leech:

> The future of the Christian community in the 21st century depends to a large extent on the quality, authenticity, and power of its liturgical life, its worship – its corporate life of penitence, lament, praise and glory. All Christian life begins in liturgy, in the act of worship. Liturgy is the primary theological act. ... Liturgy is both a sacred act and a counter-cultural act. It points both upwards in adoring love to God, and outwards in disaffiliation from the disorder and illusion of the world. It seeks to create and to manifest 'the life of the world to come' in the midst of the present chaos' (Leech 1997:164)

The recovery of authentic urban worship is pivotal to the survival of the church in the city. This constitutes a requirement to relocate liturgy as the 'people's work' and to develop patterns of worship which resonate with popular culture and post modern religiosity so often dismissed as irrelevant, inappropriate and threatening by the institutional hierarchy (Morisy 2004:169).[23] Such worship will appeal to a broader range of the senses.

---

[23] Popular religion is often regarded as a threat by those in authority because it undermines a hierarchical structures in which it is assumed that God communicates primarily with and through those with the greatest level of authority and/or highest standard of education. Such a presumption runs counter to much of the Biblical message.

Spirituality in inner-city environments is certainly different to suburban or rural spirituality. It is more direct; there isn't time to mess around. Fewer words, less discussion. Urban spirituality is less verbal, less literary; less meeting centred; more based on images and on impression. Music, colour, light; refreshment, life and peace; escape and engagement; prayer. Of course, none of these are exclusive to the inner-city; but I wonder whether the extremes encountered in urban environments, of wealth and poverty, of beauty and tragedy, of loneliness and community, are not also reflected in the extremes of spirituality; in a desire both to wonder and to work, both to challenge and to celebrate (Goddard 2004:25).

There are important lessons to be learnt from organisations such as *Alcoholics Anonymous,* and even sectarian groups such as the *Masonic* and *Orange Orders,* in their ability to provide a strong common identity, high levels of participation, and an acceptance of urban culture and values (Cuthbertson 2000).

For many people, however, while there is significant evidence that they will retain a sense of the numinous in their personal and private lives (Hay 2000; Hunt 2003), regular or even irregular involvement in worship will increasingly be out with their experience as congregational membership becomes more and more marginal across Great Britain[24] in general, and within disadvantaged urban communities in particular.[25] Under such circumstances, there is a requirement to develop what Morisy identifies as 'apt liturgy,' a 'specific liturgy which aims at including people with little faith and Christian knowledge and often focuses upon a particular distress that has arisen within a community' (Morisy 2004:237). Apt liturgy engages people in their own context and belief system whilst striving to

---

[24] Here I deliberately exclude Northern Ireland, where higher levels of church membership have been maintained.

[25] Beasley points out that people in poverty have almost always felt excluded from the church (Beasley 1997:14). Despite this, high levels of popular faith have been maintained in communities where belief in God is frequently 'taken for granted' (Ahern & Davie 1987:109).

enable them to encounter the gospel story. It seeks to relate to local culture in a way similar to the way that both Jesus and Paul took up critical issues within their context and sought to use them as oblique illustrations to get people thinking and behaving in a different manner. The requirement to encourage an ongoing basic language of faith will be significant if the ability to articulate belief is not to disappear from large parts of the urban landscape (and beyond) over the next generation as orthodox Christian worship becomes increasingly marginal in the vast majority of people's lives.

> The danger is that, without a shared language, spirituality will continue to be privatised. Individuals will continue to create their own sacred space but will not know how to share it with others. The challenge for those us who believe in community will be to encourage people to look outwards and realize that they are not alone; there are many, many others who also value the spiritual aspect of life (Hunt 2003:168).

Although urban theology's engagement with spirituality must begin with the largely domesticated and privatised spirituality which is currently much in vogue, it cannot be content to remain there. Faith is not a private matter but can only make sense in community. Dodd identifies the need to liberate spirituality in order for it to act as a spirituality of liberation.

> [T]here are three specific areas from which spirituality needs to be freed if it is to be of service to the struggle for liberation and play its essential ... and full part in that struggle. All three of these areas have to do with false polarities with which so much spirituality seems to be infected. First there is the false polarity between the immanent and transcendent. Second, that between contemplation and radical action; and thirdly, the polarity between individualism and community (Dodd 1999:19)

Such an incarnational spirituality will inform worship, pointing to a future hope which is already partially realised in the present in faith-inspired collegial action. In *Section Three* I will take up this theme of 'inaugurated eschatology' (Beckford 2000:177) as well as the broader aspect of how an urban ecclesiology might engage more effectively with what I identify as 'rooted hybrid spirituality.'

'Building on Faith' (Finneron & Dinham 2002)

Although they can often act as a drain on the energy and imagination of the local congregation, buildings are one of the key assets of the urban church. In environments where public space is limited and often too expensive to hire, a wide range of community groups make use of church buildings. In their study of Church of Scotland congregations, Flint and Kearns calculate that sixty percent of church buildings were used for wider community purposes (Flint & Kearns 2004:18).

> The possession of plant equips every church with a specific means of serving the parish. Parishioners are able to come on their own initiative to use whatever the church provides. This may be a simple service such as giving help in writing a letter or filling in a form. It might be giving food to homeless callers, providing a warm room where tea is available, or holding a jumble sale. It is normal to think of church plant as a drain on resources, but in a UPA all premises are themselves a crucial resource (Bradbury 1989:104).

However, the value of church buildings is much greater than simply the provision of community space. They are also places which communicate something of the story of faith: both the gospel story and also the story of the local congregation (Inge 2003:121). Large numbers of those who do not regularly attend worship

166

retain a strong affinity to their local church building (CHF 2004:3).[26] According

to Hunt, based on research into the spirituality of people who don't go to church,

(Hay 2000):

> [p]eople see the church building as a sacred space that is open to them. ...
> There is something about the actual building that appeals to people,
> particularly men. ... Tom describes it in this way: 'Rock, brick – it's like a tape
> recorder, it echoes things from the past.' ... So the traditional sacred space of
> our culture retains some hold over people, even when they have no desire to
> attend for formal worship (Hunt 2003:164-165).

The importance of sacred space is particularly important in the often brutalising

environment of poverty dominated urban communities, where there is also a

strong traditional emphasis on the physical (Green 1995). The Church, however,

particularly since the Reformation (and to a lesser extent, since the Second

Vatican Council in the case of the Roman Catholic Church) has been anti-

building. Theologians and Church historians have pointed to the nomadic pattern

of early Israel, the decision of God to allow the building of the Temple of

Solomon only under duress, the lack of buildings which characterised the Church

up until the Constantinian period of the early fourth century and the need to focus

on people as the fullest expression of the Church as reasons to dismiss the popular

focus on church sanctuaries. As a result, while buildings have often been regarded

as a necessity, they have rarely been regarded positively (Giles 2004:51; Murray

1998:206-208). Inge, however, has made a clear case that the sacredness of

---

[26] According to an opinion poll carried out on behalf of the Church of England and English Heritage in
October 2003, seventy three percent of people see churches and chapels as quiet places of sanctuaries in
the community and sixty three percent would be concerned if these buildings were no longer to be in use
(CHF 2004:3).

specific places was an important motif running through Scripture and argues that all church buildings have the potential to be shrines[27] where a 'sacramental encounter' can take place (Inge 2003:x). Gorringe similarly accuses much traditional ecclesiology of being anti-incarnation in its negative attitude towards buildings.

> But is the dream of doing without buildings impossibly idealist – the product of a theology too committed to the Word to the exclusion of structures? And does it imply some failure to take account of the implications of the incarnation for embodiment? Newbigin would have agreed with Barth that the misuse of the category of the incarnation 'cried to high heaven.' But is it sound theology to restrict talk of the incarnation solely to the Christ event, and does it not have profound implications for our social and political practice, as Christian socialists have always claimed? (Gorringe 2002:29).

However, Urban Theology is a practical theology and the practical reality is that in many urban communities, there is a surplus of buildings and in many cases, these buildings are in a poor state of repair.[28] Important lessons can be learnt from the Roman Catholic Church in Holland. There the Archdiocese in Rotterdam, after pursuing a policy over of a number of years of closing large and inappropriate church buildings in the city and renting accommodation for church activities, including worship, understood that as a consequence of their strategy, the church had become largely invisible. Recognising the importance of visibility,

---

[27] Inge adopts J. V. Taylor's definition of shrine as 'a permanent and much needed reminder that this is not a human-centred universe: it revolves around God and for God' (Inge 2003:103)

[28] In Scotland the problem is primarily one of a poor state of repair as many of the poorest communities are located in the post war housing schemes where there were far fewer church buildings constructed than in the more prosperous communities where many church buildings date back to the time of the Disruption.

particularly within an institutional church, they subsequently embarked upon a strategy of building small, accessible and manageable churches.[29]

A significant number of urban churches have responded to the need to repair and develop their premises by developing these as broader community facilities, either in partnership with others or with the local church taking the lead (Finneron & Dinham 2002; Church of Scotland 1995, 1998). Such facilities, however, do not necessarily increase the profile of the local church. Indeed, on occasions, there can be the opposite effect with the impression given that the local congregation, no longer sustainable on its own, has ceased to exist with the vacant premises taken over by another organisation.

> Whilst the leadership of the church may feel that the new facilities provide a new and lower threshold that encourages the wider community to encounter the church, for those outside the church the mundane symbols associated with a community building can easily dominate their perceptions. The vast majority of people who are not involved in church life will probably look upon the newly created church centre within the church building as indicative of it retreating from its former capacity. They may perceive the new facilities as being about generating income by a church strapped for cash, or even the church handing over its premises to some other initiative run by the neighbourhood forum or local authority. Rather than communicating relevance and hospitality the community facilities can easily communicate that the church has given up and quit the scene (Morisy 2004:184-185).

Morisy suggests, among other things, the development of community chaplains – 'essentially about being a *priest for the everyday*' (original emphasis, *ibid*:188) – to help the appropriate connections to be made between the broader activities of the new church-based facilities and the ongoing worshipping and faith-inspired

---

[29] I am grateful to John Miller for this insight.

congregation. This is a voluntary role, similar in some respects to that of reader or lay preacher but where the focus is community rather than congregationally based and builds upon her earlier notion of 'community ministry' (Morisy 1997).

Storrar (2004) goes one step further. He advocates that at a time when the 'hybrid membership model'[30] of church, which has been the norm within the Church of Scotland since the mid-nineteenth century, is becoming increasingly unsustainable, economically and organisationally, its reconfiguration could usefully take place around the motif of church as 'spiritual temple.' Like the Temple in Jerusalem, this is a model of religious building 'with its outer and inner courtyards, and its sanctuary and sacred spaces' (Storrar 2004:16) in which the needs of all parts of the body ('the temple of the Holy Spirit' (1st Corinthians 6:19)) are addressed. He illustrates this transition by reference to the practice of Richmond Church, Craigmillar.[31]

> In Richmond Church, the café functions as the 'outermost courtyard' of the spiritual temple. Occasionally Jessie [the church project worker] has had to throw people out for attempted drug dealing. But those who work and spend time in the café often consider themselves as fully part of the church as the active formal members. The invitation and hope is that such people will draw closer to the worship at the heart of its life. The same story could be repeated about the other occasional or regular participants in the life of this church who come into its other 'courtyards,' sometimes the 'outer sanctuary,' in the Memorial Chapel, but rarely the inner sanctuary where the congregation

---

[30] Storrar identifies three elements to the hybrid membership church: the parish model, based on the earlier identification of the local church with the entire parish population; the leisure model, in which the church attracts members on the basis of the leisure and social facilities and activities it provides; and the activist outreach model where members are focused around the necessity to evangelise those out with the congregation.

[31] Richmond Craigmillar Church is on the *Priority Areas Supplementary List* (April 2004). Although its parish does not comprise one of the very economically poorest communities in Scotland (largely as a result of demolition to the worst housing in recent years) the local church without doubt caters for many of the most vulnerable members of the wider Craigmillar community.

worship each Sunday. In Richmond Church we are witnessing a historic paradigm shift, from understanding the congregation as an activist membership body in time, *a temporal body*, to understanding the Reformed congregation as a spiritual temple in space, *a spatial body* (original emphasis, Storrar 2004:17).

This fresh motif of church life is not necessarily building-dependent, but it does serve to give an operating paradigm to those within the urban church who are attempting to transition church buildings from a congregational to a wider community space whilst seeking to retain and develop their ongoing value as sacred space.

Section 3: Pentecostal Spirituality: *'Fire from Heaven'* (Cox 2001)

Since its somewhat inauspicious beginnings in black, downtown Los Angeles at the beginning of the twentieth century – its leader William James Seymour was refused access to lectures on the developing Holiness Movement on account of his colour[32] and subsequently struggled to find an appropriate meeting place before finally being given access to a former African Methodist Episcopal Church in Azusa Street, which had most recently been used as a stable – the Pentecostal movement has had a dramatic impact not simply on global religion but also upon urban life more generally. Pentecostalism is arguably the first religious movement to engage effectively with the urban environment and with the potential of modern communication systems in the sharing of its message (Comblin 1998:146). Leading urbanologist Davis writes:

---

[32] 'Seymour was forced to listen to lectures given by Charles Fox Parham, a lecturer at a Holiness School in Houston, through an open window. On rainy days he was permitted to sit inside the building, but in the hallway outside the classroom, with the door left ajar' (Cox 2001:49).

[F]or the moment at least, Marx has yielded the historical stage to Mohammed [the rise of Islam] and the Holy Ghost [Pentecostalism]. If God died in the cities of the industrial revolution, he has risen again in the post-industrial cities of the developing world. ...

Since 1970, and largely because of its appeal to slum women and its reputation for being colour-blind, it has been growing into what is arguably the largest self-organised movement of urban poor people on the planet (M. Davis 2004:30 & 32).

Given its preponderance within the poorest urban communities in the Third World, it is difficult to calculate with any preciseness, the numerical strength of Pentecostalism. Cox (2001:xv) estimates that there may be in the region of four hundred and ten million members worldwide.[33] In Sao Paulo (Brazil), between 1990 and 1992, ninety one percent of the seven hundred and ten new churches established were Pentecostal while only one was Roman Catholic (Linden 1997:38) and in Brazil more generally, Miller estimates that Pentecostal or charismatic congregations may comprise as much as eighty percent of the regular Sunday worshipping community (M. Miller 2000:2). While this final figure may well be exaggerated, it is beyond dispute that in terms of clergy, Pentecostal pastors in Latin America already outnumber Roman Catholic priests (Jenkins 2002:213) and, perhaps even more significantly, they are drawn overwhelmingly from the same social class as their wider congregation (Freston 1998:352). All of this has led a number of commentators to point out, somewhat caustically, if also with an element of truth: 'the Catholic Church has chosen the poor [through Liberation Theology], but the poor chose the Pentecostals' (Jenkins 2002:156).

---

[33] 'Although recent claims of "over 533 million Pentecostal/charismatics in the world in 2002" are probably hyperbole, there may well be half that number' (Davis 2004:32).

Therefore, any theology (and ecclesiology) which aims to take the context and experience of urban poverty seriously cannot ignore the growing importance of Pentecostalism. According to Shaull:

> Especially for those of us, Catholic or Protestant, who in recent decades have experienced a conversion to the poor, and stand in solidarity with them in their struggle, it comes as quite a shock to realize that we may now be quite far removed from their struggle for life and may be in no position to help them find the spiritual resources for which they are searching. ...
> Whatever its limitations, the Pentecostal message and experience had radically transformed their [those living in poverty] understanding and experience of their world and enabled them to put together their broken lives and thus find new life and energy (Shaull & Cesar 2000:118 & 119).

Although the growth of Pentecostalism has been less pronounced in Europe than in other parts of the world (Davie 2002:76), some growth has nonetheless taken place, particularly in those parts of the continent where the historic churches are weakest (*ibid*). Davey also points to the dramatic increase of Pentecostal and black-led churches in London as illustrative of the growing impact of migration to Europe from the Third World (Davey 2004:9), a phenomenon which is likely to continue to influence the urban context, and consequently the nature of urban faith, for the foreseeable future. In addition, Cox correctly identifies Pentecostalism less as a denomination (or even religion) and more as a mood[34] which has effectively engaged with much of the contemporary 'hybrid culture' (Bedford 1999:999).

> I began to understand the continuing appeal of its message only when I realized that what we call 'pentecostalism' is not a church or even a single religion at all, but a *mood*. It represents what might be called 'a millennial

---

[34] Cox equates the mood of Pentecostalism to that of jazz, with which it shares many historical and cultural roots.

sensibility,' a feeling in the pit of the cultural gut that a very big change is underway. ... It is not just pentecostals today who believe that God can heal bodies as well as save souls, or that the Spirit can speak through ordinary people, or that hierarchies are to be distrusted, or that dreams and visions reveal truth. The people who call themselves 'pentecostals' are only the visible crest of a very large wave. They know how to ride it. But they did not create it, and it is much bigger than they are (original emphasis, Cox 2001:116-117).

In much the same way as Liberation Theology was previously inappropriately dismissed as being 'Made in Germany' (Johnstone 1990:11), Pentecostalism is often falsely accused of being narrowly fundamentalist and heavily dependent upon the religious right in North America (Anderson 2002:1; Jenkins 2002:157). While the United States continues to exercise some influence, the strands of Pentecostalism which are currently growing most rapidly are in the potentially much more radical shanty towns of the Third World (Shaull & Cesar 2000:127) and in those elements[35] which draw their roots from indigenous culture and spirituality (Berryman 1996:47). From the outset, indeed, Seymour and others regarded interracial worship as a more powerful sign of the presence of the Spirit than the power to speak in tongues, even when that brought them into conflict with their white, more theologically and politically conservative contemporaries (Cox 2001:63). More recently, while many white North American Pentecostals were supportive of the Contra regime in Nicaragua, twelve Pentecostal pastors were among those martyred in neighbouring Guatemala (*ibid*:311). Although its future is far from certain (*ibid*:309), in important respects, many elements of Pentecostalism are proving to be far more radical than traditionally envisaged

---

[35] Often referred to as neo-Pentecostalism (Bedford 1999:998).

(Jenkins 2002:158). Comblin (1998) is among a series of commentators (Berryman 1996; Cox 2001) who emphasise the need for Liberation Theology and Pentecostalism to engage more effectively with one another on the basis that, given their common commitment to those struggling against poverty, they 'cannot continue to live in mutual ignorance' (Comblin 1994:217).[36]

> I believe that Pentecostalism and the global upsurge of spirituality it represents may in the long run have a considerably more radical, even revolutionary impact, than liberation theology can. At its best, Pentecostalism attacks not only the demonic political and economic systems that keeps God's children in cruel bondage, but the core of distorted values and misshapen worldviews that sustains these oppressive structures (Cox 1993:806).

While it is inappropriate, and dangerous, to treat Pentecostalism as a single, homogenous phenomenon (Fulkerson 1994:242; Davie 2002:73),[37] nonetheless, there are a number of prevailing characteristics which are worthy of serious consideration in any attempt to develop an informed urban ecclesiology.

'The importance of the body and of an embodied theology' (Bedford 1999:998)

Cox has identified the ability of Pentecostalism to engage with the global quest for spirituality and identity, particularly in the constantly changing urban culture, as foundational to its success.

> It has succeeded because it has spoken to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony into the core of human

---

[36] While in Brazil in 1997, I was struck on visiting a number of the base communities how Pentecostal the worship was in tone. On one occasion, the gathering was partly led by the local Pentecostal pastor. The leading liberation Biblical scholar, Pablo Richard, claims that the distinction between the communities and Pentecostal congregations is diminishing rapidly (Cox 2001:319).

[37] There is not only wide diversity between the different branches of Pentecostalism but even within the various denominations themselves (Shaull & Cesar 2000:118)

religiousness, into what might be called 'primal spirituality,' that largely unprocessed nucleus of the psyche in which the unending struggle for a sense of purpose and significance goes on (Cox 2001:81)

His schema is helpful, although I prefer to think of what he is describing as a 'rooted hybrid spirituality'. It is 'rooted' in that it breaks down the dualist tendency between the mystical and the material as it engages with the quest for sustainable meaning within the concrete context of the person (Shaull & Cesar 2000:143). It is 'hybrid' in that it is an effective assimilation of the pre-modern, modern and post-modern (Cox 2001:110). Cox identifies three distinct elements to his spirituality, relating to particular phenomena associated with Pentecostalism: ecstatic speech (*glossolalia*); piety (mystical experience and divine healing); and hope (millenarianism) (*ibid*:83).

The practice of ecstatic utterance (of which speaking in tongues is a classic example) is not unique to Pentecostalism, or indeed to Christianity but is a characteristic of a number of faiths, including Hinduism and Buddhism. The upturn in its popularity can be associated with a sense of an 'ecstasy deficit' (*ibid*:86) within much of contemporary religion, whereby the traditional focus on truth as doctrine does not resonate with post-modern experiential learning. Pentecostalism succeeds here where much of Liberation Theology failed, particularly amongst those in most abject poverty, in that it engages in a language which is based on the supernatural as opposed to the rational, and which has an immediate impact rather than encouraging a long-term process of conscientization.

176

God is experienced intimately and intensely as broken lives are reorganized, as those considered 'worthless' and 'insignificant' discover their worth before God, and as those who thought that they could do nothing to change their situation or the world are empowered to act. This reality is communicated not by a rational word or a doctrinal exposition, but by a ritual of praise and worship. In the place of speech that was unintelligible and moralistic is speech with a supernatural character, made accessible through a sacred text, which generates emotion (Shaull & Cesar 2000:146)

The emphasis, exemplified by the speaking in tongues but by no means limited to it, that the message of God is articulated through his supernatural activity in people's lives, also gives Pentecostal worship a potentially much greater degree of egalitarianism than exists within other Reformed and Catholic traditions. In Pentecostalism, the ability to contribute to, and to lead worship, is not dependent upon education but experience of the presence of God (Fulkerson 1994:253).

The recovery of an interest in healing ministry – indicative of the second of Cox's three elements – has occurred in many parts of the wider Church over the last two to three decades in particular. Pentecostals, therefore, are by no means alone in their belief that God can intervene directly in history to effect physical healing. The numbers visiting the Catholic shrine in Lourdes, for example, grew by one an a half million in the decade between 1983 and 1993. When asked how he might explain this phenomenon, Father de Roton, a Catholic priest serving the church associated with the shrine, commented: 'We have no sure answers. … Perhaps people find religious life too monotonous and want something more intense, more festive, more emotional. Perhaps the form our religion has taken today does not respond to people's needs' (Cox 2001:105). A focus on physical, as well as

emotional and spiritual healing is particularly pertinent to those forced to live in poverty, where susceptibility to ill health is greater and the opportunities for affording effective health care reduced (Shaull & Cesar 2000:139-140).

If Pentecostalism responds to the quest for spiritual wholeness through its emphasis upon divine healing, it also effectively assimilates aspects of pre-modern popular mysticism including, in Brazil, *umbanda* (the indigenous Afro-Brazilian spirituality) and elements of popular Roman Catholicism (Cox 2001:16) whilst using the media of post-modern culture – TV and the internet – to effectively communicate its hybrid message (Davila 2002:96).

> It is significant that the word *liberacion* as now used in many circles means 'exorcism' rather than the overcoming of political and economic oppression. It appears that such a wider liberation appears so remote to many people as to be meaningless, whereas the struggle against concrete evil spirits is extremely familiar to many people with roots in traditional Latin American (including Latin Afro-American) religiosity (Bedford 1998:998).

Hope, the third element in Cox's Pentecostal spirituality – or more accurately, the conviction that the future world is already present (realised or inaugurated eschatology) is a critical response to the requirement to maintain hope, particularly in the midst of the inhuman suffering which characterises much of urban living for the very poorest (Davis 2004:34). Theologians of liberation have identified the need to develop and maintain utopian dreams,[38] particularly following the failure of the anticipated political processes of liberation to materialise (Schreiter 1998:113). Pentecostalism, however, appears to have

---

[38] Alves – widely regarded as one of the first Latin America theologians to use the term 'Theology of Liberation' – submitted his doctoral thesis under the title 'Towards a Theology of Liberation.' At the time of publication, this was subsequently changed to 'Towards a Theology of Human Hope' (Alves 1969).

enabled people to partially experience that anticipated new world in the present (Beckford 2000:177).

> Pentecostals, like many other Christians, have always talked about the Great Day that is coming. Their particular spin on the subject is that it has already begun to arrive. What the thirsty seekers who crowded into the mission on Azusa Street found was not just a new and radically egalitarian spirituality. They also found a fellowship that foreshadowed the new heaven and new earth in which the insults and indignities of this present wicked world would be abolished or maybe even reversed. At Azusa Street literally any person who came in could stand and prophesy. There were no official mediators, licensed by an ecclesiastical hierarchy or set apart by apostolic ordination. Instead, God's Spirit was present in a direct, intense, and undeniable way (Cox 2001:113).

Again, Pentecostalism has tapped in to a broader stream of millenarianism, which is characteristic of a great deal of post-modern urban culture, and it is enabling people to develop more positive life patterns which enable dignity and greater levels of self-worth, thereby countering some of the worst excesses of global capitalism (Gooren 2002:40).

Whether or not Europe continues to be relatively unaffected by the Pentecostal revival which is sweeping other parts of the world, insights into how that revival has engaged effectively with the broader rooted hybrid spirituality, which is also evident in post-modern Europe, remains pertinent to the effective development of an appropriate urban ecclesiology.

A Black Theology of Liberation (Cone 1990)

At a political level, Pentecostalism is frequently most closely associated with the politics of the right in North America but such political conservatism is by no

means automatic (Ramsey 1998:604). Indeed Cone, the father of the Black Theology of Liberation (1977, 1990), is a Pentecostal. More recently Villafane (1994) and, in a British context, Beckford (2000, 2004), have made significant contributions towards a Pentecostal political theology. Beckford, while in agreement with Cox's formulation of Pentecostal spirituality, is critical of his failure to recognise the full political extent of the initial outpouring of the Spirit in Azusa Street.[39]

> From the perspective of emancipation-fulfilment, I want to propose that while Cox's analysis provides an important conceptualisation of Pentecostalism as a 'recovery' movement, like many other Pentecostal scholars he fails to analyse the socio-political dimensions of Black faith that fuelled Azusa Street. He does not explore how slavery and oppression gave birth to Black faith in America, enabling a radical recomposition of African elements in Black Christianity. Despite providing an important analysis of the movement, Cox fails to fully contextualise political qualities of the Black Christian tradition of passive and active resistance (Beckford 2000:171).

In response to the gangland murder of Charlene Ellis and Latisha Shakespeare in January 2003[40] – which he considers illustrative of systemic failure in British society – Beckford advocates a model of 'prophetic action' (Beckford 2004:115). This model parallels in a number of significant ways the pattern of liberation methodology. It comprises: faith-inspired direct action (interventionist); analysis of the causes (holistic); commitment to all by making a primary commitment to those who are most marginalised (liberating); willingness to live with the tension of having to operate in different ways at the same time (di-unital); and inspired and regenerated by the Spirit of God (spiritual). It is in this final aspect that

---

[39] For an account of the early Pentecostal Church in Azusa Street, see pp.169.

[40] Charlene Ellis and Latisha Shakespeare were caught in gunfire between two rival gangs.

Beckford's methodology differs most markedly from that of other liberation theologians. He emphasises not only that the presence of the Spirit of God 'is found where men and women are working to address the causes and consequences of systemic failure in a manner that restores dignity, accountability and justice' (*ibid*:120) but also its presence as 'a source of regenerative power' (*ibid*).

> The Spirit is concerned with concrete change; that is, making war against the powers of non-being and evil, breaking down strongholds and ushering in a new reality. The Spirit ensures that 'greater works' (John 14:12) will be accomplished than in the time of Jesus. The Spirit of God is capable of doing what cannot naturally be achieved by human might because some of the battles we face are not carnal or physical but spiritual (2 Corinthian 10:4). To harness the power of the Spirit of God is fundamental to prophetic action for without the Spirit 'it is nothing' (*ibid*:120-121).

This emphasis on the direct activity of God in the struggle for liberation, which is often understood as a struggle against incarnated and supernatural forces of evil, may serve to make political theology more accessible for those who perceive it as overly political, secular and out with the popular religious experience of those struggling against poverty. The corresponding danger is that the historical distinction between the Scriptural context and the current one is reduced to a spiritual one, thereby removing any hermeneutical suspicion of an uncritical adaptation of Scripture to justify current practice.

With its emphasis upon the primacy of individual transformation, and on the family as the primary unit of community,[41] Pentecostalism offers the potential for

---

[41] For decades, Pentecostalism in Latin America was persecuted, leaving the churches there little choice other than to focus upon the family as its basic operational unit.

181

the sort of micro struggle for liberation that is more appropriate during a phase where there is little immediate likelihood of societal transformation. Additionally, it has demonstrated an ability to operate within market capitalism, and to play a part in self and community improvement (Gooren 2002:40).

Within Pentecostalism the danger of the movement dissolving into a politically conservative force is a present and constant one. Cox draws a distinction between the fundamentalist and experiential wings of the movement (Cox 2001). In white middle class America, there are clear indications that the movement has substantially degenerated into theological and political fundamentalism. However, in Black America, as well as within the huge urban shantytowns of the Third World, there is also evidence that the movement retains something of the fervour of the millenarian spirit of Azusa Street.

> Walter Hollenweger [one of the experts on the Pentecostal movement] declares that for William Seymour, 'Pentecost meant more than speaking in tongues. It meant to love in the face of hate, to overcome the hatred of a whole nation by demonstrating that Pentecost is something very different from the success-orientated American way of life.' It is thus not surprising that the first Pentecostal community cut across class and racial lines, something which, in that time and place, was most revolutionary. As the growth of Pentecostalism continues especially in Africa and Latin America, among people whose lives are rooted in cultures that do not separate the body and the spirit, as we do in the West, or the individual and social well-being, many of these movements are becoming increasingly involved in diverse struggles for societal transformation (Shaull & Cesar 2000:211).

'Music Brought Me to Jesus' (Cox 2001:139)

Any attempt to understand the Pentecostal movement (and its relevance in the formation of an appropriate urban theology/ecclesiology) must recognise the importance of women and song in its development.

The role of women in Pentecostal churches is a complex and ambiguous one. The literalist understanding of Scripture which is characteristic of the movement has frequently prevented women from exercising positions of governance within the congregation and to an uncritical acceptance of a hierarchical and patriarchal structure of church authority and family life. There are important exceptions to this, however, such as the Foursquare Gospel Church, where over a third of its pastors are women, and a number are the senior pastor where the role is shared with a man (Berryman 1996:170). Even where the role of women ministers is prohibited, however, there is strong evidence that women continue to play the leading role within the movement.

> When I began to visit pentecostal churches in Latin America, Asia, Europe and the United States, I immediately noticed that – despite Paul's strictures – women almost always seemed to play some leading role. It was obvious that they participate fully, even in churches where the pastor is a man. They sing and testify, prophesy and heal, counsel and teach. In fact, it often appeared that the part men play in some pentecostal churches is more shadow than substance. It also became evident to me that women, far more than men, have been the principal bearers of the pentecostal gospel to the four corners of the earth (Cox 2001:125).

Fulkerson explains this apparent contradiction by pointing to the fact that there are two competing dynamics operating within the Pentecostal treatment of Scripture. In the second, the Bible is understood as the inspired Word of God and

183

therefore takes seriously the pre-critical restrictions which it apparently places upon the role of women in church and family life. At the same time, however, the primary dynamic is the intervention of the Spirit of God directly into the lives of people in a supernatural way, resulting in a manifestation of the Spirit including speaking in tongues and anointing to preach. If a woman experiences this primary manifestation, then her right to exercise a leadership role supersedes any other restriction (Fulkerson 1994). She also points to the understanding, prevalent amongst some during the early years of the movement, and recorded in a 1908 edition of *The Apostolic Faith*, that new gender relationships had been inaugurated at Pentecost.

> Before Pentecost, the women could only go into the 'court of women' and not into the inner court. The anointing oil was never poured out on a woman's head but only on the heads of kings, prophets and priests. But when our Lord poured out Pentecost, he brought all those faithful women with the other disciples into the upper room, and God baptised them all in the same room and made no different. All the women received the anointed oil of the Holy Ghost and were able to preach the same as men. ... It is the same Holy Spirit in the woman as in the man (*ibid*:253-254).

Real problems of the massive under-representation of women in leadership positions of many Pentecostal churches remain (Beckford 2000:178) and cannot be ignored by any attempt to construct an ecclesiology which chooses to take seriously the injustices of female poverty and exclusion. Nonetheless, there is within the movement the opportunity for women to challenge patterns of male domination through a demonstration that these patterns have been overturned by evidence of the presence of the Spirit in a woman's life and ministry.

At a societal level, Davie points to how Pentecostalism has had an impact on family life, leading to changed roles for both men and women.

> Most notably, the men withdraw from the street and assume, alongside their wives, responsibility in both the church and the home (in other words, in the private realm). With the new roles in place, the relative asceticism of Pentecostal teaching leads to modest upward mobility (or, at the very least, a more secure economic existence) and, crucially, to education for the children – itself a decisive factor in inter-generational mobility. The household becomes an effective corporate group. The fact that this analysis does not meet the criteria of Western feminists in terms of 'liberation' is immaterial. It works in practice, an undeniable attraction for the women concerned (Davie 2002:69).

If the high level of participation by women is one of the characteristics of Pentecostal worship, the communication of the movement's theology through song and testimony is another important aspect. This oral, or narrative, tradition – with its strong emphasis on story and experience – much more immediately engages with the hard urban context of its membership than the frequently more process-orientated model of Liberation Theology. Atherton (2003:113), drawing on the work of Young (2000) and Sandercock (1998), points to the fact that a principal reason why people in poverty remain marginalised is that planners and decision-makers frequently dismiss the 'grounded, experiential, intuitive contextual knowledges which are more often manifested in stories, songs, visual images and speech than in typical planning sources' (*ibid*:205). In this respect Pentecostalism offers the potential of taking much more seriously the wisdom and experience of people struggling against poverty.

185

The use of story and song also enables the movement to be much more effectively enculturated into a variety of different contexts whilst still retaining its identity as Pentecostal.

> Pentecostalism has the ... uncanny ability to be at home anywhere. It absorbs spirit possession in the Caribbean, ancestor veneration in Africa, folk healing in Brazil, and Shamanism in Korea. It is now spreading in the republics of the former Soviet Union and in China, eastern Europe, and Sicily. But everywhere it remains recognizable as pentecostalism. In Latin America today it is growing very rapidly among indigenous Indian peoples who find that they can now worship in Tzeltal and Queche and retain many of their pre-Columbian healing practices under new auspices. Indeed pentecostalism's phenomenal power to embrace and transform almost anything it meets in the cultures to which it travels is one of the qualities which gives it such remarkable energy and creativity (Cox 2001:146-147).

Nowhere is this ability to adapt to the culture more obvious that in its use of popular music with no style of music 'deemed irredeemably profane by pentecostals' (*ibid*:143).

Pentecostal song can, and frequently does, display a domesticated and privatised theology, which focuses primarily on the individual's relationship with God rather than upon issues within the wider context of human suffering and oppression. According to Beckford, writing about much of the Black Pentecostal movement in Britain:

> Sunday after Sunday Black Christians sing songs about 'lilies and valleys' and 'deer panting after water.' There is little if any awareness of the political and theological implications of singing about places and spaces that have little real-life similarities or correspondence with the social spaces and places that many Black and non-Black urban people occupy. ... Another way of looking at this issue is to ask what kind of theology would be communicated if the images that are validated in song emerged from Black life settings (Beckford 1998:127).

186

At the same time, in line with the ambiguity which I have pointed to throughout this section, there is also within the musical tradition of Pentecostalism a strong emphasis on 'resisting oppression through exuberant worship' (Cox 2001:145). Only the course of the next number of years will tell which direction Pentecostalism will move in or, more accurately, what will become the majority strand within the movement. What seems beyond doubt is that it will continue to flourish in the particular circumstances of the post-industrial and post-modern city and, as such, its ability to resonate with that culture is important in the attempt to identify a practical urban ecclesiology.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have brought together some of the key elements which usefully comprise an appropriate urban ecclesiology among those struggling against urban poverty in Scotland today. I have done this against a recognised backcloth that the Urban Church is in crisis and, based on a continuation of current trends, will substantially disappear over the next generation. As well as examining some of the current key elements of Urban Theology in Britain (the need to move beyond project culture, the development of an authentic urban spirituality and a greater understanding of church buildings in Urban Theology), I have drawn upon broader, global insights from Liberation Theology (with its preferential option for the poor, its methodology and its critique of capitalist-focused ecclesiology) and from Pentecostalism (responding to contemporary urban context with what I have

identified as a 'rooted hybrid spirituality,' which effectively engages with the pre-modern, modern and post-modern culture). I have also traced, in a limited fashion, the potential within Pentecostalism for a more rooted and engaged Political Theology among those living in urban poverty, although I have consistently pointed out that the movement could equally prove to be a force for oppression rather than liberation.

In the succeeding chapters I continue to sharpen the focus of this piece of research, looking, in the first instance, at Glasgow (*Chapter Six*) and then at a series of individual congregations in and around the city (*Chapter Seven*) in my attempts to track a practical urban ecclesiology for my context.

Chapter 6

Glasgow: The City, the Poor & the Church

Introduction

In our exploration for an ecclesiology of the urban poor in Scotland, the focus of our enquiry now shifts, from the general to the particular, and specifically to a study of Glasgow, Scotland's largest city. In doing so, I will draw upon insights from previous chapters about: the nature of the modern or post modern city (*Chapter Three*); the causes and character of poverty in the United Kingdom today (*Chapter Four*); and the various theological and ecclesiological movements which have sought to consider the role of the church among those in poverty and within the city (*Chapter Five*).

The chapter is split into two main sections. *Section One* looks at Glasgow's governance,[1] and in particular, at the efforts since the early 1980s to reinvent the city 'widely regarded as *the* model of urban renewal in Britain, having successfully navigated the path from a declining industrial to a reinvigorated post-industrial city' (original emphasis, Mooney & Danson 1997:74). In this section I will draw upon Harvey's analysis of urban entrepreneurialism (D. Harvey 1989). I am particularly concerned with the extent to which the city's urban policy, of which 'civic boosterism' (Boyle 1997) has been a central element, has benefited the city's poorest residents.

---

[1] It is important here to draw a distinction between government and governance (D. Harvey 1989:6). By government I mean those who have been democratically elected (at local, national and international levels) to govern the city. Governance is a broader concept and incorporates all those, elected or otherwise, including critically the private sector, whose decisions impact on the way that the city is governed.

191

Section Two considers the position and role of the Church of Scotland in the city's poorest communities, drawing upon a range of sources from national and local levels. Although I will give some consideration to the historical quest for urban models of church in Glasgow, I will draw primarily upon the contemporary context within the city's poorest communities. I will consider both some of the problems and also the thinking of a small number of people who have reflected upon their experiences of church life from within that context. It is my hypothesis that if an appropriate, contextual ecclesiology of the urban poor in Scotland is to be generated, important insights can be gleaned from those who have spent a major part of their lives struggling, practically and theologically, with what it means to be the church in these areas.

Section One: 'The City that Refused to Die' (Keating 1988)

'Glasghu — dear green place'

Although Glasgow's roots can be traced back to before the sixth century,[2] when St Kentigern settled there after his exile from Culross, the city only really rose to prominence during the Industrial Revolution, at which time its mercantile and industrial (in particular ship-building) might earned it the reputation of the 'Second City of the Empire.' Between 1801 and 1911 the population of Glasgow increased tenfold from 77,000 to over three quarters of a million (McCrone 1991:919) The reasons for the city's rapid growth were complex and its

---

[2] Stone Age canoes have been excavated from along the banks of the River Clyde and Celtic druids lived in the area during the first century AD.

development by no means certain. Among the reasons were: the city's geographical location (on a river facing the developing markets of North America and the Caribbean and within close proximity to coal and iron ore mines); its advanced financial and educational institutions; the strong work ethic amongst its population imbued by the Protestant Reformation; and the entrepreneurial dynamism of a relatively small number of individuals (including James Watt, Henry Bell and David Napier) (Hall 1998). According to Pacione:

> At the beginning of the twentieth century Glasgow was one of the leading industrial centres of the world. With its key base in the heavy industries of coal, iron and steel, engineering and shipbuilding the city occupied a commanding position in the national and international economic system. In the peak year of 1913 Clydeside yards launched 756, 973 tons of shipping. This represented one third of Britain's tonnage, 18 percent of world output, and more than the entire production of Germany or the USA (Pacione 1995:130).

The city's dependency upon a relatively narrow heavy industrial base, which had contributed to its meteoric development, also helped to create the conditions for its decline (Gomez 1998:107; McCarthy & Pollock 1997:140). The collapse of the city's manufacturing base (McCarthy 1999:560) along with the completely inadequate development of the peripheral housing schemes to address the chronic housing problems of the post-war period, meant that by the 1971 National Census 'Glasgow and the Clydeside conurbation had the most severe micro-level deprivation in Great Britain, some 95 percent of the worst one percent of areas in Britain which suffered from multiple deprivation' (OECD 2002:73).

In recent decades the city's population has continued to haemorrhage from a high of over one million in 1931 to 611,440 in 1999 (GCC 2001) and although the rate

of decline is expected to reduce markedly over the next decade, it is still anticipated to have dropped to 598,211 by 2006 (OECD 2002:34). Levels of poverty within the city have remained stubbornly high. According to the 2003 *Scottish Indices of Deprivation*, sixteen of the poorest twenty wards in Scotland are in Glasgow (SDRC 2003:60), the city accounts for forty two percent of '*all* premature deaths in the *whole* of Britain' (original emphasis, Mooney & Johnstone 2000:174) and over 50,000 new jobs will require to be created for Glaswegians[3] if the city's employment rate is to be brought into line with the Scottish average (SE 2003:47).

Although the City Fathers must bear some of the responsibility for the enormous problems facing the city, particularly in relation to housing (Robertson 1998:54), central government policy has exacerbated the crisis (OECD 2002:268). In contrast to the increasing tendency in both the United States of America and the rest of the European Union, national government (at United Kingdom and Scottish levels) has continued to exercise considerable authority over urban policy (Bailey *et al* 1999:84). The partial implementation[4] of the Scottish Office inspired *Clyde Valley Regional Plan* (1946) as opposed to the City's own plan (*Bruce Report*, 1947) led to the establishment of new towns in Livingston,

---

[3] In 2001 only forty five percent of the city's workforce actually lived in the city. This is a substantial decrease from 1981 when the figure was sixty three percent (OECD 2002:69). Although there are now efforts to address this decline, it does mean that the majority of any jobs which have been created in the city over the past twenty years (primarily in the service sector) have not been taken by Glasgow residents. At the same time, the collapse of the manufacturing sector in the city over the same period has had a greater proportional impact on the city than on its wider metropolitan community.

[4] Plans for a fourth new town – in Stonehouse – were abandoned and the proposed resources reallocated to the development of *Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal* (GEAR), which was launched in 1976.

Cumbernauld and East Kilbride, and the policy of city depopulation (Konvitz 1992:1300; Fyfe 1996:394). Both plans were radically modernist is design and led to wide-scale demolition within the city's Victorian inner core and to the transportation of the city's working class population either to the new towns, built to high standards and reasonably equipped to respond to the changing economic context (Bailey *et al* 1999:19) or to the considerably less well integrated housing schemes built on the outskirts of the city (but critically, as far as the City Fathers were concerned, still within the city boundaries).

> In the twenty-nine areas designated CDAs [comprehensive development areas], covering one twelfth of the total city area, 97,000 homes were identified for clearance and to be replaced by combinations of high-rise and low-rise blocks at lower residential densities. Between 1961 and 1968 75% of all housing completions in Glasgow were of flats in high-rise blocks, some over thirty storeys; the most concentrated multistorey building drive experienced by any British city (Fyfe 1996:395).

The city has also suffered from a historical underbounding. 'Glasgow is essentially a poor city surrounded by mostly prosperous suburbs' (Kantor 2000:800). This situation was further exacerbated in 1996, with the reintroduction of single-tier local government and the establishment of a number of small local authorities, comprising the city's wealthy outer ring. As a result of this reorganisation of local government the city lost £46 million from its annual budget, aimed primarily at improving quality of services for the city's poorest residents (OECD 2002:188). In the subsequent three years Council Tax was raised by sixty percent and 4,000 jobs were cut (Bailey *et al* 1999:76). The impact of these measures was felt most acutely by the poorest (MacLeod 2002:615).

The city is in the anomalous position of providing a wide range of metropolitan services from an exceedingly low tax base. Immediately after local government reorganisation there were only 180,000 council taxpayers in a population of 623,000 (Kantor 2000:801). The regular requests for additional funding by the council and its partners 'to take account both of the concentration of social exclusion within the city and the metropolitan (and national) role of the city' (Glasgow Alliance 2001:11; see also GCC 2002:paragraph 5.3) have been substantially ignored.[5] In its 2003 *Cities Review*, the Scottish Executive has made it clear that there will be no changes in the city's boundaries in the foreseeable future (SE 2003:27). While it acknowledges that 'the deeply rooted social problems in Glasgow represent both the biggest challenge to building a better Scotland, and the biggest opportunity' (*ibid*:49) it has allocated thirty eight percent of the Social Inclusion Partnership budget to the city, while acknowledging that, according to the 1998 index, fifty eight percent of the country's most deprived postcode sectors are in the city (*ibid*:13 & 51). Although the regeneration budgets available to the city have increased in the latest round of spending under community planning, the city remains under-resourced.

---

[5] At a meeting in June 2001 with Ian Gray (then Social Justice Minister in the Scottish Executive) to discuss the outcomes of the *Scottish Ecumenical Assembly*, I was astonished that he indicated that the Scottish Executive felt that Glasgow was already receiving more than its fair share of the national budget.

Historically the city has not received an adequate proportion of national funding intended to tackle poverty and social exclusion (Turok & Hopkins 1998:2032).[6] In an attempt to increase its revenue base the City Council has, in recent years, embarked upon a policy of developing private sector housing in an effort to retain (or attract) middle and upper income families to the city (GCC 2001:part 1, paragraph 4.5). The proposed development of these 'New Neighbourhoods,' often displacing residents of some of the poorest regions of the city (Drumchapel, Garthamlock, Possil and Ruchill) has aroused considerable local hostility and can be seen as part of the development of mixed tenure areas (ibid:part 1, paragraph 4.17).

> The fear among many in Ruchill and Possilpark is that a government that is relentlessly courting 'middle Britain' is attempting to hide the embarrassing remnants of poverty in Britain by breaking up poor communities and further marginalising poor people. Despite the rhetoric of social inclusion, ... instead of directing resources towards the poorest people and renewing existing poor communities, the plans for our area involve creating entirely new neighbourhoods which will attract better-off people (Forrest 2000:7)

In addition to the problems caused by underbounding and the disproportionately low levels of public expenditure on the city's poorest communities, the city has suffered from a regional urban policy, which has frequently benefited the proportionately wealthier metropolitan area at the expense of the city. With the exception of its involvement in *Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal* (GEAR) in the mid 1970s – 'the first area renewal scheme in Britain to attempt to bring a co-

---

[6] Although the Executive's financial support for Glasgow's Housing Stock Transfer is a significant financial investment, it is clear that the Executive dictated that terms of the stock transfer. It is, consequently, a further illustration of how national government dominates urban policy.

ordinated approach to bear on economic and social development' (McCrone 1991:926) – the Scottish Development Agency (SDA) and its successor, the Scottish Enterprise Network (SEN), have consistently supported policies aimed at regional economic growth rather than focusing upon areas of greatest need (Pacione 1995:229; Robertson 1998:55).[7] According to Bailey *et al*, Scottish Enterprise Glasgow currently receives proportionately twenty five percent less than the other three *Local Enterprise Companies* (LECs) covering the Greater Glasgow area (Bailey *et al* 1999:77). When this is combined with the already existing benefits that those other areas have over Glasgow, in terms of infrastructure and general economic buoyancy, the city is placed at a serious disadvantage, resulting in fewer jobs being created by inward investment in Glasgow than in the surrounding areas (Lever 1991:991).

Within the city itself, the picture is also uneven and there is a preference towards investment in communities where there is already relatively high economic potential. In 1996-1997 *Glasgow Development Agency* (GDA) invested less than £9 million of its total £62 million budget in the city's eight regeneration areas (Kantor 2000:808) and, despite pressure from the Scottish Executive to focus funding more rigorously on Social Inclusion Partnerships the figure had only risen to £11 million by 2000-2001 (OECD 2002:109).

> A regional agency ultimately measures itself against its performance vis-à-vis other regions, not its success in aiding parts of the region, such as Glasgow. The need to achieve regional growth regardless of where it takes place

---

[7] As such the SDA/SEN should be understood as part of the shift in urban policy from the mid 1970s away from redistribution of wealth and towards wealth generation.

becomes a powerful constraint on policy makers. Even if regional officials are successful in revitalising particular urban black spots, if this happens without achieving significant improvements in overall economic performance, the agency risks the appearance of failure. Consequently, there were powerful economic inducements ... to promote regional economic growth wherever they could, rather than dealing with how this growth might be distributed. As one SE [Scottish Enterprise] official put it, "We have a larger responsibility. That precludes our looking at matters from the perspective of only one area, no matter how needy" (Kantor 2000:813).

It is within this wider context of exceedingly high levels of poverty and the failure of regional urban policy to substantially address these that the city's efforts at urban regeneration – primarily through a policy of place marketing – should be understood. This policy has proven to be remarkably successful in changing the external image of Glasgow (Landry 2000:3; MacLeod 2002:612). What is much less clear is the extent to which this increasingly sophisticated and integrated policy (GCC & GDA 1999; GCC 2001: OECD 2002:159) has improved the quality of life for the city's poorest residents.

> Even if successful, the selling of places is not the same as living in places. There is a dichotomy between the rhetoric of the advertising campaign and the texture of everyday life (Short 1996:435).

Glasgow's Miles Better?

From the 1930s through to the 1970s the heavily Labour-dominated city authority pursued 'a managerialist mode of social production' (MacLeod 2002:610), assuming total responsibility for the clearances of the inner-city slums and the development of the large new peripheral housing schemes. In part in response to the wider policy changes created by the shock defeat of the Labour Party in the

1977 Council elections (Boyle 1994:456) and the election of a neo-liberal Conservative government at Westminster, but also in recognition of the deepening crisis within the city, the early 1980s marked the beginning of a significant change of policy for the ruling Labour Council. In 1983 the city council launched its first place-marketing campaign – the highly successful 'Glasgow's Miles Better' – and two years later a McKinsey Report ('The Potential of Glasgow City Centre'), commissioned by the SDA, concluded that 'Glasgow ought to plan for a post-industrial future and to use place-marketing projects as the central policy tool through which post-industrial investment could be lured' (Gomez 1998:111). As a result of the report, *Glasgow Action* was established, chaired by Sir Norman MacFarlane of United Distilleries, and with a substantial input, in thinking if not in capital, from the city's private sector (Boyle 1994:457). Its aim was 'to make the city more attractive to work in, to live in and to play in; to recreate *Glasgow's entrepreneurial spirit*; to communicate the new reality of Glasgow to its citizens and *to the world*' (original emphasis, Gomez 1998:111).

Harvey has identified three main characteristics of what he classifies as a general shift within urban policy, both in North America and in Europe since the early 1980s from a managerial (or social welfare) to an entrepreneurial approach.[8] These are:

---

[8] He notes that the adoption of a more entrepreneurial approach appears to have been embraced by different cities and 'even across political parties and ideologies' (Harvey 1989:4).

First, the new entrepreneurialism has, as its centre-piece, the notion of a 'private-public partnership' in which a traditional local boosterism is integrated with the use of local government powers to provide and attract external sources of funding, new direct investments, or new employment sources. ...

Secondly, the activity of the public-private partnership is entreprencurial precisely because it is speculative in execution and design and therefore dogged by all the difficulties and dangers which attach to speculative as opposed to rationally planned and coordinated development. In many instances this has meant that the public sector assumes the risk and the private sector takes the benefits. ...

Thirdly, the entrepreneurialism focuses much more closely on the political economy of place rather than of territory. ... Place specific projects of this sort have the habit of becoming such a focus of public and political attention that they divert concern and even resources from the broader problems that may beset the region or territory as a whole. ... (Harvey 1989:7-8).

Each of these characteristics can be clearly identified in the policy of the Labour-dominated City Council from 1980 onwards.

The redevelopment of the Merchant City in the 1980s helped to lay the foundations for the city's changing image as well as acting as a catalyst for future development (Rosenburg & Watkins 1999:1977). The area, to the east of the city centre, was part of its eighteenth century development and comprised largely warehouses for the city's burgeoning tobacco and sugar trade. 'By 1980 about a third of the property in the area was vacant and Glasgow District Council (GDC) owned a third of the property, including two-thirds of the vacant property' (Jones & Watkins 1999:1132).

Although the local authority was keen to engage the private sector in the development, their initial reticence forced the Council not only to provide substantial grants, but also to agree to lease back any of the twenty three properties not sold during the initial phase of the works (*ibid*:1132). Subsequent

developments were carried out in partnership with the *Scottish Development Agency* (SDA) which, during the 1980s invested £10.5 million into the total development costs of £51 million (McCrone 1991:932). As a result about a thousand new or refurbished housing or retail units were constructed over a ten year period. Whilst this was heralded as a success, subsequent research has indicated that the development was more susceptible to downturns in the housing market than the more established areas of private housing in the city (Jones & Watkins 1999:1938). More critically, the housing was one hundred percent for purchase. Substantial public funds were used to attract young, mobile and relatively affluent people to the city centre (McCarthy & Pollock 1997:141; Seo 2002:117) and, particularly in the initial development phases, the local authority was prepared to assume the financial risks if the enterprise failed.

Harvey points out:

> Since the main aim has been 'to stimulate or attract in private enterprise by creating the preconditions for profitable investment,' local government 'has in effect ended up underpinning private enterprise, and taking on part of the burden of production costs.' Since capital tends to be more rather than less mobile these days, it follows that local subsidies to capital will likely increase while local provision for the under-privileged will diminish, producing greater polarisation in the social distribution of real income (Harvey 1989:12).

A second area which further illustrates Glasgow's pursuit of an entrepreneurial strategy is in relation to the development of the city's retail sector. The city is now the most popular shopping centre in the United Kingdom outside of London's west end (GCC & SEG 2001:4). Since the mid 1980s there has been the development of a number of prestigious city centre shopping complexes,

including Princes Square (1987), the St. Enoch Centre (1989) and the Buchanan

Galleries (1999). In 1999-2000 there was £543 million of retail sector

developments under construction in the city, the largest of which was the

Buchanan Galleries, built at a cost in excess of £200 million (OECD 2002:98).

The benefits of these developments, however, have not been shared equitably

across the city. Research in the late 1980s indicated that the residents in GEAR

did not benefit from the new employment opportunities in the city centre's

growing retail and service industries (MacArthur 1984; Lever 1991). The

development of Braehead Shopping Centre and Retail Park a decade later had a

similarly negligible impact on the neighbouring community of Govan, despite the

efforts of the local development company (Govan Initiative) to provide job access

training for local unemployed residents (OECD 2002:117).

Even more worryingly, MacLeod, drawing upon Smith's analysis of the impact of

'zero-tolerance' legislation in New York has identified the potential growth of

'revanchism'[9] in the city as its most vulnerable residents – the homeless – are

deliberately kept off city centre streets and excluded from its prestigious public

spaces (Atkinson 2001:11; MacLeod 2002:614).

> While I acknowledge that this public-space debate is far from conclusive, I
> nonetheless find it hard to reason against the view that any conception of
> 'publicness' we ascribe to the new renaissance sites is highly selective and
> systematically discriminating. For as with most political-economic expressions

[9] Revanchism is a concept which is derived from the French *revanche*, literally meaning 'revenge.' MacLeod draws upon its use by Smith (Smith, Neil (1998) 'Guiliani Time: The Revanchist 1990s' in *Social Text*, vol. 57, pp.1-20). The 'revanchists' were a right-wing populist movement in late nineteenth century France, which reacted violently against the socialism of the Paris Commune, mixing military tactics with calls for public order on the streets.

of neoliberal hegemony, the new urban glamour zones conceal a brutalizing demarcation of winners and losers, included and excluded. ... [T]he new initiatives appear to be 'reclaiming' public spaces for those groups which possess economic value as producers or consumers to the virtual exclusion of the less well-heeled (*ibid*:605-606).

A third, and final, illustration of the city's recent urban strategy relates to its promotion of a new image through a series of flagship events and buildings. These have included the opening of the Burrell Collection in 1983, and the launch of the 'Glasgow's Miles Better' campaign the same year; the National Garden Festival in 1988 and the designation of the city as 'European City of Culture' in 1990; the promotion of the city as 'UK City of Architecture and Design' in 1999, with the opening of a range of high profile buildings during that year, including 'The Lighthouse' and 'Homes for the Future'; and the official openings of the Glasgow Science Centre (the city's main millennium building) and the redeveloped Hampden Park in 2000.

The Garden Festival, developed at a cost of £20 million, generated 4.3 million visitors and the city's tourist strategy has actively built upon that early success. The number of United Kingdom visitors to Glasgow increased by eighty eight percent between 1991 and 1998, with visitors spending in excess of £450 million in the city. The tourist industry has become one of the city's main employers employing 21,000 people in 2002 (OECD 2002:96). At the same time the external image of the city has been transformed.

> The total effect was staggering in the swing of perception. Gone was the old image of Glasgow with the gangs, the violence, the hard men, and the heavy

drinking. Glasgow was now seen as a pleasant, cultured city. The new man displaced the hard man (Short 1996:435)

The creation of a fresh urban image can have positive consequences, if it reflects a set of perceptions and activities in which all members of the city can feel involved, 'helping to counteract the sense of alienation and anomie that Simel long ago identified as such a problematic feature of modern city life' (D. Harvey 1989:14). However, in Glasgow, the image of a thriving and vibrant post-industrial city is a mirage for many, if not most, of its residents (Short 1996:433; Gomez 1998:118).

Those responsible for the city's governance regularly try to highlight the successes of their place-marketing strategy and to give assurances that its benefits will reach all parts of the city in time (GCC & GDA 1999:18). However, the harsh reality is that after almost twenty years, there is still no indication that the wealth which has without doubt been generated will 'trickle-down' (or 'trickle-out') to the city's poorest communities and residents (Lever 1991:997). Over that period the gap between the rich and the poor has widened and the city has become, in many respects, a 'dual city' (SE 2003:48).

Such is the level of proposed capital development, particularly along the Clyde waterfront – the next major area of regeneration (GCC 2001) – Glasgow is set to become the 'Berlin of the next decade' (OECD 2002:131-160). Indeed part of the dynamic of image-led regeneration is that there is always the next major project which has to be undertaken, with all the risks involved, in order for the city to

stay ahead of its competitors (Harvey 1989:10; Kantor 2000:813). Investment in the city's image corresponds to a reduced level of potential investment in other parts of the city, making 'civic boosterism' an extremely difficult policy to pursue within an already divided city (Bailey *et al* 1999:47).

> Hence we may question not only the distribution of benefits arising from central area regeneration in Glasgow, both spatially and between groups of the population, but also the promise of regeneration which formed the justification for such a strategy. Since the concentration of benefits on the city centre was due largely to public policy and subsidy ..., the opportunity costs of benefits foregone elsewhere are all the more significant (McCarthy & Pollock 1997:143).

'A desert wi' windaes' (Billy Connelly)

Poverty in Scotland is dominated by the levels of deprivation within Glasgow (Gibb *et al* 1998; NCH 2002:17). According to the Scottish Executive's social justice milestones, the city is lagging behind the rest of the country in twenty one out of the twenty two indicators against which measurements have been taken (GCC 2002:Appendix 1). Nearly twice the proportion of children in Glasgow is growing up in workless households by comparison to the rest of Scotland (39.4 percent as opposed to 21.1 percent). Eight percent of babies born in the city are under weight while the national figure is less that two and half percent. Sixty two percent of people of working age in Glasgow are in employment by comparison to seventy three percent nationally, and forty eight percent of households in the city have an income of less than £10,000 per annum, compared to a national figure of thirty seven percent (*ibid*).

Any discussion of the extent of poverty in Glasgow must avoid simplistic notions of a dual city, which seeks to distinguish between the rich and poor purely in terms of where people live. The picture in Glasgow, as in the rest of the United Kingdom (Townsend 1979), is much more nuanced (Mooney & Danson 1997:84). This is likely to become even more so in the coming years as housing tenure within the large peripheral housing schemes and inner city communities is diversified, resulting in the further breakdown of communities (Miller 1999:8-9; Forrest 2000:7).

Nonetheless, the concentration of poverty within particular parts of Glasgow means that an area-based analysis of poverty remains appropriate given the unevenness of wealth across the city (Keating 1988:146; Turok & Hopkins 1998:2051: OECD 2002:108). The infant mortality rates in Easterhouse are five times higher than in neighbouring Bishopbriggs (Pacione 1993:87); in Drumchapel men die, on average, ten years younger than in the adjacent suburb of Bearsden (Macleod 2001:12); and the average household income in the richest postcode areas in the city is three times what it is in the poorest. According to Bailey *et al*:

> The former [where household income income is highest] comprise owner occupier suburbs and high status historic central areas. The latter [where it is lowest] are areas dominated by social rented housing, most of which are widely recognised as deprived. The south east of Glasgow provides the starkest evidence of this. Four postcode sectors covering the Gorbals, Polmadie and Castlemilk had over 50 percent of households in poverty in 1995/6 and only 2 to 6 percent classified as affluent. Such a low incidence of affluence is very unusual and emphasises the distinctive nature of these areas; they have very

few households indeed with much discretionary spending power (Bailey *et al* 1999:55).

The peripheral housing schemes of Drumchapel, Easterhouse, Castlemilk and Pollok were built as partial implementation of the Council's 1947 largely discredited City Plan (the *Bruce Report*) in response to massive inner-city overcrowding. They were built to a far higher density than originally envisaged by Bruce, as well as to a lower overall quality (Fyfe 1996:392)

> High density building in the periphery was controversial from the start but as fast as the houses were built more were needed. Faced with the magnitude of the problem, the city fathers opted for a policy of 'Tae hell with the planning, just give us the houses,' eating rapidly into the green belt and with social and shopping facilities coming much later, if at all (Keating 1988:154).

The population of the schemes reached their height in the early 1970s – when Castlemilk had 37,000 residents (O'Toole *et al* 1995) and Easterhouse 56,000 (Keating 1988:155) – although by that time many of their problems were already becoming apparent. As well as the lack of social infrastructure and the often poor quality of design and build of the houses (McCrone 1991:925), the schemes had been designed as residential centres of population at a time when it was expected that the long post-war economic boom would continue and that the Keynesian aspiration of full employment would be maintained. They were, as such, totally ill-equipped for the rapid deindustrialisation from the 1970s onwards (OECD 2002:70), a problem exacerbated by the comparative strength of the New Towns to which many residents moved if they were able (Lever 1991:988; Miller 1999:4; Cuthbertson 2000:4) and the appreciably higher levels of expenditure

being spent improving the housing stock within the inner city (*ibid*:91). [10]

Although a number of inner-city communities (most notably Possilpark, Blackhill and parts of the East End) remained heavily deprived, the 1981 National Census demonstrated that there had been a substantial shift in the density of city's poverty towards its periphery in the preceding ten years (Pacione 1993:89). By 1988 the Labour Council's Director of Housing, Paul Mugnaioni, could describe himself as 'the City's largest slum landlord' (Robertson 1998:60).

Although recent years have seen some improvements, most noticeably in terms of the physical appearance of the areas, the housing schemes and inner city communities such as the Gorbals, Govan, Possilpark and the East End remain considerably depressed communities with high levels of unemployment, benefit dependency and poor health. The Interim Evaluation of the Castlemilk Partnership (one of four 'New Life for Urban Scotland' partnerships established in Scotland in 1988 by the Conservative Government intended to force a more private enterprise driven agenda on the country's poorest urban communities) concluded that benefit levels were higher at the mid point of the Partnership than they had been at its outset (O'Toole *et al* 1995:3).

An important component of the regeneration process in Castlemilk and the other Social Inclusion Partnership areas throughout the city, has been the promotion of a more positive image of the area, in part to stem the haemorrhaging of the local

---

[10] In the late 1970s investment per head by all agencies in Easterhouse was less than a quarter of what it was in GEAR (£586 and £2415 respectively). In Drumchapel the figure was £317 by comparison to £1776in Maryhill.

population and, in part to encourage new people into the growing numbers of privates houses (Miller 1999:8). While welcome, the redevelopment of housing stock is insufficient as the central element of any regeneration strategy (Robertson 1998:59). Many within the city's poorest communities remain impoverished. Its poorest communities have failed to benefit substantially from either the broader place marketing of the City Council or the pro-growth strategy of *Scottish Enterprise Glasgow* (and its predecessor the GDA) and have been victims of the historical unwillingness on the part of central government to make Glasgow the special case that is required if the needs of its poorest residents (and areas) are to be more adequately addressed (Turok & Hopkins 1998:2051).

The Board of National Mission reported on the official evaluation of the 'New Life for Urban Scotland' initiative to the Church of Scotland's 2000 General Assembly.

> The Report [An Evaluation of the New Life for Urban Scotland Initiative] makes no reference to the high levels of family and community stress in these areas as a result of the programme of 'regeneration.' ... But the Report does show that in spite of hundreds of millions of pounds having being spent on improving the housing stock the population of the schemes has continued to decline, and that even in percentage terms there has been little or no impact on the long established problems of poor health, limited educational attainment, and scarce employment opportunities.
> But the Partnerships placed little reliance on the community's major resource, namely the local people and their commitment to their community. As a result the changes have been largely physical and cosmetic, and have brought little improvement in the quality of community life. 'Welcome coloured bathroom suites, double glazing, well-insulated walls. Farewell, community spirit.'
> This is the background against which the UPA congregations have lived the past year, ministers and office-bearers and ordinary members seeking to worship God and to relate the Gospel to the daily life of the community (NM 2000:paras.5.1.6.3.2-4).

Section Two: 'Sharing the Pain – Holding the Hope' (National Mission 2002)

The end of the line?

In 1995, using the data collected through the 1991 National Census, the Board of National Mission identified three hundred and thirty parishes as *urban priority area parishes* (UPAs). These were parishes where more than ten percent of the parish population were among the poorest twenty percent of the national population according to the Scottish Office's indicators of deprivation.[11] Using these criteria, over one fifth of all parishes in the Church of Scotland were designated UPAs. Out of the total three hundred and thirty, over one third (102) were in the Presbytery of Glasgow, and a further fifty three in Hamilton Presbytery (NM 1995). Although this designation highlighted the breadth of poverty across Scotland, especially with the addition of fifty four rural priority area parishes, it diluted the focus on a smaller number of parishes where the levels of poverty were greatest and the problems facing local congregations often the most acute. It was for this reason that, in 2002, the Board of National Mission suggested a reclassification of UPA parishes to focus more narrowly on the worst off communities. A revised list, based on the 2001 Census was published in April 2004 (NM 2004) comprising fifty four parishes, two-thirds of which were in Glasgow. It was to these parishes that the Board's 2002 Report was referring when it stated that '[w]ithout action and a critical realignment of resources over

---

[11] In its designation of Areas of Priority Treatment (APTs) Strathclyde Regional Council (SRC) focused upon areas where people in the worst off ten percent of the population were resident.

the next five years many of the churches in Scotland's poorest communities will die' (NM 2002:para.2.2.1.6).

As early as 1980 Alistair Osborne, then minister in Ferguslie Park (Paisley), identified the need for the Church of Scotland to develop a strategic response to the particular needs facing churches in areas of multiple deprivation (Cuthbertson 2000:16). In 1987 Ferguson, who spent ten years working in Easterhouse (Glasgow) before becoming leader of the Iona community and entering a career in journalism, wrote:

> What we are seeing in the great housing schemes and decaying inner city areas of Scotland is the virtual end of the Protestant line. Despite the countervailing mythology, it looks like being the end of the Roman Catholic line too, only later. ... There never was a time when the church attracted the urban masses, but the figures are now so stark that there is no longer point in preference of wishful thinking. The Emperor's threadbare clothes were last seen at the nearly new shop (Ferguson in J. Harvey 1988:9).

The current attempts to respond to the crisis facing congregations within Glasgow's poorest communities and to develop a church among the city's poorest citizens can be understood within a wider historical context. Harvey identifies Thomas Chalmers, George Macleod and Tom Allan as seminal figures in the ongoing quest for a practical ecclesiology in the city (J. Harvey 1988).

Each of these figures – Chalmers, in St George's Tron Church at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as the city was beginning to expand rapidly; Macleod, in Govan in the 1930s, during the Depression; and Allan, in North Kelvinside, immediately following the Second World War – sought to develop models of engagement in response to the isolation of the church from the wider

212

community,[12] to involve Kirk Session and congregational members rather than simply ministers in that engagement, and to address the material as well as the spiritual needs of people living in poverty.

The impact of their efforts extended far beyond the narrow confines of their parishes, and of the city. Chalmers 'godly commonwealth ideal offered a communal alternative to the social anxieties and suffering of early industrialisation' (Brown 1982:371) and marked, in many ways, the beginning of the modern story of parish mission in Scotland (J. Harvey 1988:57). The 'Mission – or Message – of Friendship,' initiated by Macleod over a two year period, culminating in a week of missionary outreach in October 1934, 'was to prove a model of Parish Mission in Scotland, not just for his time, but in many respects right down to the present day' (*ibid*:62). At the end of the mission eighty adults were baptised, two hundred and twenty joined Membership Classes (of which only twenty fell away) and over two hundred children joined the Sunday School.

> In the Scotland of 1934, George MacLeod was confident that if the city churches were adequately staffed and organized, and if they reached out in missions of friendship, the people would *come flocking in*. With his team ministry in Govan, and with careful planning and work, he had seen it happen (fresh emphasis, Ferguson 1990:119)

The Parish Mission in North Kelvinside during the late 1940s, initiated by Tom Allan with the support of D. P. Thomson, the Church of Scotland's evangelist at

---

[12] Harvey notes that in both the parish of St. George's Tron in the early nineteenth century and in North Kelvinside one hundred and thirty years later, approximately one percent of the parish population were involved in the local church. In Govan in the 1930s, only ten out of the six hundred and fifty Protestant households in the parish had a link with Govan Old Church (although a further one hundred and sixty five continued to be involved with other churches across the city) (J. Harvey 1988:57, 69 & 61).

the time, had similarly spectacular results, with over a hundred people becoming members of the church and every organisation within it experiencing a considerable level of growth. The mission's foundation was an ongoing parish visitation undertaken by fifty specifically trained members of the local congregation (J. Harvey 1988:69). Early on Allan recognised that one of the limitations of the strategy was the difficulty that many people experienced when they became involved in the existing structures of the church.

> [I]t is the easiest thing in the world to get people to 'join' the church; it is supremely difficult to know what to do with them once they are in; and it is virtually impossible to keep the majority of them within the conventional framework of the church's life' (Allan 1954:33).

Although resistant to the creation of a parallel church structure, Allan did establish small groups across the congregation in a model that, in some key respects, prefigured the later development of the House Church and Cell Church movements (J. Harvey 1988:71). Allan's thinking was also highly influential in the development of the *Tell Scotland Movement*, in which he was integrally involved from the mid-1950s onwards.

Although important and genuine attempts to engage with those living in poverty in Glasgow, the strategies of Chalmers, Macleod and Allan were all based upon the presupposition that the institutional church is the redeemed community and that once those in poverty realise this, they will wish to become part of it (*ibid*:72 & 75). There is, as such, little or no recognition of the insight that the poor, within

214

the biblical narrative, are themselves at the heart of the redeemed community (Anouil 2002).

Their strategies were also based on an implicit acceptance of what Margull identified as a form of 'structural fundamentalism' prevalent within the church (J. Harvey 1987:18 Shanks 1995:11), which understands the prevailing models of organisation, at both national but even more critically at local levels, as foundational and predetermined. There is a need to move beyond this and, in doing so, to draw upon the insights of those in poverty. According to Miller:

> From thirty years in a housing scheme parish [in Glasgow], I have observed this. The congregation to which I went thirty years ago had begun life in a breathtakingly beautiful building, set in the midst of a mature woodland. Walls of plate glass encouraged worshippers to include in their thoughts about God both the glory of nature and the teeming life of the city. But the glass suffered from flying stones, the windows had to be broken up, and the family of faith became preoccupied with the state of the building. Absolutely everything that took place had to raise money for the bills. ... The smashing of the final window twice in a week, and my fear about how the congregation were going to react, suddenly revealed to me that the energy of the faith was being diverted from its true purpose: we had come to care more about the building than the people it was supposedly there to serve. We had allowed the structures to take precedence over everything else. But structures, whether buildings or systems or patterns or organisations – structures are secondary. The Gospel comes first (Miller 2002:7)

The Gorbals Ministry Group, established in the late 1950s in the Laurieston area of the city, was an attempt to move beyond both the structural fundamentalism of the past and to explore[13] a model of church which sought to begin from the side of the marginalised rather than from the position of the institution. Drawing upon

---

[13] Harvey, drawing upon the work of Robinson (Robinson, John A. T. (1965) *The New Reformation?*, London, SCM Press) makes a distinction between experimental ministries – where it is assumed that the basic operating model is already known – and exploratory ministries, the form of which are created in the process of their development.

215

the insights of the Worker-Priest Movement in France and the East Harlem Protestant Parish in New York (where two of the group's members, Geoff Shaw and Walter Fyfe, had spent some time), the Group, with the support of the Presbytery of Glasgow, moved into the area.

> Their idea ... was to go and live in one house in the area, with the aim of visiting around the doors, sharing the lives of their neighbours, and seeking to enable a small congregation to emerge, 'centred on the sacraments, on preaching and on worship,' and in time, perhaps, developing 'house-meetings, fellowships and perhaps even pastoral groups.' They had previously done a survey of the institutional church congregations which already existed in the area; but had come to the conclusion that these did not really represent the majority of the Gorbals people, who, in the main, were not present in these buildings on a Sunday. It was 'no for the likes of them' (J. Harvey 1988:100-101).

At an individual level a number of those who were members of the Gorbals Ministry Group went on to become significant figures in the ecclesiastical and political life of the city, and the nation. John Harvey became Leader of the Iona Community, Richard Holloway Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Andrew Fyfe (whose father Walter had been one of the founders) the Chief Executive of the Glasgow Alliance, and Geoff Shaw, up until his premature death, inaugural Leader of Strathclyde Regional Council. Group members also contributed to many of the attempts by local people to improve the quality of their community (*ibid*:105). In terms of their original aims, however, the Group's intentions remained largely unrealised. Despite the efforts of a number of the members of the Group, no indigenous worshipping community emerged over the period that the Gorbals Ministry Group was in existence. At the time, Shaw identified three

216

particular reasons for this. Firstly, the Group had been unable to overcome the dangers of 'cultural intrusion'[14] and were viewed as largely remote by local residents. Secondly, they had underestimated the significance of sectarianism within the area and the consequent problems of seeking to promote a model of Christian community that sought to position itself beyond Protestant and Catholic culture. And thirdly, in response to the many misconceptions about the Christian faith (and perhaps more critically the Church), the Group had primarily adopted a model of evangelism which emphasised the unconditional 'love, caring and compassion of the Christian community' and placed correspondingly little emphasis on the need to become part of a community of faith. He concluded:

> [T]here has been an indecisiveness of the Group in regard to the formation of some form of congregation, and the inevitable sense of failure that the basic faith of most of the members of the Group has not in fact been adequately shared with others outside the church (Shaw in J. Harvey 1988:106).

To these can be added two further reasons. In the Group's almost inevitable desire to respond to the overwhelming needs of individuals in the area, and to the community as a whole — and the retained power of individuals to do so — the desire to build a Christian community took second place. Secondly, the Group continued to be supported by the institutional church (through the Presbytery of Glasgow). In its desire, no matter how unconsciously, to respond to the expectations of the wider Church to build a community which gathered for worship, as opposed to one out of which worship developed, the Group may have

---

[14] A danger identified by Webber in the East Harlem Protestant Parish (J. Harvey 1988:93).

remained a prisoner to the structural fundamentalism that it sought to move beyond.

Despite its self-acknowledged limitations, through the approximate fifteen years of its existence the Gorbals Ministry Group contributed a great deal to the life of the Gorbals and to the quest for an urban ecclesiology among the poor in the city. In the early 1970s the Group dispersed, partly as a result of a number of its members leaving to pursue a range of other activities and partly as the wider community it had been a part of disappeared, to be replaced by the 'brave new world' of Sir Basil Spence inspired tower blocks and terraces of glass and concrete (CSRP 2002:1). At the same time many of its residents moved to the rapidly growing council housing schemes ringing the city.

From paradise to hell

When the housing schemes were being built, 'the churches were the only structures geared to offering assistance in the development of community life' (Miller 1999:7) and, as such, they occupied a pivotal position in the developing life of local communities during those early years. Church buildings were among the first large public buildings to be built in the housing schemes and fifty years on, they are among the few that remain which are accessible to local residents irrespective of their ability to pay. The picture from one church building in Easterhouse is typical of many during those early years.

While St. George's & St. Peter's opened in 1958, it was a further three years before any schools or shops opened, and seventeen years before a community centre was built. Thus in those early years the churches were full to overflowing, not just on a Sunday, but all kinds of community groups were formed on the basis of the church building. Drama groups, football teams, etc. were originally all part of the fabric of community activity. Some churches, built initially as Hall Churches, developed their sanctuaries and early pioneers reminisce of the 300 Sunday School members going on their trip by train from Easterhouse Railway Station (Cuthbertson 2000:4).

The enthusiasm of those early years, in common with the more general atmosphere across the schemes, was relatively short-lived (Miller 1999:7; Cuthbertson 2000:4). Church leaders were often among the first of the residents to leave the area for the flourishing New Towns, and many of the problems resulting from poor housing, lack of facilities and the wider economic collapse of manufacturing began to have a major impact on the life of the local churches as well as the wider communities. The model of development during those early years – from temporary accommodation to Hall Church and then, on occasions, to a separate sanctuary and the use of assessor elders from other, well established congregations – served to undermine the potential development of more contextual forms of church, which might have more adequately stood the test of time.

The buildings, in common with much of the housing of the period were often poorly constructed and badly designed, and were frequently too large for the worshipping community as numbers settled during the early 1960s. From the outset, then, over-sized buildings were an unfortunate reminder to the congregation of those early days of spectacular growth which had come about

more as a result of the lack of any reasonable alternatives rather than an outbreak of religious, or perhaps more accurately church,[15] fervour among those living in poverty in the housing schemes. The existence of these buildings also forced congregations to develop models of church life which would make as full use of them as possible.

> [I]f you have a building, you have to use it. The fact that the congregation possesses a building dictates the kind of activities in which they engage. A variety of traditional meetings take place, which people are 'urged to support.' Frequently these activities are peripheral if not irrelevant to the main stream of local life, and utterly fail to address the great issues of life and death at the back of people's interest in God and the Church. The meetings are often undertaken for no more important reason than that 'we have always had the Let of the Hall on a Wednesday' (Miller 1987:10).

The use of assessor elders – elders from other, often middle class congregations, appointed by the Presbytery to form the Kirk Session in the newly established church until such time as local elders could be appointed – also limited the potential of the new congregation to develop in ways more appropriate to their context. Instead they largely aped the 'hybrid membership' structure (Storrar 2004) of traditional congregations, and developed a pattern which was as alien to the needs of working class people in the housing schemes as it had been in the old inner city communities (J. Harvey 1988:20). In the shift from the inner city slums to the peripheral housing schemes, the structural fundamentalism of the Church largely prevailed and the opportunity for churches to develop models of operating

---

[15] I would want to distinguish between the involvement of church people in the institutional life of the church, which has always been minimal, and their belief in God.

more in tune with the life patterns and values of the urban poor was largely missed.

In many, although by no means all, of the churches in the city's poorest communities (both inner city and outer housing scheme) the congregation and particularly its leadership, have ceased to be representative of the wider parish area (J. Harvey 1988:15; Cuthbertson 2000:17) and often lack local credibility (Forrest 2000:15). This problem is further compounded when the minister chooses (or is required) to live in a manse some distance from the parish, both geographically and culturally.

> Becoming a church member generally leads to a withdrawal from the community. There is usually, albeit subconsciously, an acceptance of a middle class value system and an antagonism to the culture around them, or they are individualists already on the periphery of the community. ... Often the church is the only place where the members can exercise some measure of autonomy or gain a little self-esteem, therefore, they become very resistant to any change and hold on desperately to status and positions, their own survival identified with that of the church (Cuthbertson 2000:17).

At an institutional level, regionally and nationally if not necessarily locally, the Church thinks and acts like a rich person (Miller 1987:18). This can be illustrated by: its dismissal of working class values (Harvey 1988:20); its attitude towards buildings as well as the training, recruitment, housing and employment conditions of ministers (Miller 1987:18); and the truncation of the Church's missionary role to that of individualistic evangelism. This reduction fails to recognise that the Gospel calls for the transformation of unjust structures as well as of individual

lives (*ibid*:20) and that Jesus' words of challenge are different to the rich and poor (Forrest 2000:44).

In 1995 the General Assembly established the *Priority Areas Renewal Foundation* (subsequently changed in 1996 to the *Priority Areas Fund* (PAF)).[16] During the *Priority Areas Fund's* four years of grant funding (1996-2000) it gave out over one hundred grants, primarily to work in areas of urban deprivation. Three out of the four case studies considered in *Chapter Seven* of this research project received funding through the Fund (Colston Milton, Orbiston and St. James' Pollok) which in each case helped them to initiate an alternative way of working that may not have been possible otherwise. Although the significance of the Fund should not be over-emphasised (Cuthbertson 2000:17),[17] there is some evidence that it has assisted a number of churches to develop new ways of working, which not only enabled them to more effectively address the needs facing the local community but also to develop models of working which were more contextually appropriate (Church of Scotland 1995 & 1998). The ecclesiological significance of five of the projects supported by the Fund was reported on by the Panel of Doctrine to the 2002 General Assembly. It concluded:

> [I]f any single theme has emerged, it is to suggest that it may be that in a time of anxiety about the future of the Church we need to be receptive to the voice of God powerfully addressing us from the open ground. Furthermore, we hear this best as we venture out, not on errands we ourselves have invented but

---

[16] For more details of the *Priority Areas Fund*, see *Chapter Five*.

[17] I was a member of the Fund Committee from 1997, and from 1999 its convener. As such, I am acutely aware of the Fund's limitations as well as its contribution to the development of new ecclesiological models.

responding in love to 'Christ in the stranger's guise' (Panel on Doctrine 2002:para.5).

This is not to suggest that community involvement, and the establishment of projects which respond to the needs of local communities, necessarily result in the more effective functioning of the local church (see the discussion of the short-comings of project-based work highlighted in *Chapter Five*). Indeed Cuthbertson indicates that his experience in Easterhouse has been that the more church members became involved as local activists, the less that they were able to commit themselves to the local congregation (Cuthbertson 2000:3). Nonetheless, more effective engagement with the needs of the parish does present an important opportunity for the local church to move beyond its traditional structures and to develop models of operating which begin from the experience of poverty rather than necessarily from that of the institutional church.

Steps on the road to recovering a radical gospel

There is relatively little written material on urban ecclesiology in Glasgow. Apart from Galloway's book on the work in which I was involved at Orbiston (Galloway 1998) and Harvey's book which formed the basis of the historical overview of church life among the urban poor in Glasgow in this chapter (J. Harvey 1988), the main sources comprise two short booklets by John Miller (Castlemilk) (Miller 1987 & 1999), an unpublished project proposal for a doctorate by Malcolm Cuthbertson looking at the place of folk religion in

Easterhouse (Cuthbertson 2000) and a Study Leave report by Martin Forrest (Possilpark), who surveyed the attitudes of a number of Church of Scotland ministers in the Glasgow area working in urban priority area parishes and reflected upon them in the light of the broader context of urban theology (particularly the writing of John Vincent) and South African Black Theology (Forrest 2000). Drawing upon the work of these three Glasgow-based practitioners, it is nonetheless possible to begin to identify a number of potential strands within an emerging ecclesiology among those in poverty in the city.[18]

At the heart of this ecclesiology lies an understanding of the privileged locus of the poor. This corresponds both to a belief that God, in responding to the cry of the poor for help, has made a preferential option in their favour (Miller 1987:21) and also that people struggling against poverty occupy a privileged position from which to view God (Cuthbertson 2000:25; Forrest 2000:19: Miller 2002:9). It is further argued that it is only from among the poor that sense can be made of the wider global order, an insight which parallels both Marxist analysis and the liberation theologies of the developing world.

> I became convinced that only from below, only from the perspective of the poor and oppressed, can we see the world as it really is and be able to free the world from exploitation. In common with many Third World theologians who hold this view, my viewpoint here owes more to a particular understanding of

---

[18] It is necessary here to make a distinction between an ecclesiology among the poor and one which is 'of the poor.' In his Study Leave report Forrest is at pains to point this out: 'What follows I do not pretend to be the people's work. These thoughts come from one who is a specialist of sorts, academically-trained, though no longer college-bound. But these are the reflections of someone who has lived and worked within a particular congregation and community for the past twelve years and has tried to be open to people's pains and concerns and who has, moreover, been forced by the expectations of his role to address 'a word' regularly to the situations in which the people of Possilpark find themselves: in worship, in joy but, probably most often, in grief.' (Forrest 2000:12).

the Incarnation than it does to Marx's scientific belief in the proletariat as the universal class, but many of us would still acknowledge Marx as the one who first opened our eyes to the privileged perspective of the world's poorest people (Forrest 2000:3)

In identifying Glasgow's urban poor as part of the majority of the world currently living in poverty (*ibid*:5), there is also a corresponding identification with the insights of the various strands of Liberation Theology which have evolved among the oppressed, primarily in the developing world (NM 1992:2; Cuthbertson 1987). While offering a critical analysis of the city's regeneration strategy from the perspective of its impact upon those in poverty, (Miller 1999:8-9; Forrest 2000:7-8) in common with a large number of liberation theologians (L. Boff 1985 & 1986), their [Miller, Cuthbertson and Forrest] sharpest criticism is often reserved for the institutional church.

> [T]he Church of Scotland's missionary enterprise has fallen into two serious errors. Firstly the Church has misdirected energy and finance into buildings, maintaining an elaborate cathedral in every Parish. Secondly the Church has substituted evangelism for Mission: it has pursued a policy of individual evangelism unrelated to people's material and economic circumstances, and offers thus a maimed and powerless message. ... Unless our evangelism is part and parcel of the endeavour to embody the compassion of God in the very structure and life of the whole Church, it is only words. By contrast with the biblical story of God and his love it is a cruel deception. And it is certainly not the Gospel (Miller 1987:26 & 27).

> [T]here seems to me to be two higher loves than the love of the Church – the love of Jesus Christ and the love of the poor. When the Church fails on both these counts it deserves to be criticised. Love cannot be blind. The Church has prostituted itself by seeking prestige, power and privilege. The harlot continues for the moment to ply her trade, while the poor cannot afford her. Perhaps for their sakes it's just as well (Cuthbertson 1987a:25).

225

While critical of the institutional church, they are all committed to what J. Harvey identified as a 'parallel church' (J. Harvey 1988:122) – one which moves beyond structural fundamentalism and seeks to allow a church among and of those in poverty to emerge.

In Possilpark, Forrest identifies the *Abigail Project* as 'a modest example ... [of] trying to make space for what might be called a parallel church to grow' (Forrest 2000:17). The project comprises a group of local mothers, many of whom are parents of drug addicts, who have been meeting both for support and also to run a café in the local area for addicts, as well as for the wider community. The group makes extensive use of the church premises and is fully supported by the Kirk Session, who regards it as an integral part of the life of the local church.[19] Although the café had to be closed in 2002 following repeated threats of violence from another café owner in the area, the group members continued to meet to support each other and to develop their growing spirituality. According to Forrest:

> The great gift of the Abigail Project to our congregation has been to bring us a new perspective, a view from much nearer the bottom of society, and from this place everything looks different. Abigail has taken us to a new place in our ministry in Possilpark and given us a better perspective on the Kingdom and this has affected how some of us, at least, read and understand the Gospel (Forrest 2000:17-18).

In 1999, the Board of National Mission's UPA Theology Group produced a short paper in which they considered the work of the Abigail Project. Members of the Abigail Group, while pleased that the wider church was expressing an interest in

---

[19] From 2001-2003 I served as Interim Moderator in Possilpark Parish Church. The Kirk Session unanimously agreed that the Abagail Project should be represented on the Vacancy Committee set up to look for a new minister after Martin Forrest left the charge in September 2001.

them, were sharply critical that the paper seemed to naturally identify Jesus with the established Church reaching out to the victims of drug misuse.

> The Abigail women themselves would not dare to identify themselves with Jesus and I fear that they might be rather rude about a middle-class Church culture identifying with Jesus and thus having to 'reach out' or 'reach down' to the poor. Of course the Church, by virtue of its predominantly middle-class location, *does* have to reach out and reach down, but surely not *as* Jesus. Rather the Church has to go down *to* Jesus, to be *with* Jesus. We need to be very careful not to imagine that the term 'lost' implies a sense of distance from Jesus when what it primarily means in our context is a sense of distance from the Church (original emphasis, *ibid*:18).

For Cuthbertson the parallel communities already exist in the religious-based organisations that continue to have a widespread level of popular appeal in Easterhouse, organisations such as the Orange Order, the Masonic Lodge and Alcoholics Anonymous. The continued appeal of these organisations, along with the role of the church in marking traditional rites of passage (particularly baptism) are seen not only as illustrative of the poor's continued religiosity (Cuthbertson 2000:11) but they also offer a strategy of 'affective sociability' by which the institutional church might encourage people experiencing poverty to become more fully involved in the life of an evolving community of faith (*ibid*:29).

For Miller those living in poverty are already part of the Church, albeit they are frequently excluded by the institution. For him there appears to be less of a need for a parallel church running alongside the prevailing system, but rather the coming to the surface of an expression of church which will continue to be in existence beyond the increasingly decaying institutional structures. In a 1999 talk

on his ministry in Castlemilk, which he concluded by drawing upon the images in J M W Turner's famous oil painting *The Fighting Temeraire*,[20] he stated:

> It is natural for a deep sadness to accompany such a review as I have given of the passing of an age, an era, in the history of the church. But if I am right that the old structures have outlived their day – that they are being tugged to their last berth to be broken up, that the church's former role will be in our day no more – if I am right about that, I am certain of this.
>
> ... I know myself [that] it is not for its structures that the church is to be valued, but for the Word, its faith. The church is firstly and finally not a matter of structure but of the heart. And among the small incidents of a Glasgow parish ... shines an irrepressible response to life – 'like small boats tossed on a wave, but always bobbing back' – in Vaclav Havel's phrase. In this is the assurance that for the church, as for us as individuals, there is surely life beyond the breaker's yard (Miller 1999:12)

Although their understanding of the nature of a parallel church differs, all three are committed to an understanding of church in which a worshipping community 'listening to the Lord, listening for the Word of Life' is central (Miller 2002:8). They have also chosen to spend a large part of their ministries living in public housing in the local parish, a decision which has helped to shape their ecclesiology as well as their relationships with the local community.

> [F]or us, moving house integrated our own domestic life with the ordinary life of the scheme, and the matters of church and faith became involved in everyday life. The children faced the problems in school and street and recreation; we knew the significance of mobile shops and public transport. And whatever affected Castlemilk affected us. Moving into the scheme gave me confidence when it came to sharing in a church response to local issues. Where once the Minister would have been welcome to visit the Housing Manager's office for a private chat about the plight of an individual tenant, it now seemed more appropriate to join the Tenants' Association, or to occupy the Housing Office with a group of protesters, in effect to throw the effort in along with the

---

[20] Both the sun and moon appear in *The Fighting Temeraire*. In classical painting they both appeared in works depicting the crucifixion. It has, therefore, been suggested that this painting depicts more than the ending of an era with the transition from sail to steam power, but also the removal of Christ's body from the cross and its journey to the tomb.

other community structures. Moving house was a tiny step, but a giant step for me (Miller 1999:9).

Any attempt to identify some key ecclesiological principles in the Glasgow context based on the insights of three highly trained Church of Scotland clergy, each of whom has been writing for different audiences, must be limited. Nonetheless, in terms of their acknowledgement of God's preferential option for the poor and of the relevance of Third World theology to their context, their desire to encourage a model of church which moves beyond the existing structural fundamentalism, and their personal commitment to the disadvantaged communities in which they have lived and served, they offer important pointers to take forward into the next part of this study, which engages with the thoughts and insights of a number of people involved in four Church of Scotland congregations in some of the poorest parishes in Glasgow and its immediate vicinity.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have taken some of the understanding which has been generated through the previous chapters looking at the city, the poor and the church and I have focused attention upon Glasgow. Although I have sought to place my reflections within a historical context, I have concentrated primarily upon the current situation.

I have concluded that the entrepreneurial strategy of place-marketing which has been adopted by those responsible for the city's governance (at local, regional

and national levels) may well have successfully altered the external image of Glasgow, but it has failed to address the growing division between rich and poor in the city, and that it is unlikely to do so in the future. Indeed, I have gone further, to suggest that such a strategy, which draws capital towards areas with the greatest economic potential, has contributed to that widening gap. As such, there are likely to be large numbers of poor people living in the city in the future, often concentrated in particular areas of city (the peripheral housing schemes and the under resourced inner city communities). Despite the considerable physical regeneration of many of these areas, little has yet been done to ensure that their residents have access to the same life opportunities which people living in other parts of the city take for granted.

In *Section Two* I have looked in some detail at the life of the church in these communities. Although the institutional churches have historically found it virtually impossible to engage with those living in urban poverty, I have noted that the situation is now recognised, both locally and nationally, to be critical. Through the writings of three particular Church of Scotland ministers I have sought to identify some ways in which the Church in Glasgow might move beyond the 'structural fundamentalism' where congregations have frequently been encouraged to continue to do the same thing, only more effectively (Shanks 1995:5). Instead I have suggested that the Church needs to develop ways of existence, which move beyond the prevailing structures and which are rooted in the Gospel priority for the poor. In making these steps the Church in Glasgow has

much to learn from: the wider global efforts to develop an urban ecclesiology of the poor; those who have attempted such a transition in the past; as well as from those currently engaged in practical ecclesiological action.

In seeking to consider how such an ecclesiology might be generated I am not exclusively concerned with the future of Church life in Glasgow's poorest communities but also with the life of the Church in Scotland. According to the liberation theologian, de Santa Ana:

> It [the Church] cannot be the Church without the poor, Christ being present in them. A church without the poor is a place that He has obviously left (de Santa Ana 1979:15)

It is to the different efforts of four churches to find ways to be the church among and with those struggling against poverty that I now turn.

Chapter Seven

Towards an Insight into the Urban Church

Introduction

In this chapter, through four case studies, I am addressing directly the research questions which are the focus of this piece of research. *What is the particular nature of the urban church in Scotland today? To what extent has the wider context of poverty shaped that church? What is an appropriate urban ecclesiology for Scotland?* In doing so, I draw substantially upon my findings from the preceding chapters which provide the framework for my analysis.

Although aware of the dangers of drawing generalisable conclusions from research based on limited data (see *Chapter Two*), the case studies have been carefully selected to enable the validity of some general conclusions about the nature of ecclesiology in urban priority area congregations serving Church of Scotland parishes in the west of Scotland.[1]

In analysing the data gathered through Focus Groups and a series of semi-structured interviews, I have also drawn upon my wider knowledge of the four congregations (and their parishes) in my role as the Church of Scotland's Priority Areas Support Worker. In three out of the four case studies I have also had, or currently have, a more direct role in the life of the local congregation. In Orbiston, I was the parish minister from September 1989 to February 2000. While there I was a founding member of Bellshill Theology Group and continued to act as an occasional adviser to the Board of Directors of Orbiston Neighbourhood

---

[1] The data is limited to Church of Scotland congregations although it may be relevant to other mainstream Christian denominations. Its focus is also on how members of the Church consider the role of the local congregation rather than upon community perceptions of church life.

Centre until May 2003. Since May 2003 (after the Focus Group and semi-structured interviews had taken place) I have provided support to the Management Committee of the Village Storytelling Centre. In the late 1980s (from September 1987 to September 1988) I served as the assistant minister in Castlemilk East as the final part of my training as a Church of Scotland minister and have continued, subsequently to have relatively close contact with the parish minister and a number of church members. In January 2005, after this research was concluded, I was appointed Interim Moderator at Colston Milton Parish Church.

Although I have argued previously (*Chapter Two: Methodology*) that this is a piece of 'committed' or 'incarnational research' (Richardson 2001:40) within the broad spectrum of liberation methodology and that, as such, neutrality is neither possible nor desirable in gathering and presenting the data from the case studies, I have taken steps to seek to ensure that it is verifiable.[2] Where additional information has been included which is not based on the qualitative or quantitative data gathered during the research data gathering process, I have attempted to highlight this with reference to footnotes.

All of the data gathered for the case studies was broken down into a series of codes, each of which was broadly similar across the four case studies. Reconstruction of the data is presented in two main parts. In the first part (*The community and the church*) I provide a broad narrative of the Case Study. In the

---

[2] All the Focus Groups and semi-structured interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. An assistant moderator was present at each of the Focus Groups.

second part, which is more analytical, I highlight a number of key issues pertaining to that particular situation. In some cases these issues are the same in each of the case studies (for example, buildings), whereas, in others (for example, sectarianism) they were particularly an issue within one although may well also have arisen in a number of others. Throughout the chapter, I seek to link my findings backwards to some of the key issues from preceding chapters (particularly *Chapters Five* and *Six*), highlighting where my local research moves this understanding forward or challenges current thinking. The value of this combined narrative and analytical approach is that it allows some comparisons to be drawn between the different case studies at a more generalisable level. I attempt to do this in the brief conclusion to the chapter.

In constructing the contextual framework for each case study, I draw on a range of pieces of quantitative data and especially upon information available as a result of the 2001 Census (SLIMS 2004, 2004a, 2004b & NM 2004a).

Each of the case studies can only present a snapshot of congregational life at a specific point (in this case, March-April 2003). In my introductory comments to each case study, as well as summarising the composition of the Focus Group, I give brief details of any significant developments that I am aware of since the point when the Focus Groups and interviews were conducted. With the exception of staff members (John Miller [Castlemilk]; Chris Park [Colston Milton]; Irene Gibson & Alan Mackenzie [Orbiston]; and Ann Merriless [Pollok]) the names of all those who participated in the case studies have been altered to protect their

236

anonymity. The names of the churches have been retained with the permission of the local congregations.

The Case Studies

Castlemilk East: 'At the heart of the parish'

The Focus Group was attended by nine members of Castlemilk East Parish Church. Two members of the group had been involved in the church throughout its history and over half had been involved for over twenty years. The minister, John Miller, joined the group towards the end of the evening to hear the summary of the meeting provided by the Assistant Moderator. Five interviews were subsequently carried out, including ones with John Miller and Irene Gibson. Irene, as well as being a member of Castlemilk East is also the Operations Manager at Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre (Bellshill). Her interview dealt with issues relating to both Castlemilk East and Orbiston. Since the time when the Focus Group and interviews were carried out part of the premises of Castlemilk East has been let out to a private childcare organisation. Plans to redevelop the sanctuary as a multi-purpose space are also under active consideration by the Congregational Board.

The community and the church.

Castlemilk, on the south east of Glasgow, was one of the four large peripheral housing schemes established by the city corporation from the 1950s onwards as a

partial implementation of the *Bruce Report* (1947). Built on historic land where a castle dating from the fourteenth century had once stood, the estate was bought from the Stirling Stuart family in 1938 and was intended initially as parkland. The new housing represented a marked improvement from the vastly over-crowded inner city slums.

> In the Gorbals, people had lived in some of the most crowded housing conditions in Europe, and most families had to share with several other families in using a toilet on the stair. In Castlemilk they became tenants of a house with several rooms, a separate kitchen, and a bathroom and inside toilet all their own. Small wonder that people in those early days spoke of Castlemilk as 'Paradise' (Miller 2003:2)

Although the population of the area never reached the anticipated 50,000,[3] Castlemilk still represented one of the largest housing developments in Europe with a population, at its height, roughly equivalent to the ancient Scottish city of Perth.

By the late 1960s, however, the area had begun to fall into serious decline (Tulle-Winton 1997:161). This was partly a result of poor initial design and build quality as well as unfair competition from the developing new towns, particularly East Kilbride, developed as a result of the *Clyde Valley Regional Plan* (see *Chapter Six*). However, the principal reason was the collapse of the city's heavy industrial employment base as part of the shift to a post-Fordist economy. In 1988 Castlemilk was one of four large public housing areas chosen as part of the *New Life for Urban Scotland* programme. The aim of the programme was 'to create in

---

[3] Official figures estimate that the population was 37,000 (1971 Census). However, according to many local people, and certainly within the Focus Group, the population was estimated to have been closer to 47,000.

Castlemilk a well functioning suburb, better integrated with the Glasgow conurbation but with more local jobs and services' (O'Toole *et al* 1995). In particular, it sought to reverse the rapid population decline which had blighted the area from the early 1970s, aiming to 'stabilise the population at around 20,000 and thereafter aim for growth towards 25,000' (*ibid*). By the time of the interim evaluation of the programme, this figure had been revised down to between fifteen and sixteen thousand. Attempts at improving the local economy have also proven to be largely unsuccessful (*ibid*). According to Mooney and Johnstone ten years after Castlemilk Partnership had been established, '87 percent of all school children in the area are eligible for clothing grants and 70 percent for free school meals, and ... 85 percent of the population are dependent on benefits' (Mooney & Johnstone 2000:177). At the time of the 2001 National Census unemployment was fifteen percent, over three times the national average (SLIMS 2004:5) and fifty five percent of those aged between sixteen and seventy four were economically inactive (NM 2004a). According to the 2003 Scottish Indicators for Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), Glenwood ward (which corresponds to the parish of Castlemilk East) was the tenth most deprived ward in Scotland and based on the 2004 SIMD data zones, ninety two percent of the population of Castlemilk are among the poorest five percent of the Scottish population (SE 2004).

> You go up the Drive [Castlemilk Drive, the main arterial route through the scheme] and its all nice, nice houses but it's still the same problems I had when I was growing up in Castlemilk. ... The problems, the problems havene gone away though they've went in doors. In the nice, lovely houses but it's still the same. And they've spent millions. There [was] a report in *The Times* [the

Glasgow evening newspaper] the other week that pointed out that the, the top ten most deprived wards... And the tenth ward was Glenwood, which is ours. So what's changed? So they've poured millions into this place and come out tenth (Graham, Focus Group).

The improvement of the housing stock in the area accounted for approximately seventy percent of investment over the initial ten years of the Castlemilk Partnership (O'Toole *et al* 1995). While physical improvements in the area, and the improvements in the quality of life which they have brought, have been welcomed – 'most folk now live in poverty in wind and watertight houses' (Jenny, Focus Group) – there is a recognition that these gains have been made at a high cost for many local residents with the breaking down of the scheme into smaller, often competing, units and the emotional and physical turmoil resulting from the decanting policy (Miller 2003:9). Part of the policy has been to introduce mixed-tenure housing into the area (McCrone 1991:935) with some houses in the new private developments costing up to £130,000 to buy. In the case of one development, as well as giving the area a new name – Carmunnock Grange as opposed to Ardencraig Crescent – attempts were also made to alter the postcode to give the impression that the new development is not a part of Castlemilk.

The failure of the *New Life for Urban Scotland* programme to substantially reduce the levels of poverty within the area, despite considerable levels of public investment over the last twenty years, is clear evidence of the inadequacy of the buildings-dominated area-based strategy which has been the hallmark of British

(and Scottish) urban regeneration policy and practice over the past generation (*Chapter Three*).

The parish population of Castlemilk East at the time of the 2001 National Census was 5,807, twenty nine percent of whom (1,710) regarded themselves as part of the Church of Scotland. Thirty six percent (2,083) were Roman Catholic, a hundred and thirty four belonged to other Christian denominations and ninety one were Muslim (reflecting, in part, the increased asylum population within the parish) (NM 2004a).

The church building is located on Barlia Terrace on what was initially envisaged as the main road through the scheme. However, subsequent changes in the plans resulted in the building, although visible to much of the parish, being in 'an appallingly unreachable place' (John, interview). This location has made it extremely difficult to develop the use of the building for wider community purposes as well as making it particularly vulnerable to vandalism. During the early 1980s and late 1990s substantial repairs and refurbishment of the buildings took place, both after considerable debate within the local congregation as to whether the maintenance of the existing building was appropriate or the responsibility of the local congregation. At the same time, the location of the building has developed an almost iconic quality for some, symbolising the role of the church in the wider community (Graham, Focus Group). It is recognised that the continuation of the church building in the parish at a time of substantial

demolition and new building has helped to give an important sense of solidity for many through a period of uncertainty and transition (Jenny, interview).

Although there is a desire to move beyond a primary focus on Sunday worship – 'we need to be more available to people' (Jenny, Focus Group) – there remains a strong emphasis upon the centrality of worship in the life of the congregation. In recent years, the church has developed a regular healing service involving members of the Kirk Session in the laying on of hands, which has shifted from an occasional evening activity to a regular part of the Sunday morning worship (Betty, interview). Although it can no longer regularly attract the huge numbers that characterised the initial phase of the congregation's life, the fact that one hundred and fifty people had been attending hastily organised prayers for Iraq (during the 2004 Gulf conflict) which were organised by the churches in the area, was taken as clear evidence that 'the church has some acknowledged connection with the big issues of life' (John, interview). In its increasing involvement with a healing ministry and the ability to develop appropriate 'apt liturgy' (Morisy 2004), Castlemilk East demonstrates an ability to engage with at least some aspects of the 'rooted hybrid spirituality' discussed in *Chapter Five.*

Both locally and nationally, Castlemilk East is synonymous with John Miller, who has been minister there since 1971. However, Castlemilk East is much more than 'John's Church' (Graham, interview). A strong, long-term ministry team over much of the last thirty years, comprising John Miller, Ann Lyall (a deacon) and George Pirie (a lay missionary), as well as a succession of students and

242

ministry and diaconal placements, has helped to develop substantial lay leadership within the congregation. In the future, there is the belief that the church will require to operate potentially without either premises or paid staff (Graham, Focus Group). John is currently working on that premise.

> I envisage trying to reduce the size of these buildings to something manageable and sustainable for the congregation. And to get people in the congregation so familiar with the things of the ministry that when I'm gone, and the church building is gone, there'll still be a congregation. ... I hope to see the congregation sort of free-standing by the time I leave. It could be two dozen people. It might be four dozen, but that, I think, is what the future of the church will be here. It's not going back to five hundred seated, seats filled on a Sunday. But if it is a vigorous group of people worshipping together and trying to address individual and communal issues, that will be the church of the future (John, interview).

The development and nurturing of skills within the congregation is a contributory factor for a number of people assuming positions of wider responsibility in the community. Three members of the Focus Group were employed in management positions within the voluntary sector (two with organisations within Castlemilk and the third in Bellshill). A large number of others from the congregation were also involved in leadership positions across a range of organisations, including School Boards, the Community Forum, Elderly Forum, Tenants' Associations and Sports Clubs. 'I don't think I've ever been to a meeting where there's no a member of this church on the committee' (Jenny, Focus Group). Although virtually every member of the church is involved in the wider community in some way (John, interview), this is not, with the exception of the Refugee Centre, in a representative capacity of Castlemilk East Church. Members are involved instead

243

as local residents committed to improving the quality of the area for all its residents as a practical expression of their faith. In this respect, the members of Castlemilk East are clearly illustrative of the sort of strong bridging social capital (Flint *et* al 2002) in their faith-enhanced commitment to the common welfare of the wider community.

> It does stem from wanting to take the life of the Gospel out into the community and be receiving people. Although I don't go, go to work with my church hat on, metaphorically speaking, it's because of my belief that I can do the work that I'm doing. And I believe because it's, it's work that God wants doing that I get the, the abilities to do it. Because twenty years ago I would never have thought I wanted to go and be a project manager. And I know it's because I've seen people as precious individuals, who need to be treated as such em, that that is reflected in how we work within the community (Jenny, interview).

Members of the church are also aware that, despite this involvement in community life, the church is no longer as high profile as it once was and that there is an on-going need to develop new patterns of working at a time when many of the traditional elements of church life, such as the Boys' Brigade, are regarded as substantially irrelevant.

The involvement of church members in community life gives Castlemilk East a local credibility and integrity, meaning that local people are content to think of it as their church. Many of the parish's residents have attended the Sunday evening Youth Club, which has operated in the church hall over the years. There is also a well established pattern whereby some of those in acute need of additional food and money make their way up to the church on a Sunday morning in order to see John Miller, or another member of the church, at the end of the service. While

there is a diversity of views about those who sit on the bench in the foyer of the church waiting to be seen, there is an overall sense that they belong as part of the church.

Members see the church as more inclusive towards those experiencing poverty than would historically have been the case, although it is acknowledged that barriers still exist, albeit that these become less pronounced once people have made the initial step to participate (Jenny, Focus Group). As the church contemplates the future, there is a degree of hope with the sense that the task of the local congregation in the area is likely to be even more essential than it has been in the recent past (Mary, interview). Although a closer structural relationship with the other Church of Scotland congregations in Castlemilk (Castlemilk West and, to a lesser extent, Carmunnock) is considered as almost inevitable, the continued need for a physical presence and worshipping community in the East Parish are seen as essential.

Emerging Issues

(1) Buildings

Although its physical isolation makes it an extreme example, Castlemilk East's building is nonetheless illustrative of 'the distortion of congregational life caused by the demands of an over-priced building' (John, interview). This distortion led some members during the early 1980s, when the building first needed substantial repairs carried out, to actively consider the abandonment of the premises until

such time as a more appropriate solution could be found, either funded from out with the area or of a nature that it would not be a burden on the congregation.

> [W]e consciously decided twenty odd years ago we weren't going to worry about money. This is a church that should be focusing on the gospel and the important things in life. And we took the step to free ourselves ... [a]nd to challenge the Church, to be saying, you know, 'Well, we havene got the money. We're no killing ourselves. We're no robbing our pensioners who cannae pay their own light bills just to pay ours' (Jenny, Focus Group).

For some, the subsequent decision in the late 1990s to re-roof the building represented an abandonment of these former principles, and they feel that the five years during which the loan was repaid distorted the activity of the church, making the raising of funds (rather than the building itself) the primary focus of congregational life.

> A lot of our energy now is going to how to pay the bills. How do we pay back the loan for the repairs on the church? You know, when we organise events, the main emphasis of that is then, 'Yeh, let's have a good time, but how much money can we raise out it?' Because we need that to pay, or keep the church going for the next year, or pay the stipend or whatever. You know, it's, it's all about. It seems that that's where the energies are going, and I feel that a lot of us feel that it's just a backward step we're taking because for being a congregation it has been very forward looking (Mary, interview).

None of those who were interviewed (or who took part in the Focus Group) gave the impression that church buildings were unnecessary. Indeed, even amongst those critical of the decision to carry out the roofing repairs, there was an acknowledgement that the maintenance of the building was symbolically important at a time of transition within the surrounding housing stock, highlighting the importance of the church as both a permanent building and agency in the midst of rapid urban transition.

Despite the problems associated with it – both in terms of location and design – or perhaps, in part, because of them, the church building and surrounding area, were seen to have a numinous value by members of the Focus Group (Betty, interview). This was expressed most fully by Graham:

> The heart of Castlemilk – the heart of the east parish. When the church was first built I don't know whether there was the choice of where it was to go but predecessors picked here because [of] the plans at the time. ... But when you think about it, we're at the top of Castlemilk East, to me personally, looking down on the parish. And the fact that back to King Arthur's time and it was the castle. And you're looking to the castle if anything goes wrong. ... And the church is on the top of the hill, on the green hill far away and things like that. And when Jesus was crucified it was on a hill. So we're on a hill. That's the way I look at it. We're in the heart, the heart of the east parish. And people can look up and what they see is the church, there on a hill, and on a green hill at that. It's just one person's view but it's the way I've looked at it (Graham, Focus Group).

The probability that those beyond the immediate congregation held a similar perspective is illustrated by the rather humorous story of Bob the dog in 'The Incomplete History of Castlemilk,' recounted by John.

> The story of Bob the dog eh, who was a black Labrador who died in front of the fire down in Barlia Terrace here. And it's the story of how his owner brought him up on a barrow. And he kept sliding off the barrow because he was very stiff at that stage, rigor mortis had set in. But eventually she came up, and dug a big hole beside the church, and this dear dog was dropped into the hole. And eh, now he is, there he is 'near to God and Mr. Miller.' I liked it very much. ... People sense that the area that the church is in has somehow been given special importance by the fact people come and pray. ... And so it's not just having *a* building, but somehow the location itself takes on an importance because of what happens here (John, interview).

The Castlemilk East Church building demonstrates many of the characteristics of Taylor's understanding of 'shrine' (Inge 2003:103) and of the way that people both within the congregation and beyond it ascribe a particular spiritual

247

significance to church buildings as 'holy space' (Hunt 2003). What is particularly significant here is that such qualities are ascribed to a facility which it is agreed was both badly constructed and in the wrong location.

Over the years the congregation has sought to critically engage with the problems associated with their building. The importance of it as sacred space has never been denied but it has been recognised that this must be evaluated against a range of other pressures which the local urban congregation faces. In the early 1980s this led them to consider the abandonment of the building whereas in the late 1990s, despite the opposition of some key individuals, the congregation chose to refurbish it as part of a wider buildings' strategy. In this they demonstrate an attempt to move beyond the normal, frequently sterile, debate around church buildings between keeping or abandoning church buildings in an attempt to find a practical and sustainable solution – both economically and spiritually – to the problems which they and many similar urban congregations face.

(2) Ministry Team and Evolving Leadership

The role of the ministry team is seen as integral in the development of Castlemilk East over the last thirty years. The skills and commitment of the primary team members (John Miller, Ann Lyall and George Pirie) are viewed as having had a major impact in the development of effective lay leadership within the congregation, with subsequent consequences for leadership within the wider community.

Members of the Focus Group spoke with a level of excited anticipation of a time when they, as 'ordinary punters' (Jenny, Focus Group), would assume overall responsibility for ministry in the area. It was noted that during the year when John was absent, fulfilling his duties as Moderator of the Church of Scotland's General Assembly, many of his functions were assumed by other members of the congregation. 'If anything, it made us stronger' (Betty, interview). Thus, although there is an acknowledged perception that across the wider area, Castlemilk East is often equated with John Miller, within the congregation there is a strong sense of self worth and ample evidence that the staff team have played a significant role in helping others to discover and develop their own gifts. The role of Ann in enabling others to assume responsibilities in worship and pastoral care was also highlighted.

> I think the capacity of John and Ann, I suppose George, meant that the church itself was able to do lots. ... [T]hat team, because it was so strong in their own abilities, they had the confidence to then reach out to the congregation and give people that opportunity to do these things (Mary, interview).

The longevity of the ministry team was also seen as important as was the fact that they lived locally. John identified the decision to move into the area as foundational to the effectiveness of his own ministry and critical to his increased understanding 'about the injustice of it all' (John, interview). Their long-term commitment to the church and community was seen as affirmative – 'we must be doing something right' (Graham, interview) – as well as giving an integrity to their position. The Focus Group members were adamant that the presence of John

during the course of the meeting would not have altered in any way what they would have said (Jenny, Focus Group). Graham additionally pointed to ways in which the ministry team had matured as a result of their involvement with the wider congregation and how, on occasions, the local congregation had helped those in staff leadership positions to change their practice and understanding (Graham, Focus Group and interview).

It is appropriate to consider the ministry team as fulfilling a function similar to that of pastoral theologians (Boff & Boff 1987:12), a function which is critical to the development of a locally-based, praxis-orientated theology and ecclesiology (see *Chapter Five*). Over the last thirty years the team have undertaken a 'conscientising function' (Freire 1996) within the church, helping people not only to assume fresh functions within the congregation but also to effectively analyse the church and community contexts and to assume wider leadership positions within them as a result. It is difficult to see how they could have exercised this function without the commitment to live in the local community and their long-term commitment to the area.

(3) Relating to the Community

Castlemilk East demonstrates a high level of identity with, and commitment to, the wider community, with a strong sense that the church and community have grown up together facing similar struggles (Graham, Focus Group). People

250

remain committed to the maintenance and development of this relationship as the basis for the ongoing relevance of the church.

> I see it being hopeful because, despite all the things, we are managing to keep the focus. ... [W]e need to be saying, 'Hey, we've got a load of kids oot here, who are hitting up every week. And we need. It's our problem because it's in our community.' And I think we need to own the place where we live and worship. And I'm hopeful that we will manage to survive within that. Em, I try hard not to be judgemental but I, I think it's lack of understanding that stops people from claiming the problem. That they see them as not, not ours. But every time the church hosts a funeral of a drug addict it's, it's our community (Jenny, interview).

Many of the members of the church, both within the congregation and the Kirk Session, are heavily involved in a wide range of leadership and support roles across the scheme. These functions are fulfilled, however, in an individual as opposed to a representative capacity. 'I think it's really done through the individual lives of people engaged in the community's existence' (John, interview).

The operating pattern in Castlemilk East avoids the potential dangers associated with the project-based culture outlined in *Chapter Five* as well as the suspicion that the church is seeking to establish an inappropriate power base in the local area through a representative involvement in different agencies.[4] It offers an important alternative to the centripetal model (Murray 1998:208) which has characterised a great deal of urban ecclesiology since *Faith in the City*, where congregations have been encouraged to develop specific pieces of work often operating out of the congregation's buildings – not a realistic option in the case of

---

[4] There is a sense in Castlemilk, as in many other local communities, that public funding agencies are reluctant to fund church-based organisations (Jenny, interview).

Castlemilk East – and dependent upon professional staff and successfully securing external funding for their ongoing viability. The 'incarnational model' undertaken by Castlemilk East may well be more sustainable in the long run for many urban churches seeking to operate with increasingly diminished resources and energy. Careful attention needs to be paid within it to enabling people to articulate their faith in the broader community context and to avoid the development of ecclesiastical structures which place additional pressures upon those involved. It is heavily dependent, however, upon those involved living locally, which is no longer the case for a significant number of urban congregations.

(4) People in Poverty

Many of those who form part of the regular worshipping congregation in Castlemilk East have experienced times of considerable hardship and poverty, although in the case of the Focus Group, this was primarily historical. There was a strong sense that the church would be failing in its duties if it excluded people in poverty – 'We couldn't call ourselves a church if someone who was poor couldn't come into our church' (David, Focus Group) – although it was also acknowledged that the organised pattern of church life, along with the perceived need to contribute financially, remained alienating and prevented some people from being a part of the congregation.

It's not that we exclude them here. But I think people can exclude themselves if they've not got. They would like to come. But especially if they know that the plate's going round and going underneath their noses. And somebody is going to stand there for a second or two ... and then realise, 'Oh no, oh no,' and move on. ... I think someone experiencing poverty would maybe keep away themselves (Jean, Focus Group).

Each Sunday, during or immediately after the service, a relatively small number of individuals make their way up to the church and sit on the bench in the foyer to see the minister (or another member of the congregation in his absence). Although it is recognised that people may come for a variety of reasons (Betty, Focus Group), they comprise primarily people living in sometimes extreme poverty and seeking additional financial and material support. The existence of this clearly defined group, which was discussed at length during both the Focus Group and subsequent interviews, gives a good opportunity to analyse in some detail the attitude of members towards those who are clearly living in poverty and to identify the extent to which the congregation has taken seriously a 'preferential option for the poor.'

Opinions about those who come and sit on the bench are mixed. According to John:

[T]here are some people who come out of the church having done their worship and see that row of people sitting on the bench, people with baseball bats, baseball caps turned round the wrong way, and some of them with dirty weans, people with scabby clothes and think, 'Look at these wasters.' And there's other people come out and give me money, that I can give to these people. So there's, there's all that going on ... inside the congregation (John, interview).

Among the Focus Group there was great sympathy towards this group although there is an acknowledgement that, in similar circumstances, many of them would have been reluctant to have sought support in such a public and potentially humiliating arena (Jenny, Focus Group and Betty, interview). The fact that this group of people are willing to come and wait on the bench is regarded as demonstrating not only their desperation but also their belief that the Church will not turn them away (John, interview). As far as members of the Focus Group are concerned those who come and sit on the bench are part of the Church even although there is a level of disappointment that they do not, on the whole, join the broader worshipping congregation.

> But I think, 'Yeh, they should be invited to join us.' Or if we have lunch after church, if they are sitting out there, they're, they are welcome to come in and have part of the lunch. And I don't think anybody should go like this, 'Huh. What are they doing in here?' Eh, I think they should be part of that. They're part of our church. Eh, I and a few others visit somebody in prison who never actually came into the service, but he came and sat on the seat. And Jamie has ended up in prison. We used to speak to him at the end of the service and we still visit him in prison because to me, he was part of Castlemilk East (Betty, interview).

In the UK, where extreme poverty, even in communities such as Castlemilk, immediately affects only a minority of people, and where politically and culturally there is a strong emphasis on blaming those in poverty for their circumstances, it is extremely difficult to conceive of situations in which the institutional churches might develop patterns of operating in which those in poverty are fully valued and their faith viewed as foundational for the wider Church. Instead, those in poverty, along with churches operating within deprived

254

communities are primarily perceived of as problems, even where, as in the case of Castlemilk East, they have a commitment to those in poverty as well as a strong sense of their own value and of their ability to make a positive contribution to the wider Church if they are viewed as equals (Jenny, interview).

> My guess is that the Church hasn't found a way to express that. And that even in relation to congregations from urban priority areas, the Church at large grades us down. But the people who come here, in poverty, think of themselves as children of God, and therefore part of the Church even if the Church doesn't recognise it. And similarly in these congregations in relation to the Church at large, for instance at the General Assembly, although the poorer churches are looked upon as a continuing problem, a little sector of the Church that creates problems for the major Church, the poor who belong to these churches know that they are the Church (John, interview).

Colston Milton: 'Hidden in a divided community'

The Focus Group was attended by seven members of Colston Milton Parish Church. Approximately half of the group were office-bearers who had been involved in the church throughout much of their lives. Three members, however, had become more active in recent years. Graham, a first-year ministry student, was present as an observer. The minister, Chris Park, attended the final part of the meeting to hear the summary from the Assistant Moderator, who is also a member of the local congregation. Three interviews were subsequently carried out, with Chris and two members of the Focus Group, one male and one female. After six years, the church building at Colston Milton has been sold to a housing developer. The Mission Group within the Kirk Session are currently considering

255

how links between the congregation and the wider community can be strengthened.

The community and the church

Milton, situated on the northern outskirts of Glasgow, was designated as a Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) in 2000 and forms part (sixteen percent) of the North Glasgow Regeneration Area. At the time of the 2001 Census, it had a population of 7,650, representing a decline of fifteen percent since 1991 (compared with a wider decline of five percent across the city over the same period) (SLIMS 2004a:14).

The area was developed in the early 1950s, with the initial population drawn substantially from the neighbouring inner-city communities of Cowcaddens, Possilpark and Maryhill. Far smaller than many of the public housing developments at the time, and with a considerably higher percentage of houses with their own back and front doors, Milton was a highly desirable and sought after area for its initial residents.

> [W]hen we came here first it was a high amenity area and to get a house in, a house in Milton was, eh, you had to be on its points. ... And many people wanted to come to Milton but couldn't come because they didn't have enough points. And we could quote so many of the young people who've moved from here and have, their lives have, you know, university graduates, who are now spread all over. And they came from Milton and there eh, there was a very high standard of people here (Helen, Focus Group).

The area continues to have one of the highest percentages of houses and bungalows, as opposed to tenements and high rise blocks of flats, of any of the

256

Social Inclusion Partnerships in the city. Since 1991 there has been a substantial growth in owner-occupied housing in the area, partly as a result of tenants exercising their right to buy their own homes, primarily among the best housing stock, while at the same time approximately half of the lower quality tenements have been demolished, accounting for the overall reduction of homes by six percent over the period (SLIMS 2004a:25). As a result the scheme is increasingly fragmented, representing a number of different communities rather than a single housing area.

> You have a lot of people who are well above the poverty line and you have one area, or certain areas in Milton, which look entirely different, as if it's a different scheme entirely from the other parts of Milton. ... I won't tell you where they are but people going around Milton can see the difference between some parts of the scheme and other parts of the scheme. And you can see just by looking at the cars, the garages, the gardens and the set up that there's more ... home owners (James, Focus Group).

The official unemployment level is high (sixteen percent), over three times the Scottish average. Only forty four percent (2,400) of those aged between sixteen and seventy four were in paid employment, while over a thousand were classified as long term sick (SLIMS 2004a:28-30). Unemployment is particularly high among those under twenty five (twenty three percent) and among lone parent families with dependent children, sixty nine percent of which have no-one in paid employment (*ibid*:32). Educational levels are also low, with sixty percent of the population without any recognised educational qualifications, considerably above the position in the city as a whole (forty one percent) and almost twice the Scottish figure (thirty three percent). Only nine percent of the scheme's

population are qualified to degree level, by comparison to the Scottish average of twenty six percent (*ibid*:33). The result of this is that even those in employment tend to have semi-skilled or unskilled work, jobs which are more susceptible to economic turndown and less likely to raise families out of poverty in the long term.

Although the area has benefited from its status since 2000 as a Social Inclusion Partnership, and a number of new community-based projects have been established, with others receiving welcome continued funding, the area has been deeply affected by a high level of political infighting within the local community. Community spirit has been low within the scheme over the last number of years.

> [T]here's maybe one thing ... that comes up quite often at meetings I go to anyway, and certainly probably Chris and other people, is the lack of community spirit in this housing scheme. I've certainly found that over the last ten, twelve years at least eh, people don't want to work the gether. They don't want to sit on the same committee together. They don't want to work for the betterment of their community. Eh, that saddens me that that doesne happen. But that's still going on just now. I'm sure it will go on for some time yet (Billy, Focus Group).

Colston Milton Parish Church was one of those affected by tensions, leading the congregation to withdraw an application to the National Lottery Charities Board for the development of its premises as a community facility following complaints in the local community. This proved an immense disappointment to the local congregation, as well as amongst some within the wider community, and undermined the church's planned strategy both for a more effective engagement

with the scheme and as a way of addressing the significant building problems that exist locally.

The congregation had a membership of one hundred and forty eight, with an additional twelve children regularly involved in Sunday worship, at the time when the Focus Group meeting and interviews were carried out (March – April 2003). Uniformed youth organisations, by comparison to other housing scheme congregations, remain relatively strong, with the Boys' Brigade in particular continuing to attract membership from across the social spectrum within the area. Church membership is relatively stable but has been declining gradually over the years. In common with many congregations, this membership is increasingly elderly, leading some to be concerned about the future viability of the congregation if the current trends cannot be reversed.

One of the marked changes in recent years has been the far higher level of involvement of the membership of the congregation in the leadership of the church, including the leading of worship, pastoral care and representing the church in activities and organisations within the wider community. This change is partly a result of a changed ethos within the Church more widely but is closely linked to the skills and personality of the current minister, Chris Park, who has successfully led the congregation through a turbulent time in its relatively recent past.

> I think you need a good leader. But not that he has to do everything. ... The idea that the poor man has to do everything. There's so many things that ministers do nowadays, but he delegates work and that is good. But he is there

259

at the helm and he's just. We've been so blessed with Chris, truly blessed. We were going through a very difficult time. Eh, I've been vacancy secretary three times and we, we just went through a very difficult time and good people were leaving which saddened us greatly. Em, and then Chris came and very quietly and subtly he changed things. And you didn't realise it was happening until it just seemed to slip in. And eh, yes, we've been truly blessed with Chris. And I hope we all, well we do, we all support him (Helen, interview).

Despite tensions and divisions in the past (James, Focus Group), it is felt that Colston Milton has always been a friendly congregation, although it is now far more open, particularly towards those struggling in the local community. Whereas the initial residents of the scheme 'were church orientated' (James, Focus Group), it is recognised that the church now requires to engage far more effectively with the wider community. Effective work through the schools has helped to form a bridge between the church and the scheme and a few individuals from the congregation, along with the minister, are involved in a number of local community organisations in either an individual or representational capacity.

For four years the congregation was able to secure additional funding to employ an arts-based youth worker who, among other activities, was responsible for the development of an annual church-community musical. This model of operating – where everyone was involved in the project from the outset – was particularly successful in integrating young people more regularly involved in church activities with those from the wider community and led to a number of young people, and their families, becoming more involved in congregational life. However, following the end of the project, with the local leadership in the congregation already heavily committed, it was not possible to sustain the work

and most of the people involved have subsequently drifted away (Chris, interview).

It is felt that, at both a national and local level, the Church has failed to communicate the changing ethos of congregational life and many people continue to perceive the Church as middle class and exclusive. This, according to members of the Focus Group, is particularly a problem for churches within the Reformed tradition, with a belief that the Roman Catholic Church has always more effectively engaged with those in poverty.

> You know, I know lots of poor people around here that go to chapel on a Sunday. The type of people I would like to see going to church on a Sunday. Eh, you know, so there's a barrier there somewhere. The barrier is no there with the Roman Catholic Church. But the barrier is there wi, with certainly the Church of Scotland, and maybe with the Methodist Church. And I, I mean, I cannae, I cannae gie you an answer to it. I can only. Well the only answer I can gie you is, in my opinion, it's because it's been like a class barrier. ... I mean you even go back centuries when you think of the Church, you see the old pictures you know. You didnae see the wee old man wi' the raggie clathes and the walking stick going into church. It was always upright people, you know, staid people going into church (Billy, interview).

A small group of committed individuals from within the congregation are involved in a monthly ecumenical service, and the future of the church in Milton is clearly understood as involving greater co-operation between the different churches in the area. At the same time, there continues to be a high level of religious intolerance, both within the area and also, to a lesser extent, in the congregation (Betty, Focus Group). While the view was strongly expressed that the majority of people in Milton were Roman Catholic, according to the 2001 Census results, thirty eight percent (2,904) of the population classified themselves

261

as Roman Catholic as opposed to thirty one percent (2,384) who claimed allegiance to the Church of Scotland and a further two percent (184) who belonged to another Christian denomination (NM 2004a). Significantly, however, eleven percent (860) did not answer the question, twice the Scottish average, which may reflect, in part, the continued sectarianism within the area (SLIMS 2004a:19).

The original church building was opened in 1952 as a hall-church in one corner of the scheme, largely surrounded by houses, making it virtually invisible to any who don't know of its whereabouts. This has meant that many people, although living in Milton, travel to other churches in the surrounding area including Bishopbriggs and Springburn. It is felt that the original location of the church reflected the initial division of the area, with the Roman Catholic Church building a chapel in the opposite part of the scheme. However, the subsequent decision to build a second chapel more centrally has made the position of Colston Milton even more peripheral.

An adjacent sanctuary was built and opened in 1964, but poor initial design and build and the high cost of maintaining the building, forced the congregation to withdraw from it in 1999, and to relocate all of its activities back into the original hall-church. Largely because of its location, the sanctuary has proven particularly difficult to sell, and for the subsequent five years its poor state of repair has acted as a painful reminder of a particularly difficult episode in the congregation's life (Helen, interview). As they contemplated the future, the members of the Focus

Group expressed a strong belief in the continued importance of a building as a visible sign of the Church's presence within the local community. They were particularly enthusiastic about the possibility of a future centrally-located facility, shared by other denominations, acting as a facility for the whole community as well as a place for worship (Helen, Focus Group).

It was recognised that this vision was more aspirational rather than particularly realistic, although it was felt with faith to be possible if the wider denominational hierarchies could be persuaded. 'God willing, it's the future, it's the way to go' (Betty, Focus Group).

Emerging Issues

(1) Buildings

The Focus Group meeting and subsequent interviews with some of those involved in Colston Milton Church illustrate, in a number of respects, the ambiguous set of attitudes which can exist within the urban congregation in respect to its buildings. Considerable frustration was expressed that the buildings had been located in the wrong place, at the very edge of the scheme and almost invisible within the broader environment (Betty, Focus Group). Although the move back into the original hall-church for Sunday worship is regarded as successful, it is acknowledged that for many the continued presence of the abandoned 1960s sanctuary is 'really upsetting' (Helen, interview), particularly for those who were heavily involved in its construction and early history. Pride in the building has

also served as a barrier in the past to the local community as the following episode recounted by Helen demonstrates:

> And this happened sadly in our church a good number of years ago I would say, where we met this person ... at the shops. 'Why don't you come to our Church.' And she said, 'Oh no. Its not for me. And I've got the baby.' And I said, 'We have a creche.' And I'd be delighted to come. You come with me and eh, you can sit beside me.' And, of course, the morning of the thing, and this actually happened at a youth parade, the lady came with the pram, came in with the pram and our church officer shouted, 'Take all prams out of here. Our floors are polished and you'll spoil the floors.' And eh, very, a little thing can spoil the whole atmosphere. There was the woman willing to come, and then being turned away. And we must forget about the polished floors and fancy curtains or whatever you have to welcome people in (Helen, interview).

At the same time, the building still retains a special atmosphere. Helen recounts another episode where a teenage girl had asked to meet her in the church to discuss fears she was having about her mother following the break up of her parents' marriage. 'She would never meet me in my own house, but she wanted to meet me at the Church and that's where she felt comfortable' (Helen, interview). Similarly, Billy, who, as an adult, only started attending the Church in his fifties, points to the importance of buildings both within the Christian faith and others.

> Well, I think buildings certainly matter. It's a, it's a kind of focus for any religion, I think, you know. Eh, whether you be Muslim, Christian, or whatever. Eh, I think a building is a focus for religion, it's a place that people identify eh, as a place for worship and where they can go and atone for their sins or, you know, pray for other people. Or maybe just go on a Sunday for satisfaction you know. Maybe to be nearer, nearer to God even (Billy, interview).

These episodes resonate closely with the findings of Hunt (2003) that religious buildings continue to hold a strong spiritual value, even for those who are no longer regularly a part of the worshipping congregation. In Billy's case the

264

spiritual quality of the building has been enhanced further since he started regularly attending worship.

> Certainly over the eh, last, I think its six years, it's six years now since I joined the church, it's eh, it's been very important to me in lots of ways. No' only to, eh, what's the word I'm looking for, no' only to enhance my faith, if you like. Because I feel it's one thing sitting in the house praying, and in the house reading the Bible, that kind of thing, but to be in amongst other people and to worship, amongst other people, gies me, makes me feel closer to God. And makes me feel a better Christian, although I don't necessarily think that all people who go to church are good Christians. Certainly not. I'm certainly no one! But I feel it makes me a slightly better one, going to church. Eh, I feel closer to God, obviously, eh going no obviously, but I mean, personally, I feel closer to God going to church. Eh, it gies me a good feeling, you know. When I, when I miss church I feel guilty (Billy, interview).

This indicates that for Billy the importance of the building is related to the current as opposed to any historical congregation. While neither James, the Session Clerk, nor Chris, the minister, regard a building as essential – 'My own opinion is ... that it's only once you've been in, a member of a church for a while that you realise that the church is not the building' (James, Focus Group) – both recognise the importance of a physical presence for many within the community and congregation. Chris identifies two distinct groups: those who 'see the church as a holy place' where the presence of God is not dependent upon their own goodness and faith; and those 'where it's more church is a safe place ... [s]o it's the coming together that creates the holy place and that's flexible and moveable' (Chris, interview). While his personal preference is for the latter, he affirms the validity of the former, particularly in a working class environment, where there is a strong sense of independence and where people often feel undervalued.

265

But their faith is real. Most of them, I 'm sure, or many of them. Their commitment is real and sustained. But they need a structure, or a place where they can come and not have to actually earn a sense of belonging. Just by being there, they belong. And a building, with a traditional use of, as worship provides that. Such that you can even sit in the back row, not speak to anyone and slip out at the end, and still feel that you are part of that congregation (Chris, interview).

As they look to the future, the Focus Group are united in their desire for a new church building, centrally located within the area and, significantly, given the strong sectarian opinions which are expressed elsewhere within the conversations, a facility which should be shared with the Roman Catholic Church in the area. This building is envisaged as a community as well as a worship space in a pattern that resonates closely with Storrar's 'sacred temple' paradigm (see *Chapter Five*). It also strongly parallels the congregation's previously unsuccessful efforts to redevelop their current facilities as a wider community space.

We thought about a community church, which was at the heart of Milton and a community church not just for religious side but was there for everybody to use. Em, and round this church, community church, would be our school which all leads into the community church, a play area, playing fields, the homes, the houses, the children and yet it's still the centre and the heart of Milton (Helen, Focus Group).

(2) Ecumenism and Sectarianism

In its 1968 Report to the Church of Scotland Home Board, the Gorbals Ministry Group identified the gulf which existed between the Protestant and Roman Catholic communities as one of the principal reasons why they had failed to develop a model of church life which integrated more effectively with local residents (J. Harvey 1987:106). Thirty five years on, sectarianism, based on the

266

evidence of Colston Milton, remains a major issue and one which continues to undermine an effective Christian witness.

While there are good ecumenical relations with St Augustine's, in marked contrast to the earliest days in Milton (James, Focus Group), there remains little or no contact with the chapel more centrally located in the scheme, where the parish priest is considered to be opposed to closer working relationships. There is a regular monthly ecumenical service attended by approximately forty five people in one of four venues across Milton, and the annual World Day of Prayer attracts up to a hundred and sixty people. However, it is acknowledged that closer working relationships would be bitterly opposed by some members of both denominations. Referring to the Focus Group's aspiration for a new ecumenical, church-community facility in Milton, Betty comments:

> I mean this, this is, this is a great concept and we are all sitting here and in our hearts we know that it is great but it's a pipe dream because we both know that on each side of the fence there are people who would never, never want to come together (Betty, Focus Group).

Joint worship within any new facility was regarded as highly unlikely, although there was some hope that it might become more possible at a future point, along with a broader inter-faith development (Billy, interview).

The Roman Catholic hierarchy was considered to be primarily responsible for much of the continued bigotry within the city, and across Scotland, with its continued support for denominational schooling being held as the central reason for ongoing religious intolerance.

You know, I just feel that the Roman Catholic Church does, does not want to move at all in any direction, does not want to give up any ground. They don't want to ch, mix vis-à-vis the schools, for example. ... I went to school and eh, we used to fight with the Catholic schools, for example. It still happens. ... But when that happens in the name of religion wi' kids under ten, I think everybody, including the Roman Catholic Church, should sit down and say, 'Wait a minute. What can we do about this? How can we stop this?' You know, 'How can we stop the bigotry?' You know, they're asking football clubs to stop the bigotry. But the bigotry doesne start with the football clubs. It starts with primary schools. It starts with the churches, in my opinion (Billy, interview).

There was little, or no, acknowledgement that the Protestant community bore any responsibility for the historical, or continued, sense of marginalisation felt by many within the Roman Catholic community.

In recent years there has been a marked increase in awareness of the levels of sectarianism which continue to exist in Scottish society (in the west of Scotland, in particular) and a number of high profile commitments on the part of the Scottish Executive to address these. Although there has been an acknowledged rise in the level of ecumenical activity, as demonstrated by the activities within the churches in Milton, it is clear that an atmosphere of 'cultural sectarianism'[5] continues to pervade local communities. Any practical ecclesiology which seeks to engage with urban Scotland will require to develop operating models which more effectively understand these ongoing issues, and which seek to address them in an active spirit of reconciliation. According to Forrester: 'Unless churches and

---

[5] One of the significant changes over the last thirty years has been the marked decline in religious attendance but without, I would suggest, a similar reduction in religious intolerance. As such, I believe that the term 'cultural sectarianism' more adequately reflects current context where sectarianism continues but is more culturally-based than attendance-based. I believe that people increasingly identify themselves negatively rather than positively ('I'm not a Catholic' as opposed 'I'm a Protestant.')

faith communities of different traditions and different contexts can demonstrate that they are committed to a costly and enriching process of reconciliation among themselves, they cannot expect the broader public to take their rhetoric of reconciliation seriously' (Forrester 2003).

(3) Relating to the Community

Colston Milton identifies the requirement for a higher level of involvement as one of the particular characteristics of a church operating within a priority area parish (James, Focus Group). In its approach it demonstrates three distinct, but related, models of engagement. At a base level there is the involvement of its members within the daily life of the scheme, 'which is substantial ... as salt and light, being a good neighbour' (Chris, interview).

At a second level, the church relates organisationally to a range of other organisations and institutions active within the local community, both statutory and voluntary. In some cases, for example, with the Wanderers' Youth Club and one of the newly established Local Housing Associations,[6] individual members are involved in their own capacity as local activists and residents. In others, such as the schools and the local Volunteer and Advice Centre, members, including the minister, represent Colston Milton church.

---

[6] Local Housing Associations (LHAs) have been established throughout the city as a result of the decision, in April 2002, to transfer ownership of all Glasgow City Council housing stock to the Glasgow Housing Association (GHA).

While some of this representational function is historical, there is anecdotal evidence that such involvement is increasing as the potential of churches to play an effective role within community regeneration is increasingly recognised (Flint et al 2002) and the Scottish Executive seeks to encourage a greater role for faith communities in regeneration.[7]

The third way in which the local church has sought to engage with the scheme has been through the development of project-led pieces of work. In the case of the youth arts project, this proved highly successful and effective for as long as the appropriate staff and funding were in place. However, limited local resources, along with the considerable commitment required to sustain the existing youth provision within the church, has meant that the work was not continued in the longer term.

The plan to develop the church premises as a major community facility in partnership with other community organisations was a significantly more ambitious project. Its failure to materialise has resulted in a sense of considerable disappointment and bitterness, both within Colston Milton church and elements of the wider community, as well as effectively blunting the congregation's intended strategy to more effectively engage with the local area. According to Chris:

---

[7] During 2004, along with others from the *Priority Areas Committee* and the *Scottish Churches Social Inclusion Network*, I have been involved in meetings with a range of Executive ministers and civil servants to consider how the role of churches/faith communities in urban regeneration can be further developed.

Had that gone ahead, as we hoped and envisaged it might, our involvement would have been quite, more significant. And had that building been taken over as a base for an After School Care, we envisaged a number of things evolving from that and the fact the two being physically next to each other, the church premises would have been available maybe for Mother and Toddlers, developing out of em, the Out of School Care, and other things of a general kind of Family Centre nature. The sky could have been the limit had that gone ahead, and I think we'd really put our eggs in that basket in terms of the church and the community working together and being a ... partnership. So a lot of disappointment that hasn't happened (Chris, interview).

Colston Milton demonstrates some of the problems associated with a 'project-based model' of community engagement. The art-based youth work was an additional piece of work taken on by the congregation for as long as funding was available. It was obviously considerably appreciated but, when funding ended, there was no one individual, or group, available to assume the role which the paid arts-worker had fulfilled. Chris acknowledges that it might have been possible to continue the work had it replaced some of the traditional youth work also functioning within the congregation.

[L]eadership, after Alex, became a problem because all our young adults are involved in the BB and Girls Brigade. So that was an issue. It would have meant stopping something that they were doing in order to commit themselves to this. And that hasn't happened. I didn't push for it to happen because I'm not quite sure that their hearts would have been in it. Em, I think their commitment, which has been good to the uniformed organisations, we would lose something very good. But that might be the way forward. There might come a time when we need to call a day on that in order to channel our resources into something that would have a wider em, effect on the community (Chris, interview).

The problems associated with the failed attempt to redevelop the church building were external to the congregation, and it is difficult to see what the local church could have done differently. The price of failure was very high, particularly

271

among the leadership within the congregation, and was the source of considerable anxiety and turmoil. The project-based model, spawned by *Faith in the City* (see *Chapter Five*), often presumes that the wider community will be receptive to a greater level of involvement on the part of the Church. In this it has underestimated just how marginal the Church has become in many urban communities. In some local communities, particularly when there is a long history of local political animosity or sectarianism, alternative strategies may require to be devised.

(4) People in Poverty

Historically it is recognised that people in Milton who were struggling socially or financially were not always made welcome in the church where the focus had sometimes been on the development and maintenance of perceived high standards (Helen, interview). Such attitudes, however, were felt to be changing within the church and gradually also within Milton.

> I agree with what Billy said. What he said there about some people in the community feel that it's maybe, kind of like, better off folk that go to church, em. But I think more folk in our community now are realising that it's not. I think slowly, and gradually, it's kind of, that they don't think that anymore. There probably is still quite a few, em, but I think in this community certainly it is getting a bit better (Kate, Focus Group).

The high cost of uniforms and capitation fees, particularly in the Boys' Brigade, continues to act as a barrier against some young people from the scheme becoming involved in church organisations.

272

While open to people in poverty, and with a clear understanding of God's special concern for those who are struggling – 'well, he wouldnae be a good God if he didnae' (Billy, interview) – the congregation continues to have relatively few people within it who have a direct recent experience of the struggles of poverty and it is felt that this situation is unlikely to change in the short-term future.

> I mean, in our situation, where we are just now, I would say that we, we are not the church of the poor. We have folk like Billy, and one or two others, who live very comfortably in both worlds, who would seem to belong more in the other world, you know, and be very much at home in it, and yet have found a home in the church. And I think we would need people like that to become more influential in what we do and how we do things, if the church would become, would change its nature to become a church of the poor. But I don't see that happening in the short term because, numerically we're not a big church but the numbers we have, have grown up in the church the way its been. And while they are warm and accepting people, I can't see it changing significantly at the moment. ... Em, I don't feel that we are a church of the poor. And I wish we could be (Chris, interview).

Colston Milton could be described as a church with a real, and increasing, passion for those struggling against poverty. In recent years it has sought, with mixed results, to reposition itself to engage far more effectively with its local community. However, in what is a mixed community, economically, culturally and in terms of religious faith, it is extremely difficult to conceive how those struggling against poverty can come to form the driving force within the local church, particularly in a context where the perception that the Church is primarily for the 'hoity-toity' (Billy, interview) remains strong. One possibility considered is the development of the sort of 'parallel church' as advocated by Harvey (1987) and Forrest (2000), held in the Wanderers' Youth Centre and led by some of

273

those who have strong cultural links to those who are marginalised within the area.

> And I do kind of wonder whether the only real way forward, in the short term, would be perhaps some kind of parallel church. Some gathering that met, say in The Wanderers Youth Club on a Sunday afternoon or an evening through the week. Or on what was other people's territory, where they felt at home. And something quite new and indigenous could develop from that location. With people like Billy taking a lead in this. And others who occasionally come to church, or have expressed an interest, to be formative in how it's done (Chris, interview).

Significantly Chris was the only person to mention this possibility. Others seemed keen to continue to try to find ways to assimilate those who were struggling into the prevailing structure.

Orbiston: 'Liberation Theology in Practice'

The Focus Group was attended by ten members of Orbiston Parish Church, including the minister Alan McKenzie. Seven members were female and three were male. Two were teenagers (still at school) who had been involved in the church over the previous four years. Although some had been part of Orbiston Church for over thirty years, none had been involved in the congregation since its foundation. The Group included three directors of Utheo Ltd., the company which manages Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre, and a further two who had been directors previously including one who had also been a member of the Theology Group. Interviews were subsequently carried out with three members of the Focus Group (two female and one male) as well as with Irene Gibson, Operations

Manager at Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre, who is also a member of Castlemilk East Parish Church. Since the Focus Group meeting and interviews a number of members of the Kirk Session have been involved in lay leadership training. An extended lease agreement for the property has also been agreed between Utheo Ltd. and the local congregation, a process which has highlighted how, despite the pride many take in Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre, it is viewed as distinct from the local church and, on occasions, even competing with it.

The community and the church

Orbiston is a post-war housing scheme, built to the south of the Lanarkshire town of Bellshill, approximately ten miles east of Glasgow city centre. It has a population of 6,078 (NM 2004a), a significant proportion of which is part of North Motherwell Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP).[8] Unemployment is almost twice the national average at seven percent and forty three percent of those aged between sixteen and seventy four have no formal educational qualifications (*ibid*). Seventy eight percent of the housing stock is rented with sixty three percent of tenants in receipt of Council Tax and Housing Benefits (NLC 2002). Although an area of considerable deprivation, Orbiston lacks the intensity of poverty associated with the other case studies, particularly Castlemilk and Milton. While Orbiston was on the original 1991 Urban Priority Areas List, it is not included on either the 2004 National Mission Priority Area List or the

---

[8] The area designated Orbiston within North Motherwell SIP is different from both the Church of Scotland parish boundaries and the council ward of the same name.

Supplementary List, which comprise the eighty most economically deprived parishes in Scotland at the time of the 2001 Census (NM 2004).

The economic and social changes which have taken place in Bellshill over the last two hundred years, in many respects, mirror the shift from the dominance of agriculture through heavy industry to the increasingly post-industrial composition of Scotland's central belt. At the beginning of the eighteenth century Bellshill was little more than a farming village of a few hundred people. The subsequent development of the mining industry, and thereafter of steel manufacturing, dominated the landscape until the late 1980s when the rundown and eventual closure of Ravenscraig (and Clydesdale) steelworks decimated the local economy.

> In the few years since then, Bellshill, like much of North Lanarkshire, has been marked by high unemployment, low morale, social deprivation and the things it carries in its wake – young people with not much purpose or hope in their lives, alcohol and drug abuse, family breakdown and a general air of malaise. There have been some small signs of an upturn in the job situation; a large supermarket distribution plant, plans for a new industrial initiative, jobs in tourism and leisure. But many of these are low-paid jobs, or in fields for which the skills are too specific to make a large difference. For many, especially school leavers and those over forty, the prospects are still bleak (Galloway 1988:28-29).

The influx of Roman Catholic Irish immigrants into the area during the time of the potato famines, and thereafter of Polish and Lithuanian migrants during the first half of the twentieth century, raised religious tensions within a strongly Protestant community and levels of sectarianism across Lanarkshire remain high. At the time of the 2001 Census thirty nine percent of the population of Orbiston

(2,384) associated themselves either with the Church of Scotland (2,160) or another Reformed denomination (224) and thirty four percent (2,078) with the Roman Catholic Church (NM 2004a). There is some evidence that while many older people continue to feel that there are still clear divisions between the two religious communities, among young people the tensions are primarily territorial (Irene, interview).

Many of the original tenants of Orbiston came up to the scheme from Bothwellhaugh (known locally as 'The Palais' after Hamilton Palace Colliery), a small mining village of four hundred and fifty houses which fell into disrepair after the closure of the associated pit in 1959. The remains of the village were eventually flooded to make way for the creation of Strathclyde Loch in the 1970s. Residents of 'The Palais,' however, continue to meet regularly, symbolising the strong sense of local identity which is characteristic of the area. Lanarkshire has some of the lowest mobility rates in Scotland (Galloway 1999:42).

Earlier in the area's history, Orbiston was also the base for a radical experiment in communal living. Founded in 1825, the community had two hundred and ninety members who ran an iron foundry as well as cultivating an extensive vegetable garden and orchard. The experiment, nicknamed 'Babylon' by its opponents, was short-lived, lasting only until its founder Abram Combe died in 1827, but its memory lives on in the names given to some of the streets in the

modern housing scheme, including Liberty Road, Community Road and Babylon Drive.[9]

During the 1990s the Jewell scheme, the economically most disadvantaged part of Orbiston, was substantially refurbished, with some of the poorest flats demolished and replaced with private houses, and the remaining flats substantially refurbished. A new thirty unit amenity housing complex was also built adjacent to Orbiston Parish Church, its residents supported on a daily basis by staff from Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre.

Opinions varied within the Focus Group as to whether there had also been a growth in community spirit at the same time as the housing stock had been improved and a number of new amenities, including the Neighbourhood Centre, had been developed.

> I think people really want to be more involved now than they were years ago. There's more feeling between people now, you know. I think people are more concerned about each other than many, several years ago. Not all people but there is that theme where I think people are more concerned about each other than they were (Margaret, Focus Group).

> ... I'm not sure I would agree with you. .... I mean I can remember away back in the days when my mother stayed down the road there in the tarans. And they could leave their doors open. And in and out of each other's houses. I mean, people were more concerned for each other then than they are now (Cathie, Focus Group).

Orbiston Parish Church, founded in 1954, met initially in a wooden hut, prior to the opening of a hall-church in 1955. The building is centrally located within the

---

[9] The existence of a historical libertarian community was investigated by the Theology Group and it acted as a considerable encouragement to members of the group during their plans to develop Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre.

scheme, although adjacent to a large shale bing, which effectively splits the area into two parts. In common with other housing scheme congregations at the time, the early days of the church were marked by considerable activity and high attendances at Sunday worship. Since the late 1960s, however, membership has fallen consistently and it is recognised that the Church no longer occupies the central place in community and family life that it previously had. In 2002 the church had two hundred and seventy members. In 2001 it was linked with Macdonald Memorial Church in the east end of Bellshill, having previously been linked with St Andrew's Church, (now part of the United Free Church of Scotland).

On the whole the congregation considers itself to be open and welcoming and is thought to relate well to the wider community in Orbiston. There is a strong sense of support for one another and an acknowledgement of how important relationships within the church, including relationships with the minister, have been through times of hardship, particularly bereavement. Although it may have been the case in the past, it is not felt that people in poverty would now feel excluded from the congregation. Considerable efforts have been made to encourage new people into the church and, in particular, to encourage those previously associated with the congregation to return. It is felt that these efforts have proven largely unsuccessful. This failure is understood as part of the wider malaise in the Church of Scotland and of changes in how society views institutional religion (Gordon, Focus Group), in which non attendance at church

has become as habit-forming for many as attendance had been in a previous generation (Gary, interview). Although the vision remains for a strong, healthy congregation at the centre of the community, there is a recognition that it is currently mainly elderly and is likely to struggle to survive in the future.

> Oh dear, have we got a future? That's the question. One lady, every Friday, when we are cleaning the church, she'll say, 'What's going to happen when we are no here? Who's going to do all these things? I say, 'There'll be somebody to follow us. Have faith, there'll be somebody. Maybe we're keeping them out.' I don't believe that but I've got a feeling that they don't want to barge in. ... So we're crawling like snails. But the future? I doubt. I don't know. I've sometimes got great doubts. I've got high hopes but great doubts (Jenny, interview).

The design of the building, and comfortable seats, helps to make worship more flexible and to encourage a greater sense of community among the worshipping congregation on a Sunday (Alan, Focus Group). The congregation has been open to changes in worship over the years and, although some hanker after a more traditional format, on the whole members of the Focus Group thought of Orbiston Church as progressive (Barbara, Focus Group).

In 1995 Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre was opened in the premises of the church, specifically expanded for the purpose. In 2004 the Centre employed twenty one members of staff, five of whom lived in Orbiston and a further five within the wider Bellshill area. Through a wide range of services for all ages, including day care, out of school care, creative arts and a community café, the Centre regularly caters for over 1,200 people per week. There is a strong pool of fifty one volunteers, two thirds of whom live locally. Orbiston Neighbourhood

Centre is dependent upon a wide range of voluntary and public sector funding, including the National Lottery and North Motherwell Social Inclusion Partnership. In 2003/04 it had an income of £571,563.

The centre was established as a result of the work of Orbiston and St Andrew's Theology Group, set up in 1991, and using the methodological principles of Liberation Theology. It has a strong spiritual ethos, with five of its nine directors appointed by the Kirk Session, and a commitment to '[i]dentify the needs of the most disenfranchised in our community and develop services to meet their needs' (Utheo Ltd. 2003). The Centre is highly regarded locally (Williams 2000:53) and its development and practice continue to attract considerable interest in the Church of Scotland and beyond as an exemplar not only of a church-related community organisation but of an attempt to develop a 'new model of church' (Hinton 2002).

Members of the Focus Group were overwhelmingly positive about the contribution of the Centre to the community of Orbiston, for example, in helping to address historical sectarian divisions (Barbara, Focus Group). In the interviews, however, it was acknowledged that tensions existed between the Centre and the local church with some members, including a number of office-bearers, sharply critical of its presence (Jenny, interview). For some there is a clear distinction between the Neighbourhood Centre and the church, both legally and practically, while for others the Centre epitomises what the work of the church in a community like Orbiston should be (Susan, Focus Group).

Emerging Issues

(1) Buildings

A significant number of churches within priority area parishes have been highly successful in the opening up of their premises to address a wide range of community needs. Orbiston is a high profile illustration of this approach (Galloway 1998; Williams 2000). The church buildings are well located, and the development of the Neighbourhood Centre has meant that they have become a focal point in Orbiston. Members of the Focus Group spoke about the special atmosphere which exists within the Neighbourhood Centre. This was attributed to the dual usage of the building.

> Possibly the fact that it is a church building creates an atmosphere even before you walk in the door, I don't know. I don't know how many people I've actually taken round there, either to sit in on daily worship or to go in for lunch or even just to see round the place. They're immediately struck by the atmosphere. Whenever you walk in the door (Cathie, interview).

This suggests that for some at least, despite the fact that there is no dedicated sanctuary within Orbiston Parish Church, there remains a wider sense of the numinous within it. However, among some residents, the building is no longer primarily thought of as the church. Williams identified that there was a wide divergence of understanding within the local community of the relationship between the church and the Centre (Williams 2000:57) indicating that for many the building has ceased to be viewed locally as a church building. This impression was confirmed by this more recent research. According to Gary:

282

I think if you went up today and you walked [into] that room where everyone was eating their dinner. And you said to them, 'What do you think of this place?' they would turn round and tell you the food was very good. But if you asked them to think a bit deeper about why it was provided and the ideas behind it, I very much doubt if you would get very many ... legit answers (Gary, interview).

Morisy (2004) identifies how churches, in developing their premises as wider community facilities, can often convey mixed messages to the wider area, leading some to assume that the local church has largely ceased to exist, or has been subsumed within a wider community facility (see *Chapter Five*). The case of Orbiston seems to confirm some of these concerns and of the requirement to develop and maintain an explicit faith-focus within the premises if the original intention to develop the church building for missional purposes is to be realised. Notwithstanding these concerns, there was strong support within the Focus Group for the use of the building as the Neighbourhood Centre. It was felt that this had been the design purpose of the original church premises in Orbiston (Jenny, interview) and that it was 'the way a church should be' (Cathie, interview). At the same time, it was acknowledged, particularly within the interviews, that not all members of the congregation shared the Focus Group's enthusiasm for the Neighbourhood Centre. Some, including a number of office-bearers, continued to view it as an imposition upon the church.[10]

Some of our own church members, some of our own elders resent the Centre, which is sad really. You would think that they would try to see what was going on. ... All they see is, 'We've lost a lost of space. We've lost a lot of storage

---

[10] When plans for Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre were being developed, three congregational meetings were held at various stages throughout the process. At each of those, more than ninety five percent of those present voted in favour of the development.

space and things. And we've lost a lot of room.' But they don't put the good things in like we could use the Day Care room most of the time. ... I get quite upset when these things happen (Jenny, interview).

Of the four case studies, the way that the church building in Orbiston is used resonates most closely with Storrar's 'post-membership spiritual temple' model (Storrar 2004, see *Chapter Five*), combining a wide range of social, economic and welfare activities with a pattern of daily worship within premises which continue to host many of the elements of traditional congregational life, including Sunday worship. However, the ambiguity with which the building is regarded by some people, both within and outwith the congregation, indicate that while it is a useful motif in demonstrating the shifting paradigm which is taking place as the current membership model of church becomes less and less sustainable, particularly in communities such as Orbiston, it is not yet illustrative of a model which has a wider resonance for those beyond the immediate central leadership of the congregation.

(2) The Project-Based Approach

At an organisational level, Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre is the primary vehicle through which members of the local church engage with the wider community, with no evident involvement in other community organisations. Five members, including the minister, Session Clerk and congregational treasurer, are directors of the company which manages the Centre. A significant additional number are involved regularly as volunteers as well as as participants in some of its many

activities. These activities include daily worship, in which a number take a particular and active interest. Although there is no specific evidence to suggest it, the apparent lack of involvement on the part of congregational members in other community activities may indicate that the management and ongoing activity of the Neighbourhood Centre have, over a ten year period, replaced a wider, more general, community involvement.

The Neighbourhood Centre has had a major impact on the life of a number of the members of the Focus Group, especially among those who had been pivotally involved in its development (Cathie, interview). Susan, who had been involved within the Theology Group from the outset and had also served on the Board of Directors for a number of years, identified it as one of the two most important periods in her life in the Church.

> And the second time was when we started working towards this neighbourhood centre. That opened up a whole new. It wasn't just coming to church on a Sunday and that was it. This was really what the church was. It was about people and putting people first (Susan, Focus Group).

Richardson's research (2001) indicates that Susan's story is not an isolated incident and the use of liberation methodology deployed by the Theology Group had a significant impact upon its membership, both in helping to formulate plans for the Neighbourhood Centre and in the development of their personal and corporate faith.[11] However, based on this Case Study, it did not significantly impact on changed perspectives within the wider congregation. This appears to

---

[11] An account of the liberation methodology developed by the Theology Group is contained in *Starting Where We Are* (Galloway 1998).

correspond with the broader impact of Liberation Theology, through which many of those most closely involved with the movement have been radically altered, whilst the movement itself has not apparently had as major an impact upon the transformation of church structures as was initially envisaged by many of its chief protagonists (and opponents).

Although they acknowledged the foundational role of the Theology Group in the establishment of the Neighbourhood Centre and the strong Christian leadership of its staff (Cathie, interview), members of the Focus Group continued to draw a relatively sharp distinction[12] between the Centre and the church. This was particularly the case for those members who had been associated with the church over a long number of years and included some who had played a pivotal role in the establishment and subsequent management of Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre. This was, in part, explained by the existence of the Centre as a separate legal entity from the church.

> Well, we've known from the very beginning that they were different entities wi' a common goal. ... to help the community in any way we can (Jenny, interview).

The separate legal structure, adopted by a number of church-based community projects, was largely developed both to safeguard the local congregation as well as to enable increased access to other sources of funding which it was felt would be difficult for the congregation to access as a part of the Church of Scotland. In

---

[12] There were in the Focus Group and subsequent interviews a number of occasions where people spoke of the church and centre as being broadly similar. Nonetheless, the prevailing emphasis was to treat them distinct whilst related.

the light of the experience in Orbiston and the changing relationship between government and faith communities in the field of community regeneration, it may be appropriate to review the value of this strategy which has been adopted by a number of other urban congregations since the development of the Neighbourhood Centre.[13]

Concern was also expressed that, since senior management staff had moved to offices in an adjacent building to the main complex, they sometimes appeared remote and aloof from the daily experiences of the Centre's activities (Jenny, interview). At a more fundamental level, however, while the activities are viewed as Christian in character – 'we cannae do one without the other. We're feeding the five thousand again' (Gary, interview) – an essentially dualist distinction is drawn between the spiritual nature of the church and the practical nature of the Centre.

> Well, as I, I see it the, the church is offering the religious side of it. The Neighbourhood Centre is sort of looking after the personalised means of everyday life, life, of purveying food. Eh, giving them something to look forward to in the morning instead of sitting about (Gary, interview).

During the Focus Group discussion on the group's aspirations for the future of the church, virtually no mention was made of the role of the Centre,[14] although two of the images reflected a model of church life which included many of the

---

[13] I am aware that this was the rationale upon which the initial decision to set up Utheo Ltd. as a charitable company limited by guarantee, having been heavily involved in its formation. Since that time, the charitable structure and lease agreement are put forward as models of good practice by the Church of Scotland's General Trustees and Legal Departments for congregations considering the shared use of their premises..

[14] The only reference to the Centre during this part of the discussion related to the possibility of the Centre being a useful resource to draw upon in the efforts to draw more young people into the life of the congregation.

Centre's activities. The essential measurement of church vitality was based, however, around the numerical strength of the Sunday morning worshipping congregation. For Irene Gibson, the Centre's Operations' Manager, this was the primary reason why many members of Orbiston Church continued to draw a distinction between church and Centre.

> I think I have just come to realise that people have different ideas of what Church is. And it is that some folks feel unless the Church is full on a Sunday, then we're no reaching people or we're no reaching young folk or. But here, within this organisation, on a day-to-day basis, and this, this is I suppose just how I see it. As I said earlier, it's about this is, what I would see Church as. But is it so off the wall that folk cannae see it? (Irene, interview).

In Orbiston, despite the overwhelming success of the Neighbourhood Centre in engaging with the wider community from a faith-based stance over a ten year period, members of the church continue to view the Centre as substantially separate. This highlights some of the difficulties of the project-based approach to church engagement, even on this scale,[15] within priority area parishes (Davey 1995:59). These difficulties have arisen despite the pioneering work of the Theology Group and the strong Christian emphasis which remains predominant within the Centre's ethos and leadership. They emphasise the central tasks, missing from much of urban missional thinking since *Faith in the City* (ACUPA 1985), of the requirement to build up the regular worshipping congregation and of the need to encourage ongoing theological reflection among church members as to the nature of discipleship in the urban church. 'The future of UPA

---

[15] Two of the major criticisms of 'project-based culture' are that it tends to be short term and very limited in focus.

288

congregations ... does not depend on the development of welfare resources but on the building up of confidence and new patterns of discipleship among those who are determined that faith should be seen in practice in our inner cities' (Davey 1995:60).

(3) Worship

Each day within the Neighbourhood Centre there is a short act of worship. The service takes place in the Youth Room and is open to all, although it is predominantly attended by members of the Day Care Unit along with some of those who have been eating their lunch in the café. A few people may also visit the Centre specifically to attend the worship (Cathie, interview). Although the Daily Worship is clearly important to those who go, they are primarily drawn from the elderly or those who are already involved with more conventional worship. There is little indication that it has succeeded in the provision of a 'sacred time,' particularly for younger and middle aged people, who feel excluded from traditional Sunday worship and may well be seeking appropriate opportunities to articulate their residual faith (Hunt 2003, Morisy 2004). Williams criticises the Daily Worship within the Centre as contextually inappropriate, highlighting the need for a pattern which would be more accessible to those who express a latent spirituality but are not part of traditional church life (Williams 2000:70).

The Daily Worship is greatly valued by some members of the Focus Group and, although some of the distinctions between Church and Centre also extend to the worship (Jenny, interview), it is more nuanced, indicating that it a possible bridge between the two elements. For Louise, who has moved into the area since the development of the Centre, there is little distinction between the church and the Neighbourhood Centre.

> Well, I was just saying that we get the church every day. Jenny and I come into the wee service every day at half past one. And that's our, we say that's our church every day, five days a week. Then we go to big church on a Sunday (Louise, Focus Group).

Members enjoy the informality of the Daily Worship and, especially, the fact that it is led on a rota basis by a diverse group of over twenty five people from the majority of the different churches in the town including representatives of the Baptist and Pentecostal churches (Cathie, interview). The involvement of members of the Roman Catholic Church, both as leaders and worshippers, is particularly welcome and regarded as indicative of the future nature of church life in the area (Cathie, interview).

Although there are weaknesses within the current pattern of Daily Worship, and there is a requirement to develop a more appropriate or 'apt liturgy' (Morisy 2004:237), it does represent an important opportunity to develop the foundational work of the Centre on a more explicitly Christian level. While Daily Worship is not a traditional part of the recent Reformed tradition, there is clear indication that it is appreciated by those who attend (Louise, Focus Group; Cathie, interview). It

also represents an important additional element to Storrar's model of the Church as 'spiritual temple' in that the emphasis shifts from Sunday worship as the central sacred space to worship more generally as 'sacred space,' located in the day-to-dayness of ordinary living. This would appear to resonate more closely with Paul's injunction to the Christians in Corinth to treat their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

(4) People in Poverty

Poverty is considered to be less of an issue for people in Orbiston today than was the case in previous generations. Indeed the relative affluence of many people, and the increased choices which they have about how to spend their time, is seen as one of the principal reasons why fewer people are involved in the church.

> I think people nowadays are more affluent now. I think there is more money now. In these days, in my day, in your days, we did not have any money in them days. So it was either go to the church, go to the Boys' Brigade, go to the Cubs, go to the Boy Scouts, whatever. You were made most welcome but that was your eh, entertainment. That was it. That was it. It all comes down to, I think, because people have more, more money now. They're more affluent (George, Focus Group).

The opinion was also expressed by one member of the Focus Group that people who were living in poverty were poor largely as a consequence of lifestyle choices, resonating closely with Murray's understanding of an 'underclass' within British society (Murray 1989, see *Chapter Four*).

> You know, that it is kind of welfare state we have now. So I don't think poverty's. If poverty is brought about, then poverty is brought about by buying

drink and buying cigarettes and buying all the things that don't really add up very much to life (Gary, interview).

In the past, in common with other churches, it was acknowledged that some people may have felt excluded on account of poverty. However, it was felt that this was substantially no longer the case and that, even in the past, it had not been insurmountable.

> Well, I mean, it's never stopped me. I don't know whether. I don't think that there is that kind of thing nowadays that I cannae buy nice clothes or anything. Or I cannae afford to put in the plate. I don't think that there is that now. I don't think that's a reason for people not to come. ... Well, maybe for one or two but I'm not going to say that it's a, a main concern. I know it's never been a concern for me, even when I was very poor (Jenny, interview).

Members of the Focus Group were keen for people who were struggling with life in the scheme to feel wanted and valued within the church but felt that they had not been particularly successful in communicating either this specific message or a more general message of welcome to the wider community. Cathie expressed the opinion that the Church appeared remarkably distant from the daily struggles with which people in poverty were engaged.

> I don't think they would see the church as the answer to their em, you know, to their struggles, whatever they might be. I mean, the only time a lot of people look to churches is for the normal em, births, deaths and marriages stuff. And other than that the church is of no use to them (Cathie, interview).

Ironically, the Neighbourhood Centre is engaging with a substantial proportion of those living in Orbiston, including some of the most disenfranchised, on a regular basis. There is a need for the church to find ways of utilising this opportunity

more effectively, perhaps through the development of 'community chaplains'[16] (Morisy 2004:188). The failure of members of the Focus Group to recognise this opportunity is symptomatic of the wider disjunction which exists between the Neighbourhood Centre and the church, limiting the potential value of both.

St James' Pollok: 'A mini cathedral'

Seven members of St James' Pollok participated in the Focus Group, including Ann Merrilees who works as a deacon within the church. All participants were female and, with the exception of Ann, had been involved in the congregation for over twenty years. In most cases this involvement stretched back to the earliest days of the congregation. Three interviews were subsequently carried out. At the time of the Focus Group and interviews, the church was vacant, the previous minister Helen Hamilton having been in ill-health for some period prior to her demission. Subsequently St James' Pollok has a new minister. No decision has yet been taken about further development of the building, although it remains on the agenda of both the local congregation and the Management Committee of the Village Storytelling Centre.

The community and the church

---

[16] Morisy identifies four main aims for the role of community chaplain. These are: to encourage people to 'do business with God;' to bring greater integration of Sunday church life with the weekday activities; to present the church centre as a new way of being church rather than the church rationalizing its resources or wanting to generate income; to build a sense of corporate identity across centre users (and congregation) in a manner that builds up social capital within the neighbourhood (Morisy 2004:188).

The parish of St James' Pollok (population 10,920) is one of four Church of Scotland parishes comprising the Greater Pollok Regeneration Area.[17] The area, designated a Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) in 1999, has an overall population of 38,874, corresponding to seven percent of the population of the city (SLIMS 2004b:14). Built on farmland originally owned by the Maxwell family, for many of those who moved out from the inner-city slums in the years after the Second World War, Pollok was an idyllic community.

> Well ... a most exciting place to arrive in from the Gorbals, a tenement in the Gorbals for my family. Thrilled to bits to come on the bus here, and then you walked for a long while 'til we, you got to your new house at the back of the church. And here was a house with a garden at the front and the back, and a bathroom. I thought I was in heaven. I was in heaven. It was just wonderful. And everyone was the same. And no one had carpets or televisions or anything like that. And if you had a wee half moon rug, you were a toff. And Pollok was just a wonderful place (Frances, Focus Group).

The decline of the area, in part attributable to some of the poor quality flat-roofed housing built in the post-war years (Jennifer, Focus Group), largely mirrors the collapse of heavy industry in the city. By the time the housing development at Darnley, on the southern edge of Pollok, was completed in the mid 1970s, it already qualified as an area of deprivation (Keating 1988:157). This was a far cry from Sir John Maxwell's original vision for Pollok as 'a garden suburb superior even to Mosspark.' According to the 2001 Census, only twelve percent of those working in Pollok were employed in manufacturing industries, a drop of nine percent from 1991 (SLIMS 2004b:37). Although it has fallen significantly over

---

[17] The other parishes are: Househillwood St Christopher's, Priesthill & Nitshill and Carnwadric.

the last ten years, the official unemployment figures remain stubbornly high at eleven percent (almost twice the Scottish average) with those under twenty five worst affected (*ibid*:29). In 2001 one third of families with dependent children had no-one in paid employment and this figure increased to almost two thirds (sixty five percent) of families headed by a single parent (*ibid*:32).

In recent years, parts of Pollok have undergone significant physical regeneration with much of the poorest quality housing demolished and replaced, primarily with private homes. There has also been a marked increase in tenants exercising their right to buy. Over the ten year period from 1991, owner occupation in the area increased from twenty five to forty eight percent (*ibid*:24). There is some anecdotal evidence that a significant number of those who purchased homes in the area have a previous attachment to Pollok.

> But what I really think is lovely is em, is the fact that the young people who have moved out have come back in, have bought the houses. They've come back into Pollok and bought the houses. I think that's great because em, if they stayed in Calfhill Road, they've now got a house in Bonnyholm which is just round the corner. And so they're back with their friends and a family, and it's a unit. And we are getting a community building up again (Frances, interview).

Pollok is now economically the most diverse of the Social Inclusion Partnership areas in Glasgow. Forty eight percent of the population (18,490) are among the poorest five percent of the Scottish population while nineteen percent (7,508) are among the richest fifty percent[18] (SE 2004).

---

[18] In Castlemilk, the entire population is among the poorest ten percent, while in Easterhouse and Drumchapel only three and seven percent respectively of the population are among the wealthiest fifty percent.

Despite these changes, however, and the sense that a 'new Pollok' (Jane, Focus Group) is being created, significant social problems remain. In the area of Pollok covered by St James' parish only ten percent of the working age population are educated to degree standard, less that two-fifths of the Scottish average (twenty six percent) and fifty percent have no formal educational qualifications at all (NM 2004a). This issue is particularly pronounced among those over fifty where seventy six percent are without educational qualifications, resulting in higher long-term unemployment within this age group, while those in paid work are in generally lower paid employment and more susceptible to any downturn in the labour market (SLIMS 2004b:33).

Pollok also has the youngest age profile of any of the Glasgow SIPs, with thirty five percent of the population aged under twenty five, higher than both the Glasgow (thirty two percent) and Scottish (thirty percent) averages (*ibid*:14). Drug abuse, particularly among young people, is understood as a major problem locally and there have been high levels of suicide and drug-related deaths in the area.

> There's great poverty still here and the drug scene is very, very ... prevalent. And I don't think the drinking is such a big problem as the drugs now. ... Half seven in the morning there can be a car outside this church and there's wee boys. And we're talking about twelve, thirteen, fourteen to this car to this man and that happens. That happens here in Pollok sadly (Frances, Focus Group).

There is recognition of these problems within St James' Pollok. The Village Storytelling Centre, developed by the church, works extensively with young people in the area, primarily through the local schools, and the previous minister,

in partnership with the YMCA, was heavily involved in the establishment of a support network for young people whose peers had died violent or drug-related deaths. Links have also been established with a large group of young people who congregate in the vicinity of the church building and who are involved in some of the gang violence in the area.

The first service for St James' Pollok (at the time called St Aidan's) was held in the local primary school in Langton Road in August 1948. With over a hundred people attending, there was insufficient room for all who came and two services had to be held. Large numbers symbolised the early years of the church as it effectively cornered the leisure market (Storrar 2004) in the new housing scheme. At its height, the congregation had two church buildings in different parts of the parish, the largest Girls' Guildry Company in Scotland and over two thousand church members. The success of these early years was due, in part, to the charisma of the congregation's first ministers, but also to the lack of other reasonable alternatives in the lives of people moving into the area. 'The church was the only place that was, was there for folk' (Frances, Focus Group). From the 1970s onwards, membership of the church has fallen dramatically, and in 2002 it stood at two hundred and sixty nine.

The rapid decline of the congregation over the last twenty years, and with it the loss of traditional involvement in the parish, is a matter of considerable regret and pain for many within the church.

It used to be [part of the community] but not now. Because there were so many different things went on in the church that everybody. Some of the family was there in every house practically, because there was music groups, there was drama groups, the Girls Brigade, Boys Brigade, Guides, Brownies, see we don't, and youth clubs. We've nothing like that now (Grace, Focus Group).

Although a wide range of groups continue to be associated with the church, including uniformed youth organisations, a Guild and Sunday School, their numbers are increasingly small and fragile (Sarah, interview). The congregation is primarily elderly and there is a sense of frustration that younger people (those aged under fifty!) including many family members, appear to be no longer interested in the church (Heather, Focus Group and interview).

Considerable effort has been expended in recent years into fundraising events to try to ensure the financial viability of the congregation. This has placed considerable pressure on a small, but highly motivated, group of office bearers, some of whom have also had to cope with tensions within the congregation, especially over the decision to redevelop part of the church building as The Village. These tensions are ongoing and it is felt they would be likely to flare up considerably if plans to make considerable changes to the sanctuary were adopted. 'It's not all sweetness and roses here. ... And it doesn't take very much to bring it to the surface again' (Frances, Focus Group).

Leadership within St James' is concentrated in a relatively small group of staff member and office-bearers, who have multiple responsibilities. Although their contribution was valued, some members of the Focus Group felt that tasks could be more evenly shared across a wider group of people. Tensions have also existed

between members of the congregation and some of the previous ministers. These problems are not considered unusual to St James' but normative within all churches.

> And I feel like running away from the church, you know, because I hear that many things that I don't like. But it's no any different from any other church, you know what I mean. ... I'm led to believe that most churches, and I think it's quite true, there's an awful lot of bitchiness in churches and that. I cannae say that I don't do it, but I try no to (Jane, interview).

While there is a recognition that the church is people rather than a building (Jane, interview) the church buildings and, in particular, the sanctuary are of immense importance to the members of St James' Pollok. The building is highly unusual in that, over a three year period between 1950 and 1953, it was moved from its original site in west Pollokshields to its current location.

> It was a mammoth task 'down-taking' this building weighing several thousand tons and transporting it the 4 ½ miles to Pollok. Only 20 stonemasons, veterans of their trade, were occupied on the job. The removal was done by one lorry doing up to three journeys a day. ...
> For three years the masons plied their skill to the dismantling and rebuilding of the church, and today it stands in Lyoncross Road almost an exact replica of its former self. A bell tower has been added, for the old church never had a bell.
> Many of the fittings have been modernised. Now heating has been installed and the electricity system improved, but the old pews are back in their places and the age-old atmosphere with them.
> The church added an old world touch to the ranks of houses around it. A short distance away stands the only other stone building in the district – Crookston Castle (Evening News 1953).

Built by local craftsmen from Govan and Pollok, this building has also assumed wider community significance, particularly for those early residents who watched it being rebuilt. Acquiring the status almost of a 'mini cathedral' (Frances, Focus Group), members of the Focus Group felt that the community continued to look

to the buildings as 'their church' (*ibid*) and that historical associations with it continued to be very strong (Ann, Focus Group).

There is an acknowledgement, however, that church life is alien to a significant proportion of the local community (Sandra, Focus Group) and that St James' can, on occasions, appear unwelcoming and exclusive, particularly towards those who are struggling against poverty (Jane, interview). The Village has helped to break down some of these barriers by opening the church building up to the wider community, especially children and young people (Jane, interview).

The Village is the primary vehicle through which members of the congregation relate to the wider community at an organisational level and a few members of the church are involved in a range of other community organisations as a result of their involvement in The Village. The church has benefited on a number of occasions from funding through the Social Inclusion Partnership. Strong, natural links with the community are difficult in part because most of the office-bearers no longer live in the area but also because of the considerable demands of maintaining activities within the church.

> I think a lot of the problems, a lot of the elders stay out of Pollok. There's very, not many elders live in Pollok. ... When, when you're out in the street, folk will come and ask you, 'When can I come and see the minister?' 'When can I go up?' Because they know I go to church, but I'm about the only one there, in my area (Marjory, Focus Group).

Links with other churches in Pollok are reasonable but limited. During the previous ministry relationships with St James the Great, the local Roman Catholic Church, were developed although many members continue to draw a sharp

distinction between Protestants and Roman Catholics indicating that a high level of 'cultural sectarianism' remains. According to the 2001 Census, thirty seven percent of the parish population regarded themselves as part of the Church of Scotland (3,595) or another Protestant denomination (464) and thirty one percent (3,433) considered themselves members of the Roman Catholic church. Relationships with the wider Church are ambivalent, with a sense that while they are generally supportive, the structures are remote and insufficiently responsive to the particular needs of the congregation (Frances, interview).

Although it is felt to be a 'constant struggle' (June, Focus Group), there is a strong sense that the church in Pollok will survive in the future (Heather, interview). Major decisions will require to be taken about the church buildings relatively soon and it might be necessary, in time, to move out of the sanctuary into the church halls.

> I think em, I hope we will not be diminished by circumstances, financial restraints. I hope we will survive. I doubt if we will be able to hold on to the beautiful building. I think we may need to adapt the hall. I think that could be on the horizon if our numbers dwindle. And we have very few people in employment, because the folks that are there mostly now is in the older bracket. They're more retired folks and some of the younger folks have no employment. So we, we are coming to quite a crunch time, I think. But I think we're survivors. I think we'll survive in some fashion, but I don't think we'll be able to use the church as it is completely. We will have to adapt at some point. And I'm a wee bit anxious that this is the moment that it should be done, and we're maybe letting the chance go by us. But it's a hard decision at the moment (Frances, interview).

Emerging Issues

(1) Buildings

Within Pollok, at both a community (Frances, interview) and, in particular, at a congregational level, there is a huge attachment to the church building of St. James' Pollok and a sense that the atmosphere within it communicates something of the presence of God among his people through the generations.

> I think it's because the Spirit has been moving in that building and the worshipping and prayers of the people that have gone on before you. And sometimes I feel that it's soaked in me and I think it passes to you. I think it's there. I think there's an essence there that you, you pick up em, from all that past history within it (Frances, interview).

This sense is partly a result of the extraordinary relocation of a substantial and imposing Victorian building into the heart of the new post-war housing development – 'I know but how pride is a sin but we really do feel proud of the church, because it's em, its second time round' (Jane, interview). The design and style of the building make it relatively easy to understand why it has such strong emotional ties for members of the congregation and community.

The nature of the building has helped to shape the ecclesial practice of the congregation, for example in the development and maintenance over a fifty year period, of a robed choir and a relatively high liturgical pattern of worship. Although keen to emphasise that the church is more than a building, for some there is a strong sense of the church building as 'sacred space' where it is sometimes easier to have a sense of God rather than as part of the worshipping congregation. Jane, an elder and active member of the congregation, feels that she

is closer to God on her own in the building rather than as part of the congregation, echoing closely the attitude that Hunt (2003) has identified among those who don't attend traditional worship.

> I like it best when I'm on my own, you know. Or if we have, I used to love the evening communion services which we don't have now. Em, but again the modern way of doing things I'm not too happy about. When we had our morning communion services and everybody gets up and they go and they shake hands here and there. And I'm no for that. I'm for just sitting quietly and, and, and let the feeling stay with me for a while, you know (Jane, interview).

The particular character of the building has made it especially difficult for the congregation to accept any adaptation to its design and function. The development of The Village evoked considerable and acrimonious protest among a significant group of church members[19] and was acceptable to others only on the basis that, built in the nave, it did not detract from the look of the central part of the building. It is difficult, even for some of its supporters, not to think of its presence within the sanctuary as 'an intrusion' (Heather, interview). As a result, there is considerable reluctance to put forward significantly more ambitious plans which would involve adapting the rear balcony and the replacement of the pews at the rear of the building with a new egg-shaped construction containing additional rooms.

> I'm afraid that's got a lot of us very, very worried. ... It just doesnae look like a church. I know you can make this a church if you've got a few people. I know, no matter where you are. But to me this, people would go in and they wouldnae think, 'I'm here to hear the Word of God.' I'm here and I'm going to stare at this building and this, what they've done in it. I just cannae bear to think that they would do what they are planning. I hope they don't. I mean, I

---

[19] Thirty five people voted against the initial development.

303

must be honest. I hope they don't. Eh, it's too, it's too much. They are putting it's like, it's like, well it's an egg shape. They will be taking so many pews away from the back of the church and this is going to be in the centre, with an opening for bridal parties coming through this. It's like ribs, you know, well it's an egg shape, but ribs with partitions, glass partitions. ... I just cannot imagine it (Heather, interview).

In reality, the congregation is already struggling to maintain the sanctuary and its extensive hall accommodation. This position is likely to become more pronounced in the relatively near future (Frances, interview). The plans may offer a credible, and potentially fundable opportunity to develop a more sustainable building whilst maintaining the highly valued sanctuary. Based on the evidence of the Focus Group and interviews, attachment towards the building of St James' Pollok supersedes viewing it as a 'shrine' and it has become, instead, 'idolatrous' in ways that are seriously distorting the vision and energy of the congregation and which threaten to undermine its future viability (Inge 2003:122). According to Sheldrake:

> ... [the cathedral] is a repository for the memory and the aspirations of the community which have been constantly renewed and changed across time. To enter such a building is to enter into communion with centuries of human pains, achievements and ideals. Indeed, the moment a building like a cathedral becomes *fixed* rather than something fluid and continually changing it is a museum rather than a living symbol of the city (Sheldrake 2001:154, original emphasis).

(2) Changing context of ministry

During the meeting of the Focus Group and subsequent interviews, members spoke extensively about their relationship to some of the different ministers who

have worked in St James' Pollok since the congregation was established in 1948. These different ministries contrast the changing fortunes and nature of ministry within a priority area parish over the last fifty years.

The contrasting ministries of Clarence Finlayson, the first minister, and James Currie, who came as an Associate seven years later,[20] made a considerable impact on the church and community during their formative years.

> We were greatly blessed in having em, the Rev Clarence Finlayson and then Mr Currie coming eh, to join. Two completely different ministries there: the quiet man you know, and the, the showman you know. But it was a wonderful combination and em, though there was various difficulties about that ministry too. But em, we got a wonderful start here, you know (Frances, Focus Group).

Clarence Finlayson's spiritual leadership and gifts as a faith healer attracted many people to the church as did the inspirational and outspoken preaching of 'old Jack Currie' (Sandra, Focus Group). Their contrasting gifts demonstrate different models of church life, with James Currie's ministry reflecting a high point in the development of leisure facilities in Storrar's evolving 'hybrid membership' model (2004). Interestingly, Clarence Finlayson's gifts in a healing ministry attracted large numbers during the 1950s and 1960s to evening services, and illustrates that, even forty years ago, the quest for healing (part of the post-modern spirituality which Pentecostalism has successfully responded to) engaged with popular urban culture. During these initial twenty years, in common with many of the churches in the city's new housing schemes, membership grew dramatically and the church enjoyed a position at the centre of much that was going on in the

---

[20] For the first six years James Currie served as an Associate Minister, before becoming minister in 1961, a position he held for a further 11 years.

community (Marjory, Focus Group). However, when James Currie left Pollok in 1972, it marked the start of a period of fairly rapid decline in the church's membership.

> Two thousand of a membership, that was the glory days. But sadly, when Mr Currie left, some folks were following the wrong JC and they also left. So our two thousand membership you know, declined then (Frances, Focus Group).

When Helen Hamilton came as minister to Pollok in 1991 it was to both a very different congregation (with membership about a sixth of the size that it had been twenty years previously) and different community, where the optimism of the early days had disappeared and unemployment was running at a record twenty four percent (SLIMS 2004b:29). Over the ten years of her ministry, she helped to bring the congregation 'into the modern world' (Frances, Focus Group), encouraging members of the congregation to engage more effectively in the life of the wider community, establishing the work of The Village to respond more effectively to the young profile of the area, and building up better working relationships between the different churches in the scheme. Relationships with some members of the congregation were difficult on occasions, particularly among those who continued to see ministry primarily in terms of congregational pastoral care as opposed to parish involvement as well as among some of the few men still active in the congregation who found it difficult to accept the changing circumstances within the church as well as the validity of a female minister.

> Helen was too good for quite a few, like a majority of people in that church. They didnae appreciate her. The outsiders did appreciate her more than we did in the church. But I think a lot of it was jealousy. I think it was because she. A

lot of the men were. A lot of the men! How many men have we got? Four? Five? Six? But they were all, you know, they were rude. I used to be quite surprised. I never thought anybody would be as rude as they were to her (Jane, interview).

As early as the 1930s George MacLeod was identifying the break down within the Church of Scotland's parish-based system between the membership of the church and the population of the parish (J. Harvey 1987:62), particularly within the vastly overcrowded inner-city communities such as Govan (see *Chapter Six*). The significant building and staffing resources which characterised the formative years of the Church Extension Movement helped to offset this rupture in the short term. However, dwindling resources, inappropriate structures and the failure of the Church to develop appropriate incarnational models of church, combined with the rising social and economic problems within the housing schemes along with the rapid movement away from cultural church attendance from the mid 1960s onwards (Brown 2001:198)[21] has meant that ministry has become a significantly more complicated task than appeared to be the case fifty years ago.

(3) Relating to the community

The success of The Village Storytelling Centre has surpassed all expectations with the facility currently catering for 3,000 people annually rather than the initial estimates of 1,250. It has established an increasingly national reputation and its work, while still tightly focused around storytelling, has diversified to include

---

[21] In Pollok the impact of this was felt most acutely in the early 1970s after the departure of the Rev. James Currie.

extensive work in the schools across Pollok and at Crookston Castle. The publication of *Buffalo Horns*, a book of indigenous stories put together by refugees and asylum seekers living in the Greater Pollok area, has won the organisation additional critical acclaim. The skills and personality of the Project Manager, Rachel Smillie, are greatly appreciated.

> I would like folks to really come in and even just sit in an empty church and listen to Rachel. I mean, listening to them singing and listening to the wee stories. The pews are polished stupid. It's just marvellous to stand out there and listen (Heather, Focus Group).

Use of part of the church building by The Village has considerably increased access to it, particularly by young people. At the time when the Focus Group meeting and interviews took place, a group of young people who had habitually hung around outside the church had also started meeting in the side chapel. While the presence of this group, some of whom had been involved in a spate of serious vandalism, caused concerns among some, it was generally felt that this opening up of the building was an important way of sharing something of the Christian message, albeit at a subliminal or oblique level (Morisy 2004:vi). However, there are clear tensions between The Village and the more traditional usage of the building. Even among its supporters a distinction is drawn between the work of The Village and the work of the church.

> You know because they did, they sort of stopped helping, and doing their duty to the church and they went to The Village and that kind of annoyed some folks, you know. Other folks combined both (Jane, Focus Group).

308

A number of the key office-bearers within the congregation are also heavily involved in the management of The Village, considerably adding to their already heavy burden. While not undermining the valuable contribution which The Village is making to the social and spiritual life of Pollok, the difficult relationship which exists between The Village and a significant percentage of the congregation does call into question the ongoing effectiveness of this approach to community involvement at a time when the local congregation is increasingly vulnerable. It illustrates well Davey's concern (1995) that such a project-based approach can become both a drain on the limited energy of many urban congregations and increasingly outwith the potential of the most vulnerable.

Primarily through The Village, the church does relate to a number of other community organisations, including the Community Forum (Frances, Focus Group). Efforts are also made to offer the organisational support of the local church to particularly pressing community issues, such as housing and transport (Sandra, Focus Group).

> I think this is a church that tries very much to be part of the community. It maybe doesn't always achieve this but it does try. ... Well, the obvious example is The Village reaching out into the schools and the things like that. But, I think we try, if there is anything, even the likes of, if they have spotted a problem with the buses, somebody will go along to a meeting to find out about the buses, why are they being stopped and things like that. And if there is anything that they have heard about at the church and they want somebody to go. I mean, at one point I was on the Ladymuir Community Council, not the Community Council, Ladymuir, it's an advice centre. And I used to go with the church magazine, to get it printed and they asked for myself and Jane went on. But we felt after a while there wasn't very much we were contributing to it. But things like that, we do try to get involved in the community (June, Focus Group).

The church's ability to be more fully involved in community issues is limited both by the considerable amount of work which is involved in sustaining traditional congregational life and the fact that relatively few of the most active members now live within the parish. Unless these trends can be reversed in the relatively near future, it is difficult to see how St James' Pollok, despite its magnificent building and the pioneering work of The Village, can be sustainable in its current shape in the long term. According to Frances, who has been involved in St James' for much of her life, since moving from the Gorbals during her childhood, 'Em, I think we will survive but I don't know, in, in a much smaller capacity somehow' (Frances, interview).

(4) People in poverty

Despite the significant physical changes in the area over the last few years, it was recognised that poverty remains a major issue for a considerable number of people living in Pollok, although more hidden than might have been the case previously (Jane, interview). This has been recognised particularly through the involvement of young people in the church's uniformed organisations.

> [W]e had a couple of girls, two sisters, who came [to the Girls' Brigade] for quite a long while and then just stopped coming. So we put a wee note in the door to say that we'd started back again and one of the other officers met her and she said she did not have enough money for their collection. ... Heather had the same problem, so it does obviously affect some people. ... When she went to see the family, there wasnae even furniture in the house (Sandra, Focus Group).

Within the Focus Group there were both different levels of awareness about the degree of poverty in the area – in part attributable to the fact that some members of the group no longer lived in Pollok – and attitudes towards those in poverty. Helen felt that the jobless were largely to blame for their own predicament and that many people had unrealistic life-standard expectations.

> This is where the struggle comes in. It's no that they cannae afford a pair of shoes. They cannae afford the named shoes. That's where the problem lies, in keeping up with the Jones' (Helen, interview).

These opinions parallel closely the political philosophy of the New Right and continue to confuse relative and absolute poverty (see *Chapter Four*).

Members of the Focus Group felt that it would be difficult for those who were really struggling against poverty to become part of St. James' although there were some of the organisations associated with the church, primarily the concert party (The Jewels) and the Misfits (a keep fit group), where a number of the members supported one another through times of difficulty (Frances, interview). Others, particularly during the interviews, commented on how they had felt excluded from the congregation on occasions and, consequently, felt it unlikely that those in poverty would find it easy to be accepted (Jane, interview; Helen, interview). Additionally Jane felt that it would be extremely difficult for people to seek assistance and cited an occasion where she felt someone in hardship had been turned away as indicative of an unchristian attitude among some members of the congregation.

[O]ne night, we were at the keep fit and the door, somebody chapped the door and they went to the door, someone went to the door. I'll no say who it was. And this person says, 'Eh, I'm starving. My, my kids and I are starving. I need some money for food.' And em, the person said, 'Oh, you're at the wrong place. The Chapel's across the road.' ... I said to them, 'See if that had been Jesus. Would you have sent him to the Chapel?' Now if Helen had heard about that she would have been angry. We, we didnae give money out because there's an awful lot of drug problems here. And money, you know, if you give them money they could be just looking that. But if you heard that anybody was hungry, kids, we had stocks, we had stocks in the cupboard that we could have given them. You know a meal out of it anyway. But that is, that's. That, well, really did get me. ... It did. I think it was awful cold and I thought, 'What's the church, what's the church about?' In fact, I said to somebody, 'What's the, what's the church about if it's not for helping people like that?' (Jane, interview).

Conclusion

Despite significant public investment in each of the four areas in which the Case Studies are situated, it is clear that there remain significant levels of poverty in all of them, reaffirming the conclusions reached earlier within this study (*Chapter Three*) that an area-based regeneration strategy, heavily focused upon physical and planning improvements has substantially failed to address the high levels of poverty and inequality which continue to exist in urban Britain today. Attitudes vary between (and within) the different congregations about those who are struggling against poverty. There is support for the notion of an 'undeserving underclass' (*Chapter Four*), particularly within the economically more mixed communities of Pollok and Orbiston.

In all four cases, the early years of the congregations were marked by high numbers and dramatic growth countering the often prevailing notion that the

Church 'never had the city' (Atherton 2003:39) From the 1960s onwards there has been an equally dramatic decline, most pronounced in the case of St James' Pollok where membership has fallen by almost eighty eight percent since the mid-1970s. This picture seems to confirm Brown's analysis of the secularisation process in Britain since the 1960s (Brown 2001) and runs counter to other theories which continue to equate the collapse of church membership with the movement from the country to the city during the industrial revolution. Although aspirations were expressed in each congregation that the Church might return to a day of high membership, this was regarded as highly unlikely in all cases, with considerable realism that the future shape of the church in the urban context would be considerably smaller and might, in some cases, not be sustainable.

There was clear evidence in each Case Study that, in principle at least, the congregations have accepted an understanding of God's 'preferential option for the poor' (*Chapter Five*) as foundational to their ecclesiology, although all have found it difficult to reflect this in practice. Despite creative attempts to engage more effectively with the wider community, and an increased awareness on the part of some of the structural causes of poverty, there is little evidence that the position has changed significantly since the late 1980s.

> [W]e are members of a church which, even at the local level, is rich and powerful in comparison with many of the people in the community. While there are some encouraging signs that the church is responding to the challenge of becoming a church *for* the poor, there is little evidence to suggest that it will ever be a church *of* the poor (Smith 1989:7, original emphasis).

Two broadly distinct models of community engagement can be identified. In the case of Orbiston, Pollok and, to a lesser extent Milton, the congregations have attempted to develop significant church-based community projects. In the cases of the first two, these have proved highly successful in attracting external funding and currently cater for substantial numbers of local people, including some of the most vulnerable members of their community. Despite these successes, however, the Case Studies have further highlighted some of the potential weaknesses of the project-based model of regeneration, including a distortion of the congregation's wider agenda to develop contextually relevant worship and discipleship and a potential loss of identity for the local congregation as it is potentially subsumed into a broader community facility. In the case of St James' I have suggested that this model is not likely to be sustainable in the long term.

The second model of community engagement is that developed primarily by Castlemilk although also present, to a more limited degree, in Milton. Here members are enabled and encouraged to play a full part in the wider life of the voluntary sector within the parish, not in a representative capacity, but as individuals concerned with the broader welfare of their community. This model may well be more realistic for the future of the Urban Church although it is dependent upon a high percentage of those active in the church living within the parish. In the case of St James' Pollok, in particular, this is not the case.

A strong attachment to the church building was to be expected in the case of St James' Pollok, where a focus on the sanctuary was acknowledged even by

members as potentially damaging to the development of the congregation's future vision. However, even where church buildings were regarded as having been built in the wrong place, of a poor design quality (as in Colston Milton and Castlemilk) or were multi-functional (Orbiston), the importance of church buildings as 'sacred space' was strongly emphasised confirming the conclusion reached in *Chapter Five* that church buildings are highly significant in any practical urban ecclesiology.

The role of the minister was identified as central within each of the congregations.[22] There is some evidence that, although they are viewed as occupying a pivotal role within the life and vision building of the local congregation, and had a representational function in relationship to the wider parish community, ministers are developing a more collaborative style of leadership. In the case of the staff team in Castlemilk, I have suggested that their long-term commitment to the area has enabled them to assume a function broadly similar to that of the 'pastoral animator' or 'organic intellectual' in Liberation Theology.

Although there was little evidence to suggest that there was widespread Pentecostal practice within the congregations, there were indications that each was endeavouring to engage with the 'rooted hybrid spirituality' that was identified in *Chapter Five*. In all four congregations worship was regarded as

---

[22] It is possible that this point was particularly emphasised during the Focus Groups because the members were all aware of my position as an employee of the Church of Scotland, although, in the cases of Pollok and Colston Milton, not necessarily that I am an ordained minister.

pivotal to the life of the Church. Despite its weaknesses, the pattern of Daily Worship developed at Orbiston may offer important lessons for the development of a more appropriate or 'apt liturgy' (Morisy 2004) which engages with the spirituality of those who do not regularly attend traditional Sunday worship. The place of healing was also mentioned in two of the Case Studies, in Pollok during the ministry of Clarence Finlayson in the 1950s and of its increasing importance as part of the regular worship within Castlemilk.

While there was clear evidence that churches are, on the whole, working much more closely together, both denominationally and across denominations than was the case historically, a strong tradition of 'cultural sectarianism' remains. The continuing levels of religious intolerance are, perhaps, peculiar in mainland Britain to the west coast of Scotland. As such, relatively little writing has been done in this field (J. Harvey 1988). It remains central, however, to the development of an urban ecclesiology in the Scottish context and should be the topic of further research.

Chapter 8

Towards Informed Practice:

An Urban Ecclesiology for Today

Introduction

As I have sought to point out throughout this study any theological reflection carried out in a liberative key must, by definition, arise out of committed action and lead, through a praxiological process, to more informed practice. Therefore, in a brief, concluding afterword to the main body of this research, I will seek to highlight how this work has *helped to shape* the activity of the Church of Scotland's strategic response to its work within priority area parishes, an activity for which I have a principal responsibility. Any activity, by necessity, is imperfect and is still very much 'under construction' (C. Boff 1987; see *Chapter Five*). I use the phrase *helped to shape* deliberately because the work of the Priority Areas Committee (or Unit) is constantly evolving out of the complex sets of relationships, opportunities and threats to which we require to respond as well as hopefully shape. It is also, in line with best liberation practice, a communal activity in which I play a part. Nonetheless, I do believe that this research has been a significant element in the ongoing formation of informed and committed action in this sphere of work.

The work of the Unit[1] is focused on three main spheres of activity. These are: engaging with the wider Church; resourcing new forms of Church life; and resourcing more effective community engagement. Although there is always the

---

[1] I prefer to talk of the *Priority Areas Unit* as, at the time of writing, the *Priority Areas Committee* is under reconstruction as part of a broader reorganisation of the Church of Scotland's central structures. In this process, the main Boards of the General Assembly will be replaced by a reduced number of Councils and a number of the committees by task groups or units. The work focusing on priority areas will be part of the Ministries' Council.

danger that one of these elements may gain a long-term ascendancy – and particular programmes cover more than one dimension – the aim is to strive to keep them in a constantly dialectical relationship operating as an ongoing hermeneutical spiral. Methodologically it is appropriate to enter this relationship at any of these three nodal points. However, the depth of crisis facing the urban Church which I have identified in the preceding pages of this work make it necessary, at this stage, to give particular attention to the development of contextually appropriate and sustainable models of Church life and witness. Undergirding the entire ethos of our work is the commitment of successive Church of Scotland General Assemblies to the 'gospel imperative to the poorest and most marginalised' (NM 2002, 2003). This must be understood within the broader schema of a 'preferential option for the poor' in which God's universal love for all is incarnated in his primary love for those most often marginalised by others. Another fundamental principle of all aspects of the Unit is the commitment to operate on a macro-ecumenical level,[2] with a specific focus upon partnership with the Roman Catholic Church given the ongoing need to address the context of 'cultural sectarianism' which this study has highlighted.

Engaging with the wider Church

The Unit is seeking to develop a range of relationships at local, national and global levels which seek to inform members of the Church about the ongoing

---

[2] By 'macro-ecumenism' I mean operating with all those committed to the improvement of the quality of life of all, with a particular focus upon the need to operate at an inter-faith level.

reality of poverty, to engage in mutually beneficial relationships and to challenge individuals and congregations to engage in more effective and transformative activity. These include: attempts to encourage twinning between congregations serving in priority area parishes and other more economically prosperous communities; ongoing efforts to increase staffing levels within priority area parishes through an evolving National Plan; and the development of *Together for a Change*.

'Together for a Change' was established in April 2003 as a result of funding from the Church of Scotland Guild. It seeks to develop, through the local churches, relationships between two communities in Scotland where people are struggling against poverty and similar communities in the Third World. In the five small communities dotted along the Royston Road in Glasgow's east end and a similar area in the Gambia, groups of women and men are hoping to share their experiences and identify lessons for others committed to tackling poverty. After initial unsuccessful attempts in Easterhouse (Glasgow) and Kingston (Jamaica) to develop work among young people susceptible to exclusion from school and prone to involvement in gang violence, work is now underway connecting a number of communities in Malawi and Ruchazie (Glasgow). In both sets of the relationships there will be a series of exchange visits from late 2005 onwards as well as a range of other means of communicating between the different partners. Critically, however, 'Together for a Change' is not intended purely for the benefit of the four participating

communities but as part of a broader effort to inform and change the Church's understanding of poverty through the work of the Guild. It is intended to connect in with broader campaigns to address global injustice and poverty.

Together for a Change is a small attempt to draw upon the expertise of people living in poverty, based upon the principle that they have a knowledge and awareness which will be essential if the causes as well as the symptoms of global poverty are to be more adequately addressed. It is also an attempt to enable people to develop a greater understanding of the connectivity between poverty in Scotland and the Third World, attempting to utilise some of the more mutually beneficial dimensions of globalisation. Although small and fragile[3] in scope, *Together for a Change* resonates with D. Harvey's schema (drawing on Williams' understanding of 'militant particularism') to enable connections between different 'spaces of hope' which reflect, in micro, some utopian potential for a future socialist paradigm (D. Harvey 2000, see *Chapters Three* and *Four*).

Resourcing Church Life

Throughout this study I have constantly sought to demonstrate the depth of the crisis which is facing mainstream urban congregations in Scotland and to indicate that without critical and immediate action, the Church of Scotland as an

---

[3] In all four areas, this project has had difficulty establishing itself as a core activity of the local churches and communities. This has been particularly pronounced in Easterhouse and Kingston, where the decision to end the partnership had to be taken. I believe this fragility is symptomatic of the struggles which are constantly faced within these communities where the necessity for immediate survival often has to take precedence over other developmental work with long-term goals and aspirations.

institution is set to disappear from the nation's economically poorest communities within a very short timescale. This reality has highlighted the urgent requirement to develop fresh expressions of Church life, which more adequately respond to the urban context and to the 'rooted urban spirituality' of Scotland's cities (and beyond). This has been a particular focus of the Unit since the establishment of the Priority Areas Committee in June 2003. Most of it has been small scale and has involved the development of a range of partnerships with other agencies and denominations on the basis that it is neither possible nor appropriate to develop work on a unilateral basis.

In October 2004, the Priority Areas Committee, in partnership with *Unlock*,[4] appointed a part-time worker in Glasgow to assist churches serving priority area parishes in the city in the development of the skills and the resources necessary for reading the Bible in an urban and liberatory key. Her current work includes working with an emerging Bible Group among an elderly group in Colston Milton and support to a range of other small groups including one currently being developed alongside a reasonably long-established Church-based community café in Ruchill. At about the same time, the Committee commissioned a visual artist to work with Carnwadric Parish Church (part of Greater Pollok) to encourage the development of more visually-based worship as part of an attempt to engage more effectively with post-modern spirituality. Within a relatively short period of time

---

[4] *Unlock* is a small national charity, based in Sheffield. Over the last thirty years it has been pioneering a model of urban Bible reflection which takes the urban context as its starting point and which draws extensively on liberation methodology.

this appears to have brought a fresh vitality to worship[5] and to have enabled a group of people not previously active in the regular planning of worship to become involved. In both these spheres of activity, as well as in similar work among young people at an even more embryonic stage, the intention is to start small and learn from experience, to remain local, and to build sustainable ways of operating at low cost. While this work is primarily focused upon energising the existing structures, the Unit is also, through *Urban Expression (Glasgow)*, seeking to develop work which resonates with J. Harvey's suggestion of the need to develop experiences of 'parallel churches' which move beyond the structural fundamentalism of many mainstream denominations (J. Harvey 1988, see also *Chapter Six*).

> *'Urban Expression (Glasgow)' is a partnership initiative of the Church of Scotland's New Charge Development Committee,[6] the Baptist Union of Scotland and the Priority Areas Committee supported by Urban Expression. Over the last ten years Urban Expression, which draws from a primarily Mennonite or Anabaptist tradition,[7] has overseen the development of nine church planting initiatives in East London through the establishment of small teams of people committed to living in some of the poorest parts of the capital and to working alongside local people in the development of small, culturally*

---

[5] At present the group are only involved in the planning for worship once every six weeks. Preparation includes two evening sessions with the artist to explore ideas and structure and then a full day on the Saturday to prepare the Church prior to worship.

[6] The Committee for New Charge Development is the body within the Church of Scotland which has the primary responsibility for church planting at both a geographical and network level.

[7] For more details about *Urban Expression*, see www.urbanexpression.org.uk.

appropriate faith communities. By November 2005 it is intended to have established two 'Urban Expression' teams in Glasgow, possibly in the city's east end. These teams will be responsible for their own housing and subsistence with 'Urban Expression (Glasgow)' responsible for recruitment and ongoing formation. While they will relate to other local congregations, they will be independent and free to develop the patterns of church life which appear most appropriate to their circumstances. Again the aim is to develop models of being church which engage more effectively with urban culture and which are sustainable in the long term at a time of decreasing national and local resources.

One of the more unexpected findings of this study[8] has been an awareness of church buildings within priority area parishes as 'sacred space,' largely irrespective of the location or condition of these buildings. At a practical level, many church buildings are in an increasingly critical condition and it is clear that if these are to be maintained or, on occasions, replaced by more appropriate facilities, significant investment will be required. Since 2003 the Church of Scotland General Trustees[9] have prioritised their spending towards congregations serving priority area parishes, replacing the general availability of limited grants (in the region of £10,000) to most congregations with grants in the region of

---

[8] Certainly this would not have been something I would have expected to have found so strongly pronounced at the outset of this research and these findings have challenged me to think more strategically about the nature of church buildings within priority areas.

[9] The General Trustees are the body responsible within the Church of Scotland for the denomination's buildings.

£50,000 for those operating within parishes on the 2004 Priority Areas List (NM 2004). In partnership with the General Trustees, the Unit began work in November 2004 with fourteen priority area congregations across Glasgow, each of which is looking to develop its premises as a result either of the poor local condition of the existing plant or in response to changing circumstances. In each case the congregation is being encouraged to think creatively and to ensure that its proposals are designed to enable the local congregation to engage more effectively with the most marginalised members of their community. Representatives from the different congregations are sharing their vision and experiences with each other and, in all cases, are receiving limited support from a specialist in community development employed by the Committee. The funding available through the General Trustees will be insufficient to enable all the necessary work to be undertaken but it is understood as offering a catalyst for a range of fresh building initiatives which will maintain and develop the 'shrine-like' nature (Inge 2003) of religious buildings in frequently barren and rapidly changing urban contexts. While for a long number of years, I have been convinced that large church buildings used exclusively for worship are a draining and inappropriate burden upon urban congregations, this current research has highlighted the requirement for the Church to continue to create appropriate physical spaces in which people will be able to engage with the numinous in a culture where regular congregational worship is likely to become the activity of an increasingly tiny minority. Such spaces will be essential if the 'rooted hybrid

spirituality' to which I have pointed is not to become even more privatised and apolitical in character.

Resourcing Community Life

Since the 1985 publication of *Faith in the City* (ACUPA 1985), urban ecclesiology has been dominated by a 'project-based' model whereby congregations (or the leadership within them) have developed a wide range of responses to community needs in a pattern which has often aped broader urban regeneration strategy. Notwithstanding the valuable contribution which much of this work has made at an individual level, in *Chapters Five* and *Seven* I have concluded that this model has not, with a few notable exceptions, equipped urban congregations for the current tasks. Indeed, the heavy demands placed upon a fragile leadership by such initiatives may well have further weakened the local congregation. I have suggested that where sufficient numbers of congregational members live locally, an 'incarnational model' of community engagement, whereby those involved in congregational life are encouraged and equipped to be involved in the wider community activity in their area, will be more appropriate.

Since its inception the Priority Areas Committee has made a number of efforts to develop appropriate resources within this field. Initial possibilities of working with *Re:generate*,[10] a radical community-empowerment organisation which combines Freirean methodology with the promotion of social entrepreneurship,

---

[10] For more information about the work of *Re:generate* see www.regeneratetrust.com.

failed to materialise. A partnership with *Tearfund* to promote their *Church, Community and Change* materials across the Priority Areas Network is proving similarly difficult to shift from aspiration to practice, with a number of potentially interested congregations already too over-burdened to enable them to undertake fresh work. An attempt, in collaboration with similar contexts in Newham (London) and Liverpool to redevelop the process to make it more accessible in the urban context offers potential. Certainly the Committee is fully aware of the need to develop resources which will help local congregations to make the essential transition from a congregationally-dominated to a community-focused ecclesiology. It is hoped that the establishment, from March 2005, of a *Transformation Team* to work with churches (and broader faith communities) across Glasgow can play a strategic role in this critical development.

In March 2004 the Priority Areas Committee commissioned a feasibility study into how churches serving priority area parishes might be more effectively supported in their community engagement. The study highlighted much of the high quality work which is currently being undertaken by congregations but also emphasised the lack of coordination, appropriate support and the frequent dominance of clergy in community engagement indicating that, in many contexts, it is the paid staff as opposed to the wider congregation that take primary responsibility for working within the broader parish. The study advocated the establishment of a team of people to work alongside local churches. The term 'Transformation Team' was chosen, in part to identify the

team's proposed methodology with the 'Training for Transformation' (Hope &

Timmel 1995, 1999) tools established in central and southern Africa from the

1970s onwards[11] but also out of a desire to move beyond the failed language of

community regeneration which for many living within priority area parishes is

symptomatic of top-down planning dominated by demolition and rebuilding. In

November 2004 the Committee received funding from 'Glasgow Alliance,' the

city's umbrella regeneration agency, to enable the work to proceed and

recruitment of the initial two staff members took place in February 2005 with

the aspiration that the full team of seven or eight people will be operational by

August 2005. While initially the team will be employed by the Church of

Scotland, plans are at an advanced stage to establish a separate charitable

organisation – 'Faith in Community (Scotland)' – comprising representatives

of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland with the potential

involvement of Glasgow Churches Together and the Scottish Inter-Faith

Council.[12]

The team will operate at three levels, each of which resonates with some of the

primary conclusions of this current research. It will work with individuals from

faith communities to offer more effective support and training for those engaged

---

[11] The *Training for Transformation* process has also been used extensively in other parts of Africa, as well as by a number of exponents of community development in the United Kingdom (see for example www.regeneratetrust.com). In recent years the materials have been further developed to take greater account of the issues of the environment, gender, racism, culture and governance.

[12] Both Glasgow Churches Together and the Scottish Inter-Faith Council were involved in the feasibility study. Initially it had been anticipated that the *Transformation Team* would have been established from September 2005, which would have allowed more time to develop the charitable structure prior to the work commencing.

in volunteering within the broader community including the transfer of skills across different parishes – the promotion of 'brave social capital' (Morisy 2004) – and training which will move beyond project responses to a greater understanding of the structural causes of poverty. It will operate with local congregations – advocating greater ecumenical and inter-faith co-operation as foundational – looking to develop more strategic responses to the needs of their communities, encouraging theological reflection on any activities developed and with a member of staff specifically committed to the promotion of sustainable long-term solutions. At a structural or organisational level, it will promote a more coordinated approach by faith communities to the complex issues of urban poverty in Glasgow while attempting to 'bend their mainstream funding,' moving beyond project-based solutions to long-term sustainable areas of work. The team will also work with *Glasgow Community Planning Partnership*, which is in the process of assuming responsibility from *Glasgow Alliance* for the coordination of the city's regeneration strategy, to enable a greater level of understanding of faith communities within the city's public sector and to identify those areas where more collaborative work could be promoted.

The development and work of the *Transformation Team* is a major focus for the work of the Committee over the next period (and also of my own workload) and it is recognised that it could easily distort the broader schema outlined in this concluding chapter, undermining the dialectical relationship which ought to exist between the three spheres of activity. In order to minimise this danger, we have

asked an external accompanier, from the Baptist Union of Great Britain, to work with the Unit to help to ensure that a correct balance of activity is maintained.

Towards Utopia

In recent years a number of liberation theologians have identified the need to develop a utopian vision in the midst of the envisaged long struggle towards liberation. D. Harvey, writing from within a neo-Marxist perspective, makes a similar plea. I have suggested that the realised eschatology prevalent within Pentecostalism is one of the characteristics which has enabled the movement to make such dramatic inroads into urban culture over the last century and which makes it possible that it will have an even more dramatic impact in the twenty first century.

Throughout this study I have sought to be realistic about the current state of the Urban Church in Scotland as well as its future potential. Indeed, through the course of the last five years I have become increasingly aware of the depth of the crisis which we are facing. In such a context I believe that a utopian vision is more, not less, important. I am reminded of the insight of the woman I met in Sao Bernard favela on the outskirts of Sao Paulo in May 1997 to which I referred in *Chapter One.*

> *This woman, living with her family in conditions of appalling squalor, replied simply, 'We can give you hope.' I must have looked incredulous. After all, how could anyone living in a broken-down shack with an open sewer running past*

it – or through it when it rained – offer us hope? She must have noticed my confusion. 'Martin,' she pointed out, 'You have to recognise that hope is not the same as optimism. Here there are no grounds for optimism, but still there are grounds for hope. For hope comes from God.'

What then is my utopian vision for the future of the Urban Church in Scotland? It is not a return to the days of full churches with people queuing up to get into Sunday worship and of seven double-decker buses necessary for the annual Sunday School trip. I, for one, do not lament the passing of these times or see a way in which we can return usefully to a Christendom era where the gospel was often distorted by its association with the powerful. I dream, however, of small, sustainable urban congregations where people have a radical understanding of what it means to follow Jesus today, a structural understanding of the causes of poverty, and a commitment to Christian discipleship which means that we might strive together to make earth more resemble heaven. For those who have inspired such a vision and been my soul mates along the way, not least those whose stories are told in the preceding pages of this work, I give thanks to God. May the journey forward be as exciting as the one undertaken thus far. 'Traveller, the road is made by walking it' (Enrique Dussell).

Bibliography

Addy, Tony (1989) 'Community Work and the Inner City Church' in British Council of Churches *Changing the Agenda: Christian Reflections on Mission and Community Work*, London, British Council of Churches, pp.71-84.

Ahern, Geoffrey & Davie, Grace (1987) *Inner City God: The Nature of Belief in the Inner City*, London, Hodder & Stoughton.

Alcock, Peter & Craig, Gary (2000) 'Local Poverty Profiles and Local Anti-Poverty Work' in Bradshaw, Jonathan & Sainsbury, Roy (eds) *Experiencing Poverty*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, pp.55-77.

Allan, Tom (1954) *The Face of My Parish*, London, SCM Press.

Alves, Rubem (1969) *A Theology of Human Hope*, Washington, Corpus Books.

Anderson, Allan (2002) *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, Churches Commission on Mission (CCOM) Meeting, 14th-16th September 2002. Copy available at www.ctbi.org.uk.

Anouil, Gilles (2002) *The Poor are the Church: A Conversation with Fr. Joseph Wresinki, Founder of the Fourth World Movement*, Mystic, Twenty-Third Publications.

Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas (ACUPA) (1985) *Faith in the City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation*, London, Church House Publishing.

Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas (ACUPA) (1990) *Living Faith in the City*, London, General Synod of the Church of England.

Archbishops' Council (2004) *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*, London, Church House Publishing.

Arnstein, Sherry (2000) 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' in LeGates, Richard & Stout, Fredric (eds) *The City Reader (2nd Edition)*, London, Routledge, pp.240-252.

ATD Fourth World (1999) *Introducing the Knowledge of People Living in Poverty into an Academic Environment*. Copy available at www.atd-uk.org.

Atherton, John (2003) *Marginalization*, London, SCM Press.

335

Atkinson, Tony (1998) 'Targeting Poverty: Poverty in the UK will Never be Addressed Unless Real Targets are Set' in *New Economy*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp.3-7.

Atkinson, Rob (1999) 'Discourses of Partnership and Empowerment in Contemporary British Urban Regeneration' in *Urban Studies*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp.59-72.

Atkinson, Rob (2000) 'Combating Social Exclusion in Europe: The New Urban Policy Challenge' in *Urban Studies*, vol. 37, no. 5, pp.1037-1055.

Atkinson, Rowland (2001) *Managing Public Spaces: Policies Driven by Social Control of Community Empowerment*, Urban Change & Policy Research Group, Discussion Paper No. 5, University of Glasgow.

Atkinson, Rowland (2002) *Does Gentrification Help or Harm Urban Neighbourhoods? An Assessment of the Evidence Base in the Context of the New Urban Agenda*, CRN Paper 5, June 2002. Copy available at www.neighbourhoodcentre.org.uk.

Bailey, Nick; Turok, Ivan & Docherty, Iain (1999) *Edinburgh and Glasgow: Contrasts in Competitiveness and Cohesion (Interim Report of the Central Scotland Integrative Case Studies)*, Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow.

Baker, Christopher (2004) *Regenerating Communities: A Theological and Strategic Critique*, Manchester, William Temple Foundation. Copy available at: www.wtf.org.uk.

Barbour, Rosaline S. & Kitzinger, Jenny (eds) (1999) *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, London, Sage Publications.

Barham, Jean, Harvey, Jim & Kelly, Peter (2004) *What Makes a Good Life? First Scottish Poverty Watch Report*, Glasgow, The Poverty Alliance. Copy available at www.povertyalliance.org.

Barry, Brian (2002) 'Social Exclusion, Social Isolation and the Distribution of Income' in Hills, John, Le Grand, Julian & Piachaud, David *Understanding Social Exclusion*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp.13-29.

Bauman, Zygmunt (1998) *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Beasley, Mary (1997) *Mission on the Margins*, Cambridge, Lutterworth Press.

Beckford, Robert (1998) *Jesus is Dread: Black Theology and Black Culture in Britain*, London, Darton, Longman & Todd.

Beckford, Robert (2000) *Dread and Pentecostal: A Political Theology for the Black Church in Britain*, London, SPCK.

Beckford, Robert (2004) *God and the Gangs: An Urban Toolkit for those who Won't be Sold Out, Bought Out or Scared Out*, London, Darton, Longman & Todd.

Bedford, Nancy E. (1999) 'Whatever Happened to Liberation Theology?' in *The Christian Century*, 20th October 1999, pp.996-1000.

Bell, David & Haddour, Azzedine (eds) (2000) *City Visions*, Harlow, Pearson Education Limited.

Bennett, Fran & Roberts, Moraene (2004) *From Input to Influence: Participatory Approaches to Research and Enquiry into Poverty*, York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Bennett, Fran & Roche, Chris (2000) 'Developing Indicators: The Scope for Participatory Approaches' in *New Economy*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp.24-28.

Beresford, Peter, Green, David, Lister, Ruth & Woodard, Kirsty (1999) *Poverty First Hand: Poor People Speak for Themselves*, London, CPAG.

Beresford, Peter (2001) 'Service Users, Social Policy and the Future of Welfare' in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 21, no. 4. pp.495-512.

Berryman, Philip (1996) *Religion in the Megacity: Catholic and Protestant Portraits from Latin America*, New York, Orbis Books.

Berryman, Philip (1998) 'Translator's Foreword' in Comblin, Jose *Called for Freedom: The Changing Context of Liberation Theology*, New York, Orbis Books.

Bessis, Sophie (1995) 'From Social Exclusion to Social Cohesion: Towards a Policy Agenda' in *The Roskilde Symposium, 2 – 4 March 1995*, University of Roskilde, Denmark. Copy available at www.unesco.org/most/besseng.htm.

Bevans, Stephen B. (2002) *Models of Contextual Theology* (Revised & Expanded Edition), New York, Orbis Books.

Bevir, Mark (2000) 'New Labour: A Study in Ideology' in *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp.277-301.

Blakebrough, Eric (ed) (1995) *Church for the City*, London, Darton, Longman and Todd.

Blair, Anthony (1999) *Daily Mail*, 10th February 1999.

Blair, Anthony (2001), *Address to the Christian Socialist Movement*, 29th March 2001. Copy available at www.number-10.gov.uk.

Bloor, Michael, Frankland, Jane, Thomas, Michelle & Robson, Kate (2001) *Focus Groups in Social Research*, London, Sage Publications.

Boff, Clodovis (1986) *The Way Forward for the First World Church*, London, CIIR.

Boff, Clodovis (1987) *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations*, New York, Orbis Books.

Boff, Clodovis (1996) 'Methodology of the Theology of Liberation' in Sobrino, Jon & Ellacuria, Ignacio (eds) *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, London, SCM Press, pp.1-21.

Boff, Leonardo (1985) *Church, Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*, London, SCM Press.

Boff, Leonardo (1986) *Ecclesio-Genesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*, Glasgow, Collins.

Boff, Leonardo (1988) 'What are Third World Theologies?' in *Concilium*, 1988/5, pp.3-14.

Boff, Leonardo (1999) 'Life and Death on Planet Earth' in *Concilium*, 1999/5, pp.1-11.

Boff, Leonardo (2002) 'The Contribution of Brazilian Ecclesiology to the Universal Church' in *Concilium*, 2002/3, pp.78-83.

Boff, Leonardo & Boff, Clodovis (1987) *Introducing Liberation Theology*, Tunbridge Wells, Burns & Oates.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich (1959) *The Cost of Discipleship*, London, SCM Press.

Bosch, David J. (1991) *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*, New York, Orbis Books.

Boyle, Mark (1994) 'The Politics of Urban Entrepreneurialism in Glasgow' in *Geoforum*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp.453-470.

Boyle, Mark (1997) 'Civic Boosterism in the Politics of Local Economic Development – 'Institutional Positions' and 'Strategic Orientations' in the Composition of Hallmark Events' in *Environment and Planning*, vol. 29, pp.1975-1997.

Bradbury, Nicholas (1989) *City of God? Pastoral Care in the Inner City*, London, SPCK.

Bradshaw, Jonathan & Lister, Ruth (2000) 'Research: Panel Session' in Bradshaw, Jonathan & Sainsbury, Roy (eds) *Experiencing Poverty*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, pp.289-297.

Bradshaw, Jonathan (2001) *Methodologies to Measure Poverty: More than One is Best!*, International Symposium: Poverty: Concepts and Methodologies, Mexico City, March 2001.

Bradstock, Andrew (1995) 'Liberation Theology After the Revolution' in Rowland, Christopher & Vincent, John (eds) *Liberation Theology UK*, Sheffield, Urban Theology Unit (UTU), pp.87-105.

Bramley, Glen & Chapman, Michael (2000) 'Perspectives on Social Justice: Service Not Included – Service Provision and Local Spending Patterns' in Scottish Executive *A Scotland Where Everyone Matters: Social Justice Annual Report 2000*, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive, pp.90-95.

Brewer, Mike, Goodman, Alissa, Myck, Michal, Shaw, Jonathan & Shephard, Andrew (2004) *Poverty and Inequality in Britain 2004*, London, Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS). Copy available at www.ifs.org.uk.

Bridge, Gary & Watson, Sophie (2000) 'City Economies' in Bridge, Gary & Watson, Sophie (eds) *A Companion to the City*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Brown, Calum (2001) *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000*, London, Routledge.

Brown, Gordon (1997) *The Guardian*, 2nd August 1997.

Brown, Gordon (1999) *The Times*, 17th September 1999.

Brown, Stewart J. (1982) *Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

Bruce, Steve (2003) 'The Demise of Christianity in Britain' in Davie, Grace, Heelas, Paul & Woodhead, Linda (eds) *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., pp.53-63.

Bryman, Alan (2001) *Social Research Methods*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Burchardt, Tania, Le Grand, Julian & Piachaud, David (2002) 'Introduction' in Hills, John, Le Grand, Julian & Piachaud, David *Understanding Social Exclusion*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp.1-12.

Burden, Tom (2000) 'Poverty' in Percy-Smith, Janie (ed) *Policy Responses to Social Exclusion: Towards Inclusion?*, Buckingham, Open University Press, pp.43-58.

Byrne, David (1989) *Beyond the Inner City*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press.

Byrne, David (1997) 'Chaotic Places or Compex Places? Cities in a Post-Industrial Era' in Westwood, Sally & Williams, John (eds) *Imagining Cities: Scripts, Signs, Memories*, London, Routledge, pp.50-70.

Byrne, David (1999) *Social Exclusion*, Buckingham, Open University Press.

Byrne, David (2001) *Understanding the Urban*, Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Cambridge Economic Associates (2001) *National Evaluation of the Former Regeneration Programmes: Summary Report*, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive. Copy available at www.scotland.gov.uk/cru.

Cameron, Helen (2003) 'The Decline of the Church of England as a Local Membership Organization: Predicting the Nature of Civil Society in 2050' in Davie, Grace, Heelas, Paul & Woodhead, Linda (eds) *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Carley, Michael (2000) 'Urban Partnerships, Governance and the Regeneration of Britain's Cities' in *International Planning Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp.273-297.

Castells, Manuel (1996) *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: vol. 1: The Rise of the Network Society*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Castells, Manuel (1997) *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: vol. 2: The Power of Identity*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Castells, Manuel (1998) *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture: vol. 3: The End of the Millennium*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Castells, Manuel (2000) 'The Contours of the Network Society' in *Foresight: The Journal of Future Studies, Strategic Thinking and Policy*, vol. 2, no. 2, April 2000, pp.151-157.

Castells, Manuel (2000a) 'European Cities, the Information Society and the Global Economy' in LeGates, Richard & Stout, Fredric (eds) *The City Reader (2nd Edition)*, London, Routledge, pp.557-567.

Castells, Manuel (2000b) 'Urban Sustainability in the Information Age' in *City*, vol. 4/1, pp.118-123

Chatterton, Paul & Bradley, David (2003) 'Bringing Britain Together: The Limitations of Area-Based Regeneration Policies in Addressing Deprivation' in *Local Economy*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp.98-111.

Chiavacci, Enrico (1999) 'A Carefully Hidden Reality' in *Concilium*, vol. 1999/5, pp.30-38.

Church & Nation Committee (2004) *Voices on Poverty – A Scottish Perspective*, Edinburgh, Church of Scotland. Copy available at www.churchofscotland.org.uk.

Church Heritage Forum (CHF) (2004) *Building Faith in Our Future*, London, Church House Publishing.

Church of Scotland (1995) *God in our Place*, Edinburgh, Boards of National Mission, World Mission & Social Responsibility.

Church of Scotland (1998) *Good News for a Change*, Edinburgh, Boards of National Mission, World Mission & Social Responsibility.

Civil Renewal Unit (CRU) (2004) *Firm Foundations: The Government's Framework for Community Capacity Building*, London, Civil Renewal Unit.

Clark, Colin (1940) *The Conditions of Economic Progress*, London, MacMillan.

Clark, David (2000) 'The Future Urban World' in LeGates, Richard & Stout, Fredric (eds) *The City Reader (2nd Edition)*, London, Routledge, pp.579-589.

Cleary, David L. (1985) *Crisis and Change: The Church in Latin America Today*, New York, Orbis Books

Coffey, Amanda & Atkinson, Paul (1996) *Making Sense of Qualitative Research: Complementary Research Strategies,* California, Sage Publications.

Collins, Chuck & Lister, Jim (1996) 'From 'Social Strategy to 'Partnership': Ferguslie Park and Its Significance for Community Work Practice' in *Concept*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp.3-7.

Collins, Chuck (1999) 'Applying Bakhtin in Urban Studies: The Failure of Community Participation in the Ferguslie Park Partnership' in *Urban Studies*, vol. 36. no. 1, pp.73-90.

Comblin, Jose (1990) *Being Human: A Christian Anthropology*, Tunbridge Wells, Burns & Oates.

Comblin, Jose (1994) 'Brazil: Base Communities in the Northeast' in Cook, Guillermo (ed) *New Face of the Church in Latin America'*, New York, Orbis Books, pp.202-225.

Comblin, Jose (1998) *Called for Freedom: The Changing Context of Liberation Theology*, New York, Orbis Books.

Commission on Poverty, Particpation and Power (CPPP) (2000) *Listen Hear: The Right to be Heard*, Abingdon, The Policy Press.

Cone, James (1977) *God of the Oppressed*, London, SPCK.

Cone, James (1990) *A Black Theology of Liberation: Twentieth Anniversary Edition*, New York, Orbis Books.

Corden, Ann (1996) 'Writing about Poverty: Ethical Dilemmas' in Dean, Hartley (ed), *Ethics and Social Policy Research*, Luton, University of Luton/Social Policy Association, pp.8-20.

Cox, Harvey (2001) *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge, Da Capo Press.

Crown Street Regeneration Project (CSRP) (2002) *The Story So Far*. Copy available from CSRP, Legal House, 101 Gorbals Street, Glasgow.

Cunningham-Burley, Sarah; Kerr, Anne and Pavis, Stephen (1999) 'Theorizing Subjects and Subject Matter in Focus Group Research' in Barbour, Rosaline S. & Kitzinger, Jenny (eds) *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, London, Sage Publications, pp.186-199.

Cuthbertson, Malcolm (1987) 'The Kingdom and the Poor' in *The Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*, vol.4, no.2, pp.123-133.

Cuthbertson, Malcolm (1987a) 'A Plea for Downward Mobility: The Church and the Urban Poor' in *Radical Scotland*, no. 26, p.25.

Cuthbertson, Malcolm (2000) *Folk Religion & the Mission of the Church in the Urban Priority Area with Special Reference to Easterhouse (Proposal for Ph.D. Study)*, unpublished article.

Darling, Alistair (2002) 'Foreword' in Department for Work and Pensions *The Changing Welfare State: Social Security Spending*, pp.v-vi. Copy available at www.dwp.gov.uk.

Davey, Andrew (1995) 'Being Church as Political Praxis' in Rowland, Christopher & Vincent, John (eds) *Liberation Theology UK*, Sheffield, Urban Theology Unit (UTU).

Davey, Andrew (1999) 'Globalisation as Challenge and Opportunity in Urban Mission' in *International Review of Mission*, vol. 351, October 1999, pp. 381-388.

Davey, Andrew (2000) 'Towards Cosmopolis' in *City*, vol. 4/1, pp.149-151.

Davey, Andrew (2001) *Urban Christianity and Global Order: Theological Resources for an Urban Future*, London, SPCK.

Davey, Andrew (2003) 'Flesh and Blood Cities: The Struggle for Urban Realism in Theological Practice' in *Anvil*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp.93-103.

Davey, Andrew (2004) 'Editorial' in *Crucible*, July-September 2004, pp.3-12.

Davey-Smith, George, Dorling, Daniel & Shaw, Mary (eds) (2001) *Poverty, Inequality and Health in Britain: 1800 – 2000 (A Reader)*, Bristol, The Policy Press.

Davie, Grace (1994) *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Davie, Grace (2002) *Europe: The Exceptional Case: Parameters of Faith in the Modern World*. London, Darton, Longman and Todd.

Davila, Brenda Maribel Carranza (2002) 'Pentecostal Flames in Contemporary Brazil' in *Concilium*, 2002/3, pp.93-101.

Davis, Kingsley (2000) 'The Urbanisation of the Human Population' in LeGates, Richard & Stout, Fredric (eds) *The City Reader (2nd Edition)*, London, Routledge, pp.3-13.

Davis, Mike (2000) 'City of Quartz: Excavating the Future of Los Angeles' in LeGates, Richard & Stout, Fredric (eds) *The City Reader (2nd Edition)*, London, Routledge, pp.193-198.

Dawson, Andrew (2002) 'New World, New Politics, New Labour: Third Way Revisionism and Prophetic Political Theology' in *Political Theology*, vol. 3, no.2, pp.157-177.

De Santa Ana, Julio (1979) *Towards a Church of the Poor: The Work of an Ecumenical Group on the Church and the Poor*, Geneva, World Council of Churches (WCC).

DeFilippis, James (2001) 'Our Resistance Must be as Local as Capitalism: Place, Scale and the Anti-Globalisation Protest Movement' in *City*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp.363-373.

Denscombe, Martyn (1998) *The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects*, Philadelphia, Open University Press.

Denzin, Norman K (2000) 'Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research' in Denzin, Norman K. & Lincoln, Yvonna S. *Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd Edition)*, California, Sage Publications, pp1-28.

Department of the Environment (DoE) (1977) *Policy for the Inner Cities*, London, HMSO.

Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) (1997) *Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration: A Guide for Practitioners*, London, DETR.

Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) (1998) *Where Does Public Spending Go? Pilot Study to Analyse the Flows of Public Expenditure into Local Areas*, Regeneration Research Report, no. 20.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (1999) *Opportunity for All: Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion*, London, The Stationery Office Ltd.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (2000) *Opportunity for All: One Year On – Making a Difference*, London, The Stationery Office Ltd.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (2001) *Opportunity for All: Making Progress*, London, The Stationery Office Ltd.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (2002) *Opportunity for All* London, The Stationery Office Ltd.

Dodd, Christine (1999) 'Liberating Spirituality and Spirituality of Liberation' in Rowland, Christopher & Vincent, John (eds) *Liberation Spirituality*, Sheffield, Urban Theology Unit.

Dussel, Enrique D (1979) 'Historical and Philosophical Presuppositions for Latin American Theology' in Gibellini, Rosino (ed) *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America*, London, SCM Press, pp.184-212.

Edwards, John (1997) 'Urban Policy: The Victory of Form Over Substance' in *Urban Studies*, vol. 34, no. 5, pp.825-844.

Eisenschitz, Aram (1997) 'The View from the Grassroots' in Pacione, Michael (ed) (1997) *Britain's Cities: Geographies of Division in Urban Britain*, London, Routledge, pp.150-172.

Elizondo, Virgil (1981) 'Do We Really Have Third World Churches?' in *Concilium*, vol. 144, pp.vii-ix.

Elizondo, Virgil & Boff, Leonardo (eds) (1984) 'Editorial: Theology from the Viewpoint of the Poor,' in *Concilium*, vol. 187, pp.ix-xii.

Engels, Friedrich (2000) 'The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844' in LeGates, Richard & Stout, Fredric (eds) *The City Reader (2nd Edition)*, London, Routledge, pp.46-55.

Etzioni, Amitai (1995) *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda*, London, Fontana.

Etzioni, Amitai (1996) *The New Golden Rule: Community and Morality in a Democratic Society*, London, Profile.

Etzioni, Amitai (2001) 'The Third Way is a Triumph' in *New Statesman*, 25th June 2001.

Evening News (1953) *The Church that Moved Across Glasgow – Stone by Stone*, Glasgow, Evening News, 10th September 1953.

Farnell, Richard, Furbey, Robert, Hills, Stephen Shams Al-Haqq, Macey, Marie & Smith, Greg (2003) *'Faith' in Urban Regeneration: Engaging Faith Communities in Urban Regeneration*, Bristol, The Policy Press.

Ferguson, Ronald (1990) *George MacLeod: Founder of the Iona Community*, London, Harper Collins.

Finneron, Doreen & Dinham, Adam (eds) (2002) *Building on Faith: Faith Buildings in Neighbourhood Renewal*, London, Church Urban Fund.

Flint, John; Atkinson, Rowland & Kearns, Ade (2002) *Churches & Social Capital: The Role of Church of Scotland Congregations in Local Community Development*, Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow.

Flint, John & Kearns, Ade (2004) *The Role of Church of Scotland Congregations in Developing Social Capital in Scottish Communities: Enabling and Cohesive or Irrelevant and Divisive*, Centre for Neighbourhood Research (CNR) Paper 16, Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Centre for Neighbourhood Research. Copy available as www.neighbourhoodcentre.org.uk.

Ford, David F. & McFadyen, Alistair I. (1995) 'Praise' in Sedgwick, Peter (ed) *God in the City: Essays and Reflections from the Archbishop's Urban Theology Group*, London, Mowbray, pp95-104.

Forrest, Martin (2000) *Recovering a Radical Gospel: Reflections on the World, Theology and Insights from the South*, Church of Scotland Board of Ministry, unpublished Study Leave Report.

Forrest, Ray & Kearns, Ade (1999) *Joined Up Places? Social Cohesion and Neighbourhood Regeneration*, York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Forrester, Duncan (2003) *Beyond Racism and Sectarianism: Is Religion the Problem or the Solution*, The 18th Eric Symes Abbott Memorial Lecture. Copy available at www.westminster-abbey.org.

Fraser, Ian (1988) *Reinventing Theology as the People's Work*, Glasgow, Wild Goose Publications.

Fraser, Ian (1990) *Living a Countersign: From Iona to Basic Christian Communities*, Glasgow, Wild Goose Publications.

Freire, Paulo (1996) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Revised Edition)*, London, Penguin.

Freston, Paul (1998) 'Pentecostalism in Latin American: Characteristics and Controversies' in *Social Compass*, vol. 45, no. 3, pp.335-358.

Friedmann, John (1996) 'Rethinking Poverty: Empowerment and Citizens' Rights' in *International Social Journal*, vol. 147, March 1996, pp.161-171

Fulkerson, Mary McLintock (1994) *Changing the Subject: Women's Discourses and Feminist Theology*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press.

Fyfe, Nicholas (1996) 'Contested Visions of a Modern City: Planning and Poetry in Postwar Glasgow' in *Environment and Planning*, vol. 28, pp.387-403.

Galloway, Kathy (1998) *Starting Where We Are: The Story of a Neighbourhood Centre*, Glasgow, Wild Goose Publications.

Galloway, Kathy (1999) *A Story to Live By*, London, SPCK.

Galloway, Kathy (2001) *Poverty in Scotland*, Church Action on Poverty. Copy available at www.churchpoverty.org.uk/scotland.htm.

Garner, Rod (2004) *Facing the City: Urban Mission in the 21st Century*, Peterborough, Epworth Press.

Geddes, Mike (1997) 'Poverty, Excluded Communities and Local Democracy' in Jewson Nick & MacGregor, Susan (eds) *Transforming Cities: Contested Governance and New Spatial Divisions*, London, Routledge, pp.205-213.

Gergen, Mary M. & Gergen, Kenneth J. (2000) 'Qualitative Enquiry: Tensions and Transformations' in Denzin, Norman K. & Lincolm, Yvonna S. (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd Edition)*, California, Sage Publications, pp.1025-1046.

Gerson, Kathleen & Horowitz, Ruth (2002) 'Observation and Interviewing: Options and Choices in Qualitative Research' in May, Tim *Qualitative Research in Action*, London, Sage Publications, pp.199-224.

Gibb, Kenneth; Kearns, Ade; Keoghan, Margaret; MacKay, Daniel & Turok, Ivan (1998) *Revising the Scottish Area Deprivation Index (Vol. 1)*, Edinburgh, The Scottish office Central Research Unit.

Gibellini, Rosino (ed) (1987) *The Liberation Theology Debate*, London, SCM Press.

Giles, Richard (2004) *Repitching the Tent: The Definitive Guide to Reordering Church Buildings for Worship and Mission* (Third Edition), Norwich, Canterbury Press.

Glasgow Alliance (2001) *Creating Tomorrow's Glasgow: Delivering a Strategy for Glasgow (2001-2005)*, Glasgow Alliance, 39 Vincent Place, Glasgow. Copy available at www.glasgowalliance.co.uk.

Glasgow City Council (GCC) & Glasgow Development Agency (GDA) (1999) *Glasgow's Renewed Prosperity: A Joint Economic Strategy for Glasgow*, Glasgow City Council.

Glasgow City Council (GCC) & Scottish Enterprise Glasgow (SEG) (2001) *Glasgow Economic Monitor: December 2001*, Development and Regeneration Services, Glasgow City Council, Glasgow.

Glasgow City Council (GCC) (2001) *Glasgow City Plan*, Glasgow City Council. Copy available at www.glasgow.gov.uk/cityplan.

Glasgow City Council (GCC) (2002) *Social Justice Milestone*, Report to the Policy and Resources (Social Inclusion Strategy) Sub-Committee, 27th March 2002.

Goddard, Giles (2004) 'Escape and Engagement: Spirituality and Worship in an Urban Setting' in *Crucible*, July-September 2004, pp.23-25.

Gomez, Maria V. (1998) 'Reflective Images: The Case of Urban Regeneration in Glasgow and Bilbao' in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 22.1, pp.106-121.

Gooren, Henri (2002) 'Catholic and Non-Catholic Theologies of Liberation: Poverty, Self-Improvement and Ethics Among Small-Scale Entrepreneurs in Guatemala City' in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 41:1, pp.29-45.

Gordon, David, Adelman, Adele *et al* (2000) *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain*, York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Gordon, David & Pantazis, Christina (1997) *Breadline Britain in the 1990s*, Aldershot, Ashgate.

Gornik, Mark R. (2002) *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Gorringe, Tim J. (2002) *A Theology of the Built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, Redemption*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Graham, Elaine (2000) 'Good News for the Socially Excluded? Political Theology and the Theology of New Labour' in *Political Theology*, vol. 2, pp.76-99.

Green, Laurie (1987) *Power to the Powerless: Theology Brought to Life* Basingstoke, Marshall Pickering.

Green, Laurie (1990) *Let's Do Theology: A Pastoral Cycle Resource Book*, London, Mowbray.

Green, Laurie (1995) 'The Body: Physicality in the UPA' in Sedgwick, Peter (ed) *God in the City: Essays and Reflections from the Archbishop's Urban Theology Group*, London, Mowbray, p.105-118.

Green, Laurie (2001) *The Impact of the Global: An Urban Theology* New City Special 13, Sheffield, Urban Theology Unit.

Green, Laurie (2003) *Urban Ministry and the Kingdom of God*, London, SPCK.

Gutierrez, Gustavo (1983) *The Power of the Poor in History*, London, SCM Press.

Gutierrez, Gustavo (1988) *A Theology of Liberation (2ⁿᵈ Edition)*, London, SCM Press.

Gutierrez, Gustavo (1996) *Essential Writings*, London, New York

Gutierrez, Gustavo (1999) *The Density of the Present: Selected Writings*, New York, Orbis Books.

Gutierrez, Gustavo (1999a) 'The Task and Content of Liberation Theology' in Rowland, Christopher (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Hale, Sarah (2002) 'Professor MacMurray and Mr Blair: The Strange Case o the Communitarian Guru that Never Was' in *Political Quarterly*, vol. 73, no. 2, pp.191-197.

Hall, Peter (1996) 'The Global City' in *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 48, no. 1, pp.15-23.

Hall, Peter (1998) *Cities in Civilization: Culture, Innovation, and Urban Order*, London, Phoenix Giant Paperback

Hall, Peter & Pfeiffer, Ulrich (eds) (2000) *Urban Future 21: A Global Agenda for the Twenty-First Century*.

Haralambos, Michael, Holborn, Michael & Heald, Robin (2000) *Sociology: Themes and Perspctives*, London, Harper-Collins.

Haraway, Donna J. (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, London, Free Association Books.

Harries, Richard (2001) 'The Third Way' in *Crucible*, January – March 2001, pp.25-42.

Harvey, Anthony (2001) *By What Authority? The Churches and Social Concern*, London, SCM Press.

Harvey, David (1989) 'From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism' in *Geograifiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, vol. 71, pp.3-17.

Harvey, David (1997) 'Contested Cities: Social Process and Spatial Form' in Jewson Nick & MacGregor, Susan (eds) *Transforming Cities: Contested Governance and New Spatial Divisions*, London, Routledge, pp.19-27.

Harvey, David (2000) *Spaces of Hope*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

Harvey, David (2001) *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

Harvey, John (1987) *Bridging the Gap: Has the Church Failed the Poor*, Edinburgh, Saint Andrew's Press.

Hasselberg, Jan (1997) 'Poverty in the South and in the North' in *Gegrafiska Annaler (Series B: Human Geography)*, vol. 79, no. 4, pp.227-241.

Hay, David (2000) *The Spirituality of the Unchurched*. Speech at the British and Irish Association for Mission Studies Conference, 13th September 2000. Copy available at www.martynmission.cam.ac.uk.

Hennelly, Alfred T. (1995) *Liberation Theologies: The Global Pursuit of Justice*, Connecticut, Twenty Third Publications.

Hinton, Jeanne (1995) *Walking in the Same Direction: A New Way of Being Church*, Geneva, World Council of Churches.

Hinton, Jeanne (2002) *Changing Churches: Building Bridges in Local Mission*, London, Churches Together in Britain & Ireland (CTBI).

Hinton, Jeanne & Price, Peter B (2003), *Changing Communities: Church from the Grassroots*, London, Churches Together in Britain & Ireland (CTBI).

Hocking, Gina (2003) 'Oxfam Great Britain and Sustainable Livelihoods in the UK' in *Community Development Journal*, vol. 38, no. 3, pp.235-242.

Hoban, Martin (2001) 'Rethinking Regeneration' in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp.519-522.

Hobsbawm, Eric (1977) *The Age of Revolution*, London, Abacus.

Holden, Chris (1999) 'Globalization, Social Exclusion and Labour's New Work Ethic' in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp.529-538.

Holloway, Richard (2000) 'One City, One Scotland: Lessons from the Lord Provost's Commission on Social Inclusion in Edinburgh' in *Third Annual Lecture*, Scottish Urban Regeneration Forum, June 2000.

Hollway, Wendy & Jefferson, Tony (2000) *Doing Qualitative Research Differently: Free Association, Narrative and the Interview Method*, London, Sage Publications.

Holman, Bob (1997) *FARE Dealing: Neighbourhood Involvement in a Housing Scheme*, London, Community Development Foundation.

Holman, Bob (1999) 'A Voice from the Estate' in Timms, Stephen; Holman, Bob & Stanton, Helen *Joined-Up Writing: New Labour and Social Inclusion*, London, Christian Socialist Movement, pp10-17.

Howard, Marilyn, Garnham, Alison, Finister, Geoff & Veit-Wilson, John (2001) *Poverty: The Facts (4th edition)*, London, Child Poverty Action Group.

Howarth, Catherine, Kenway, Peter & Palmer, Guy (2001) *Responsibility for All: A National Strategy for Social Inclusion*, London, New Policy Institute. Copy available at www.npi.org.uk.

Hunt, Kate (2003) 'Understanding the Spirituality of People who Do Not Go to Church' in Davie, Grace, Heelas, Paul & Woodhead, Linda (eds) *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd., pp.159-169.

Hutchinson, Jo (2000) 'Urban Policy and Social Exclusion' in Percy-Smith, Janie (ed) *Policy Responses to Social Exclusion: Towards Inclusion?*, Buckingham, Open University Press, pp.164-183.

Johnstone, Martin (1990) *Liberation Methodology as a Key in the Development of an Indigenous Theology of Liberation for the First World with Particular Reference to the British Context*, University of Aberdeen, M.Th. Thesis.

Johnstone, Martin (1997) *Brazilian Interviews: March – June 1997*, private papers.

Johnstone, Martin (2001) 'Breaking out of Poverty: Good News for the Socially Excluded?' in Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS), *Breaking New Ground: The First Scottish Ecumenical Assembly 2001*, Dunblane, ACTS.

Jones, Colin & Watkins, Craig (1996) 'Urban Regeneration and Sustainable Markets' in *Urban Studies*, vol. 33, no. 7, pp.1129-1140.

Jones, Kathleen (2000) *The Making of Social Policy in Britain: From the Poor Law to New Labour (3rd Edition)*, London, The Althone Press.

Kantor, Paul (2000) 'Can Regionalism Save Poor Cities? Politics, Interests and Institutions in Glasgow' in *Urban Affairs Review*, vol. 35, no. 6, pp.694-820.

Kavanagh, John (1996) *The Independent on Sunday*, 21st July 1996.

Keating, Michael (1988) *The City that Refused to Die. Glasgow: The Politics of Urban Regeneration*, Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press.

Keats, Daphne M. (2000) *Interviewing: A Practical Guide for Students and Professionals*, Philadelphia, Open University Press.

Kee, Alistair (2000) 'The Conservatism of Liberation Theology: Four Questions for Jon Sobrino' in *Political Theology*, issue 3, pp.30-43.

Kenway, Peter, Fuller, Stephen, Rahman, Mohibur, Street, Cathy & Palmer, Guy (2002) *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in Scotland*, Bristol, The Policy Press.

King, Ursula (1998) *Faith and Praxis in a Post-Modern Age*, London, Cassell.

Kirk, J. Andrew (1989) 'A Different Task: Liberation Theologies and Local Theologies' in *Theology in the City: A Theological Response to 'Faith in the City,'* London, SPCK, pp.15-31.

Kitzinger, Jenny (1995) 'Introducing Focus Groups,' in *British Medical Journal (BMJ)*, vol. 311, pp299-302.

Kleinman, Mark (2000) 'Include Me Out? The New Politics of Place and Poverty' in *Policy Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp.49-61.

Konvitz, Josef K. (1992) 'Missing the Boat: Port City Planning in Glasgow During World War II' in *Urban Studies*, vol. 29, no. 8, pp.1293-1304.

Krueger, Richard A. & Casey, Mary Anne (2000) *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research (3rd Edition)*, California, Sage Publications.

Kvale, Steinar (1996) *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*, California, Sage Publications.

Landry, Charles (2000) *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, London, Earthscan.

Le Corbusier [Jeanneret, Charles-Edouard] (2000) 'The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning' in LeGates, Richard & Stout, Fredric (eds) *The City Reader (2nd Edition)*, London, Routledge, pp.336-343.

Leadbeater, Charles (1999) *Living on Thin Air: The New Economy*, London, Viking.

Leech, Kenneth (1995) 'London's Racial Crisis' in Blakebrough, Eric (ed) *Church for the City*, London, Darton, Longman & Todd.

Leech, Kenneth (1997) *The Sky is Red: Discerning the Signs of the Times*, London, Darton, Longman & Todd.

LeGates, Richard & Stout, Fredric (eds) *The City Reader (2nd Edition)*, London, Routledge.

Lever, William F. (1991) 'Deindustrialisation and the Reality of the Post-Industrial City' in *Urban Studies*, vol. 28, no. 6, pp.983-999.

Levitas, Ruth (1998) *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, London, MacMillan Press Ltd.

Levitas, Ruth (2001) Against Work, A Utopian Excursion into Social Policy' in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp.449-465.

Lewis, Julie & Randolph-Horn, Elizabeth (2001) *Faiths, Hope and Participation: Celebrating Faith groups' Role in Neighbourhood Renewal*, London, New Economics Foundation & Church Urban Fund.

Linden, Ian (1997) *Liberation Theology: Coming of Age?* London, CIIR.

Linden, Ian (2000) 'Liberation Theology: Coming of Age?' in *Political Theology*, issue 3, pp.11-29.

Lister, Ruth (1990) *The Exclusive Society: Citizenship and the Poor*, London, CPAG.

Lister, Ruth (2001) 'New Labour: A Study in Ambiguity from a Position of Ambivalence' in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp.425-447.

Lister, Ruth (2001a) 'Towards a Citizens' Welfare State: The 3 + 2 'R's of Welfare Reform' in *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 18 (2-3), pp.91-111.

Lister, Ruth (2001b) 'Doing Good by Stealth: The Politics of Poverty and Inequality Under New Labour' in *New Economy*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp.65-70.

Lister, Ruth & Beresford, Peter (2000) 'Where are the Poor in the Future of Poverty Research?' in Bradshaw, Jonathan & Sainsbury, Roy (eds) *Researching Poverty*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, pp.284-301.

Livezey, Lowell W. (1998) 'Church as Parish (Union Theological Seminary's East Harlem Protestant Parish)' in *The Christian Century*, vol. 115, no. 34, pp.1176-1177.

Local Government Association (LGA) (2002) *Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities*, London, LGA Publication.

Lund, Brian (1999) '"Ask Not What Your Community Can Do for You": Obligations, New Labour and Welfare Reform' in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp.447-462.

Lupton, Ruth (2003) *Poverty Street: The Dynamics of Neighbourhood Decline and Renewal*, Bristol, The Policy Press.

McArthur, Andrew (1984) *Local Economic Regeneration: Community Level Effects in Clydeside*, Centre for Urban & Regional Research, Paper 16, University of Glasgow.

McCarthy, John & Pollock, S H Allan (1997) 'Urban Regeneration in Glasgow and Dundee: A Comparative Evaluation' in *Land Use Policy*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp.137-149.

McCarthy, John (1999) 'Urban Regeneration in Scotland: An Agenda for the Scottish Parliament' in *Regional Studies*, vol. 33.6, pp.559-566.

McCormick, James & Philo, Chris (1995) 'Where is Poverty? The Hidden Geography of Poverty in the United Kingdom' in Philo, Chris (ed) *Off the Map: The Social Geography of Poverty in the United Kingdom*, London, CPAG Limited, pp.1-22.

McCrone, Gavin (1991) 'Urban Renewal: The Scottish Experience' in *Urban Studies*, vol. 28, no. 6, pp.919-938.

MacLeod, Gordon (2001) *Renaissanciation, Homelessness, and Exclusionary Citizenship: Unraveling the Contours of a 'Revanchist' Urbanism*, Paper presented at the 97th Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, February 27 – March 3, 2001, New York, USA.

MacLeod, Gordon (2002) 'From Urban Entrepreneurialism to a 'Revanchist City'? On the Spatial Injustices of Glasgow's Renaissance' in *Antipode*, vol. 34, issue 3, pp.602-624.

Mack, Joanna & Lansley, Stewart (1985) *Poor Britain*, London, Allen & Unwin.

Marx, Karl (2001) 'Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association' in Davey-Smith, George, Dorling, Daniel & Shaw, Mary (eds) (2001) *Poverty, Inequality and Health in Britain: 1800 – 2000 (A Reader)*, Bristol, The Policy Press, pp.90-96.

Marx, Karl & Engels, Friedrich (1952) *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Moscow, Progress Publishers.

Mason, Jennifer (1996) *Qualitative Researching*, London, Sage Publications.

Mason, Jennifer (2002) *Qualitative Researching (2nd Edition)*, London, Sage Publications.

Mason, Jennifer (2002a) 'Qualitative Interviewing: Asking, Listening and Interpreting' in May, Tim *Qualitative Research in Action*, London, Sage Publications, pp.225-241.

Massey, Doreen (2000) 'Understanding Cities' in *City*, vol. 4/1, pp.135-144.

Maxwell, Richard, Dorling, Daniel & Shaw, Mary (2000) *Inequalities in Life and Death: What If Britain were More Equal*, Bristol, Policy Press.

Maxwell, Simon & Kenway, Peter (2000) *New Thinking on Poverty in the UK. Any Lessons for the South?*, ODI Briefing Paper, November 2000. Copy available at www.odi.org.uk/briefing/pov9.html.

May, Tim (2001) *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*, Philadelphia, Open University Press.

May, Tim (2002) 'Introduction: Transformation in Principles and Practice' in May, Tim (ed) (2002) *Qualitative Research in Action*, London, Sage Publications, pp.1-14.

Mellor, Rosemary (1997) 'Cool Times for a Changing City' in Jewson Nick & MacGregor, Susan (eds) *Transforming Cities: Contested Governance and New Spatial Divisions*, London, Routledge, pp.56-67.

Merrifield, Andy (2002) *Dialectical Urbanism: Social Struggles in the Capitalist City*, New York, Monthly Review Press.

Merton, Robert & Kendall, Patricia L. (1946) 'The Focused Interview' in *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 51, issue 6, pp541-557.

Merton, Robert (1987) 'The Focused Interview and Focus Groups: Continuities and Discontinuities' in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 51, issue 4, pp550-566.

Mesters, Carlos (1984) 'The Use of the Bible in Christian Communities of the Common People' in Torres, Sergio & Fabella, Virginia (eds) *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities: Papers from the International Ecumenical Congress of Theology February 20 – March 2, 1980, Sao Paulo, Brazil*, New York, Orbis, pp.197-211.

Michell, Lynn (1999) 'Combining Focus Groups and Interviews: Telling How It Is; Telling How It Feels' in Barbour, Rosaline S. & Kitzinger, Jenny (eds) *Developing Focus Group Research: Politics, Theory and Practice*, London, Sage Publications, pp.36-46.

Miller, Gale & Dingwall, Robert (eds) (1997) *Context and Method in Qualitative Research*, London, Sage Publications.

Miller, John (1987) *Buildings and Mission*, Glasgow, Castlemilk East Parish Church.

Miller, John (1999) *Beyond the Breaker's Yard: The First Margaret MacGregor Memorial Lecture*, Friends of Govan Old, Glasgow.

Miller, John (2002) *Reflections on the Beatitudes*, Edinburgh, St Andrew Press.

Miller, John (2003) *Listening to Underground Rivers: Social Change 1970 – 2000*, Strathclyde University Town and Gown Lecture, 15th May 2003.

Miller, Mike (2000) 'Lost Among Christians?' in *Social Policy*, vol. 31, no. 1. Copy available at www.socialpolicy.org.

Mooney, Gerry & Danson, Mike (1997) 'Beyond 'Culture City': Glasgow as a 'Dual City'' in Jewson Nick & MacGregor, Susan (eds) *Transforming Cities: Contested Governance and New Spatial Divisions*, London, Routledge, pp.73-86.

Mooney, Gerry & Johnstone, Charlie (2000) 'Scotland Divided? Poverty, Inequality and the Scottish Parliament' in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp.155-182.

Morisy, Ann (1997) *Beyond the Good Samaritan: Community Ministry and Mission*, London, Mowbray.

Morisy, Ann (2004) *Journeying Out: A New Approach to Mission*, London, Continuum.

Murray, Charles (1989) 'Underclass' in *Sunday Times Magazine*, 26th November 1989.

Myers, Bryant L. (1999) *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*, New York, Orbis Books.

Nagle, Robin (1997) *Claiming the Virgin: The Broken Promise of Liberation Theology in Brazil*, New York, Routledge.

National Mission, Board of (NM) (1992) *UPA News*, Issue 2.

National Mission, Board of (NM) (1995) *UPA News*, Issue 5.

National Mission, Board of (NM) (2000) *Report to the General Assembly*, Edinburgh, Church of Scotland General Assembly.

National Mission, Board of (NM) (2002) *Sharing the Pain – Holding the Hope*, Edinburgh, Church of Scotland General Assembly.

National Mission, Board of (NM) (2003) *Report to the General Assembly*, Edinburgh, Church of Scotland General Assembly.

National Mission, Board of (NM) (2004) *Church of Scotland Priority Area Parishes List*.

National Mission, Board of (NM) (2004a) *Statistics for Mission*.

NCH (2002) *Factfile 2002: Facts and Figures about Scotland's Children*, Rochester, Chapel Press.

New Policy Institute (NPI) (2002) *Policy Analysis 3: What Do the Poverty Numbers Really Show?* London, New Policy Institute. Copy available at www.poverty.org.uk.

Nickoloff, James B. (1996) 'Introduction' in Gutierrez, Gustavo *Essential Writings*, London, SCM Press, pp.1-22.

North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) (2002) *Information on Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit, April 2002 for Council Wards and Area Committees*, Motherwell, Chief Executive's Office, North Lanarkshire Council.

Northcott, Michael (1995) 'Children' in Sedgwick, Peter (ed) *God in the City: Essays and Reflections from the Archbishop's Urban Theology Group*, London, Mowbray, p.139-152.

Novilos, Virginia Trevino (2002) 'A Pentecostal Paradigm for the Latin American Family: An Instrument of Transformation' in *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal Charismatic Research*, vol. 11. Copy available at www.pctii.org/cybertab.html.

Oakley, Nigel (2004) 'Base Ecclesial Communities and Community Ministry: Some Freirean Points of Comparison and Difference' in *Political Theology*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp.447-465.

Oatley, Nick (2000) 'New Labour's Approach to Age-Old Problems. Renewing and Revitalising Poor Neighbourhoods – The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal' in *New Economy*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp.86-97.

Office of Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (2003) *Community Involvement: The Roots of Renaissance (Summary No. 5)*. Copy available at www.odpm.gov.uk.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2002) *Urban Renaissance: Glasgow: Lessons for Innovation and Implementation*, Paris, OECD.

Osberg, Lars (2002) *Trends in Poverty: The UK in International Perspective – How Rates Mislead and Intensity Matters*, Institute for Social & Economic Research. Copy available at www.iser.essex.ac.uk.

O'Toole, Mo; Snape, Dawn & Stewart, Murray (1995) *Interim Evaluation of the Castlemilk Partnership (Summary)*, Edinburgh, Scottish Office. Copy available at www.scotland.gov.uk/cru/resfinds.

Ottmann, Goertz Frank (2002) *Lost for Words? Brazilian Liberationism in the 1990s*, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press.

Pacione, Michael (1993) 'The Geography of the Urban Crisis: Some Evidence from Glasgow' in *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, vol. 109, no. 2, pp.87-94.

Pacione, Michael (1995) *Glasgow: The Socio-Spatial Development of the City*, Chichester, John Wiley & Sons.

Pacione, Michael (ed) (1997) *Britain's Cities: Geographies of Division in Urban Britain*, London, Routledge.

Pacione, Michael (2001) *Urban Geography: A Global Perspective*, London, Routledge.

Page, Robert (2001) 'New Labour, the Third Way and Social Welfare: "Phase Two" and Beyond' in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp.513-516.

Paget-Wilkes, Michael (1986) 'Strength and Weakness in the Church' in Forster, Greg (ed) *Hope in the City*, Nottingham, Grove Books Ltd, pp.11-14.

Palacio, Carlos (2002) 'Shifts in Theology; Socio-Ecclesiastical Changes: Recent Developments in Theology in Brazil' in *Concilium*, 2002/3, pp.71-77.

Panel on Doctrine (2002) *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, Edinburgh, Church of Scotland General Assembly.

Pelton, Robert S. (ed) (1997) *Small Christian Communities: Imagining Future Church*, Notre Dame, Notre Dame Press.

Persaud, Winston D (1987) 'The Marginalised Makers of History' in *Current in Theology and Mission*, vol. 4, no. 5, pp.354-360.

Phan, Peter (2000) 'Method in Liberation Theologies' in *Theological Studies*, vol. 61, no. 1, pp.40-63).

Pityana, N. Barney (1989) 'Towards a Black Theology for Britain' in Harvey, Anthony (ed) *Theology in the City: A Theological Response to 'Faith in the City'*, London, SPCK.

Pixley, Jorge P. & Boff, Clodovis (1989) *The Bible, the Church and the Poor*, London, Burns & Oates.

Polanyi, Karl (1957) *The Great Transformation*, Boston, Beacon Press.

Poverty Alliance (2003) *An Agenda for Action Against Poverty.* Copy available at www.povertyalliance.org.

Powell, Martin (ed) (1999) *New Labour, New Welfare State?: The 'Third Way' in British Social Policy* Bristol, Policy Press.

Powell, Martin (2000) 'New Labour and the Third Way in the British Welfare State: A New and Distinctive Approach?' in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp39-60.

Prideaux, Simon (2001) 'New Labour, Old Functionalism: The Underlying Contradictions of Welfare Reform in the US and the UK' in *Social Policy and Administration*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp.85-115.

Putnam, Robert D. (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York, Simon & Schuster.

Rahman, Mohibur, Palmer, Guy & Kenway, Peter (2001) *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion*, York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Ramsay, Meredith (1998) 'Redeeming the City: Exploring the Relationship Between Church and Metropolis' in *Urban Affairs Review*, vol. 33, no. 5, pp.595-626.

Rennie-Scott, John & Kim, Yeong-Hyun (1999) *Globalization and the City*, Harlow, Longman.

Ribeiro, Claudio de Oliveira (1999) 'Has Liberation Theology Died? Reflections on the Relationship between Community Life and the Globalization of the Economic System' in *The Ecumenical Review*, July 1999, pp.304-314.

Richard, Pablo (2002) 'Interpreting and Teaching the Bible in Latin America,' in *Interpretation*, October 2002, pp.378-386.

Richardson, Jenny (2001) *Educators with Attitude: A Discovery of the Expertise of Radical Theological Educators with the UK's Urban Poor*, Unlock, Sheffield. Copy available from Unlock, 336a City Road, Sheffield.

Robertson, Douglas (1998) 'Pulling in Opposite Directions: The Failure of Post-War Planning to Regenerate Glasgow' in *Planning Perspectives*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp.53-68.

Robinson, David (2000) 'Accounting for the Uncounted' in Carpenter, Aurea, Nicolson, Rebecca & Robinson, David (eds) *What If? ... Fifteen Voices for Change for Britain's Inner Cities*, London, Community Links, pp.46-57.

Robinson, Peter (2003) 'Editorial Matters' in *Anvil*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp.81-89.

Roker, Debi & Coleman, John (2000) 'People Growing Up in Family Poverty' in Bradshaw, Jonathan & Sainsbury, Roy (eds) *Experiencing Poverty*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, pp.268-288.

Rogers, Richard & Gumuchdjian, Philip (1997) *Cities for a Small Planet*, London, Faber & Faber.

Rogers, Richard & Power, Anne (2000) *Cities for a Small Country*, London, Faber & Faber.

Rosenburg, Louis & Watkins, Craig (1999) 'Longitudinal Monitoring of Housing Renewal in the Urban Core: Reflections on the Experience of Glasgow's Merchant City' in *Urban Studies*, vol. 36, no. 11, pp.1974-1994.

Rowland, Christopher (ed) (1999) *A Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Rowntree, B. Seebohm (2000) *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*, Bristol, Policy Press.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford (1993) 'Future of Liberation Theology is Down the Road to Ecumenism' in *National Catholic Reporter*, vol. 29, no. 23, p.16.

Russell, Haliary (2001) *Poverty Close to Home: A Christian Understanding*, London, Mowbray.

Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1984) *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation*. Copy available at www.vatican.va.

Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1986) *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*. Copy available at www.vatican.va.

Sachs-Jeantet, Celine (1996) 'Humanizing the City' in *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 147, March 1996, pp.129-135.

Sandercock, Leonie (1998) *Towards Cosmopolis: Planning for Multicultural Cities*, Chichester, John Wiley & Sons.

Savage, Mike & Warde, Alan (2000) 'Urban Sociology, Capitalism and Modernity' in LeGates, Richard & Stout, Fredric (eds) *The City Reader (2nd Edition)*, London, Routledge, pp.264-277.

Schreiter, Robert J. (1998) *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local*, New York, Orbis Books.

Scottish Affairs Committee (SAC) (2000) *Poverty in Scotland*, London, The Stationery Office.

Scottish Ecumenical Assembly (SEA) (2001) *Breaking New Ground: The First Scottish Ecumenical Assembly*, Mainstream Publishing/Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS).

Scottish Executive (SE) (1999) *A Scotland Where Everyone Matters: Social Justice Annual Report 1999*, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive.

Scottish Executive (SE) (2000) *A Scotland Where Everyone Matters: Social Justice Annual Report 2000*, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive.

Scottish Executive (SE) (2001) *A Scotland Where Everyone Matters: Social Justice Annual Report 2001*, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive.

Scottish Executive (SE) (2001a) *Working Together for Scotland: A Programme for Government*, Scottish Executive. Copy available at www.scotland.gov.uk.

Scottish Executive (SE) (2002) *Better Communities in Scotland: Closing the Gap*, Communities Scotland. Copy available at www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk.

Scottish Executive (SE) (2002a) *A Scotland Where Everyone Matters: Social Justice Annual Report 2002*, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive.

Scottish Executive (SE) (2003) *Building Better Cities: Delivering Growth and Opportunities (Review of Scotland's Cities)*, Edinburgh, The Stationery Office.

Scottish Executive (SE) (2003a) *Inequalities in Health: Report of the Measuring Inequalities in Health Working Group*. Copy available at www.scotland.gov.uk.

Scottish Executive (SE) (2004) *Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004: Summary Technical Report*. Copy available at www.scotland.gov.uk.

Scottish Poverty Information Unit (SPIU) (1999) *Poverty in Scotland*, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University.

Sedgwick, Peter (ed) (1995) *God in the City: Essays and Reflections from the Archbishop's Urban Theology Group*, London, Mowbray.

Segundo, Juan Luis (1973) *The Community Called Church*, New York, Orbis Books.

Segundo, Juan Luis (1976) *The Liberation of Theology*, Maryknoll, Orbis.

Seidman, Irving (1998) *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, New York, Teachers College Press.

Seymour, Jane (ed) (2000) *Poverty in Plenty: A Human Development Report for the UK*, London, Earthscan.

Seo, J-K (2002) 'Re-Urbanisation in Regenerated Areas of Manchester and Glasgow: New Residents and the Problems of Sustainability' in *Cities*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp.113-121.

Shanks, Norman (1995) *Transforming Community? The Church in the Modern City*, Faculty of Divinity Research Seminar, University of Glasgow, 7 November 1995.

Sharma, Kalpana, Khan, Sameera & Warnock, Kitty (2001) *Governing Our Cities: Will People Power Work*, London, Panos Institute.

Shaull, Richard & Cesar, Waldo (2000) *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches: Promises, Limitations, Challenges*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans.

Shaw, Keith & Robinson, Fred (1998) 'Learning from Experience? Learning from Two Decades of British Urban Policy' in *Town Planning Review*, vol. 69, no. 1, pp.49-63.

Sheldrake, Philip (2001) *Spaces for the Sacred*, London, SCM Press.

Short, John R. (1996) *The Urban Order: An Introduction to Cities, Culture and Power*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers.

Silverman, David (2000) *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*, London, Sage Publications.

Smerdon, Matthew (2000) 'As Easy as 1, 2, 3' in Carpenter, Aurea, Nicolson, Rebecca & Robinson, David (eds) *What If? ... Fifteen Voices for Change for Britain's Inner Cities*, London, Community Links, pp.68-75.

Smith, Greg (1989) 'Community Development and Christian Mission' in British Council of Churches *Changing the Agenda: Christian Reflections on Mission and Community Work*, pp.7-21.

Sobrino, Jon & Ellacuria, Ignacio (eds) (1996) *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*, London, SCM Press.

Social Disadvantage Research Centre (SDRC) (2003) *Scottish Indices of Deprivation 2003*, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, University of Oxford.

Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) (2001) *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, London, Cabinet Office. Copy available at www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk.

Soros, George (1996) 'The Capitalist Threat' in *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 1996.

Special Commission (2001) *The Report of the Special Commission anent Review and Reform*, Edinburgh, Church of Scotland General Assembly.

Stake, Robert (2000) 'Case Studies' in Denzin, Norman K. & Lincoln, Yvonna S. *Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd Edition)*, California, Sage Publications, pp.435-454.

Stanton, Helen (1999) 'A Voice from the Countryside' in Timms, Stephen, Holman, Bob & Stanton, Helen *Joined-up Writing: New Labour and Social Exclusion*, London, Christian Socialist Movement, pp.18-20.

Stepney, Paul, Lynch, Richard & Jordan, Bill (1999) 'Poverty, Exclusion and New Labour' in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp.109-127.

Storrar, William (2004) *Temples of Loose Connection and Spiritual Practice: A Reformed Model of the Congregation for the 21ˢᵗ Century*, unpublished article.

Strathclyde Labour Market Intelligence and Monitoring Service (SLIMS) (2004) *Scotland's Census 2001 – A SIP Level Analysis: Castlemilk Partnership Area*, Glasgow, SLIMS.

Strathclyde Labour Market Intelligence and Monitoring Service (SLIMS) (2004a) *Scotland's Census 2001 – A SIP Level Analysis: The Milton SIP Area*, Glasgow, SLIMS. Copy available at www.northglasgowpartnership.co.uk.

Strathclyde Labour Market Intelligence and Monitoring Service (SLIMS) (2004b) *Scotland's Census 2001 – A SIP Level Analysis: Greater Pollok SIP Area*, Glasgow, SLIMS.

Taylor, Jenny (2003) 'After Secularism: British Government and the Inner Cities' in Davie, Grace, Heelas, Paul & Woodhead, Linda (eds) *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Taylor, Peter; Turok, Ivan & Hastings, Annette (2001) 'Competitive Bidding in Urban Regeneration: Stimulus or Disillusionments for the Losers' in *Environment and Planning*, vol. 19, pp.45-63.

Teixeira, Faustino (2002) 'Stories of Faith and Life in the Base Communities' in *Concilium*, 2002/3, pp.38-46.

Thrift, Nigel (2000) '"Not a Straight Line but a Curve," or, Cities are Not Mirrors of Modernity' in Bell, David & Haddour, Azzedine (eds) *City Visions* Harlow, Pearson Education Limited, pp.233-261.

Tombs, David (2002) *Latin American Liberation Theology*, Boston, Brill Academic Publishers.

Townsend, Peter (1979) *Poverty in the United Kingsdom: A Survey of Household Resources and Standards of Living*, New York, Penguin.

Tulle-Winton, Emmanuelle (1997) 'Happy in Castlemilk? Deprivation and Depression in an Urban Community' in *Health & Place*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp.161-170.

Turner, Denys (2000) 'Liberation Theology in Britain Today' in *Political Theology*, issue 3, pp.64-79.

Turok, Ivan & Hopkins, Nick (1998) 'Competition and Area Selection in Scotland's New Urban Policy' in *Urban Studies*, vol. 35, no. 11, pp.2021-2061.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1999) *Human Development Report 1999: Globalization with a Human Face*, New York, Oxford University Press.

Urban Bishops' Panel (2002) *The Urban Renaissance and the Church of England: A Discussion Paper*, London, General Synod of the Church of England.

Urban Task Force (1999)) *Towards and Urban Renaissance*, London E & FN Spon.

Utheo Ltd (2003) *Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre: Business Plan, 2003 – 2006*. Copy available from Orbiston Neighbourhood Centre, Bellshill.

Vaughn, Sharon; Shay Shumm, Jeanne & Sinagub, Jane (1996) *Focus Group Interviews in Education and Psychology*, California, Sage Publications.

Veit-Wilson, John (1987) 'Consensual Approaches to Poverty Lines and Social Security' in *Journal of Social Policy*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp.183-211.

Veit-Wilson, John (1998) *Setting Adequacy Standards: How Governments Define Minimum Incomes*, Bristol, Policy Press.

Vidales, Raul (1979) 'Methodological Issues in Latin America,' in Gibellini, Rosina *Frontiers of Theology in Latin America*, New York, Orbis Books, pp.34-57.

Vigil, Jose Maria (1997) *Is There a Change of Paradigm in Liberation Theology?* Copy available at: www.sedos.org.

Villafanc, Eldin (1994) *The Liberating Spirit: Toward an Hispanic American Pentecostal Social Ethic*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmanns.

Vincent, John (2000) *Hope from the City*, Peterborough, Epworth Press.

Von Weizacker, Ernst, Lovins, Amory & Lovins, Hunter (1997) *Factor Four: Doubling Wealth – Halving Resource Use*, London, Earthscan.

Walker, Alan & Walker, Carol (eds) (1997) *Britain Divided: The Growth of Social Exclusion in the 1980s and 1990s*, London, CPAG.

Walsh, Margaret (1997) 'Still Hoping' in Rowland, Christopher & Vincent, John (eds) *Gospel from the City*, Sheffield, Urban Theology Unit.

Ward, Bernie & Lewis, Julie (2002) *Plugging the Leaks: Making the Most of Every Pound that Enters Your Local Economy*, London, New Economics Foundation. Copy available at www.pluggingtheleaks.org.

Ward, Graham (2000) *Cities of God*, London, Routledge.

Warren, Robert (1995) *Being Human, Being Church: Spirituality and Mission in the Local Church*, London, Marshall Pickering.

Watt, Paul & Jacobs, Keith (2000) 'Discourses of Social Exclusion: An Analysis of Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal' in *Housing Theory and Society*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp.14-26.

Webber, Melvin W. (2000) 'The Post-City Age' in LeGates, Richard & Stout, Fredric (eds) *The City Reader (2nd Edition)*, London, Routledge, pp.535-539.

Wilks-Heeg, Stuart (1996) 'Urban Experiments Limited Revisited: Urban Policy Comes Full Circle' in *Urban Studies*, vol. 33, no. 8, pp.1263-1280.

Williams, Andrew M. (2000) *Community Involvement as a Model of Mission for the Local Urban Church*, University of Glasgow, M.Th. Thesis

Williams, Fiona (2001) 'In and Beyond New Labour: Towards a New Political Ethics of Care' in *Critical Social Policy*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp.467-493.

Williams, Malcolm (2002) 'Generalization in Interpretative Research' in May, Tim *Qualitative Research in Action*, London, Sage Publications, pp.125-143.

World Commission on Environment & Development (WCED) (1987) *Our Common Future*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Young, Iris Marion (2000) *Inclusion and Democracy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.