

***Seeking the way forward***

**UMDP Annual Report**

**2008-9**

## ***Seeking the way forward* – UMDP Annual Report 2008-9**

This report goes to the 25 original sponsoring and endorsing bodies that were behind the setting up of the project in 2004 (see below); the three further organisations who have joined the endorsing body in 08-9 (the Church of God of Prophecy, the Church Army and the Church Urban Fund) and the invitees (see appendix 1) to the series of ‘wider urban mission network’ conversations that took place during the year – as reported in Section 2.

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## Ways of Working – Strive first for the kingdom of God Matthew 6:33<sup>1</sup>

Not only have some exciting new things developed during this year, but the process of working together with an increasingly wide range of agencies and denominational bodies has itself brought many fruitful conversations and sharing in worship and prayer together.

The Project has continued to work primarily as a catalyst. It has also continued to place a high value on worship and praying together in the way it organises events. This is seen most clearly in the structure of the Urban Mission event put on in June 2009 that was advertised as a ‘day of prayer and conversation on the big issues of urban mission’. (see section 6.2)

This year has seen the fruits of three processes that began in Phase 1 (2004-7). This shows the benefit of the extension of funding.

These are reported against the broad **development goals** that were set for 2007-2010:

1. To use the Evaluation of the experience gained in Yorkshire & Humberside and Wales, and of networking with Black-led churches to learn about viability of the model for other regions to adapt to their own contexts.
2. To help bring into being networks of networks in urban mission and ministry exploring the basis, forms, means, methods involved, towards the formation of some kind of UK-wide Christian urban mission grouping, in order to strengthen the Christian presence in urban areas as in *Faithful Cities Report Recommendation 2*.
3. To pay particular attention to Black-led congregations, churches and parishes and wherever possible to undertake the necessary proactive work to link them appropriately with general sources of support and networks.
4. To promote shared endeavours in recruitment, training and education for urban mission and ministry, both lay and ordained, with appropriate forms of recognition and accreditation; and to further the outworking of the *Faithful Cities* report’s recommendations on training, especially for lay people on a wide and inclusive basis, in close communication and appropriate collaboration with the Church of England’s Bishop for Urban Life and Faith.
5. To provide support for networks for Urban Mission practitioners (See Section 7 for these), especially those whose denominations that do not have their own urban officer and those that are supporting the Project financially (currently the Methodist Church).
6. To further partnership in urban mission and ministry between the four nations of the UK.
7. To contribute to the follow up for the UK Urban Mission Congress in 2007 and promote and develop that in 2010 as the focus for the practitioners from all four nations of the UK.

### Prioritisation of work to further the goals

*Stepping Up*, the annual reporting and consultation event June 08 confirmed that the key targets for 08-09 should be

- the development of better links at a national/UK level
- the development of training provision

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<sup>1</sup> But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6.33 NIV

## Section 1 – Learning from Networking – supporting and accompanying Job 4:4 & Ecclesiastes 4:10<sup>2</sup>

During the year the Y&H urban mission network ‘Sustaining Christian Urban Presence’ has met twice. We have progressed from working with representatives of organisations to developing relationships with individuals to resource and refresh them, and encourage them to link in with one another. Due to the large area of the Y&H region we have developed a strategy of holding three events per year one in the east of the region, one in the south and one in the north. In doing this we hope that people will be able to attend at least one of the network events. Individuals that attend have found the events thought provoking and useful networking opportunities.

Many lessons have been learnt this year about people’s capacity to do work. With both the Y&H network and offering to support BMC through West Yorkshire African Caribbean Churches Council, we have discovered that with the current economic situation people’s ability to engage with anything extra even if it would be of great long-term benefit has been greatly reduced. This has been frustrating but underlines the necessity of a project such as UMDP to help these organisations.

## Section 2. Networks of networks – linking and sharing - Ephesians 4: 4-7, 11-16; 2 Corinthians 9: 6-11

A key text that was presented at the *Stepping Up* event was that in which Paul talks of the different parts of the body which need to connect well together: ‘From Him [Christ] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.’ (Eph 4:16, NIV). Also important to the Project is the idea of generosity – that in sharing together we can do far more than can be achieved apart.

The attempt to put some connectivity between the various national ligaments so that they then help the whole body of Christ in the UK Urban and community mission context has been the major work in 2008-9.

This piece of work centred mainly on three pre-existing national networks:

### 1. The Eccleston Group

During the previous four years the Eccleston Group of Christian social action/community development agencies (see Appendix 1.1) had been meeting together to do some of that linking. The Group in its final set of conversations decided that it had done some very good things but that it had lost energy during that time. It had suffered from:

- a change of personnel in its constituent members, who had not been adequately briefed about the role and aim of the group;
- the loss of funding to CCWA that meant that it could no longer act as co-ordinator and administrator for the Group
- organisations as a whole had not bought in to the philosophy of the *Concordat*, even if their representatives had
- and that the aspirations within the *Concordat* of generous working together for the greater good of the gospel had been too tough a call.

At their meeting in May 08 they agreed to have one more meeting in September 08 with the other two networks and cease activity after that, and join in with whatever new structure emerged.

### 2. The Evangelical Coalition for Urban Mission (ECUM)

This body was a key element in the creation of the UMDP Project.

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<sup>2</sup> Your words have supported those who stumbled; you have strengthened faltering knees. Job 4:4 NIV  
If one falls down his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no-one to help him up. Ecclesiastes 4:10 NIV

Its Executive was clear that in sponsoring the Project it was working towards the amalgamation of ECUM into the new wider body, and at their meeting in the autumn they formally agreed to cease activity once their funding obligation to the UMDP was honoured.

### **3. The Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ) Urban Round Table Network**

This began under the aegis of Caritas in 2004, and transferred to CARJ in the course of 2008.

It is not an agency network primarily although a number of Catholic social action networks take part, but is mainly a place of conversation and support for lay and clergy engaged in this form of ministry. They also agreed in summer 08 to take part in the wider conversations.

## **The process through the year**

### **September 2008 – three-way meeting**

The UMDP convened a three-way meeting between the three networks in September 08 for a day of structured conversation, facilitated by Tim Evans of Worth Foundation with Erica Dunmow (UMDP). In the morning, after opening worship, the three networks spent time in separate conversations celebrating their work, and identifying why they were weak or felt their task was done. The positives that they wanted the new structure to hold on to were shared with the whole group. After lunch the members were mixed up to do some dreaming together about the things that the new thing could do.

### **November 2008 – wider urban mission network exploration**

Most of the agencies present in September, plus some other who had not been part of any of the three but were interested in joining the process (see Appendix 1.2) were convened by the UMDP to meet in two venues connected by a *Skype* link to look at the list of things generated in September and to prioritise them and decide which were most important for the new body to do. Erica Dunmow (UMDP) in Manchester, and Tim Evans (Worth Foundation) in London facilitated the day. A small group of people agreed to meet in Jan 09 to shape those suggestions into a practical process.

### **January 2009 – putting ideas into practical form**

The small group was brought together by UMDP in January, and the dream of some sort of national focus for this sort of mission was as strong as in the autumn, but circumstances had changed considerably since the two previous meetings. Several agencies were beginning to face financial constraints and the appetite to put energy into making a new structure happen was just not there.

### **February 2009 – change of approach**

The UMDP role had always been that of catalyst, and the vision was that a group of agencies would create the momentum to bring the new thing into being supported by UMDP. When the Jan 09 meeting showed no appetite amongst those present to drive the process, the UMDP Management Group meeting agreed to change the approach and to work instead to bring a wider group of organisations into the Endorsing Body for the Project itself – i.e. they would identify as being in support the aims of creating such a new body and giving the Project a wider permission to work more proactively to bring it about.

### **June 2009 – new Endorsers**

The UMDP then started actively inviting organisations to join the Endorsing Group – looking especially at sections of the Christian community under-represented in the original Endorsing Group. Of the four bodies formally approached by the end of May, three - the Church of God of Prophecy, the Church Army and the Church Urban Fund – have accepted, and the fourth is very active in the Midlands Urban Mission Training Node Pilot (see Section 4) and will reconsider membership as that relationship develops.

### **June 2009 - The *Seeking the way forward* Annual Reporting event**

At this event to which all the Endorsers were invited, plus some of the agencies that took part in the wider conversations in autumn 09, considered the proposal that had been shaped to develop a new

national Project in the form of a hub or hubs for information and support for training on urban mission (see Appendix 2 – the text of these documents has been altered in the light of the discussion on 22 June).

### **July 2009 – Join us on the Journey**

The UMDP is now actively working with the agencies and denominational bodies listed above that are its Endorsers to see which of them wish to become active Partners with a legal and financial commitment to the new ‘hub’ Project, or who wish to be seen as Supporters where their role is similar to the existing Endorsing role, but with the expectation that they will act as advocates to help bring it about and will actively engage with its on-going work.

## **Section 3 – Black-majority churches – welcoming and joining**

Galatians 3:28,29<sup>3</sup>

The approach behind this area of work is to undertake proactive contact with local Black-led churches and Projects and national BMC denominations to ensure that they are offered an opportunity to engage integrally with all levels of the UMDP Projects’ work, and become part of the normal range of contacts. The major engagement with Black-majority churches has been through five threads of work:

1. Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Network – see Section 1 above
2. The process of consultation for the Network of Networks – see Section 2 above
3. The Midlands Urban Mission Training Node Pilot – see Section 4
4. The Urban Mission Forum – see Section 5
5. The links with the Commission VII Study Group process of E2010 – see Section 7

Given the approach outlined above, it is more appropriate to report on that progress integrally within the relevant sections.

In most of these examples the proactive work that began in the later part of 2007-8 is now bearing fruit.

The reduction in funding for the Churches Racial Justice Network attached to CTBI and the closing of ACEA places this work in a different context from the one two years’ ago. The Catholic Association for Racial Justice is now the only denominationally-based body specifically addressing this issue.

## **Section 4 – shared endeavours in training — equipping for mission—**

Luke 9:62- 10:6

This was the second activity prioritised at Stepping Up in 2008.

A wide range of agencies in the Midlands and Scotland (particularly Glasgow) had been approached in 2007-8 to see if they were willing to participate in piloting some sort of node of expertise on training and learning resources for urban mission in their part of the UK. Funding had been sought, but was pending a greater range of participants actually signed up. Development was scaled down to one region in the course of the year in the light of that.

Charges were made to all the participants in the Pilot Midlands Node to help offset the lack of external funding.

### **1. Midlands**

Several meetings were held with groups of these people in the Midlands area, which led in February 09 to the idea of producing a joint brochure of courses to be distributed on paper and as a pdf file and on websites. The majority of these bodies were BMC denominations or courses, or bodies such as the

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<sup>3</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:28-29 NIV

Queens' Foundation that has a strong history of linking with BME practitioners. Following that successful conversation, the UMDA set up a meeting with the Education for Discipleship group of the W Midlands Regional Training Partnership (RTP) – a body in advance of such a structure for the E. Midlands RTP [check]. The RTP was impressed at the range of participants and agreed to link in to the Node and host the brochure on its website, as well as publicise it through its events and channels. The brochure is due for publication in June 09.  
(see Appendix 3 for list of participants)

## **2. Glasgow**

The appetite for a new process, especially one being promoted from outside Scotland did not prove to be there. However the International Christian College, through the Director of its Masters in Mission in the Urban World, has decided to engage as a national partner, and may undertake some proactive development from within that city/ region.

## **3. National**

A wide, but not exhaustive range of national bodies – mostly independent training courses - was then approached to see if they also wanted to advertise into the Midlands region joint brochure. All but one of those approached agreed. (see Appendix 3)

An evaluation of this process will take place in the autumn, with a wider national invitation list in the hope that other areas will build on the pilot model.

## **Section 5 – support for national networks of urban mission practitioners – gathering - Isaiah 66:18<sup>4</sup>**

This work was scaled down in June 08, partly because the networks approached either had existing funding and staff in post at this point, or were not persuaded of the benefits of a shared resource. This may well change in the coming months as the availability of any form of core funding for such networks becomes harder to find.

The Project has kept lines of communication open with them all and this is a key element of the ideas being explored for post-2010. The Methodist City Centre Network has a place on the UMDP Management Group in order to strengthen that link.

## **Section 6 and 7 – partnership between the four nations of the UK and support the UK Urban Mission Congress (Jesus in the City – JITC) – it is through our walking together that Jesus is revealed- Luke 24:13-35**

These two areas are closely linked and are therefore reported on together.

The UK Urban Mission Congress Trust was persuaded of the sense of the continuity of administration that could be gained through the sharing of administration at agreed to utilise and pay for one day per week of the UM Networks Support Officers' time.

The work for JITC has involved administering the Exec meetings, developing the programme structure, creating publicity including new flyers and website designs, liaising with the Belfast team and reviewing and altering existing paperwork, contacting prospective speakers. In doing this we have been on two visits to Belfast to meet JITC links and view venues for the Congress.

The role of the UMDP has continued to be more developmental and the major task has been the shaping of the links with the Edinburgh2010 conference in June 2010 (see [www.E2010.org.uk](http://www.E2010.org.uk) for more information). The E2010 Conference has also a series of Commissions with different areas of study and

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<sup>4</sup> And I, because of their actions and their imaginations, am about to come and gather all nations and tongues, and they will come and see my glory. Isaiah 66:18 NIV

the JITC executive had decided in 2008 that Commission VII \_ Christian Community in Contemporary contexts' was the most appropriate to link in to. This has taken place in two ways:

### **1. The 'bubbles' hearings**

A wide range of organisations were identified as being places of holding events where there is enthusiasm for urban mission bubbling up in the UK. These were invited to either conduct a special workshop around the Commission VII Study Themes or to be happy for a member of the JITC exec to listen to their discussion and report against the headings. In all ten bodies in Scotland and England accepted this.

The will evidence be fed into the Commission VII Report and also forms the basis for the thinking for JITC Belfast 2010 in March.

### **2. Adfywio'n Trefi – Urban Refreshment - Wales – June 2009**

Planned jointly with Gweini ( project of EA Wales) Churches Together in Wales and the Cardiff Archdiocese and Wrexham Diocese Justice and Peace Networks and hosted by an Assemblies of God church. It was advertised as a Day of Prayer and Conversation.

The Commission VII Seven Themes and questions were condensed into four Streams. Rev'd Roy Jenkins chaired the day.

A case-study process was trialled in which enabled people to talk less than they may be used to about what they are doing and instead to think more about Jesus teaching and the Spirit's leading in terms of what God wants done for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Each Stream featured two case studies, had a Facilitator and a Reflector. These people were from all three sections of the Christian community as were the attendees.

Very rich and prayerful sharing happened and many spoke of how working in response to the needs of people outside the church was what enabled churches to work together, despite our brokenness and arguments.

A key moment was when a homeless young man who had come in looking for shelter, was the person in the room who could provide a lighter for the candles that were used as a sign of God's presence at the short liturgy that began our lunch.

### **3. Commission VII Study Group Process**

UMDA was invited to become one of the two world Co-conveners of this process. This was not felt appropriate but Erica has done a lot of work with the Co-Convenor who is based in Edinburgh. The advantage of this has been more contacts with Black-led churches, including pastors from Edinburgh. A short paper on indigenous leadership and the failure of the mainstream churches to see vocations in minority ethnic and white working class people was presented at the study Conference in December 08. A short summary paper from the 'Bubbles' process was presented at the Study Conference in June 09 and the longer write-up will be part of the Report on the E2010 website and a book that might come out of the Commission VII.

## Appendix One – participants in the Wider Coalition discussions

### Eccleston Group Members

#### Agencies:

Caritas, Church Action on Poverty (CAP), Churches' Community Work Alliance (CCWA), The Churches Regional Network (CRN), Church Urban Fund (CUF), Evangelical Alliance (EA), Faithworks, Housing Justice, Livability Community Mission Team (pka Shaftesbury Society), National Estates Churches Network (NECN), Spurgeons Network (from 08), Tearfund, Urban Mission Development Project, YMCA;

#### Denominations:

Salvation Army and URC (Church Related Community Worker support staff)

### ECUM members:

CUrbS, Frontier Youth Trust, Scripture Union Youth and Justice Ministries, Unlock, Urban Saints, Urban Vision, Worth Unlimited.

### Individual members of the CARJ Urban Round Table Network

#### Others invited to the November 08 meeting:

Hope08 Coordinator; The Message Trust (Eden Projects); Bishop for Urban Life and Faith (CoE);

Four meetings have been held, one in September 08 between members of Eccleston Group, CARJ Urban Round Table Network and ECUM; one in November 08 with a wider membership; one in January 09 of a small group drawn from the wider group; and the *Seeking the Way Forward* Reporting Day in June 09.

## Appendix Two – proposals for support for urban mission after 2010

These proposals have come out of the four consultation events listed in Section 2 of the main Report and Appendix 2.

Four things have been suggested:

1. - **support** for ministers/practitioners to equip them for the particulars of urban ministry and mission, and community development and transformation processes
2. - **strengthening** the confidence and capability of lay people to engage in community mission in urban contexts alongside or in the absence of paid leadership (practical and discipling resources)
3. - **encouragement** of the large denominations to work more with independent specialist agencies and the smaller denominations, and to value and utilise resources available through them.
4. - a **voice** of prophetic challenge into the national denominations and agencies to prioritise the allocation of resources to this area of mission, and maybe into national government

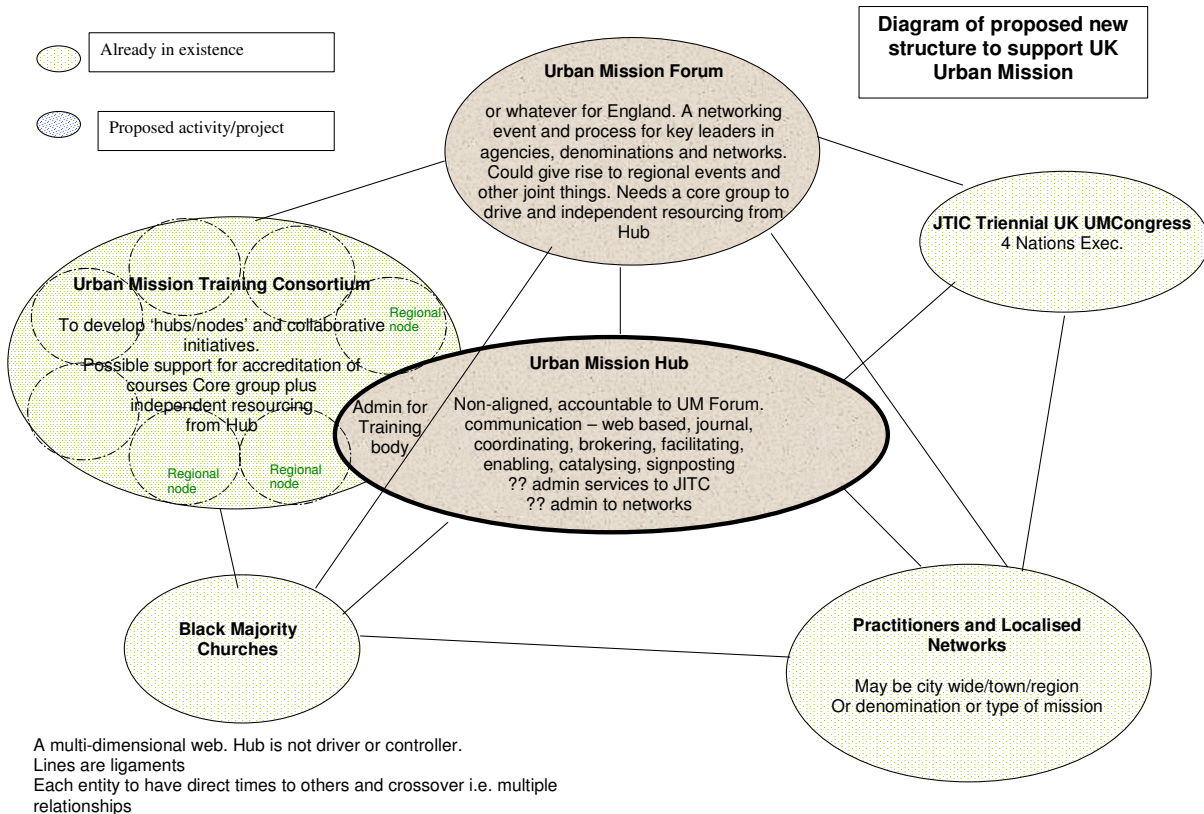
### Possible model for delivering support

The overall proposal is to set up 'non-aligned' hub connecting a number of national organisations on a partnership basis, and serving regional nodes that will include a wider range of national and local participants. Some of the regional node organisations will also be partners in the overall Project.

*At this point it is still to be clarified to what extent the hub either serves, or simply links with, bodies based in Ireland, Scotland and Wales.*

The partners will have legal funding and managerial responsibility for the Project, but as with the UMDP, the accountability will be to a much wider group of stakeholders.

The hub and nodes will in all their activities, work in a non-aligned and inclusive way, and pay especial attention to the involvement of Black Majority Churches and other smaller denominations and agencies.



The Project will undertake the following activities:

### 2.1 Training and learning

- connect the provision and sharing of information on specialist training, learning and discipling that works in disadvantaged contexts, mainly through regional Nodes and using web-based communication (based on the UMDP's Urban Mission Training Node pilot in the Midlands)
- explore and possibly provide accreditation routes (mainly through regional Nodes)
- encourage and lobby for the development of better vocational courses for ordained ministries to serve in urban settings, and provide these in their absence
- ensure that national decision-makers hear the special needs for ministry in these settings
- convene national meetings of practitioners, providers and policy setters
- and enable and support a national coalition on training for mission and community transformation to oversee all the above

### 2.2 Regional/area networking

- promote and enable non-denominational regional networks of urban mission practitioners to come together for support, equipping and encouragement, using the learning from UMDP and other networks

### 2.3 National networks and UK-wide networking

- encourage and resource (where appropriate) mainly non-denominational but context-specialist networks and gatherings of urban mission practitioners within England, and work with similar structures elsewhere in the UK
- convene a national forum for urban mission agencies and denominational bodies
- convene opportunities for people to exchange expertise, ideas and passion for mission between these networks and organisations across the UK
- support a national coalition of agencies, networks and denominational bodies to work to achieve the above and do together what they cannot individually manage to resource on their own

### 2.4 Information

- provide a central signposting and connecting function between national and regional networks, denominational bodies and agencies concerned with urban mission and community transformation, utilising a **web-based** and IT information system that will:
  - provide specialist information and advice for national and regional staff
  - be a more general point of information for local practitioners
- produce or promote e-news mailings for local practitioners
- publish or disseminate practitioner-based experience, theological and missiological learning from urban contexts, through journals, blogs, etc.

## Appendix Three – participants in the Midlands Urban Mission Training Node Pilot

- Queen's Foundation
- Unlock,
- New Testament Church of God Education Centre
- Masters in Mission in the Urban World, International Christian College
- Catalyst Trust.
- Nehemiah Foundation ,
- Timothy School of Ministry, Church of God of Prophecy
- Household of Faith Church – Anointed for the Market Place
- Urban Theology Unit,
- Education for Discipleship Steering Group, Regional Training Partnership (W Mids) (Ch of England, Methodist, URC)
- Crucible
- Development and Missions Network, Black Majority Churches Liaison, Christian Aid
- Voice in the City
- Church Action on Poverty,
- Housing Justice
- Livability
- Cliff College

Erica Dunmow  
Katy Armstrong  
UMDP July 2009