

“Hope for the Poor”

A Talk to the New Wine ‘United’ Conference 2017

A few weeks ago I confirmed an 11 year old boy called Martyn along with both of his parents. I first met him at a holiday club in an estates parish in the south of Blackburn, a club set up to feed children in the school holidays. He and his sisters had been coming to holiday club since it started. Things were really tough at home, the family were leading challenging lives, the children would hardly eat anything. But over time the Parish has seen them grow in confidence and broaden their horizons. Through contact with local Christians the family have settled down, they have found a much more structured way of life and through the loving service they have received they have come to faith.

Freedom Church, a new church plant on the Mereside estate in Blackpool, sets up a stall in the local car boot sale as a way of bringing a faith encounter to people who would normally never darken the door of a church. On the second week of running it a lady called Sharon came into the tent and promptly burst into tears and cried for about 10 minutes solid. Linda, the priest at that Church let her cry and just sat beside her gently offering comfort. She eventually told Linda that her mum had just been diagnosed with terminal cancer and she was devastated. They talked for a long time and she asked what church Linda was from. Linda told her, and that they were meeting for a service that afternoon, and she turned up with her son and husband and they have barely missed a Sunday since (this was nearly a year ago). Freedom Church showed her God's love, and welcomed the whole family into the church family. Sharon says knowing God loves her has got her through what would have been a terrible time when her mother died. She is growing in faith, and is a very active participant in a weekly bible study group. Last month the whole family were baptised in a very special service. Life has not been perfect, or easy for Sharon since she has joined church - it didn't fix all her problems or make her pain go away - but it helped her to realise and believe that God is with her through all the ups and downs of life.

Arthur came into contact with his local church on one of our Lancashire estates through a youth organisation. Initially he struggled with social skills. The parish priest gave a lot of support to his mum. Eventually Arthur became a server and has grown in confidence. He is now a young man and in further education. The impact of the church on Arthur's life has been transformative - a group of people who could accept and love him as he was and a place to grow into the lovely and faithful young man he has now become.

I could tell plenty of stories like that, stories where people from hard backgrounds living in the toughest parts of the country have come to faith in Jesus Christ through passionate and committed Christian ministry which has combined service and proclamation. What worries me though, and what I want to focus in this talk, is the stories I cannot tell. You see in the inner urban areas and outer estates of our nation there are countless people like Martyn, Arthur and Sharon whose lives are in a mess, who need the saving news of Jesus Christ but who will never hear it. And why not? Because there is no Christian community to proclaim, or because that community is so weak that it has given up. 'How shall they hear without a preacher?' St Paul asks in Romans Ch 10. The simple and hard truth is that, in the poorest parts of the country, we are withdrawing the preachers. The harvest is rich, but the labourers have been re-deployed to wealthier areas. We are seeing the slow and steady withdrawal of church life from those communities where the poorest people in our nation live.

And that matters. For the past 25 years I have been delighted to see a vast and ever growing industry of evangelism that now sets the pace in the Church of England. The Archbishop of Canterbury is passionate about evangelism and has made it one of his major priorities, backed up with initiatives such as 'Thy Kingdom Come.' Dioceses almost all have strong growth strategies in place. The Church Commissioners have released £100m in assets to invest in mission initiatives. Planting new congregations has become an industry in itself, even having its own Bishop and backed up by the work of New Wine, HTB, Fresh Expressions, Messy Church and many others. We have had over two decades of evangelical ascendancy and the majority of senior leaders will now emphasise mission and evangelism above anything else. New evangelistic resources appear on the scene all the time, countless new para-church groups and agencies appear with fresh ideas or new materials. We massively emphasise discipleship to try equip existing Christians to share faith more successfully. I could go on and on. This is a vast and ever-growing industry.

And what has been the impact? Accelerated decline. In 2001, according to census data, 71% of the UK population identified themselves as Christian. In just ten years, that figure had dropped to 59%. And the trend continues. The 2016 British Social Attitudes Survey found that 48.5% of the population said they were 'nones' (ie that they have no religion), outnumbering Christians who were just 43.8%. Between 1980 and 2015, the percentage of the population attending church declined from 11.8% of the population to 5.0%. In the

Church of England attendance decline increases steadily each year and averages around 2% to 3% per annum.

We are all trying massively hard to renew the Church. We are working like crazy, we are praying like mad, we are trying every new idea under the sun. Yet the longed-for renewal does not seem to come. In fact decline just seems to speed up. Why? Why are we struggling so much? I want to suggest that the answer is quite a straightforward one. It's because we have forgotten the poor.

Every effective renewal movement in the whole history of the Church has begun not with the richest and most influential, but with the poor and the marginalised. 'I have come to proclaim good news to the poor' Jesus said in the synagogue at Nazareth. How often have you seen those last three words 'to the poor' omitted or re-interpreted or spiritualised? But when Jesus said 'poor' he meant 'poor', and he demonstrated that in the way he lived the rest of his life. In order to found a movement to transform the world, he called not the wealthy, the articulate or the powerful but a ragtag, chaotic bunch of third rate fishermen, busted tax collectors and clapped out rebels. He chose the poor and the weak and the powerless, he chose those who knew their utter dependency on God because they quite literally had nothing else to depend on, and with these keystone cop disciples he blew apart the whole meaning of what it is to be human.

The first Christians were true to that example as we read in Acts. What made them stand out was their care for the poorest and the dignity they gave even to slaves. They pooled resources so that one of the actions of the first gentile converts was to contribute to the needs of the saints in Jerusalem. It was a church of and for the poor.

It should not surprise us therefore that every lasting renewal movement has been true to that tradition. When the Roman soldiers came to arrest St Lawrence during the persecution of Diocletian in 304AD and demanded to see the riches of the Church, he took them out into the streets and showed them the poor and the crippled and the lame. 'Here is our gold' he told them. A great line, but it got him cooked on a griddle. Church for the poor. When St Francis heard his call to rebuild the church which had fallen into corruption he called into community the illiterate and the uneducated, he gave them clothes to wear and food to eat and urged them, through their simplicity, to model the way of Christ and they began a

potent movement of reform that left monarchs quaking and powerless. Church for the poor.

When Vincent de Paul wanted to renew a wholly decadent and derelict French church in the seventeenth century, he bypassed his aristocratic connections and went instead to the galley slaves and the prisoners and the destitute and unchurched citizens of the new cities. He organised communities of priests and sisters to serve and proclaim and the result was a renewal which swept across France and overseas and was one of the great inspirations behind the Catholic renewal in this country in the nineteenth century. Church for the poor. When Newman and his companions, tired of pluralism, of sloppy worship and of a decaying Parish structure, wanted to address corruption and laziness in the Church of England in the 1830's, they began in the libraries of the Oxford colleges. However within just a few years, their adherents had left their books behind and instead were out on the streets, caring for orphans and cholera victims, vying for each other over who could be appointed to the poorest Parishes, using their first class minds to preach to the tenement dwellers. Church for the poor. Or again Wesley, angry with the complacency of an established church which had lost its passion for Christ, went to the margins, to the forgotten rural areas and the urban areas which were outside existing Parish structures, using his horse and his feet to go to the unchurched and preach. Church for the poor. Or look in our own day. The Church in western Europe might be in decline, but as Christians we are part of a vast, global movement expanding more quickly than ever before. And where is that growth? Africa. China. South America. It's amongst the poor.

The lesson of scripture, the lesson of the past is clear. If we want renewal, we must start with the poor. And yet in the Church of England we have a mission approach that is almost entirely focussed on the needs and aspirations of the wealthy. Rather than speaking good news to the poor, we are complicit in the abandonment of the poor.

Now that is a very strong claim to make. So let me give you the evidence that lies behind it. To do so I am going to focus on the urban estates, the large areas of social housing that fringe many of our large towns and cities. First, the statistics. Church attendance. The proportion of people who attend an Anglican church in England is 1.7%. On the estates that figure is less than half at 0.8%. Moreover the rate of decline on the estates is almost four times faster than the rest of the country. Now given those chilling figures and the fact that

Jesus came to proclaim good news to the poor, you might think that the Church of England would invest in these areas and deliberately divert resource from rich to poor. So what is the truth? Nationally we spend £8 per head of population on ministry. In some rural areas that figure rises to £24 per head. On the estates we spend just £5 per head, by far the lowest. The poorer you are, the less the church values you.

Second, leadership. When my old Parish in Hartlepool, a thriving estates Church, was vacant a few years ago, it was over two years before the Bishop could appoint. Clergy didn't want to live in that kind of area, they didn't want their children educated alongside the poor – you'll know the litany of excuses. At the same time a Parish in Paddington was advertised and at once attracted 122 expressions of interest. That is the true measure of the spiritual health of the Church of England. It is incredibly hard to attract calibre leaders to estates Churches. And whilst many of those who do that work are heroic, we have to be honest and accept that some really struggle because their reason for being there is that it is the only job they could get. God doesn't seem to be calling our best leaders to serve the poor. Or maybe he is calling, and we're not listening.

Third, access to ministry in times of need. In 2011 the Synod of the Church of England passed a new table of fees that massively increased the cost of funerals and weddings. Normally if you want to work Synod up to a frenzy you give a rousing speech about a bias to the poor. They love to listen to that sort of thing, but they don't like to pay for it. That fee increase was nodded through with just two votes against. Without any real fuss at all, we calmly priced the poor out of the ministry of the Church.

Fourth, infrastructure. Take my own Diocese as an example. Over the past ten years in the Diocese of Blackburn, we have closed churches in Grange Park and Mereside in Blackpool, reduced staffing levels in Ribblesdale and Stoups and seen churches in Skerton and Over Darwen grow ever weaker. Fortunately we are finding ways to re-invest in these areas and the new plant in Mereside is going fantastically. But the national picture is one of slow withdrawal. It is not a deliberate strategy, but as a result of countless reluctant decisions we are losing the estates churches. They are being closed or merged or having their priests withdrawn. And once you get into the building the problems become even more apparent. If you go to a suburban church you will usually find a comfortable and well maintained building with carpets, heating, clean toilets and good music. Estates churches rarely have

the money to maintain themselves properly. If you're poor all you're worth is a cold and half derelict building.

Fifth, church-planting which is a major plank of renewal and reform. The towns chalked down for plants are very clearly identified. They are student towns with a young and upwardly mobile population. Or they are in parts of London where the deprivation stats are high but where gentrification is bringing fast change. There are one or two honourable exceptions, for example St Peter's Brighton who have planted on to the Whitehawk estate. But for the most part church planting is white middle class graduate church for white middle class graduates.

And the sad truth is that the wider church often doesn't seem to care too much about all this. Wealthier parishes grumble incessantly about having to 'subsidise' the church in poorer places. Estates churches and their leaders are all too often forgotten or blamed for the failings of their parishes. Many feel isolated or forgotten or misunderstood or undervalued.

The Church loves to rail against social inequality. And yet we absolutely model the social inequality we so often condemn. The Church of England loves to boast about being a Christian presence in every community. And yet in those communities that most need to hear the message of hope we find in Jesus, that presence is ever weaker or non-existent.

This matters. It matters massively, and it matters because there are people out there who desperately need to hear Good News. Friends, we have a Gospel of hope, a Gospel that proclaims that through the transforming power of the cross there is no darkness that is not dispelled by the light of Christ, no pain that is left unhealed by his touch, no sin that is unforgiven by his grace, no injustice that is not addressed through his power. And the place where that message of hope is most needed is precisely the place where it is hardest to proclaim it, that is amongst the poor.

As I speak, Grenfell Tower stands as a charred and ruined symbol of the desperate inequality that blights so many lives. It was destroyed by its façade, a façade constructed so that the wealthy residents of north Kensington would not have to face the reality that they were living adjacent to the social housing of their cleaners and carers and waiters and taxi

drivers. The 80 or more people who were manslaughtered in that building died for one reason and for one reason only which is that they were poor. They are victims of years of rapacious under-investment, of corporate greed, of inept and corrupt local government, of a materialist culture that values human life only in so far that it is economically expedient to do so.

I really pray that the terrible fire at Grenfell might be a wake-up call, showing the nation the desperate lives that so many people are living today. The Brexit vote and other recent elections have shown up a real anger amongst the poorest in our nation, and it is an anger that we need to listen to rather than explain away.

The causes of that anger are easy and plain to see. Take the Somers Town estate in my old Parish in London. The residents there are surrounded by multi-billion pound infrastructure projects at Kings Cross and St Pancras and yet their own housing is woefully inadequate and suffering from years of under-investment. Their jobs are increasingly ill-paid and tedious, with many relying on zero hours contracts or the gig economy. A friend told me recently about a woman in her Parish whose husband had three jobs and yet the family were still dependent on the shameful indignity of the foodbank. 'It's not fair, is it?' she complained. And he's right. It's not fair. And she should be angry rather than sad. Residents of Somers Town are seeing accelerated changes to the make-up of their communities imposed upon them by people who lives miles away and when they complain they are accused of racism or xenophobia. They are seeing a loss of local leadership as roles and responsibilities once undertaken by people within communities are professionalised and taken away from them. They feel abandoned by those organisations and institutions that were created to represent them – the Labour Party, trades unions, the building societies, the local government. Owen Jones's powerful book 'Chavs' plots how perceptions of estates residents have changed in recent decades so that those once hailed as hardworking heroes are now mocked and demonized.

Areas characterised by social deprivation desperately need a Gospel of hope. And yet what are we doing? We are withdrawing. We are under-investing. What kind of church is it that turns its back on the dispossessed, or offers them only crumbs from the table of the rich? Unless we start with the poor, the Gospel we proclaim is a sham, an empty hypocrisy.

Now of course there will be those who say, come on Philip, get real. The church is running out of cash. That means some churches are bound to close, and the churches on our outer estates are unviable, they are a luxury that we can't afford. That's what plenty of very sensible accountants and church bureaucrats would tell us. And indeed a church that abandons the poor might well be financially viable. It's just that it would no longer be the Church of Jesus Christ. If we abandon the poor, we abandon God. If we fail to proclaim the good news to the poor, we lose the right and the authority to proclaim the good news to anyone, anywhere.

I remember once when I was running an estates Church in London I was rung up by a member of the Diocesan finance team who said, in passing, 'Well of course you are a subsidised Parish aren't you?' And I realised that for the previous 20 years of my ministry, that's how I had thought of myself. A subsidised priest, only able to minister because of the largesse and generosity of the wider Church. But who is subsidising whom? Yes, arguably, there may be a small financial subsidy from rich to poor. But the spiritual subsidy flows the other way. It is the rich church that is subsidised by the poor church, because unless it is proclaiming good news to the poor, the Church is not the church at all.

Moreover, as all those renewal movements I named earlier show us, once we put the poor first it is the whole church that benefits. Because it is a hard environment to proclaim, the estates constitute an excellent testing ground for new ideas, leaders and resources. A church leader who can grow a church on an outer estate can grow a church anywhere. An evangelistic or discipleship resource that works in areas of poverty will work anywhere. A Gospel proclamation that answers the questions of the poorest will transform lives anywhere. If we start with the poor, we will find renewal.

In order to turn the world upside down we need to turn the church upside down. So what do we need to do? Let me suggest seven steps that will help us to become a church of and for the poor that the world might believe.

First, we need to reflect on the content of our proclamation. There is a perception that there is a single, verbal Gospel message that can be picked up and dropped from place to place. 'Christ died for our sins.' 'Life in all its fullness.' Those well-known statements which so easily trip off the Christian tongue. But the Gospel is not a message. It is a person, Jesus

Christ, and the way he speaks into different contexts and situations differs from place to place. If you turn up on an estate with nice, tidy complacent answers to questions no one is asking, they will tear you to shreds. Successful evangelism begins with intense listening, with a profound desire to hear the issues on people's minds and a genuine open heart to discern how Jesus speaks into them. If you're in debt, what is the good news? If you're dependent on a foodbank to feed your children, what is the good news? If you're cripplingly lonely and can't afford the bus into town, what is the good news? Simple formulae, or trite clichés about God's love won't do as answers to these questions.

Of course there are answers, but we need an honesty and an openness and a desire to take risks in order to reach them. And once we have reached them, then our preaching, our teaching, our worship, our pastoral care, our common life, our approach to teaching, our whole sense of what it means to be a Christian must all be altered in order to accommodate them. Later this year we are going to launch a project to encourage estates practitioners and theologians to listen deeply to estates residents and then ask the question, 'What is the good news here?' We hope it will create a resource and a methodology that will be of much wider use.

Second, leadership. We need to raise up leaders in, for and from the urban church. The best person to speak the Gospel into an urban estate is someone who has grown up there, so we need to be courageous and take risks in raising up a local leadership. Catapulting in 200 white, well-educated, beautiful people from the nice bit of town will dispossess and disempower local residents. The impact will be to take their church away from them such that the church will become just another service provided on their behalf by patronising outsiders. In the Church of England our current structures for selecting and training licensed lay or ordained leaders are woefully unfit for purpose and deliver only white, graduate class leaders. The time for tolerating this systemic failure is now over. We must take risks in raising up local leadership, leadership that cannot and will not speak the jargon-laden drivel of the contemporary church but will instead have the Gospel energy to transform it.

And to raise up this new generation of leaders, we need our best clergy to commit significant periods of their ministries to the poorest areas. The task is now too urgent for excuses. The days in which priests hopped from a suburban Parish to a nice market town to a Cathedral close without ever going near the poorer estates cannot continue. I would urge

anyone here who is a Church leader from any denomination to listen to that challenge. I have heard many stories from clergy telling me that they can't possibly work in an urban Parish because they need the best schools for their children. But I have heard almost as many stories from clergy children brought up on estates telling me how that experience has made them compassionate for the vulnerable and passionate for the Gospel. Jesus proclaimed good news to the poor. We need our clergy to do the same.

Third, the church-planting movement, which is making such a difference in so many areas, needs to put the poor first rather than last. Let me take you back to one of my opening stories. In Blackpool, church life on the Mereside Estate had completely died out. So we found the money to put Linda Tomkinson on that estate along with her husband, Pete, who is training with the Church Army. On Sunday mornings they run a stall at the car boot sale. Through the week they run a community choir, a bereavement drop-in service, a community development group splendidly called the Mafia and much else. And through generous service they have seen church life grow and many people who were miles from the Lord come to faith. What's more they are loving every single second of it. It is impossible to conceive of people taking greater delight in ministry.

HTB, New Wine and many Dioceses and denominations are developing church planting strategies. But too many are aimed at the low-hanging fruit in fast regenerating urban areas or university towns. I am astonished at the number of people Jesus is calling to plant new churches as long as they are in Zones 1 and 2 of the London transport system. It's the wrong place to start. Renewal comes from courageous mission to the places where it's toughest. If you feel called to plant, we need you on the outer estates, we need you in our northern towns, we need you in areas where a majority of people come from other world faiths, we need you in those areas where the trendy coffee shops and artisanal bakers are hard to find. Come there if you really want to make a difference in Jesus' name.

Fourth, we need to marry together service with proclamation. In an area of Sunderland I once knew well there were two churches. One, in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, was fabulous at community development work, service of refugees, projects for the elderly, schools ministry and so on. The other, a charismatic free church, was brilliant at evangelism and thought its sole aim was to convert people to Christ. The first is small and shrinking slowly. The second grew spectacularly but then declined just as quickly and is no more. One did

service without proclamation. One did proclamation without service. To grow sustainably we must do both.

A feature of those opening stories was that they were about churches who both serve generously and proclaim boldly. If all we do is proclaim and ignore the hard reality of people's lives, if all we offer is Jesus the living bread when they need real bread to put in their stomachs, no one will listen. We are hypocrites and the Gospel we speak is empty. On the other hand if all we do is serve and not proclaim, as many churches do, we are subjecting people to the greatest deprivation of all which, in the words of Pope Francis, is to be deprived of ever hearing the saving news of Jesus Christ. A feature of all growing urban churches is an intentional marriage of service and proclamation. A wonderful example of this is Christians Against Poverty who do both brilliantly and fearlessly.

Fifth, we need patient presence. A feature of an anxious and paranoid church is that we have become obsessed with the quick win. We love those stories of people who have grown churches to a thousand within three years because they enable us to think that there are simple answers to complex questions. And that cult of the quick win is one of the factors that makes people afraid of urban ministry. It won't deliver the 'instant success' to which we are addicted.

And it won't. Urban and estates ministry is hard work and slow going. It takes years to become established, to win trust, to learn the questions, to form leaders, to work out how best to serve, to discern accessible ways of proclaiming, to win souls for Christ. And there will be many setbacks along the way, many leaders we form who move away, many families we work with who for no good reason disappear, many projects and initiatives we attempt that won't get off the ground. That can be hard. But it's real and it's true and it's the Gospel. Think of St Paul. He endured countless setbacks, there were arguments, there were places he could not enter. At one point he speaks about being 'unbearably crushed.' This is real Christian ministry. It is cross-shaped, it hurts, it's sacrificial. If it is simple it is inauthentic.

There is a great deal more that the diocesan or central structures of the Church can do to support its urban clergy, for example abolishing the vacancy so that there can be stable leadership over many years even if church leaders want to move on. But the quick win is a delusion. Long-term, faithful, patient, loving presence is what the urban church needs.

Sixth, we need to accept that this is everyone's concern and everyone's problem. If the church wants to be present in places of poverty, it is no good to leave it up to a few heroic church leaders whilst the rest of us get on with our ordinary lives. The wider Church must support the church in urban areas, and do so in genuine and concrete ways. That means financial subsidy, it means letting go of its best leaders for urban ministry, it means support and prayer and encouragement, it means a willingness to listen to the urban church and amend its own life and structures accordingly. If you are not from an urban Church then think for a moment, in what ways is your church supporting an estates or inner urban Church? And if it is not, what does it need to change to do so? Don't forget - your church only has the authority to proclaim in its own context because of your brother and sister Christians who are worshipping and serving in the toughest areas. You are the Church only because they are the Church.

And seventh, we need prayer. We need sincere, disciplined, authentic prayer because it is only through prayer that the Lord will soften our hearts and open our ears to the cry of the poor. Pray for the church in areas where it is hard to be the church. Pray for yourself so that you can discern how God is calling you to proclaim Good News to the poor.

I believe there is change, there is a new openness to being a Church of and for the poor. There are a number of new and interesting initiatives and ideas, some significant books are starting to appear such as 'A Church for the Poor' by Martin Charlesworth and Natalie Williams. Pope Francis has reawakened many to centrality of this area of Christian ministry. But it is not enough. And it is not fast enough. We know the stats. Within 10 years we will have all but lost the Church in the poorest areas. We will have become a complacent, smug church of and for the rich.

We know the energy and vision of the New Wine movement. We know how much this movement is waking up to the cry of the poor. We need a passion, an anger, a desperation for this work. Please, listen to what the Urban Church is saying. If those who find a Christian identity within this fantastically energetic Gospel movement really woke up to the cry of the poor, if you could release leaders into the urban church and support them once released, if you could find ways to plant where the urban church has died out, think of the difference we could make to the church and to the nation. Renewal will come when we put the poor

first.

Let me end with a story. In Lancashire there is a very beautiful, Victorian Church that was once a thriving place of worship for the working class community it served. But the area began to change. Many people of Asian origin moved in, much of the old housing was demolished and not replaced. The congregation dwindled away till there were only a couple of dozen people shivering away in a vast barn of a building. So they moved out of the church which was made redundant to become a vast symbol of withdrawal and decline, and they now worship in an extended room in the old vicarage. Out of the window they can see the hulk of the building that they could not maintain. On the walls are pictures of the glory days when the streets were lined for the Whit Walk and they had forty choristers in the choir stalls. There are bits and pieces from the old church: the war memorial, some stained glass, and that ultimate symbol of Anglican life, the Churchwardens wand. It is a church whose angel is one of guilt and grief and nostalgia. It is locked in its past.

That church seems to me to be a symbol of too much of our contemporary Christian life. We are so busy looking back to the church's past that we fail to see ahead to God's future. And that is especially a feature of the urban church where declining numbers and decaying buildings are the norm. People are so locked in memories of what they were that they cannot see God's future. We see the church through the eyes of grief. If only things could be what they once were.

Yet what does Jesus say in the synagogue at Nazareth. 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' He throws our gaze forward to God's future. It is a vision of hope, a vision of joy, a vision of the triumph of the loving power of the cross.

That is the good news we must proclaim to the poor, the hope of God's future. In that future there is justice for the oppressed. In that future there is food and drink for everyone. In that future, debt and sin is cancelled. In that future all is acceptance and all is love. That is our task, to proclaim God's future and to do so not with fear or anxiety, but with joy. 'When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame,' says Jesus.

Let's invite everyone to the feast of the lamb. And let's start with those who most need good news of hope. For when we speak hope to the poor, we speak hope to everyone.

+Philip Burnley July 2017