
MISSION AUDITS IN URBAN PRIORITY AREAS

RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED



So your church wants to do a mission audit? You are in an Urban Priority area and you don't know where to start. This leaflet gives:

- a) some idea of the published resources which are available, and how far they are appropriate. We make no claim that our list is exhaustive, but there is more than enough to get you started.
- b) some notes by Greg Smith on how to make the most of the task. A fuller version of this paper entitled "Mission Audits in UPAs; Towards an Appropriate Method," is available from London ECUM or BCGA price 50p plus large SAE.
- c) some addresses of groups which can help.

This paper, published by The British Church Growth Association, is a follow-up to the inner city research project jointly sponsored by BCGA and ECUM and carried out by Greg Smith in 1985/86. An in-depth theoretical paper on the project appears in the Church Growth series co-published by BCGA and Handsel Press and the main findings will be published by Kingsway at the end of 1987.

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Marshall's

RESOURCE PACKS & QUESTIONNAIRES

The following items and packs are specifically designed to help churches undertake an audit:

1) **Mission Audit Pack** (£5) from Milton Keynes Christian Foundation.

A substantial contribution with lots of examples of questionnaires and exercises for a parish audit. Not specifically aimed at the inner city but could be adapted.

2) EUTP's **"Mission Audit; Switching the Style"** 1986 Version of the earlier Urban Workshop Kit. (£6.00) from EUTP:

To help urban congregations "Know your Church, Know your Neighbourhood, Know your Gospel": A Package of units from which you can select, ranging from urban walkabouts with a camera, to delving in the census data. Should be presented in EUTP's distinctive style (see their booklet "Learning Without Books". Definitely targetted at UPA churches both in method and content. At the moment its multicultural emphasis is weak but another unit is planned to cover this.

3) **"An Audit for the Local Church"** (£1) from CofE BMU, obtainable via Church House Bookshop.

A revised version of questionnaire and worksheets found in "Faith in the City" Aimed at UPAs not just at CofE parishes. 24pp designed for Xeroxing

NB. Most dioceses with UPA areas have an officer with special responsibility and are working on detailed statistics for all parishes as background to local parish audits. In many cases churches of other denominations could negotiate access to such figures.

4) **"Mission Audit"** by John Nightingale of the BMU of the CofE (£1.50) from Church House Bookshop or BCGA Book Service.

5) **"Towards Local Social Analysis"** Church Action on Poverty:

A simple 4 page guide on using the 1981 Census statistics.

6) **"Discovering the Poor"** (Urban Theology Unit)

A detailed practical guide to local 1981 Census material. 2nd. edition 1987 from UTU 50p.

7) **"Moving On"** Chelmsford diocese

Congregational questionnaires and analysis sheets for a compulsory diocesan census in September 86. A bit bureaucratic (for centralised planning) but backed up for each parish in the diocese by some detailed computer work on 1981 Census statistics.

8) **"Focus on Mission 1981-82"** Southwell Diocese worksheets on a strategy to help plan local outreach.

9) **Willesden Diocese** papers on mission audit.

For details of items 8 & 9, contact Eddie Neale at Shaftesbury Project.

10) **"Church & Neighbourhood Survey Mk.III"** published by Nationwide Initiative on Evangelism. (probably now out of print. Try BCC, 2 Eaton Gate SW1.)

11) **God at Work in the Inner City Project:**

London ECUM and BCGA have copies of questionnaires and reports from this project. These were specifically developed for multicultural East London. LECUM also has software for data analysis on floppy disc for a BBC Acorn micro-computer.

Materials include:

- Questionnaire for a congregational profile. (Baptist or Anglican version)
- Questionnaire for a network survey of all the churches in an area
- Group Bible study on God at Work.
- Draft community survey
- "God's in E7" a popular style report on one network survey.
- VHS video of slide presentation "Seeds of Hope", showing the pattern of church life in East London together with discussion and Bible Study notes.

12) David Wasdell: **Papers from the Urban Church Project**

These are dated but include "Tools for the Task", "Congregational Survey", and "Long Range Planning and the Church"

Available from BCGA book service.

BOOKS

The following books have some useful ideas on analysis of your church and neighbourhood including sample questionnaires: All are available from BCGA book service.

Eddie Gibbs "I Believe in Church Growth" Hodder (£2.95)

Roy Pointer "How Do Churches Grow?" 1st Edition published by Marshalls (£5.95), 2nd edition to be republished by MARC Europe and BCGA at £2.95 in 1987.

Roy Pointer "The Growth Book" BCGA/MARC Europe 1987 (£1.95)

Paul Beasley Murray "Turning the Tide" Bible Society. (£1) Research on Baptist churches.

Peter Brierley "Beyond the Churches" MARC Europe. (£4.95) Includes questionnaires to help you discover unreached people groups in your locality.

Greg Smith "In the Inner City: How can we tell if God is at Work?" Handsel Press/BCGA (£1.50) Asks some hard theological and sociological questions to undergird your thinking about your Mission Audit.

"What Churches Can Do" Methodist Church, Mission Alongside the Poor (50p). Pamphlet full of ideas for action.

OVERSEAS ITEMS

TAFTEE (Bangalore) have produced a course on "Evangelism to Communities" with a fascinating sample questionnaire for use in cross cultural situations.

MARC International have produced a questionnaire on identifying People Groups and their characteristics.

London ECUM will make available copies for reference.

NOTES ON METHODS

Greg Smith : April 1987

These notes are based on my experience in the "God at Work in the Inner City" research project and in the community based surveys of the Linguistic Minorities Project (1979-83). Much of what I suggest comes from the experience of mistakes that I have made in the past!

1) A participatory style of research is essential in any mission audit or church survey if it is to be of value in turning the ethos of the church from maintenance to effective mission. This means:

a) An audit cannot be imposed on a congregation as a bright idea from above or outside without being counter productive.

b) The whole congregation must own the exercise, and as wide a range of people as possible must take part in every stage from defining the objectives, designing surveys, putting them into effect, analysis and report writing and discussing implications.

c) One must not rely on outside experts: rather the congregation must become their own experts.

d) The process of sharing in an audit can be as important as the product. Relationships can be strengthened and encouragement can be found as people discover more about themselves, each other and God.

2) An audit must pick up the signs of hope as well as the problems and "failures". Otherwise the church will be overwhelmed by its own powerlessness, despair and guilt.

3) An audit must have a spiritual dimension: it is not just a sociological or management exercise. Many Christians would see such an approach as purely "worldly" or trying to organise the Holy Spirit. However, getting people talking and praying about how God is already at work in the church and neighbourhood is a positive step towards mission. The process of the audit must be integrated into the worship of the church, and the theology behind it must be made clear.

4) In UPAs everything must be expressed in language and style which ordinary people can understand.

a) Written questionnaires and reports can be daunting to the non-reader.

b) Sociological and theological jargon must be ruthlessly pruned from any reports.

c) Statistics must be presented, clearly and visually (and honestly and accurately)

d) Stories and drama can be useful ways of exploring the issues.

5) It is important to explore issues from a number of different view points (triangulation), not just that of the institutional church and its members. Possible sources include.

- a) Census statistics and neighbourhood mapping
- b) Survey / interviews with church members
- c) Survey / interviews of other churches and voluntary agencies
- d) Survey / interviews with non-christians in the community.
- e) Group discussions about the neighbourhood
- f) Local walkabouts and networking visits

6) In many UPA parishes there is a shortage of people with research skills, e.g. questionnaire design, statistical analysis using computers, report writing and communications skills. The implications are

a) there must be a realistic assessment of what the church can undertake in case it bites off more than it can chew.

b) there is a case for looking for outside expertise, but there needs to be a clear contract with any consultant, and an attempt by that consultant to become as much an insider as possible according to the principles of participatory research. An outside expert must not be allowed to dictate the terms of the discussion. "Total power is when you can set the definitions of a situation and get everyone else to believe you."

c) There is a case for outsiders to be involved as "candid critics" in the audit process. A consultant with a wide knowledge of other UPA churches is one possibility, a group of people from a neighbouring parish, a church of another denomination or theological background, or non-christian local tenants' group are others.

7) An audit must be set in a fully ecumenical context.

a) This means contacting ALL other churches in the neighbourhood, including the hidden black churches, newly planted fellowships, and ethnic churches (possibly sects and other faith groups).

b) With fellow christians this means a commitment to non-competitive mission at the very least, to collaboration and fellowship in the gospel wherever possible.

c) An overview of the sociology of religion in the neighbourhood enables one to develop an evaluation of other models of mission which may be more successful or more appropriate than existing ones.

8) There must be a conscious effort to avoid racism (and sexism) in the whole process of audit. Black people (women) can be marginalised and treated as invisible because of the following factors among others

a) They are not adequately represented in the core group / decision making bodies of the church.

b) They are excluded from involvement in many meetings because of extra domestic and work pressures (shifts etc.)

c) They are less likely than white middle class males to be gripped by a theoretical paper based exercise.

d) Their contribution is not seen to be of value (implicit racist assumptions of superiority), or not seen as having something distinctive to say

("we treat everybody the same") by the leadership of the church.

9) The whole thing must be conducted in a spirit of openness, trust and honesty. Christians are notoriously bad at dealing honestly and openly with issues and feelings that may provoke conflict, for example about changes in church tradition, or on the political issues which are bound to arise. Pastoral care and sensitivity for those who are in disagreement with the majority will be essential.

10) Do not rush the early stages of planning, networking, training interviewers, audit design etc. in a mad panic to "do a survey" and produce a report. It will take twice as long as you think anyway! And even then, when it comes to mission, you've only just begun.

ADDRESSES



London ECUM

Lawrence Hall, 2/4 Cumberland Road London E13 8NH
(tel. 01 476 3651: fieldworker Greg Smith).

EUTP (Evangelical Urban Training Project)

P.O.Box 83, Liverpool L69 8AN (tel 051 709 1463 :
Director, Jim Hart)

Shaftesbury Project

79 Maid Marian Way, Nottingham NG1 6AE (tel. 0602
585731 : Director Roy McCloughry, Inner City Group
convenor Richard Farnell, and Urban Project worker
Eddie Neale).

Church of England HQ. and Bookshop

Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1 (tel.
01 222 9011)

BMU Board of Mission and Unity (Geoff Pearson) :

ACUPA Officer for UPA's (Pat Dearnley)

Chelmsford Diocesan Office | Guy Harlings, New
Street Chelmsford CM1 1NG (tel. 0245 266731)



BCGA (British Church Growth Association)

St. Marks Chambers, Kennington Park Road, London
SE11 4PW (tel. 01 793 0264 : Monica Hill). Book
Orders to BCGA Dept. St. Ninian, Comrie Road,
Crieff, Perthshire PH7.

MARC Europe

Cosmos House, 6 Homesdale Road, Bromley, Kent BR2
9EX (tel. 01 460 3999 : Peter Brierley). Their
research department will undertake surveys of
congregations, or of whole districts on a contract
basis.

Milton Keynes Christian Foundation

4 Church Street, Wolverton MK12 5JM .

CAP (Church Action on Poverty)

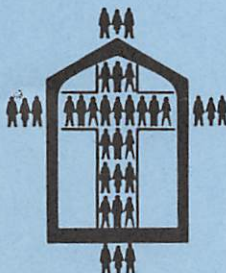
27 Blackfriars Road, Salford, Gtr. Manchester M3
7AQ (tel. 061 832 7815 :John Battle).

UTU (Urban Theology Unit)

210 Abbeyfield Road, Sheffield S4 7AZ (tel. 0742
423438 : John Vincent) .

This leaflet is based on work by Richard Farnell
and Eddie Neale of Shaftesbury Project, Greg Smith
of London ECUM, and Monica Hill of BCGA.

Further copies of this leaflet cost 20p plus SAE
each (up to 10 copies) and 10p each for larger
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please ring for a quote.



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