

“Urban eco-mission: Healing the Land in the Post-industrial City. How can Clay Community Church more faithfully perform brownfield rehabilitation for community use?”

Abstract (378 words)

The area of Possilpark in Glasgow is marked by the presence of large areas of degraded brownfield land. Polluted, undeveloped land is most prevalent in the poorer areas of Glasgow and presents one of the most intractable problems for the governance and wellbeing of the city. Seen in this light, brownfield rehabilitation has become the locus of meaningful missional engagement for Clay Community Church (CCC), a new charismatic-evangelical church plant in Possilpark. Few resources were available for reflection on this pioneering work and the church was concerned to ascertain if and how their work could be practiced in a mode that was more *faithful* (missiologically and biblically).

This dissertation uses Action Research to evaluate the practices of the church. Concept-mapping, artistic reporting and video footage were used as part of the initial collaborative exploration process. The core research revolves around nine semi-structured interviews with church members and two follow-up focus groups. Lastly, the proposals were evaluated according to Tearfund’s document ‘Evidences of Integral Mission,’ with suggestions also being made as to how these evidences could be modified in light of the research. The central product of this collaborative process was a thirty-one point Action Plan describing proposals for action with a view to future transformation of the church’s ministry practice. Connections were made between themes emerging from the rich qualitative data and material from a range of disciplines, including biblical theology (Colin Gunton, Richard Bauckham), environmental ethics (Michael Northcott), urbanism (Jane Jacobs), urban ecology (Kevin Gaston), missiology (Alan Hirsch), and urban theology (Mark Gornik, David Smith). In the section on biblical theology, particular attention is paid to Christological and Pneumatological themes, rooted in the following passages: 2 Chronicles 14, 2 Kings 2, Ezekiel 47, Isaiah 61, Psalm 87, Romans 8 and Revelation 21. The theme of *healing the land* emerging from these passages resonated strongly with the charismatic spirituality of the participants.

The result is a detailed reflection on a Christian earthkeeping project in which rich connections are made from lived practice to a variety of wider disciplines and back again. Eco-theologian Willis Jenkins has suggested that this type of practical theology could provide the impetus required to re-invigorate the discourse of Christian environmental ethics, a field - in his opinion - too long mired in theoretical debates.