

A photograph of a man and a woman walking away from the camera down a narrow, cobblestone street at night. The street is illuminated by warm, yellow streetlights, creating a soft glow. The buildings on either side are multi-story and have a classic European architectural style. A sign for 'ITALIAN' is visible on the left building. The couple is silhouetted against the light, and their shadows are cast on the cobblestones.

URBAN JUSTICE



WELCOME

Welcome to our Urban Justice Manifesto which we believe is a Holy Spirit inspired initiative that outlines a comprehensive strategy to reach our community and further afield and which echoes the sentiments of the Father's heart as described in Isaiah 58. We feel as though we have been given a blueprint from heaven itself! We invite you to read this document carefully and prayerfully, and allow the Holy Spirit to move your heart. There are many ideas and proposals in the manifesto, and whilst aspirational in nature, it outlines a five year project at least and who knows where it may lead! So don't be overwhelmed by the magnitude of this initiative; rather, see it as presenting a host of opportunities to serve and get involved in various areas.

Essentially Urban Justice is about the ONE, making meaningful connections with people and seeing individual lives transformed through the power of the Gospel in action. The programme will be a challenge which will require our support, our time and our finances, but we believe the rewards will be great when heaven celebrates the many people who will come to faith and find their purpose, identity and destiny in Christ. We commend this document to you and we look forward with anticipation and expectation as the story unfolds.

Blessings

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Senior Pastors

Grace Generation

N.I Charity No. NIC101897

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Isaiah 58:6-12

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? 8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. 9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’ If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, 10 if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. 11 And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. 12 And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.



VISION

To be a living example of Isaiah 58 within our church family, our communities and the nations..

AIM

- To be stirred, raised and released as a church family into our God-appointed calling.
- That our church would challenge injustice and bless the community with Christ's love like never before.
- To see our community and nation transformed through a relationship with Jesus.



WHO?

On the following pages are some of the sections of our community whom we feel would be blessed, released and restored through Urban Justice. Our Church family are currently involved with many of these groups of people and this list does not negate any of the incredible work carried out to date; it's purely a list of those we see within our community in need of Urban Justice.

APATHETIC

Those living in the comfort zone of work and family who see little or no need for God in their lives.

“If I have a nice house, car and family then what more do I need?”

What can we offer?

A presence in our town to get people talking, making connections between their daily lives and the church – Bean There on the Go, Pop up Shops, maintenance team, mobile prayer team and Urban Justice programmes.

Opportunities to bring these people on to church property during the week through innovative, Christ-centred programmes that are relevant to their lives, all offered at no cost.



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ADDICTS

Drugs, alcohol, gambling and crime - people who feel they are too far gone for God

"How could I fit into a Church with what I'm doing?"

What can we offer?

Hope. We are a church who aren't afraid to embrace and love those on the fringes of our society in whatever setting that might be. Nothing expresses Christ-like love more than giving someone your time, offering practical help with food and clothing and when trust is built, offering help in dealing with substance abuse through education, counselling, mentoring and training.

POVERTY STRICKEN/ FINANCIALLY BURDENED

Those struggling to make ends meet who may be holding bitterness and resentment towards God..

“What has God ever done for me?”

What can we offer?

A confidential and safe environment where people can share their financial concerns and have their immediate needs addressed.

For some, housing may be their main concern and we may need to offer a temporary home.

Others would benefit from our clothing outlet, grocery and furniture ministries and for those with children, our toy unit.

When immediate need has been met we can then offer money management and guidance courses, debt counselling and benefit support to address the root cause of their financial problems.

Through it all leaving people in no doubt that 'every good and perfect gift comes from above' (James 1:17).



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HUNGRY

People in our own church family and community who are hungry through various circumstances.

“How can I listen to you if I’m hungry?”

What can we offer?

Grocery store – building on our already hugely successful food bank, this would offer people the opportunity to select their own shopping, something most of us take for granted. This ministry would be closely monitored and would run along similar lines as our current food bank to avoid misuse.

Food Ministry – fresh food lovingly made by our team ready to be collected or distributed as required, fresh or frozen.

Bean There On-The-Go – a mobile version of our pride and joy (Coffee House). We have already seen how successful this ministry has been in seeing people come to know Jesus; let's get it out on our streets and into our estates.

These programmes will go some way towards feeding the hungry in our community, but we are well aware that we are living in a world with people dying of starvation on a daily basis. We need to get serious about addressing hunger on a global scale. Banbridge is just the beginning.

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UNEMPLOYED

Those who, at any age, feel worthless and without purpose due to unemployment.

"Why would God want me if I can't even get a job?"

What can we offer?

Mentoring through our young adults programmes.

CV help, specific volunteering opportunities for all age groups, interview preparation and careers guidance.

For those content to live in the benefit culture let's try and sow into their lives the Godly principle of an honest day's work and assist them in discovering the Godly calling on their life.

POLICE/SOCIAL SERVICES/ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Those involved in and affected by Community policing, Social Services and Local Government.

“What has the church got to do with our work?”

What can we offer?

A willingness to be educated in areas of concern within the town and to come alongside the police and work in partnership with them to help make a difference in our community.

To be a trusted and respected agency for social service referrals.



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FAMILIES

From those living in happy homes to those dealing with marital breakups, relationship problems and communication breakdowns. Teenage mums and dads to middle aged high earners.

“Why would I need God in my life with all my other problems?”

What can we offer?

Through our Small Group Network we are a church who do life together, carrying one another's burdens, celebrating the highs together and offering prayerful and practical support. We recognise the strength of encouraging families to have fun together and enjoy exciting days out and meals together in church.

In Urban Justice we would offer a structured link between the lives of families in our community and in the church through home visits, pastoral support and practical help through our food ministries, our maintenance team and financial guidance.

Our innovative Christ-centred programmes will offer a range of activities and opportunities for every family member irrespective of age.

Parenting classes and information sessions would be offered, working alongside agencies such as Care for the Family and Barnardos, Marriage preparation classes, cookery classes, healthy lifestyle sessions and virtually all of our programmes can benefit the family demographic.

For those journeying through the pain of relationship problems we could refer them to our Christian marriage counsellors and family mediators who are trained and experienced in offering this support. Single parents could be supported through child care facilities, hair and beauty pop-up shops and pampering days, Sisterhood and family respite.



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Facing boredom, temptations, pressure to conform, struggles with identity and relationships, lack of suitable role models and apathy towards their future.

“How is your Church relevant to my life?”

What can we offer?

Currently in Grace Generation we are blessed to have a fantastic kids and youth ministry which Urban Justice would aim to build on. We can already see the fruit of our various programmes in the amazing children and young people currently in our church. We have the opportunity to bless our community and their children like never before with a full range of well-structured activities and programmes.

Breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, dance classes, Football Academy and other sporting opportunities, language classes, numeracy and literacy help, kids' reading group, cookery classes, sexual health education, SHINE programme, 1:1 mentoring, children's day care centre, expanded summer schemes and volunteer and employment opportunities.

Some of our more light-hearted ideas include movie days, pop-up ice cream stall, waffle cart drop-in, creative arts, LEGO club, multimedia classes, self-sufficiency gardening classes, toy swap-shop, music workshops, kids' play park and disco days.

We want to have Church premises busy every day with a multitude of activities, creating opportunities for parents and children to come together to learn and have fun within a loving Christian environment.

We see children as key to unlocking the work in the community and these programmes and activities, in addition to what we are already doing, will play a vital role in opening doors to the lives and homes of those we deal with. Again, with many elements of Urban Justice, these programmes will serve as another access point to Sunday Church services for our target groups and to see young lives won for Christ.



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ELDERLY

Facing isolation, vulnerability, suicide, ill health, depression and feeling a lack of purpose. Some may attend church but have no experience of the church in action in their lives.

“Am I not too old to start going to Church?”

What can we offer?

Pastoral home visits, practical help via food ministries and maintenance team, Social programmes. pensioner lunches, exercise opportunities, dancing, movie theatre, days away, concerts, Computer classes, cookery classes, volunteer opportunities, youth-elderly mentoring scheme, hair and beauty treatments.

These are all designed to value, honour and bless the elderly in our community.


DEPRESSED/ SUICIDAL/ LONELY/ BEREAVED

Those facing fear and isolation, who feel that no-one understands them and they have nowhere to turn to for help. Many may desire to know God and be part of a church but don't want to go alone. Others are resentful, feeling that God doesn't answer their cries.

"How could you know how I feel?"

What can we offer?

We are fully aware of the lack of resource and provision for these hurting people within our community; therefore we have a duty to come alongside them and be the hands and feet of Christ. We could offer a range of counselling and therapy services, volunteer opportunities and links to expert agencies.



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DISABLED

Those suffering with a physical or mental disability who may be isolated from our community. Church can be an unwelcoming place for them and their family.

“Does your church welcome disabled people?”

What can we offer?

Respite for families would be a huge blessing and the long term goal of a fully equipped centre should be on our vision agenda.

We want to work alongside schools and expert agencies to provide specific programmes designed to help and support those living with a disability and their families.

As we progress, these may include breakfast, lunches, days away, cinema days, music, workshops, drama, arts and crafts, sports and games.

These activities could form a very accessible path to Church on a Sunday.



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SICK

Suffering illness at home, in hospital, care homes and hospices and coping with the daily practicalities and financial strain.

“How welcoming and supportive is the Church?”

What can we offer?

In conjunction with the work already going on, we would aim to offer a range of pastoral support in homes, hospitals and care homes for those unable to get out. For example, transport to hospital visits, food and maintenance ministries, counselling services, mentoring, befriending and a mobile prayer team.

BUSINESSES/ SCHOOLS/ COLLEGES/ HEALTH CENTRES

Many may not see church as being relevant. Few may see the connection between God and their school, workplace or their business success.

“How can Church help my business? We do RE here, why do we need a church?”

What can we offer?

Business breakfasts, leadership training and teaching, School assemblies, SHINE programmes, teaching opportunities through Learning for Life and Work programme, opportunity to bless local schools with practical help via our maintenance team



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EDUCATIONALLY CHALLENGED

Those who struggle to read or write or who are without necessary qualifications. They may face feelings of shame, isolation and vulnerability.

“How can I know God when I can’t even read the Bible?”

What can we offer?

Numeracy, literacy and other educational opportunities along with mentoring, structured links to local colleges and the possibility of vocational training.

HOMELESS/ (EX)PRISONERS/ REFUGEES/ FOREIGN NATIONALS/ TRAVELLING COMMUNITY

Those whose home is on our streets, in a prison cell, a caravan or a hostel. For some it's a living nightmare.

"What does your God have to offer us?"

What can we offer?

Dignity for these groups can be hard to come by. Urban Justice will meet these people where they are and do our best to be the hands and feet of Jesus. This demographic could make use of every programme and ministry we will run. As a Christ-centred, New Testament group of believers in 2016 we are duty bound to provide housing and accommodation on some level. These sections of society will bring their own unique set of challenges but they are without doubt the people the Lord speaks of in our missional texts.



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HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

If this Urban Justice ministry is to function and grow, we need to be totally reliant on Christ. As believers we need to grasp the reality that we have no choice but to follow the teaching of Isaiah 58. We cannot be spectators; we need to search our own hearts and ultimately answer the question - "Am I in or not?" We need to be personally and collectively stirred, fired up and resolved to get on board with this, otherwise it simply won't work.

We need a collective momentum within our Church family, sustained periods of prayer and fasting, specific teaching from the front and an overall ethos of recognising the colossal significance of the programme. If it flourishes we can expect change, discomfort, uncertainty and challenges but we will take it all back to Isaiah 58 and stand on God's Word,

*'Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.'* (Isaiah 58 v 8).

The Lord has already abundantly blessed Grace Generation with the people He has brought amongst us for a time such as this. People with tremendous giftings and abilities and more so, a hunger and a desire to serve Him. In producing this document it has become more apparent with almost every idea committed to paper, that the people we need are already in our House.