



THE URBAN PLANTING SCHOOL

A two-year training programme for planting the gospel in urban communities



Hello

If you're reading this it is likely that you are somewhere on a journey towards planting the gospel in an urban setting.

Whatever you're feeling about your journey - excited or apprehensive, hopeful or cautious - we encourage you to first pause for a moment.

God commands us, "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) - so before you start looking through this document, invite God to influence you as you read and reflect.

If you begin the journey in communion with God you can be assured that the time you spend exploring UP is well invested - whatever the next step might be for you.

Be blessed as you explore,

Stef & Gordon

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WHAT IS URBAN PLANTING?

THE URBAN LANDSCAPE



“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:19-20



When you think of the word 'urban', you might picture vibrant city centres like London, Cardiff, Glasgow or Belfast.

However, urbanisation has expanded far beyond the major cities. An increase in national and global mobility has seen the diverse mix of nationalities, cultures and socio-economic backgrounds normally confined to big city centres reproducing across our neighbourhoods, estates, suburbs and towns with significant effects.



As the nations move into the neighbourhood, the once-familiar stories of these everyday places is quickly changing.

It is increasingly clear that people and their communities are broken. The places where we live, work, rest and play are in need of authentic disciples who embody Jesus in the day-to-day of everyday life.

People and communities are separated and unknown to one another, rarely working together towards the same goals and outcomes. People feel lost in the busyness of the crowd and remain strangers, divided by their difference. There seems to be a widening gap between those with hopes, aspirations and opportunities, and those without. Increasing numbers of people feel isolated and alone, with a deepening loss of meaning and purpose in life.

UP is our humble attempt towards making Jesus known in urban communities like these.

Defining Urban

For somewhere to be classed as urban, we would suggest that the location and people will match at least 2-3 of the following features:

Location



- ✓ A city, town or estate
- ✓ High population density
A large number of people live in a relatively small geographic area.
- ✓ Extremes of poverty/wealth
The poor & the rich exist in close proximity.
- ✓ Signs of social deprivation
Brokenness is visible. The local community lacks access to essential resources, opportunities, or support.

People



- ✓ Visible diversity
There is a wide range of people from different backgrounds, cultures, races, and identities.
- ✓ Anonymity
Despite living so closely to others, many people live and feel unknown/unseen and are strangers to their neighbours.
- ✓ Lack of social cohesion
People don't feel connected or united; they're not really working together or for each other.
- ✓ Mobility & transiency
People constantly move around. Nothing is fixed. The only thing that stays the same is change!



“UP exists to equip gospel-hearted and missionally-minded people to reach and plant into urban communities.”

STEF LISTON

URBAN CITIZENS

**WHO IS
UP FOR?**

UP is for all missionally-minded, gospel-hearted people who want to plant the gospel in urban settings. UP is for those who are prepared to think differently, live radically, walk faithfully and labour diligently.

UP IS FOR YOU IF YOU ARE...

- ...an individual, couple or group with a desire to share the gospel in an urban context.
- ...already based in an urban context or reaching into one nearby, OR planning to be in the future.
- ...willing to invest two-years being spiritually and practically equipped to help you effectively reach urban communities and bear long-lasting fruit.

Who is UP for?



Individuals, couples and households wanting to plant the gospel in their neighbourhood (either where they already live, or somewhere they are called to in future).

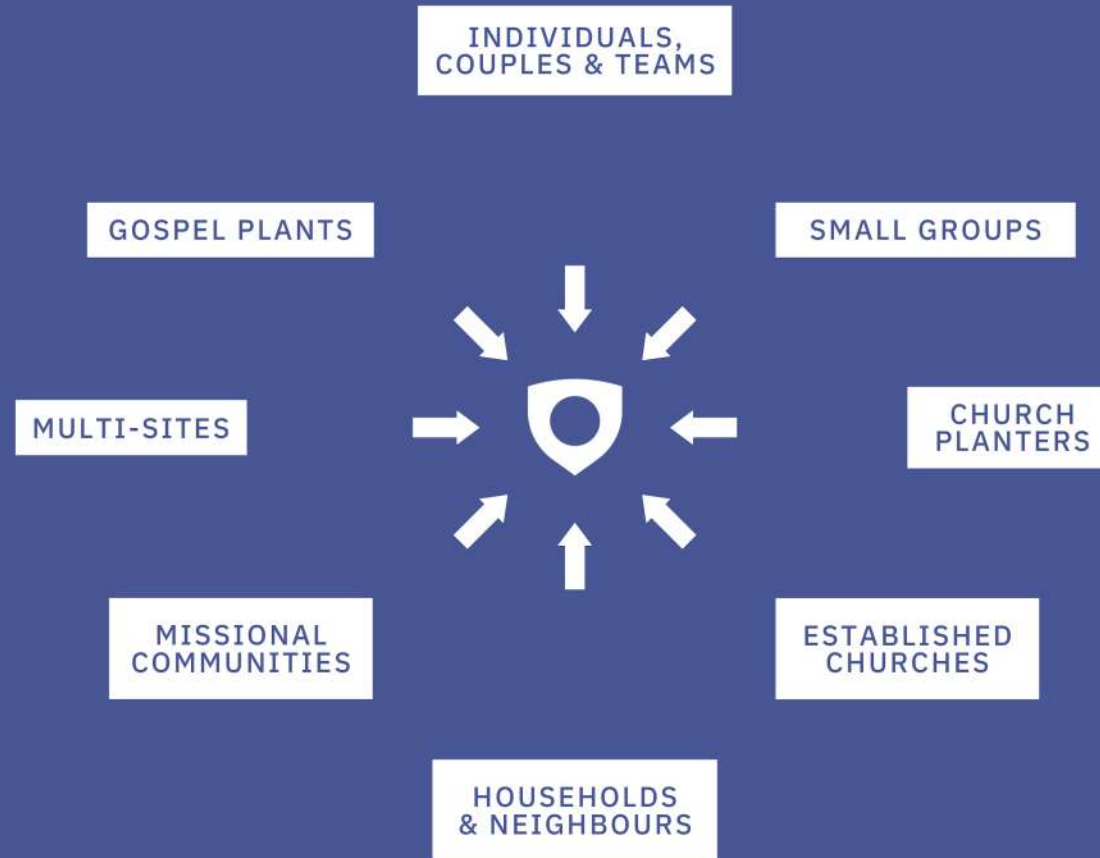


Those who lead or have responsibility for house groups, missional communities or gospel plants and want to be equipped with tools to help their community make a significant impact.



Established churches and multi-sites seeking to expand their missional skillset and amplify their gospel witness in their local community and surrounding area.

UP Who is UP for?





“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

MATTHEW 15:14-16

WHAT IS UP?

TRAINING PROGRAMME

How UP will prepare you

Over two years, UP will equip and encourage you in the principles of missional pioneering, enabling you to discern where God is already at work and help you to plant the seeds of the gospel deep in the soil of your unique urban setting.

Training Overview

Core components of UP school

- Training takes place over two years
- x3 in-person training weekends per year (Friday evening through to Sunday afternoon)
- Peer group mentoring
- Training developed & delivered by urban planters
- Pastoral support & insight at training weekends
- Spirit-filled insight & moments of prophetic input
- Supplementary resources (online & suggested reading lists)



Mission modules

Each residential weekend comprises a blend of content from across five modules:

1. Theology of Mission

What does the Bible teach and instruct us about God, ourselves, and our Spirit-empowered mission to those we live amongst?

We will explore Biblical themes, alongside historical and contemporary church examples of God's missional heart in reaching the unreached.

4. Kingdom Collaboration

How might we co-labour with others towards the same ends and same goals in seeing Jesus made known in the places where we work, rest & play?

Jesus has promised that as we parter in unity with others, it will command His blessing.

2. The Missional Disciple

Exploring the formational role of discipleship in living a fruitful missional life that imitates and honours Jesus.

What are the foundational traits, habits and practices of disciples who make disciples?

5. Unique Urban Challenges

Every context presents its own unique urban challenges.

We will explore and discern how Gospel truth intersects with contextual culture, opening up opportunities for Jesus to be made known and glorified, even in the hardest to reach places!

3. Communities of Mission

The Trinity is an outward facing transformative community of sending mission, one into which we have been warmly welcomed.

Likewise, we too are called to live arms-outstretched, outward facing, sent into the world to warmly invite others to experience Jesus through Spirit-filled community and our everyday transformational relationships.

Dates & Locations

UP will be facilitated across three unique urban settings: London, Sheppey and Liverpool. They will each host two residential weekends across the two-year programme.

CAMDEN, LONDON

The Church in Bassett Street recently re-planted and re-oriented towards a fresh vision to love and reach their surrounding streets and estates of North London with the good news of Jesus.

SHEPPEY, KENT

Good News Church Sheppey is a growing Gospel Community that was planted in 2018 with the dream of seeing Jesus made known in one of the UK's most deprived towns. The church love and serve Sheppey in a multitude of practical ways and have seen numbers of people come to faith in Jesus.

KENSINGTON, LIVERPOOL

The Liverpool Gospel Plant began when two families relocated their lives from Norfolk, with a vision of sharing Jesus with the communities of Kensington. The area is home to approx. 16,500 people, many of whom are yet to encounter Jesus.

2024-26 DATES

4-6 October 2024

CAMDEN, LONDON

14-16 February 2025

SHEPPEY, KENT

6-8 June 2025

KENSINGTON, LIVERPOOL

3-5 October 2025

CAMDEN, LONDON

6-8 February 2026

SHEPPEY, KENT

5-7 June 2026

KENSINGTON, LIVERPOOL

The UP team

Who are the people involved in delivering **UP: The Urban Planting School**?



Stefan Liston

Head of RM training & practitioner

Stef, along with his wife Davina, three children and a small team, planted Revelation Church London in 2006, and he now serves as an elder there. Stef helps to lead the Relational Mission family of churches and carries specific responsibility for training and church planting. Stef loves reading, walking, music, longboarding, and watching good films.



Gordon Watson

UP Course Manager & practitioner

Gordon is married to Natalie. They are adoptive parents to two older teens & are also foster carers. In 2018 their family of five moved from Medway to plant Hope Church Sittingbourne (Kent). Gordon has a masters degree in Missional Leadership, loves talking with people about Jesus and is often found in the terraces supporting Charlton Athletic home & away.



Matt & Helene Spocchia

UP mentors & practitioners

In 2018 Matt & Helene were sent from Canterbury and moved their family of four to Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey (Kent). They have seen Jesus move through their passion to be ordinary, everyday people; all the while making themselves available to be used by an extraordinary God. Many of those who have joined their Gospel plant are from an unchurched background.



Craig Prentice

UP mentor & practitioner

Craig is married to Heather and they are parents to three young adults. Craig is part of the team that planted and leads Thanet Community Churches - 3 inter-connected congregations in Ramsgate, Margate and Broadstairs (Kent). Craig has a vocational background in social work, loves spending time with his family and has run the London marathon.



Eve and Gamel Byles

UP Pastoral Care & practitioners

Eve and Gamel are married with two adult children and both have extensive experience teaching by vocation. They serve together on the team leading a re-planted church that is now part of a regional multi-site. They are both pastorally gifted and will be serving us as the mum and dad of our UP training weekends.



Michelle Safo

RM Business Link & practitioner

Michelle is a businesswoman with a passion for seeing church and business leaders working together to bring regeneration and transformation in lives and communities through Kingdom advance. Michelle is a member of a multi-site church in Essex and is married to Emmanuel with two young adult children.



Tuuli Platner

UP brand language & practitioner

The daughter of missionaries and a third culture kid, Tuuli was seven when her family settled in the UK. She serves as the student deacon for her local church and recently stepped into a new adventure of living missionally in a close-knit community within inner-city London.



Joel Johnson

UP Intern and Practitioner

Joel is a student at university and serves with the Students and Youth team at his church. He has trained as a home church leader as his church alternates between home church and larger all-together gatherings for greater discipleship. Joel has a heart for seeing people become more missional in their day-to-day lives.



Jay Eastman

UP Training consultant & practitioner

Jay serves as a community developer and pioneer church planter. Originating from America and now living in Berlin (Germany) since 2001, Jay has helped plant five churches throughout the city, reflecting the rich context of each area. Jay serves across multiple movements as a learning systems consultant. Jay's lived experience, missional insight and community education expertise has helped shape the overarching content and flow of UP.



And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

DANIEL 12:2-4

APPLY

COMMIT TO URBAN PLANTING

2024/26 Annual Programme Fees

UP is intended to serve wide and far, not only those amongst our Relational Mission family of churches, but also collaborating with other streams, spheres and denominations.

We also believe UP should be financially accessible, so we have priced this first two-year programme to hopefully make that possible. Therefore, group discounts are available to encourage and enable more than one person to attend from each setting.

2024/25 Annual Programme Fees*

FIRST DELEGATE

£449

The first delegate from each local setting is priced at £449 per year

ADDITIONAL DELEGATES

£399

All additional delegates from the same setting** are priced at £399 per year

**We believe that teams and additional households from the same local settings will benefit from attending UP together.

MARRIED COUPLES

£749

Married (or engaged) couples are priced at £749 per year

We recognise the family unit as the hub of urban mission, and often (but not always) couples pioneer together. Attending together causes each training weekend to become an opportunity to step away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and be equipped and encouraged together.

*Please note: Delegates are responsible for organising their own travel, accommodation and meals.

What happens next?

We hope this prospectus has proven helpful, and given you enough information to consider whether UP may be for you.

At the start of this document we invited you to pause and to reflect on God - Now seems like a really great time to invite you to pause and stop again, and to listen to what the Holy Spirit is impressing upon your heart.



Ready to apply?

Apply

Applications are now open for our first two-year intake! **The deadline for all applications is Wednesday, 31st July 2024.** Our very first UP training weekend starts on the evening of Friday, 4th October 2024 in Camden, London.

If UP is for you, here's what to do next:

1. Download and complete the UP application form found at relationalmission.org/up
2. Send your completed form to Gordon via up@revelationchurch.org.uk

You can also [email Gordon](#) directly with any questions about the training programme.

Peace,
Stef & Gordon

relational
mission



UP is a training initiative of the Relational Mission family of churches.

Together we preach Christ, and plant and strengthen churches to the ends of the earth.



www.relationalmission.org/up

up@revelationchurch.org.uk

