



# Church for the Unchurched

A vision for the work of  
Gorse Hill Baptist Church



*Summary*

Gorse Hill  
BAPTIST CHURCH

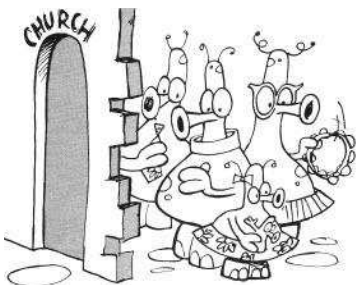
## ...Who?

- We use the word “unchurched” for people who know very little about Christianity, and have never entered a church worship area, except at weddings, funerals and christenings.
- They probably have wrong ideas about what we believe, and what we do. Their only impression of church is from news and comedy on television.
- We have lots of contact with unchurched people in the community, via regular and special events.



## ...Why?

- Our main purpose on earth, in obedience to the Lord Jesus, is to bring people into God’s kingdom, to rescue them for ever.
- People need to become Christians and find eternal life.



*Something alien*

Based on CPO Worthing UK Ref CPO 1028. Used by permission.

- Most people see church services as something alien and irrelevant to them. It isn’t often useful to “invite them to church”, with the assumption that this will help them.
- We shouldn’t write these people off. They often pray, and are sometimes attracted to Jesus. They may become Christians.

## ...How?

- It is our business to find ways of introducing them to Jesus, so they can find God, and then to help them grow as Christians.
- GHBC could start a weekly group for these people. We would pray that this would help many of them to find a new life.
- For others, a one-to-one introduction to Christianity may be right.
- The group should be made up of unchurched people and Christians, without unnecessary “hurdles” which often hinder people from joining us and coming into God’s family.



*Hurdles*

## **...What?**

- It is for Gorse Hill Baptist Church to decide what would be most relevant and practical in our locality.
- The group needs to meet in a relaxing environment, with things that are familiar to people, such as easy chairs and hot and cold drinks. There should be opportunity for discussion.
- The good news and basic teaching would be given in stages, with things explained in ways that people can understand, even if they start out knowing nothing about Christianity.
- We would have to go back to basics and explain who Jesus is, giving some background, and maybe historical evidence.
- The group would be under the authority of the church leadership, and the church would need to pray for this group, where real people can receive eternal life.
- A group would not be short-term but must continue, so that those who attend can develop a stable Christian faith and life. Also others may join, perhaps from their witness.
- An Alpha course is unsuitable, mainly because it provides no ongoing support. After it finishes the original problem would remain.
- There should not be a lot of pressure to attend church services, although these would be publicised. The group is the right place for the person to be at that time. We need to do what is best for these unchurched people, in love for them.

***"We should not make it difficult for those who are turning to God"***

*from Acts 15:19*

## **...When and Where?**

- Groups, or other opportunities, should be aimed at people contacted via events and activities, both recent and ongoing.
- We need to decide on venue(s) and time(s) in the week. We should ask local people what suits them.
- There is very little need to change the way we do things at present, because a new group would run in parallel with the existing worship services, but at different times in the week.
- We must find good ways of publicising the group to existing and new contacts.

## ***Final note***

Please read, consider, and pray about what this leaflet says. You may be prompted to act, and to be part of an important new work! There is also a "Church for the Unchurched" booklet available, explaining more about this vision and exciting opportunity, if you have time to read it.

I believe these things may be crucial to the church's strategy of helping people to become Christians, that is, the people who will make up the ongoing church as it continues into the future.

In other words I think that this vision is "for such a time as this" (see Esther 4:14). We've developed good contacts with a lot of unchurched people in Gorse Hill, and it would be a crying shame if we did not build on these. Changes may be needed to our thinking about how to bring people into God's kingdom, but sometimes change is necessary to achieve a good outcome.

In our desire to help local residents to become children of God with a place in heaven, we should not ignore something which offers effective ways of fulfilling Jesus' Great Commission to us in Matthew 28:18-20. We would see people move from just being interested, to a faith in Christ, and then grow in their new life to be an active part of the church, helping & caring for people.

Recently I spoke with someone locally who has been put off from going to church services. But when I spoke about the kind of group which this leaflet suggests, she said she would come to that. So there is already some local interest!

Deciding what to do in reality would of course need a lot of prayer, research, thought and planning. But we have a lot of available options for helpful activities and content. Although this may take a while to implement, we cannot put it off.

We also need to pray that the Spirit of God will be at work in the ordinary people of Gorse Hill, creating a desire to know God. And then we will, I hope, be able to provide the opportunity to bring this about.

Trevor Hancock, September 2014

*Note: The need for this leaflet has been approved by the church's minister & deacons. Copyright © Gorse Hill Baptist Church, Swindon*