

Especially Among the Poor

Some ask why *The Urban Ministry Institute's* purpose statement includes the phrase "especially among the poor."

By the year 2025, one out of every three people on the planet will live in urban poverty. We believe that God is raising up leaders who will go to the unreached millions among the urban poor in America and around the world. More importantly, we believe that God is raising up dynamic leaders from among the urban poor who deserve access to quality theological education.

This belief is not predicated simply on the urgent need, although God's Church should certainly respond in faith to the unique challenge of a swelling urban population. Rather, we assert that God has "chosen those who are poor in the eyes of this world to be rich in faith and to inherit the Kingdom which he promised to those who love him." (James 2.5) Whether we are rich, poor, or somewhere in between, we believe that Jesus has given all of us as believers a theological mandate to prioritize the poor in our life and ministry.

As much as Christians may wish that poverty and oppression did not exist, to avoid talking about the problem will not bring a solution. We believe that the Church is God's agent for bringing Christ's Kingdom which leads to freedom, wholeness, and justice. Furthermore, we believe that people from families and communities struggling with urban poverty are not to be viewed simply as objects for Christian benevolence but as a dynamic leadership pool for the future of the whole Church. We believe that all training for Christian leadership must be done in the light of Christ's announcement that:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me; therefore, he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
(Luke 4.18-19)

To the best of our ability, we will strive to be a Christian leadership training center which is accessible and relevant to Christian leaders, not on the basis of economics or social power, but on the basis of their calling by God to serve his Church.