

Matthews Gospel in the Urban Context

A new commentary by Paul Skirrow and Peter Winn, who have between them decades of experience working in marginalised urban communities and with workers and unemployed people. This commentary is available on line and new chapters will be regularly added each month.

This reading of Matthew's Gospel is founded on a suspicion - that the gospel text is normally interpreted by and for people who are socially and economically secure. Consequently most biblical interpretations have little to say to people who live in deprived and marginal communities in Britain or elsewhere. These are interpretations that do not address the very real issues of the distribution of wealth and power in society and so are unable to speak to the urgent and concrete concerns of poor and dispossessed people. In short, the bible has become a text that supports the status quo.

The commentary argues that Matthew's gospel resists being used to underpin an unjust and unequal social order. It argues that an authentic understanding of the biblical message is only possible if it begins with the situation of the marginal poor. This is not just a theme in Matthew's text but one that is rooted in the whole biblical witness.

This study is built on the assertion that the authentic view of Matthew's Jesus comes out of economically, politically and socially marginalised people. This key – the urban hermeneutical key in the 21st century – unlocks the view of Jesus that Matthew was preserving. The marginalised urban communities of Britain offer an essential reading site from which to understand Matthew's agenda. For poor urban communities, who daily have to overcome the exploitative mechanisms of economy and politics, the words of Matthew 24:29 are a simple account of their lives.

For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.

This makes us look critically at interpretations to date and examine the way such interpretations add to the burden of the poor. Whatever Matthew's Jesus was doing and saying it could not have been in support of the rulers over the marginalised.

To find our more and download the commentary chapter by chapter go to:

www.urbanmatthew.co.uk

To be on a list of names which will receive an email when new material is added write to

update@urbanmatthew.co.uk