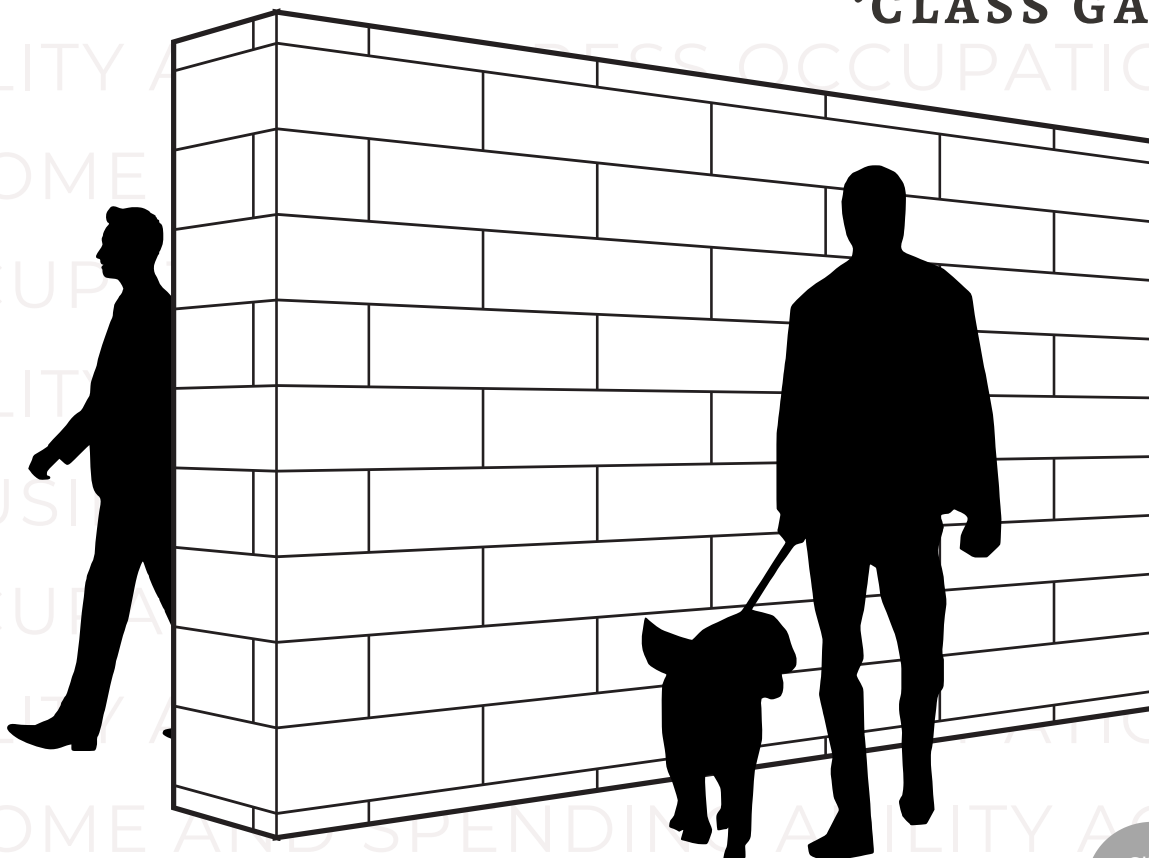


Guest Speaker: **Duncan Forbes**

Let's talk about... **Class**

9th June
2021
7.30pm

**DO UK CHRISTIAN
CHURCHES FACE A
'CLASS GAP'?**



Click
2
Sign Up

Discussion on **Zoom** hosted by



Emmanuel Church
CANTERBURY

Do UK Christian churches face a 'class gap'?

As one source puts it:

"The middle classes are, in general, more likely to attend church, but they are also less likely to believe in God and more likely to be atheists... The working classes are less likely to attend church, yet more likely to believe in God than the middle classes."

A 2015 study found that about 10% of the English population is 'practising Christian'. But of this minority, 81% had a degree level education or equivalent, compared with 45% for the population as a whole. 21% worked in education, compared with 7% of the whole population; 10% in health care, compared with 7%.

DUNCAN FORBES has devoted his life and evangelical ministry to understanding and addressing this 'class gap'. He was born on the Alton estate in Roehampton where he now pastors the FIEC-affiliated New Life Church as well as running training and consultancy services with his organisation Urban Ministries.

Duncan is a qualified and experienced music technology teacher, studied theology at Oakhill and holds a Doctorate in Urban Ministry from Westminster Theological Seminary (USA).

Here is a brief introduction to some of the issues we will consider, based on some of Duncan's talks. Visit the Urban Ministries website for these talks and a suggested starting point for this discussion:



People from a section of society can feel excluded in many UK churches because of social class. We lack the right word to describe this class: traditionally it is 'working class' (Duncan settles on the term 'lower classes'). The markers of this class include:

- **Accent**
- **Dress**
- **Occupation**
- **Education**
- **Income and spending ability**
- **Neighbourhood location and housing tenure – especially 'council estate'**



Some of these social origin 'markers' generate feedback which in turn undermine confidence from early life.

People from this background can feel judged in church. They feel expected to adopt an alien middle-class culture. Churches may have a focus on reaching higher-status and more powerful individuals who are seen as socially influential. This goes with a concern to counter the 'new atheism' spread by higher-status individuals.

This is unfaithful to the biblical vision of a church where all are one in Christ and where those of 'low' social status are often those used by God to take positions of leadership and influence.

Working-class men (in particular) may feel that middle-class people are the ones equipped for leadership and will 'sit back' in a mixed class environment.

Working-class people may be suspicious of middle-class authority and cultural dominance. They react against 'speeches' and preaching which appear to be a peg for this. But they respect the authority of God and of the Bible.

Duncan offers a wealth of advice on overcoming these barriers. Here are a few:

- **Use illustration and questions that relate to people's own experience of life (for example 'have you ever felt betrayed?') Then break down the Bible and explain it**
- **Encourage people to take positions of leadership and to overcome reticence due to background**
- **Avoid judgment based on occupation, dress and accent.**

9th June 2021, 7.30pm

Zoom Meeting ID and Password provided with sign-up

Click
2
Sign Up



Emmanuel Church
CANTERBURY