

THE SUBURBAN CHURCH'S ROLE  
IN THE URBAN MISSIONS

By  
Patrick Donohue

An Integrative Thesis

Submitted to the faculty  
In fulfillment of the requirements  
For the degree of  
Master of Arts (Religion)  
At Reformed Theological Seminary

Charlotte, North Carolina

December 2010



## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION: ONE CHURCH AND ONE CITY.....	4
Literature Review .....	8
Definition of Terms .....	10
2. UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH’S MIGRATION FROM THE CITY.....	14
What Has Been Lost?.....	22
3. GOD’S DESIGN FOR THE CITY.....	28
The Old Testament Concern for the City .....	28
The New Testament Concern for the City.....	39
A Theological Framework for Urban Mission.....	46
4. UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH’S RETURN TO THE CITY.....	49
5. URBAN MISSION FOR THE SUBURBAN CHURCH.....	53
6. CONCLUSION.....	
70REFERENCE LIST .....	72

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: ONE CHURCH AND ONE CITY

In 1894, on Walbrook Avenue, in the heart of Baltimore City's West-side community, six ladies, gathering in an apartment above a dry cleaner, began to pray about God's work in their community. Within the year they had begun the North Chapel Mission and only a year later, the North Avenue Mission Chapel. By 1896, just two short years later, the North Avenue United Presbyterian Chapel was founded and became a charter member of the United Presbyterian Church of North America. The church was a reflection of, and committed to, its North Avenue community. The North Avenue community, situated 3 miles northwest of the center of Baltimore, was a center for urban growth. Just blocks away, on Pennsylvania Avenue, the offices of the Baltimore City School Board were located. In 1900, the school board would found and begin The Colored High School and Training School, also located on Pennsylvania Avenue<sup>1</sup>. It boasted "a one year program to train the city's black elementary school teachers."<sup>2</sup> Two years later in 1902, the Colored High School added a two-year training, post-high school program that seven years later would become its own institution<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Coppin State University, "About Coppin"

<http://www.coppin.edu/About/History.aspx> (accessed February 5, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> BlackPast.org: Remembered and Reclaimed, "Coppin State University (1900 --)"

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aah/coppin-state-university-1900> (accessed February 5, 2010).

<sup>3</sup><http://www.coppin.edu/About/History.aspx> (accessed February 5, 2010).

By 2010, the North Avenue community has greatly changed. The Colored High School has now formed into two separate institutions. Frederick Douglas High School is now located off of Windsor Avenue and is a predominately African-American High School. The training school has become Coppin State University, one of America's most prestigious Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) boasting up to 4,000 students<sup>4</sup>. Just a few blocks from Coppin State University is the New Shiloh Baptist Church, Baltimore's largest and most well-known African American Church. The community has changed much over the past hundred years.

The North Avenue United Presbyterian Church is no longer a part of the North Avenue Community. In 1951, the church moved 5 miles southwest to North Chapelgate Lane and became the Chapelgate Lane United Presbyterian Church. This moved the church 2 miles further west from the center of Baltimore. In 1960 the church moved onto North Rolling Road, 13 miles from the center of Baltimore, moving out of the city, like many traditionally white churches, into Baltimore County. This move brought a new name with it as well; the Chapel Hill United Presbyterian Church. By 1980, the church was named Chapelgate Presbyterian Church and was worshipping at N. St. Johns Lane, 15 miles from the center of Baltimore in Howard County. Currently, the Chapelgate Presbyterian Church worships on Marriottsville Road in Howard County, almost 20 miles from the center of Baltimore City and 16 miles from its original location in 1894. Howard County is known to be one of the most wealthy and best-educated counties in the nation. It

---

<sup>4</sup><http://www.coppin.edu/About/History.aspx> (accessed February 5, 2010).

has been called a “suburban utopia” free of the problems of that plague Baltimore City.

Meanwhile, just miles away, Baltimore has decayed over the years becoming one of America’s most troubled cities. In 1980, when Chapelgate Presbyterian Church moved to Howard County, Baltimore was in crisis.

The blue-collar jobs that had put food on the table for generations were evaporating like drops of water on a hot griddle; thirty thousand manufacturing jobs had disappeared during the previous ten years alone. Every day thousands of city residents – one in ten – faced the empty days, slammed doors, and empty pockets of unemployment. Joblessness stalked youths and minorities; fifty percent couldn’t find work. More public-school kids took permanently to the streets than stayed to stride across an auditorium stage, shake a principal’s hand, and palm a diploma – while in surrounding counties, high school graduates outnumbered dropouts at least four to one. Economy-related crimes – burglary, larceny, and robbery – spiked, jumping almost fifty percent during the first half of 1981. The “white flight” triggered in the 1960s sped on without a backward glance. Residents were fleeing the city at a rate of 10,000 a year.<sup>5</sup>

Baltimore continues to decline. In 1996, the *New York Times* published an article about “third world” conditions in the United States<sup>6</sup>. Baltimore neighborhoods were featured in the front page of the article. The *Wall Street Journal* agrees. Steve Hanke and Stephen Walters, both professors in Baltimore universities write, “Baltimore deserves the Third-World profile it has developed because of its expanses of crumbling, crime-riddled neighborhoods populated by low-income renters, an absent middle class, and

---

<sup>5</sup> Maria Garriott, *A Thousand Resurrections: An Urban Spiritual Journey* (Washington, D.C.: Riott Publishing, LLC, 2006), 26.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Gornik, *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith in the Changing Inner City* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), 238.

just a few enclaves of high-income gentry near the Inner Harbor or in suburbs<sup>7</sup>.”

Chapelgate’s history is not unlike many churches in the suburban areas of Baltimore. The history of many of today’s suburban churches begins in the city. Yet, many have incrementally and progressively fled urban communities for the safety of suburban areas. One wonders if the idols of self-protection, comfort, and ethno-centricity have motivated such migration. Caution has to be used when ascribing motives to the flight of the church. Churches function as organizations containing members, all of which have different experiences, backgrounds, and reasons for leaving the city. However, patterns have developed over the course of the church’s history that lead observers to ponder the path of the church.

However, the kingdom of God has a distinctively urban and multi-ethnic focus, a focus that engages the brokenness of the city. The church’s role is to work toward the renewal of the city. In doing so, the church can return to the culture-shaping role it once held in the early church. This thesis will examine the church’s history with regards to urban engagement in the US and other Western cultures, paying particular attention to one church’s history with the city of Baltimore. We will then examine the suburban church’s recovery of and reinvestment in ministry to urban communities, attempting to recast a framework for the suburban church’s involvement in urban ministry.

---

<sup>7</sup> Hanke, Steve and Stephen Walters. “Blame Taxes for Baltimore’s Rot” *The Wall Street Journal* (July 5, 2008).

## Literature Review

Not much has been directly written concerning the suburban church's role in ministry to the City. However, much has been written concerning the importance, function, role, and future of Urban Ministry.

For the specific focus of the urban ministry in Baltimore City, two resources have been profoundly helpful. Maria Garriott's *A Thousand Resurrections*, though not cited extensively, is essential in highlighting the private spiritual war fought by all who refuse to run from the city, but, instead, follow God's call to embrace it. She recounts her own experiences in ministry to the Pen Lucy neighborhood of Baltimore City. *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City*, written by Mark Gornick, shifts its focus to the Sandtown community of Baltimore City. Gornick weaves in personal stories of his ministry in Sandtown, while thoroughly outlining the theological, sociological, and biblical underpinnings of urban ministry. It expresses the impact a church has when it chooses to be a "church of the community."

In investigating the church's flight from the city, several sources have been particularly helpful. Harvey Conn's article, *The Rural/Urban Myth and World Mission* outlines some of the biases and misconceptions Christians have towards the city. Plantinga and Rozeboom's *Discerning the Spirits: A Guide to Thinking About Christian Worship Today* and Donald McGavran's *Understanding Church Growth* have been helpful in understanding the "Homogenous Unit Principle" of church growth in the 1960's and its influence on the suburban church's flight from the city. In trying to understand the "Secular City Debate", Harvey Cox's *The Secular City: Toward a*

*Postmodern Theology and Religion in the Secular City: Toward a Postmodern*

*Theology* are helpful in understanding his unique perspective on the church's future role in the City. Daniel Callahan's *The Secular City Debate* does an exceptional job of summarizing and representing the different voices in the debate.

In terms of constructing a theological picture of God's concern for the city, several sources have been significant. Tim Keller's *A Biblical Theology of the City*, an article from the July 2002 "Evangelicals Now", underlies the major themes of God's concern for the city and the church's need to recover a theological perspective of the city. Keller highlights the church's overall abandonment of the city and calls believers to re-engagement if the church hopes to recover influence in the culture. He expands his thoughts in *Our New Global Culture: Ministry in Urban Centers*. These themes are also emphasized in *The Urban Face of Mission: Ministering the Gospel in a Diverse and Changing World*, written and edited by Manuel Ortiz and Susan Baker. It is a compilation work of authors concerned for the church's urban mission, highlighting social issues and leadership. Larry McSwain contributes *Understanding Life in the City: Context for Christian Ministry* to the discussion. He highlights the character of the city and the biblical imperatives concerning care for the city.

The Bible has much to say concerning the city. God's urban emphasis can be traced throughout the Old and New Testaments. Harvey Conn and Manuel Ortiz's *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City & the People of God* is the seminal textbook on urban ministry from a biblical and theological perspective. Conn and Ortiz outline throughout the Scriptures God's particular concern for the urban setting. Charles Van Engen's *The Complementarity of Universality and Particularity of God's Mission:*

*Reflections on Planting Multi-ethnic Congregations in North America*, Samuel Larsen's *A Christocentric Understanding of Linguistic Diversity: Implications for Mission in a Pluralistic Society*, and Niels-Erik Andreasen's *Town and Country in the Old Testament* were helpful in understanding the urban aspect of redemptive history in the Old Testament. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* by Wayne Meeks and Harvey Conn's *Lucan Perspectives on the City* were particularly useful in understanding the New Testament's concern for the city.

In understanding the church's role in returning to urban ministry, many of the above sources and several other sources were particularly helpful. Ray Bakke in *The Urban Christian: Effective Ministry in Today's Urban World* and *A Theology as Big as the City* confronts the notion that Christianity is a "rural" religion and readdresses the church's urban engagement in the context of his personal urban ministry in Chicago. John Perkin's model of community development is outlined in *With Justice for All: A Strategy for Community Development*. Perkins is the authority on inner city community development. *A Heart for the City: Effective Ministries to the Urban Community*, edited by John Fuder, compiles multiple perspectives on urban ministry, representing different ethnic communities and local church models.

Much has been written and much will continue to be written about the city and its rise or decline, depending on your perspective.

#### Definition of Terms

The definitions of urban, rural, and suburban are often confused and the dividing lines are becoming increasingly blurred and easily misunderstood. At its most basic, the term "urban" is understood as "of or pertaining to" the "city".

“Sociologist Louis Wirth, a prominent member of the Chicago School, produced a classical definition in 1938 that scholars still debate, deny, correct and modify. ‘A City,’ he argued, is ‘a relatively large, dense, and permanent settlement of socially heterogeneous individuals’.<sup>8</sup>” The city is where the greatest concentration of individuals exist with the greatest ethnic, cultural, and socio-economical diversity. Two related terms are *urbanism and urbanization*. Ray Bakke’s definitions are helpful. “By *urbanization* we refer to the city as a magnet. Urbanization pulls people in from rural areas. By *urbanism* we refer to the city as a transformer, transmitter, and magnifier of culture.<sup>9</sup>”

The understanding of what is the particular make up of the suburban landscape can be difficult to grasp. After all, “In San Francisco and Philadelphia, Houston and Boston, the word *suburb* denotes home for the middle and upper classes. But in the Matheri valley of Nairobi and high on the hills of Caracas, the suburbs are where we find the poor and the marginalized.<sup>10</sup>” Throughout the world the terms urban and suburban mean very different things in very different contexts. For the ease of our study, we’ll focus on the North American and largely “Western” understanding of the urban / suburban divide. Yet, even in North America, the definitions can be difficult to grasp. “Suburban living has often been stereotyped

---

<sup>8</sup> Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001), 159.

<sup>9</sup> Harvie Conn et al. *The Urban Face of Mission: Ministering the Gospel in a Diverse and Changing World* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2002), 30.

<sup>10</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 19.

into a white, affluent, middle-class haven for living with all the amenities of the city and few of the liabilities. In reality the suburbs vary greatly.<sup>11</sup>

The dividing line between urban / suburban contexts is unclear and consistently changing. Conn notes:

The context, even in suburban and rural communities, is drastically changing. Rural communities are becoming small sized cities (50,000) and are growing toward becoming larger, middle-sized cities (100,000). “The real city is the total metropolitan area – city and suburb” (Rusk 1993:5). Keep in mind that more and more the lines between urban and suburban are fading (Elliston and Kauffman 1993:128). “No longer suburbs, not quite, they are called ‘urban villages’ by some” (Conn 1994a: 134-35). Suburban communities are becoming more and more culturally diverse.<sup>12</sup>

The definitions are unclear and hotly debated. Some have suggested clearer definitions<sup>13</sup>. Yet, for the purpose of this study we’ll embrace a classic understanding of the suburbs. Simply put, the suburban areas are those that lie just outside the city, home predominantly to the middle and upper class. McSwain notes that “the stereotypes are partially true. Suburbs do contain a more concentrated population, more affluent persons, and more children and family activities.<sup>14</sup>” Conn and Ortiz agree that the stereotypes are often true. “In North America, the suburbs are havens for the middle and upper classes; the poor are left behind in the hole of the urban doughnut.<sup>15</sup>” But it is wise to be reminded that the suburbs hold elements

---

<sup>11</sup> Larry McSwain, “Understanding Life in the City: Context for Christian Ministry”, *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, no. 24 (Spring 1982): 18.

<sup>12</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 279.

<sup>13</sup> McSwain, “Understanding Life in the City”, 18. McSwain suggest addition terms. *Rurbia* is considered to be, “a fusion of city and countryside.” *Exurbia* is defined as a “countryside enclave of the urban affluent who can afford a country estate, a resort condominium, or second home in the country

<sup>14</sup> McSwain, “Understanding Life in the City”, 18.

<sup>15</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 212.

and characteristics of both urban and rural contexts and the dividing lines are never as clear as they may seem.

## CHAPTER 2

### UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH'S MIGRATION FROM THE CITY

Over the decades, what has prompted churches, like Chapelgate, to depart from the cities? Again, one cannot judge accurately the motives of the heart, but there are considerations, both sociological and theological, that may prompt such a widespread departure. The departure has not been localized to churches:

As David Rusk documents in his study *Baltimore Unbound*, the changes in the city are related to as yet unchanging patterns of flight and abandonment. Since 1950, the population has dropped from nearly one million to around 630,000, the middle and upper classes having packed up and moved to the suburbs. About a thousand people a month are still leaving the city. By most counts, over 40,000 houses are abandoned, with scores of empty lots being added as demolition crews tear their way across the city's row-house fabric. Baltimore is the nineteenth largest city in the United States, but in 1999 it has the second highest per-capita homicide rate.<sup>16</sup>

The departure of the middle and upper classes has coincided with the rising tide of crime and homicide in Baltimore. As Gornick cites, "A Johns Hopkins researcher found that, in terms of psychological damage, the children living in Baltimore's inner city were more adversely affected than children living in war-torn Bosnia<sup>17</sup>." Just as refugees from Bosnia fled to safer parts of Europe, so have those with financial means fled Baltimore's urban centers to reside in the safer climates of its

---

<sup>16</sup>Gornick, *To Live in Peace*, 36.

<sup>17</sup> Idid. 36.

surrounding counties. Many have left our cities simply because they feel safer in rural communities, especially when they consider the safety of their children.

The suburban communities surrounding our American cities offer opportunities that are better than their neighboring urban communities. Finding employment is easier and educational opportunities are far better. Howard County, a neighboring county of Baltimore City, offers one of the best education programs in the nation. Baltimore City offers one of the worst and it is on a continual decline. Teachers refuse higher salaries offered to them by the city school system for fear of threats to their own personal safety.

Those seeking a more homogeneous racial and lifestyle demographic will seek to move away from cities that, by nature, are more diverse. Tim Keller writes, “Even today, people like the homeless, or new immigrants, or the poor, or people with ‘deviant’ lifestyles, must live in the city. The city is always a more merciful place for minorities of all kinds. Why? The density of the city creates the possibility of strong minority communities. Density creates diversity. The dominant majorities often dislike cities, but the weak and powerless need them. They cannot survive in the suburbs and small towns<sup>18</sup>.” Keller makes an excellent point by highlighting the strength of minority communities in the city. They need one another, especially new immigrants and the homeless. The “weak and powerless” are drawn more to the city.

Racism and classism have also been motivating factors in the suburban church’s movement from the city. John Perkins wrote, “The evangelical church, with

---

<sup>18</sup>Keller, Timothy. “A Biblical Theology of the City,” *Evangelicals Now*, posted July 2002 <http://www.e-n.org.uk/1869-A-biblical-theology-of-the-city.htm>, (accessed October 9, 2009).

remarkable exceptions, remains the greatest stronghold of the sin of racism in America today.<sup>19</sup>” The race issue is prevalent in most of America’s cities and may prompt, as Perkins notes, a motivating factor for the church’s flight. However, one must be careful of reducing the cause to one central issue. Such reductionism imputes race as the sole issue for church flight. The reality is that in every situation multiple factors are involved, even if racism is a strong factor.

The “white flight” movement of the 60’s and 70’s brought a cultural shift away from the cities. Thus urban flight has been predominately contained within the white middle-class segment. “In 1920 city dwellers were the majority of the US population. In 1970, however, more Americans were living in suburbs than the cities. ‘Of two hundred million people, seventy-six million lived in areas around but not inside cities, sixty-four million in the cities themselves.’<sup>20</sup>” The middle class is radically fleeing the city leaving behind the economically “weaker” minority communities. The 1950’s brought an economic shift that prompted the urban flight:

Though untouched by war and the disintegration of an empire, the industrial city of the United States also looks less and less like a launching pad for hope and more and more a repository of despair. The shift in American cities from an industrial to a service-oriented economy creates a “rust belt” in older urban centers in the Northeast. The middle-class identification of the city with crime and social disintegration has left the metropolis with a collapsing tax base, a failed attempt at urban reform in the 1950’s, and marginalized life of social and political powerlessness.<sup>21</sup>

The flight has continued. While the Non-Western world has experienced urban swell, Western cultures have seen the opposite. The cities have become a home to the

---

<sup>19</sup> John Perkins. *With Justice for All: A Strategy for Community Development* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1982) 32.

<sup>20</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 70.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 71.

dispossessed and poor while the surrounding counties have become home to white, middle-class fortresses.

The Church Growth Movement, coupled with the “white flight” movement, of the 1960’s brought a change in focus concerning how churches grow that has factored in the church’s exit from the city. The movement was spearheaded by Donald McGavran of Fuller Theological Seminary, who adopted “a principle something like a mass-marketing technique – namely, the hotly debated, sociologically founded “homogenous unit principle”<sup>22</sup>. The Homogenous Unit Principle (HUP) established that “men (and women) like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers.”<sup>23</sup>

McGavran’s concept follows three church growth related observations:

Donald McGavran’s original conceptualization included the beginning formulation of three interrelated observations: (1) that there are distinct culturally-defined subgroups in any given population in specific context; (2) that at a specific time certain sub-groups appear to respond more readily to evangelistic efforts than others; and (3) that this is an important factor in being able to explain why some churches grow numerically more quickly than other churches.<sup>24</sup>

The HUP presented a distinct way of thinking about church growth. It encouraged churches to commit to an identified people group as a target for strategized growth. The church follows where the people group leads in terms of its best communication of the Gospel. If that people group moved, so did the church. This, coinciding with

---

<sup>22</sup> Cornelius Plantinga and Sue A. Rozeboom. *Discerning the Spirits: A Guide to Thinking About Christian Worship Today*. (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 17.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Van Engen,. “The Complementarity of Universality and Particularity in God’s Mission: Reflections on Planting Multi-Ethnic Congregations in North America”(paper presented at the Ward Consultation, Chicago, IL, November 3-4,1997). 8

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 8.

the “white flight” movement, fueled many churches in the 1970’s and early 1980’s to follow their target people group out of the cities. As the people grew increasingly uncomfortable with the city, so did their congregations. Even today, the church growth movement influences the way churches relate to their immediate neighborhood and its community. Will a church reflect and commit to the neighborhood it is located in or will it follow its people wherever they may lead? Each church must ask this question for itself. Much, as Conn mentioned above, is built on the middle class false belief that crime and “social disintegration” characterize the city.

Harvie M. Conn, in his article *The Rural / Urban Myth and World Mission*, outlines several factors that have influenced the church’s withdrawal from the city. In examining the North American Mission movement, with particular emphasis on the Reformed tradition, Conn asks why the church still remains tribal, rural, and suburban,<sup>25</sup> unwilling or unable to break through its own homogeneity.

Conn speaks of the “rural / urban myth” that pervades evangelical thinking. The rural lifestyle is idealized while the urban lifestyle is condemned. “Drawing on the paradigm of “the noble savage,” verbalized by Jean Jacques Rousseau, it romanticizes the bucolic, the countryside, and gazes in horror at the city<sup>26</sup>”. This mythology has affected the media’s portrayal of the city:

Thus when a news magazine, radio, or television news department produces an urban affairs segment, this usually means the reporting of crime, poverty, low-income housing, and assorted miseries. The view of the city as unnatural can be demonstrated by a recent TV advertisement for Boy Scouting

---

<sup>25</sup> Harvie Conn. “The Rural/ Urban Myth and World Mission” *Reformed Review* 37 (1994). 126.

<sup>26</sup> *Idid*, 126.

depicting a forlorn boy wandering through the city. The message states that this boy lives in a shoddy, non-genuine world: 'His stars are neon lights. Instead of grass, he has cement.' Boys are urged to join the Boy Scouts and engage in camping to spend time in the countryside, get away from the urban scene. Thus they will become more human.<sup>27</sup>

This mentality has pervaded much of evangelicalism. Jacques Ellul spoke of the city as the place of idolatry, oppression, and opposition of human power to the power of God.<sup>28</sup> Along with Ellul, other prominent figures in evangelicalism have publicly expressed their feelings about the city. D.L. Moody was one of them. " 'We cannot get the people we are after,' he lamented, when urged to resume urban revivalism. 'The city is not the place for me,' he wrote his family in 1896 on a rare visit to New York. 'If it was not for the work I am called to do, I would never show my head in this city or any other again'."<sup>29</sup>

Conn also considers racism to be a motivating factor in the church's withdrawal. The HUP, combined with the "American Middle-Class" dream, can draw lines racially. "Contemporary Evangelicalism is, of course, a white religious phenomenon. The most visible display of this racism in recent years has been suburbanization and the evangelical church's retreat from the American cities in white flight."<sup>30</sup> Manny Ortiz notes, "ethnic pluralism has enlarged the gap between the city and suburb, and racism has encouraged it."<sup>31</sup> Ortiz and Conn seem to share Perkins assessment that racism has fueled much of the church's departure.

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 127.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 130.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 131.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 134.

<sup>31</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 73.

*The Secular City*, written by Harvey Cox in 1965, raised to consciousness a discussion concerning the church's role in the city. It brought an uproar amongst Catholicism and Protestantism, asking questions like "Could the cities be saved? Does urbanization spell an end to rich human relationships, human freedom, and human development?"<sup>32</sup> Cox's attempt was to make sacred secularization and the city was the center of secularization. Cox later wrote, "Secularization, an equally epochal movement, marks a change in the way men grasp and understand their life together, and it occurred only when the cosmopolitan confrontations of city living exposed the relativity of the myths men once thought were unquestionable."<sup>33</sup> He equates the rise of secularization with the rise of urbanization and encourages the church to embrace secularization. This may play into Conn's assessment that contemporary evangelicalism is a "white religious phenomenon." Many evangelicals have totally secularized the city. Cox writes, "the effort to force secular and political movements of our time to be "religious" so that we can feel justified in clinging to our religion is, in the end, a losing battle. Secularization rolls on, and if we are to understand it and communicate with our present age we must learn to love it in its unremitting secularity."<sup>34</sup> For evangelicals, this further cemented the picture of the city as purely secular.

But is the city any more immoral than America's rural areas? The answer is yes and no. The city offers a greater concentration of people in a localized geographic area. Therefore, one is confronted more with issues of crime, lifestyle

---

<sup>32</sup> Daniel Callahan, *The Secular City Debate* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 2

<sup>33</sup> Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective*. (New York: MacMillan Company, 1965), 1.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 3.

choice, and immorality in a denser environment. But the same issues confront rural and suburban regions as well. The concentration is simply less. This leads Christians to idealize the rural and suburban areas as less immoral than the cities. As McSwain notes:

This aspect of the city often causes revulsion for Christian persons who see the city as an alien place. "How can one live there and maintain faithfulness to God?" is often asked. Caution should be exercised here, for the same kinds of behavior can be found in almost any community. It is more visible in the city because similarly minded people get together to create a large effect. The more this occurs, the more the city becomes a magnet to draw such persons from towns and communities to participate in the sub-culture.<sup>35</sup>

The corruption of sin reaches the heart of the suburbs to the same extent as it reaches the heart of the city. The corruption is simply obscured more due to a lesser concentration of people. As Tim Keller wrote, "the city, then, has a powerful magnifying glass effect. Since God invented it as a 'cultural mine,' it brings out whatever is in the human heart. Why? The density and therefore diversity of the city brings out the best (and the worst) in the human heart."<sup>36</sup>

Fear has driven many away. Christians fear the influence *of* the city and they fear their influence *in* the city. "The majority of Christians just stay away in fear their own faith may not be adequate to effect meaningful change in the lives of those who do not live by the codes of conventional moral behavior<sup>37</sup>." Sadly, American Christians largely have left the cities. Ray Bakke, a writer, missions director, and resident of Chicago, laments the flight, "I read *The Secular City*, by Harvey Cox, when it was first published in 1965. While it was wonderfully informative, it was far too

---

<sup>35</sup> McSwain, "Understanding Life in the City", 13.

<sup>36</sup> Keller, "A Biblical Theology of the City" 2.

<sup>37</sup> McSwain, "Understanding Life in the City", 13.

optimistic for the city I was experiencing. Not only was my city on fire, but the evangelicals I knew were fleeing the city in droves. It was called the “white fright, white flight” syndrome. These were my people, the ones who had the “right view” of inspired, inerrant Scriptures, the “right view” of missions – the ones who believed “greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.” They fled!<sup>38</sup>

### What has been lost?

Conn and Ortiz define the city as “a relatively large, dense and socially heterogeneous center of integrative social power, capable of preserving, changing and interpreting human culture both for and against God’s divine purpose.”<sup>39</sup> Inherent in this definition is the sense that, due to its “integrative” and “heterogenous” make up, the city by nature simultaneously represents the best and the worst of humanity. Larry McSwain in his article, *Understanding Life in the City: Context for Christian Ministry*, speaks of the city as both attractive and repulsive.<sup>40</sup> He sees this tension in Nathaniel Hawthorne when he wrote that “whatever had been my taste for solitude and natural scenery, yet the thick, foggy, stifled elements in the cities, the entangled life of so many men together, sordid as it was, and empty of the beautiful, took quite a strenuous hold upon my mind. I felt as if there could never be enough of it.”<sup>41</sup> McSwain adds his own thoughts:

There is in the city the dwelling of the ugly. One can find in it the craters of houses bombed by arsonists at work for insurance benefits and row upon row of slum quarters housing forgotten elderly and poor. “Here is skid-row where the winos line the streets and the highest rates of violence are

---

<sup>38</sup> Ray Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 20-21.

<sup>39</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 233.

<sup>40</sup> McSwain, “Understanding Life in the City.” 6.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 6.

recorded by the police,” intones the tour-guide director as the bus weaves through the Bowery in New York City, Madison Street in Chicago, or Little Havana in Miami. Yet in the same city are the residences of the beautiful. The finest cultural centers housing the world’s collections of art, architecture, ballet, history, opera, and symphony are found within its parameters. Luxurious townhouses, refurbished brownstones, exclusive apartments, and mansions of splendor provide living quarter for the rich and powerful.

The city is an expression of both affluence and poverty. Side by side stand opportunity and oppression. It is the seat of our world’s greatest expression of culture and its greatest expression of injustice.

What has the church lost by its departure from the city? If the church continues to disengage from an ever-increasing culture of urbanization, what will the future hold for it? If the church continues to focus on rural society, what will happen to its place in the culture? What has been lost and what will be lost?

We live in an ever-increasing urbanized world. Raymond Bakke notes that “in 1900 about 8 percent of the world’s population lived in sizable cities. Today over 50 percent of this earth – over three billion people-lives in world-class cities<sup>42</sup>” and that number is growing. “It was predicted by Rafael Salas that by the end of the twentieth century the world would experience radical and overwhelming change, with the majority of people living in urban centers, primarily in the cities of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Harvey Cox goes further when he says, “Future historians will record the twentieth century as that century in which the whole world became one immense city.<sup>43</sup>” The trajectory of our world is moving in more of an urban direction. If the church continues to reject ministry to urban centers, they will miss out on unprecedented opportunities to influence our world for the Gospel.

---

<sup>42</sup> Conn, *Urban Face of Mission*, 33.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 43.

We live in an ever-increasing urbanized world and those urban centers are becoming increasingly multi-cultural and multi-ethnic. “The city is the place of human diversity<sup>44</sup>.” Various nationalities settle in distinct regions within the city. “Global city centers are complex salad bowls of all worldviews<sup>45</sup>.” Dozens of languages and cultural distinctives are represented and celebrated in our cities. “Today’s America is a multi-ethnic society on a scale that boggles the imagination. The teeming multitudes of all colors, languages, smells, and cultures are not just a quaint sideline in our nation. They are America<sup>46</sup>.” If American churches plot their trajectory according to McGavaran’s HUP, the church will miss out on the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nature of the Gospel. Due to the cacophony of various religions, culture, and ethnic realities in the city, it leads urbanites to a greater openness to new religious and cultural ideas. Tim Keller, speaking of the openness of the city, writes:

In the village little changes and people live in very stable environments. Thus they are suspicious of any major change. Because of the diversity and intensity of the cities, urbanites are much more open to radically new ideas – like the gospel! Because they are surrounded by so many people like and unlike themselves, and so much more mobile and subject to change, urbanites are far more open to change/conversion than any other kind of resident. They may have moved to the city out of a searching restlessness. But even if not, once they get to the city, the pressure and diversity makes even the most traditional and hostile people open to the gospel<sup>47</sup>.

---

<sup>44</sup> McSwain. “Understanding Life in the City”, 15.

<sup>45</sup> Tim Keller, “Our New Global Culture: Ministry in Urban Centers.” *Redeemer City to City*, [http://redeemercitytocity.com/library.jsp?Library\\_item\\_param=469](http://redeemercitytocity.com/library.jsp?Library_item_param=469), (accessed October 2010), 2.

<sup>46</sup> Van Engen, “The Complementarity of Universality and Particularity in God’s Mission” 5.

<sup>47</sup> Keller, “Our New Global Culture”, 3.

The church has feared the influence of the city, yet, in doing so, they have neglected a field that expresses a greater openness toward the Gospel than the suburbs. “For many churches the diversity of the city is a barrier to the universal witness and ministry in the name of Christ. But to allow any geographic, social, cultural, or economic barrier to hinder the church in this mission is to be less than the church of Jesus the Lord of all<sup>48</sup>.” The kingdom of God transcends cultural, ethnic, and racial barriers. The Gospel fullness extends to every culture and language. The people of God experience this fullness when they are exposed to the faith within the context of other cultures. “Many people hate cities because of the diversity of the cultures, people ‘not like us’, but we see that God enjoys and wills the diversity of cultures as bringing forth the richness of his creation. Christians should rejoice and enjoy diversity of cultures, recognizing that they all stand judged by God’s Word<sup>49</sup>.” The same God is reflected differently in different cultures. For churches to limit themselves to one ethnic, racial, or cultural group is to limit their exposure to the fullness of the kingdom of God.

The urban centers of our world have always been and will continue to be the shapers of culture. “Cities draw together human talent and resources and tap the human potential for cultural development as nothing else does<sup>50</sup>.” Those living in urban centers participate in the formulation of cultures. Meeks, writing about the first century culture, says, “The city, then, was the place where the new civilization could be experienced, where novelties would first be encountered. It was the place

---

<sup>48</sup> McSwain. “Understanding Life in the City”, 19.

<sup>49</sup> Keller, “Our New Global Culture,” 4.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 1.

where, if anywhere, change could be met and sought out. It was place where the empire was, and where the future began. To become a city dweller meant to be caught up in a movement.<sup>51</sup> It was within this cultural milieu that Christianity first exploded onto the map. The same is true today. If Christians truly want to shape culture, they must be present in the source of today's cultural shaping.

Our cities also offer the greatest populations of the poor and oppressed suffering under the injustices of a corrupt society. Gornik writes, "inner city neighborhoods are a focal point of urban suffering and exclusion, and everyone who lives in the inner city knows firsthand the struggle for survival<sup>52</sup>." He later adds:

Urban schools are widely failing, the health care system is not open or working for the poor or uninsured, and most young people still face a future of jobs flipping hamburgers and stocking shelves. Much more remains to be done, though a number of churches are involved in their communities, too many are disengaged. This is the other side of the parable of the Good Samaritan, the passing by (Luke 10:31-32)<sup>53</sup>.

God has always called his people to have concern for the poor and oppressed in their midst. The cities offer greater opportunities to follow God's call to work against the pillars of injustice in our society. In Isaiah 58, God confronts the nation of Israel for a religiosity that neglects the poor and oppressed in their midst. In v. 6 and following Isaiah reads, "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn

---

<sup>51</sup> Wayne Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 16.

<sup>52</sup> Gornik, *To Live in Peace*, 3.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

away from your own flesh and blood?” Verse 8 says what happens when God’s people care for the poor and oppressed in their midst, “Then your light will break forth like the dawn.” Christ himself said that the poor will always be with us. “One of the requirements of biblical faith is to name such wrongdoing as injustice and in so doing take account of its urban character<sup>54</sup>.” Will the suburban church simply pass by these opportunities to work for peace and justice?

Much has been lost. If the church continues to leave the city it will continue to miss the unprecedented opportunities that the city offers. It will have no voice in the changing shape of culture and the open environment for the Gospel. It will miss the opportunity to care for the areas that have become the centers for poverty and oppression.

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. 51.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE CITY**

Is God for or against the city? Do the Scriptures speak of a Christian's role in the city? Do the Old and New Testaments have an urban focus or are they simply ambivalent?

Though the Scriptures do not speak overtly about a Biblical approach to the city, biblically and theologically it is clear that God has a specific design for the city. The city has been part of God's redemptive plan through both the Old and New Testaments. The plan started through the cultural mandate in the garden. It can be traced throughout the gradual unfolding of God's redemptive plan and revelation throughout history. That plan continues today and will ultimately find culmination in the New Heavens and the New Earth.

#### The Old Testament Concern for the City

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1)." Genesis 1:26 and 27 tells us that "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let him rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the

ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Genesis tells us here that man, created in the image of God, was designed to rule and have dominion over the creation.

God reinforces this design and expands it in Genesis 1:28 in what theologians have named the cultural mandate. “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves in it.’” Adam and Eve are commanded by God to rule the creation, but also to be the builders of culture, to increase in number, and to set the trajectory of this new culture. As Ortiz and Conn note, “God calls Adam and Eve and their future descendants to rule the earth and subdue it (Gen. 1:28). As mentioned above, this calling has been aptly termed the cultural mandate. It is a calling to ‘image God’s work in the world by taking up our work in the world (Spykman 1192:256).’ But it could just as easily been called an urban mandate<sup>55</sup>.” God is calling Adam and Eve to build cities and be the formers and shapers of a culture centered on God.

Genesis 2:8-10a tells us, “Now the Lord had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground – trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river watering the garden flowed from Eden.” God immediately places Adam and Even in a garden, a traditionally rural setting. God commands them to care for the Garden, “to work it and care for it. (Genesis 2:15)” Is God’s design, as

---

<sup>55</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 87.

some have suggested, a distinctively “rural” design? After all, the history of creation and redemption begins in a garden. Did God create the Garden and, the Satan create the city? Are the cities a result of Adam and Eve’s banishment from the Garden and if so, by nature, part of the curse? After all, the founding of the first city and the first mention of city in Genesis 4:17 are in response to Cain’s sin against Abel. “Cain is introduced as a city builder.<sup>56</sup>” Is the formulation of the city a result of the Fall or was it part of God’s design before the Fall?

The answer lies in the nature of the cultural mandate. “It will be accomplished through more than farming or husbandry; the founding of the first city will be one of the first achievements of this enduring mandate to expand the borders of the garden (Gen. 4:17). The future of humankind outside the garden was destined to play out in the cities.<sup>57</sup>” The cultural mandate is not purely urban, it includes expanding extensively throughout the wilderness and rural settings, but it cannot be denied that the population intensity of cities is an integral part of the mandate. Meredith Kline notes:

The couple in the garden was to multiply, so providing the citizens of the city. Their cultivation of the earth’s resources as they extend their control over their territorial environment through the fabrication of sheltering structures would produce the physical architecture of the city. And the authority structure of the human family engaged in the cultural process would constitute the centralized government by which the life and functioning of the city would be organized, under God<sup>58</sup>.

There is here both an expansive (“cultivation of the environment”) and a concentrated element (city building). Of course, the Fall changed the trajectory of

---

<sup>56</sup> Niels – Erik Andreasen,, “Town and Country in the Old Testament” *Encounter*, 42 no. 3 (Summer 1981) 262.

<sup>57</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*. 87.

<sup>58</sup> Idid. 87.

culture, and specifically the city and city life. But according to the cultural mandate, God's design for creation had an urban, cultural-shaping dimension before the Fall. As plays out later in the Old Testament, "Despite sin's radical distortion of God's urban purposes, the city remains a mark of grace as well as rebellion, a mark of preserving, conserving grace shared with all under the shadow of the common curse. Urban life, though fallen, is still more than merely livable.<sup>59</sup>" Keller writes,

The city is not to be regarded as an evil invention of ungodly fallen man. The ultimate goal set before humanity at the very beginning was that human-culture should take city-form... there should be an urban structuring of human historical existence. The cultural mandate given at creation was a mandate to build the city. The city was to form (out of obedience to the "cultural mandate") from the Garden, with the Garden at its center. Now, after the fall the city is still a benefit, serving mankind as refuge from the howling wilderness condition into which the fallen human race, exiled from paradise, has been driven.<sup>60</sup>

Gornick adds, "Cities are not a divine afterthought but are part of the original potential of creation, urban stewardship that increases flourishing in the urban environment is a covenant responsibility.<sup>61</sup>" The flourishing of cities was part of God's cultural plan and considered a responsibility of God's covenant people.

For Cain, the founding of the city provided protection and stability. The founding was a result of his sin against his brother, but it was also part of God's grace extended to Cain. Old Testament cities provided shelter and protection. "In the world of the ancient Near East what made a city (as opposed to a village) was its

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 87.

<sup>60</sup> Keller, "A Biblical Theology of the City", 1.

<sup>61</sup> Gornick, *To Live in Peace*, 130.

role as a fortified guardian.<sup>62</sup> This was God’s protection of Cain and his family, a grace in the moment of rebellion.

The next mention of city in the Old Testament is in the context of the Babel narrative in Genesis 11. The narrative of the Tower of Babel has been used by scholars and theologians to condemn the city, but is that what the narrative is really communicating? The peoples of the world, under one language, had gathered together on the plain of Shinar. “Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the earth.’ But the Lord came down to the city and the tower that the men were building (11:3-5).” God then confused the language of the people, fragmenting them into different cultural and people groups, “and they stopped building the city(11:8).” Is God’s disturbing introduction of different languages intended to condemn cities and the building of the cities?

The men of Babel pulled together collectively to build a city with a great tower. Even in God’s eyes, they were accomplishing much. Cities have that effect. They have the power of “drawing together of resources, strength, and talent.<sup>63</sup>” “Cities draw together human talent and resources and tap the human potential for cultural development as nothing else does.<sup>64</sup>” Is God condemning the collective resources of cities for protection and cultural development and in so doing, condemning the city itself?

---

<sup>62</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*,83.

<sup>63</sup> Keller, “A Biblical Theology of the City”, 1.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 1.

God's intervention alone acknowledges the powerful resources of the city. But the text suggests that God's condemnation concerns the hubris of the people rather than the creation of the city. "According to G. von Rad, the city builders offended against God by arrogance (hubris), by pitting themselves and their skills against God's power and will.<sup>65</sup>" Keller notes the pride of the people at Babel:

The Babel-builders specifically sought to build a city that would gather people for their own glory. In any case, the result of the sin of Babel is confusion. People cannot communicate. Any human effort at unity based on common defiance of God resulted in fragmentation and greater disunity. So today, cities built on human defiance of God and for 'making a name' for the human builders find enormous strife and confusion and violence between diverse groups.<sup>66</sup>

But inherent in this discussion is the self-reliance commonplace in wealthier urbanites. Most cities have pockets of extreme wealth inhabited by the upper class, the dominant culture of the city. The self-reliant pride present in the Babel narrative is common in the wealthier sections of America's cities. They desire to be their own gods and feel they have the means to achieve it.

Many have also suggested that the diversity resulting from Babel was part of God's design from the beginning. "Many scholars believe that, since Genesis 9 and 10 indicates God wanted human spread and cultural differentiation, Babel may have actually been built in resistance to cultural diversity.<sup>67</sup>" "Kreutzer (2003), in a helpful recent treatment of the subject, argues cogently that, over time, geographical separation of human beings naturally results in cultural-linguistic diversity, a

---

<sup>65</sup> Andreason, "Town and Country in the Old Testament", 265

<sup>66</sup> Keller, "A Biblical Theology of the City", 4.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 4.

diversity which was intended by God from the beginning.<sup>68</sup> God's design for Babel was the diversity of human culture. It is a commentary on the hubris of men, but in no way suggests that God is against the city. It may do just the opposite. God celebrates the diversity of his people and the cities contain the greatest centers of diversity in our world.

Genesis 13,14, 18, and 19 speak of Sodom and Gomorrah, cities known for their rampant immorality. Chapters 18 and 19 record the destruction of the cities even after persistent intercession on their behalf by Abraham. Lot is negatively influenced by his presence in the city. These cities underline the great potential cities have for collective immorality and rebellion against God. It reminds readers the cities can offer both the best and worst of humanity.

Cain built the first city for his protection and safety. As mentioned above, ancient Near Eastern cities were fortresses protecting their inhabitants from the dangers of the wilderness. The nation of Israel was gifted six cities by God throughout the conquered territory that were to be "Cities of Refuge" (Numbers 35, Joshua 20). They were cities "to which a person who has killed someone may flee (Numbers 35:6)." Individuals who fled to these cities would receive a just trial. "The cities of refuge were to be symbols of life, not death, of divine protection rather than self protection. They were to be the urban first-fruits of the redemption of the divine kinsman (Job 19:25; Is. 41:14; 44:21-22) and a preview of 'the glory of the heavenly

---

<sup>68</sup> Samuel Larsen, "A Christocentric Understanding of Linguistic Diversity: Implications for Missions in a Pluralistic Era" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Missiological Society and the Independent Foreign Missions Association, Orlando, FL, September 25-27,2003), 6.

Jerusalem, when the murderer's place of exile will become the place of refuge for all the pardoned.'<sup>69</sup>"

The book of Jonah contrasts God's care for the city of Nineveh and Jonah's revulsion towards it. "The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. (Jonah 1:1-3a)." Both Jonah and God recognized the wickedness of the city. God's desire was for Jonah to engage the brokenness of the city with words of repentance. Jonah ran. Even after Jonah's reluctant obedience, God confronts Jonah in chapter 4 for his lack of concern and compassion for the city. God brings him out of the city. Overlooking the city, with its 120,000 inhabitants, God confronts Jonah's lack of compassion. This event foreshadows an event in Matthew 9, where Jesus "went through all the towns and villages, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:35-36)."

The people of the nation of Israel, though nomadic for 40 years due to their rebellion, always were fixed on the permanent cities of the Promised Land. These cities include the six cities of refuge as well as forty-two cities that were to be gifted to the Levites. Their protracted nomadic existence was a consequence of their criminal forgetfulness and rebellion, never the final goal for the nation or God's ultimate design.

---

<sup>69</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 89.

The later Old Testament, from the monarchical period through the inter-testamental period, set up a contrast between Jerusalem, the city of God, and Babylon, the city of man. The motif is finally settled in Babylon's destruction in Revelation.

The city of Jerusalem "would exemplify the glory of this geocentric universalism. In Jerusalem, the Sovereign Lord chose to erect his temple house (2 Samuel 7). Here on the mountain citadel of Zion, God would dwell (Ps. 74:2). And here the dynastic house of David would fulfill its task as the royal covenant caretaker (2 Sam. 7:11-16). The perfections of beauty (Ps. 48:2; 50:2; Ezek 16:14), the security of peace (Is 2:2-4) and unity (Ps 122:6-9, 133) were typified in Jerusalem.<sup>70</sup>" It was to be the centralized dwelling of God in the midst of His people. It was to be ruled by the Law of God. This city was to be ruled by the divine king and was to be the "joy of the whole earth" (Psalm 48:2) and the "highest joy" (Psalm 137:6). "Jerusalem stood as a covenant testimony to the cities of the world of the unity and peace of God (Psalm 122:6-9).<sup>71</sup>"

Babylon, in contrast, is "doomed for destruction" (Psalm 137:8). It was committed to Baal-worship, immorality, and self-reliance. If Jerusalem highlighted the best of God's design for the city, Babylon represented the heights of man's autonomous rebellion against God. Conn and Ortiz write:

Hundreds of years after its early history, Babel the city had become Babylon the urban empire. The independent city had become a conquering political network of urban centers. Its long succession of rulers had carried out a policy of deliberate urbanization. Throughout the territories, cities had

---

<sup>70</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 106.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 106.

become for Babylonians the instrument of administration and defense, and for their subjugated peoples the symbols of oppression and lost hopes.<sup>72</sup>

Babylon conquered, subjugated, and oppressed nations. It was the seat of divine rebellion and immorality.

Instead of subjugation and oppression, the city of Jerusalem and the nation were to be about peace and justice. Guided by the Torah, they were to care for the poor and the oppressed in their midst. “Over against an urban world where justice and righteousness could mean oppression and disregard for the poor, *hesed* love forbade taking advantage of others in the name of the law (Mt. 23:23). In God’s new social order it was not simply justice that must be maintained; it was love and justice (Hos 12:6). Yahweh’s delight was “kindness, justice and righteousness on earth” (Jer 9:24; Is 16:5).<sup>73</sup> There was to be no poor amongst Israel (Deut 15:4) and no injustice. “Poverty and oppression were also enemies to overcome in the mission of this new community.<sup>74</sup>”

But Israel and Jerusalem forgot the Torah and adopted the paradigm of Babylon. They no longer heard the cries of the weak, poor, and oppressed. Isaiah 58 records a national fast in Israel, yet the people grow weary of what they perceive is God’s lack of response. God condemns their fast as empty. They have forsaken obedience to the Torah. God responds in verses 6 and 7 with a description of the fast that He desires. “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 101.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 98.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. 99.

with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?” Yet, Israel continued to abandon the Torah and adopt the oppressive paradigm of Babylon.

Then the unthinkable happened. The prophet Isaiah informed Hezekiah, “The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon, nothing will be left, says the Lord (Isaiah 39:6).” The time had come. The city of God was besieged by the city of Satan. “At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem and laid siege to it, and Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city while his officers were besieging it (2 Kings 24:10-11).” Babylon conquered Jerusalem and the people of Israel and Judah were carried into exile. The nation mourned over Jerusalem’s destruction hoping that God would restore its beautiful walls, clinging to God’s promise that He will preserve the throne of David.

But they were still to express concern for the city God had carried them into. Jeremiah 29:7 reads, “Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” God’s concern for the city is not localized to Jerusalem, the city of God, but to all cities in which God’s people find themselves. They were to be about the cultural mandate in whatever context God carried them into. The people of God were to cling to hope of the restoration of the city of God, yet work for the good of Babylon. Their hope was a physical resurrection of Jerusalem out of the ruins. That was part of God’s plan, but He had something even greater in mind.

Nehemiah, while in exile, clung to the restoration of Jerusalem, the city of God. He became God's agent to bring about the restoration of Jerusalem. "Nehemiah, feeling this shame, pleads, 'Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace' (Neh. 2:17)<sup>75</sup>." Nehemiah repented of his people's rebellion and sought the reestablishment of their urban pace. "Nehemiah sought a solution to the crisis in the city not through personal industry or technical prowess but in the presence of an engaged and faithful God.<sup>76</sup>" Nehemiah's prayers are answered and his efforts are accomplished. "With the walls of the city rebuilt, God's peace for the city had become a greater reality.<sup>77</sup>" Jerusalem is restored. "The Bible unashamedly uses the renewal of the city as a symbol of redemption.<sup>78</sup>" Yet there is a sense that Nehemiah's work is unfinished:

Under Nehemiah's guidance, the people of Jerusalem rebuild their city; that story helps all their dispersed sons and daughters (Acts 1:8; Gal. 3:29) to see and experience new urban possibilities. In one sense, Nehemiah is an unfinished story, with chapters still to be written as long as our struggling neighborhoods do not know the full resolve of God's peace.<sup>79</sup>

That redemption and its impact on the city comes to greater and ultimate fruition in the New Testament.

### The New Testament Concern for the City

God's redemption comes in Christ. The restoration and rebuilding of Zion (Jerusalem) is embodied in the re-establishment of the throne of David. As Ortiz and Conn wrote:

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 92.

<sup>76</sup> Gornik, *To Live in Peace*, 135.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 145.

<sup>78</sup> Andreasen, "Town and Country in the Old Testament", 275.

<sup>79</sup> Gornik, *To Live in Peace*, 148.

Above all else, one feature transforms this description of urban renewal. At its heart will be the coming of David's greater son, the Messiah. The Spirit of the sovereign Lord will rest upon him, and the ancient ruins will be rebuilt, the places long devastated will be repaired; "they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations" (Is. 61:1,4). With his coming the tent of childless Zion will be filled with her descendents, who "will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities (Is. 54:1-3; cf. Amos 9:12; Acts 15:17).<sup>80</sup>

God's plan for the city and urban renewal is wrapped up in the redemptive and rebuilding work of Christ.

Does the New Testament reinforce the Old Testament's concern for the city?

Does Christ express an urban dimension in his ministry and missionary call to his followers? Does the early church reflect a compassion and burden for the urban centers for the ancient world?

When the New Testament opens, Jerusalem is occupied and governed by Rome. The Hellenistic movement that swept the world during the Intertestamental Period brought a greater urbanization, setting the stage for the Roman Empire. "The cities of the Mediterranean world were at the leading edge of the great political and social changes that occurred during the six and a half centuries from Alexander to Constantine.<sup>81</sup>" As Conn and Ortiz note, concerning Rome's use of the city to build its empire:

That pattern is stamped on the urban background of the New Testament. To solidify conquests and advance Greek influence, Alexander and his successors had build new urban settlements and rebuilt existing ones. He himself was reputed to have established seventy such cities. In the centuries that followed, Hellenization became closely linked to urbanization. Cities became local administrative communities within the colonial system. Following Greek practice, they were permitted to retain their changing

---

<sup>80</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 114.

<sup>81</sup> Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, 11.

cultural identity and keep, within limits, a strong measure of political autonomy.<sup>82</sup>

It is within this context that the redemptive work of Christ takes shape. The cultural identity of Israel was maintained, yet the nation was under the political thumb of the Roman Empire. “Into this urban world came Jesus of Nazareth. And with his coming came the inauguration of God’s urban renewal plan.<sup>83</sup>” Some have argued that Christ was a man of the country, yet the region in which Christ’s ministry took place was one of the most densely populated regions of the time.<sup>84</sup> Even the “rural” regions, in which Christ ministered were densely populated. Josephus in *War of the Jews* wrote, “The cities lie very thick and the very many villages that are here are everywhere so full of people by the richness of their soil that the very least of them contained about 15,000 inhabitants.<sup>85</sup>”

The Gospel writers and the writers of the New Testament emphasize the city in various ways. Luke, in his Gospel and the book of Acts, represents the greatest emphasis on the city. “The word *polis* occurs about 160 times in the New Testament. And half of these occurrences are found in the Lucan writings.<sup>86</sup>” Cadbury notes, “Luke seems to think it worth while to note the city as the scene or scope of what he has to tell, even when he has made no mention of the city by name.<sup>87</sup>”

---

<sup>82</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 119.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 122.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 120.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. 121.

<sup>86</sup> Harvie Conn, “Lucan Perspectives on the City,” *Missiology* 13 (1985), 409.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. 413.

The setting of Christ's redemptive work was in Jerusalem. During Christ's ministry period, there is a sense in which his gaze was toward the city and the work of redemption that would be accomplished there. As Conn notes:

The centerpiece of gospel attention, however, remains the mission of Christ, oriented uniquely by Luke toward Jerusalem, the city of the great King (Luke 9:41; 22:10; 23:19; 24:49), and Jesus' urban pilgrimage toward his atoning death and resurrection (DeRidder 1975: 128-200). Jesus is called to the city for the fullness of his mission, and Luke's Gospel takes on the appearance of an extended processional toward the city as its messianic goal.<sup>88</sup>

Luke 9:51 reads, "As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem." "As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it (Luke 19:14)." Christ experiences arrest, trial, and beating in Jerusalem. He is then, as foretold in Luke 13:33, removed from the city to face execution.

Hebrews 13:12 reads, "And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood." Just as Adam was cast from the garden as a result of his sin, the second Adam was cast from the city to make atonement for sin.

Luke continues his emphasis on the city in the book of Acts, underscoring the urban environment in which the Apostle Paul ministered and in which the early church grew. Jerusalem continues to be the focal point. "Another important bridge between the two volumes and their urban interest is the function of Jerusalem as "a sort of geographical sign-post" (Maddox 1982:10). As in the Gospel, the book of Acts invests theological significance to the city. Jerusalem, the place of resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost, becomes the starting point and measuring stick for all apostolic ventures.<sup>89</sup>" Acts 1:8, the great missionary imperative, has its starting

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 414.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 417.

point in Jerusalem as the base for an urban mission movement, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The Old Testament concern for the poor and oppressed in your midst is re-established in the early church (Acts 4:32-35; 6:1-4).

The book of Acts, with its emphasis on the missionary endeavors of Paul to the urban centers of the ancient world, parallels Christ’s ministry. Just as Christ’s gaze was always toward Jerusalem, Paul’s gaze was towards Rome<sup>90</sup>. “For Luke, the coming of Paul to Rome signals and symbolizes the entrance of Rome into the role of focal center of the church and missionary home base of its gospel outreach. The center of the church is no longer Jerusalem; it now moves to Rome (Filson 1970:15)<sup>91</sup>.” Paul throughout his missionary tours, focused on the urban centers of the ancient world. After all, “the cities were where power was. They were also the places where changes would occur.<sup>92</sup>” “The mission of the Pauline circle was conceived from start to finish as an urban movement.<sup>93</sup>” He was a man of the city bringing the redemption message of Christ to the centers of ancient culture. As Meeks notes, Paul and his ministry was “entirely urban.” “In that respect it stood on the growing edge of the Christian movement, for it was in the cities of the Roman Empire that Christianity, though born in the village culture of Palestine, had its greatest successes until well after the time of Constantine.<sup>94</sup>”

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.419.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 418.

<sup>92</sup> Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 15.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 8.

Even outside of Paul, the church had a distinctly urban emphasis to it. Conn and Ortiz write:

The Roman Empire before and after Paul's day decried the urban life and romanticized the rural way of life (Lowenstein 1965). But that seems remote from the pages of the New Testament and its picture of the church. Even the term *ekklesia* – a word we translate as “church” – had an urban ring in the days of the empire.<sup>95</sup>

The bulk of New Testament epistles are written to cities where the gospel had flourished and taken root, giving birth to vibrant new churches. “Paul sees the church in the city as a railway station, not an exhibition hall. By both word and deed the gospel was spread to Jew and Gentile from those communication centers<sup>96</sup>.” This also becomes a period in which diversity characterizes the church in ways never before. The missionary focus switched from Jerusalem to Rome, expressing broadness to God's kingdom not embraced before. Gentiles of every nation were following Christ. “The Spirit's work at Pentecost opened the flood gates for all languages and tongues to hear the Gospel. Antioch of Syria, a commercial center in the Roman Empire and a citadel of Greco-Roman culture, becomes the urban entry point for Christianity into the Gentile world<sup>97</sup>.” The diversity and extent of the kingdom of God was being experienced in the urban context.

We've seen how the urban environment was part of God's design at the beginning of creation and throughout the unfolding of God's redemptive history. But the New Testament concern for the city extends to the consummation of God's

---

<sup>95</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 132.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 145.

redemptive plan as well. Christ brought about the kingdom of God; however, that kingdom has not yet been fully realized.

The Old Testament prophets spoke of a city whose foundations would never be destroyed. It is said of Abraham in Hebrews 11:10, “for he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” Believers of God throughout the Old and New Testament have longed “for a better country – a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them (Hebrews 11:16).” It is a city where God dwelt (Hebrews 12:22) and his people live with him experiencing peace and shelter. It has yet to come (Hebrews 13:14). It is the city of the living God (Hebrews 12:22). This city is partially realized in the church, inaugurated by Christ, but will be fully realized in His second coming.

Revelation continues the motif of Jerusalem, the city of God, in opposition to Babylon, the city of Satan. Revelation 16,17,18 record the destruction of the city of Babylon, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries (Revelation 18:2-3).” The city of Babylon will never return (Revelation 18:21).

The New Jerusalem, the city of God (Revelation 3:12) will endure and be established forever. In Revelation 21, John records his vision of the Holy City, “coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband (21:2). It is a city in which God will dwell with his people (21:3; 21:23; 22:3). In the city is a garden with the tree of life (22:1-2). The image of the Garden of

Eden is restored. Cities were to flow from the Garden. In the end, there will be one city, the New Jerusalem, with the Garden at the center.

The Scriptures testify that God's design for humanity is an urban design. His people are to live in community, influencing the city with the Gospel. Our ultimate destiny is the city of God, the New Jerusalem, where perfect peace will be established.

## A Theological Framework for Urban Mission

It is clear from the above Biblical survey that the kingdom of God has a distinctive urban focus. Therefore, God's people are to share his heart for the "peace and prosperity of the City." A few additional theological considerations support a believer's calling and commitment to urban mission.

The principle of "incarnational" ministry aids in building a theological framework for urban mission. The premise of "incarnational" ministry is "God with us (Matthew 1:23)." God left the privileges of heaven to become one of us in order to rescue us from sin's oppression. In turn, He calls his people to leave their places of privilege to relieve the oppression of those around them. The cities represent "oppression" in our world more than any other. More will be discussed on the particular implications of "incarnational" ministry in an urban context later in this work.

The city of Ephesus in the first century was centered around the worship of Artemis. It is typical of first century cities and the heterogeneous rise of religious cults associated with cultural trade routes<sup>98</sup>. "Foreign settlers in a city found neighbors from the same country and set up a shrine of their native gods<sup>99</sup>." Each city was a testament to the plurality of idolatry.

The presence of idolatry is no less pronounced in today's cities as it was in the first century world. The shrines may not be there but cities are given to the worship of sex, money, and power. These gods provide no greater satisfaction than does the worship of an ancient shrine. Idolatry is everywhere. Yet, modern

---

<sup>98</sup> Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 18.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

cities become a centralized hub of the plurality of idols and the devotion of idol worship.

The church, just as ancient Israel, is given to idolatry as well. One has to consider whether the idolatry of safety and comfort have prevented suburban Christians from engaging the urban mission field. God called the prophet Jonah to bring the message from the Lord to the city of Nineveh. Nineveh was known for its immorality and violence. Jonah refused the command of God and fled. After all, “Nineveh was the most powerful city in the world, the seat of the Assyrian Empire whose military threatened to overrun Israel and its neighbors. Doing anything that in any way benefited Assyria would have been seen as suicidal for Israel.<sup>100</sup>” Fear for safety, comfort, and racial superiority fueled Jonah’s refusal to go to Nineveh. The entire book traces Jonah’s wrestling with his personal idols as relates to urban engagement. The suburban church would do well to expose and wrestle with the idolatry that keeps it from engaging the city.

Keller speaks of the city as the battleground between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man:

In every earthly city, there are two ‘kingdoms’ present, two ‘cities’ vying for control. They are the city of Baal (or Satan or the god of this world) and the City of God. The city of Satan deifies power and wealth and human culture itself (making art, technology, business as an end in itself instead of a way of glorifying God). The city of God is marked by God shalom (Jeru-shalom) – his peace. His peace is a place where stewardship of God, creation, justice, compassion and righteousness lead to harmony and family building and cultural development under God. Christians are to see the earthly city as something to love and win. They are to win it by seeking its shalom (Jeremiah

---

<sup>100</sup> Timothy Keller, *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope That Matters* (New York: Dutton, 2009), 134.

29) and seeking to spread the city of God within it, and to battle the city of Satan within it.<sup>101</sup>

The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Men can become a theological paradigm in which all the Scriptures can be read. The book of Revelation highlights the conflict between these two cities. It graphically contrasts Babylon, the “harlot city (Revelation 17)” with Zion, the city of God. Augustine popularized this concept in his work *The City of God*. Keller adds, “We are to see that, though the fight between these two kingdoms happens everywhere in the world, earthly cities are the flashpoints on the battle lines, the places where the fighting is most intense, where the war can be won.<sup>102</sup>” If our cities are such places, or “flashpoints”, it makes it all the more critical that God’s people are present working for the peace of the city.

---

<sup>101</sup> Keller, “A Biblical Theology of the City”, 5.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

## CHAPTER 4

### UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH'S RETURN TO THE CITY

God's plan of redemptive history outlined throughout Scripture has a distinctive urban focus. Yet, that focus has been lost by evangelicalism. As Conn notes:

For its first three hundred years beyond the coming of Christ, the church saw cities as gifts of God, royal routes to the evangelization of the world. Now the picture is not so bright. In the Western world the church moves to the outer edges of the city, fearful of what it perceives as emerging urban patterns. In the worlds of Africa, Asia and Latin America the cities expand as the population flows toward them, but with notable exceptions, the church feels overwhelmed and moves only slowly to face urban challenges.<sup>103</sup>

The church has largely abandoned the city. As with anything, there are exceptions. Pockets of evangelicalism are beginning to forsake the idols that get in the way of urban ministry. A re-engagement is possible and is happening. But for the suburban church that recovers a heart for the city, what does re-engagement entail?

#### One Suburban Church's Return to the City

In 1894, when those six ladies gathered above a dry cleaner's on Walbrook Avenue, they could never have dreamed what God might do. Over 100 years later, Chapelgate Presbyterian Church has gone through many seasons of growth and has become one of the largest Presbyterian churches in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

---

<sup>103</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 79.

Its history has largely been one of flight from the problems of Baltimore City, but God is beginning to change the make-up of the church. Chapelgate is recovering a heart for Baltimore City.

In 2006, Chapelgate began discussing what God may be calling them to do in response to the needs of the city of Baltimore and in response to the Biblical imperative to care for the poor and oppressed around them. Returning to Walbrook Avenue was not a possibility. The Walbrook community had changed and Chapelgate had changed. The church's home was the suburbs and it has a suburban identity. But it has chosen to no longer ignore the cries of the city.

Shortly after those discussions began, a ministry at Chapelgate called "Serve Greater Baltimore" was formed. The mission of Serve Greater Baltimore was simply to help re-engage the members of Chapelgate with a heart for the city and encourage them to consider what God may be calling them to do in response to the needs of the city. They believed that deeds of service done in the name of Christ gave tangible witness to the healing Truth of the Gospel. Without anyone realizing it, something big was being born in their midst.

Over the past 4 years, Serve Greater Baltimore has grown beyond just Chapelgate. Its mission is to mobilize volunteers to embody "kindness, mercy and grace to those in need in Baltimore City." Their mission is based on the core principle that Christ brings healing, renewal, and peace to the marginalized in society. Practically, Serve Greater Baltimore mobilizes volunteers to serve in ministry partnerships throughout Baltimore City. Currently, the ministry has 10-15 partner ministries throughout Baltimore City, both secular and faith-based. They

partner with battered women's shelters, homeless centers, ministry to at-risk youth, Habitat for Humanity, and park clean-up groups.

Serve Greater Baltimore's mission is not to start new ministries in the city but to support existing ones. They become a connecting point between eager volunteers and existing ministries to the city. Their hope is to facilitate relationships that provide ongoing fruit in the city that lead to the spread of the Gospel in Baltimore through both word and deed.

To begin facilitating those conversations, Serve Greater Baltimore hosts "Serve the City" projects. These are one-day or multiple day projects where a large number of volunteers are mobilized who then disperse throughout the city to various projects sponsored by Serve Greater Baltimore partnerships. They have proved profitable in starting conversations that lead to ongoing relationships and the proclamation of the Gospel. Each one of these "Serve the City" projects has been able to mobilize at least 250 volunteers. Those volunteers are not just from Chapelgate. Seven other suburban churches, with histories similar to Chapelgate, have gotten involved. Without intentionally setting out to do it, Serve Greater Baltimore has become a nexus point for suburban churches to re-engage in ministry to city. But the volunteers do not all serve out of a faith-motivation or a faith-background. Bank branches, student groups, and government officials volunteer. AmeriCorps groups and Job corps groups serve alongside residents of the city and residents of the county. The most recent "Serve the City" project saw a US Congressman and a County Councilman get involved.

The strategic plan for Serve Greater Baltimore is to eventually become it's own non-profit organization that provides not only volunteer support for existing partnerships but financial support through fund-raising and grant writing.

Chapelgate's concern for the city continues to grow. The usual resistance to urban ministry is still evident but God is slowly restoring a concern for the city. For many years, Chapelgate has spoken of planting a church in the area. A church planting committee was formed in 2009 and a location has been identified. It is in Baltimore City. The stated make-up of the church plant will be to focus on mercy and recovery ministries in the City. It will work in lock step with Serve Greater Baltimore as it grows to address the needs of the city and proclaim the message of God's restorative healing in the Gospel.

## CHAPTER 5

### URBAN MISSION FOR THE SUBURBAN CHURCH

#### Prayer for the City

One of the simplest, yet most effective ways a suburban church can reach the city is to pray for it. John Perkins wrote, “God spoke through His spokesman Jeremiah, calling His people who were living in cities dominated by spiritual aberration to ‘seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. *Pray to the Lord for it*, because if it prospers, you too will prosper’ (Jer. 29:7, italics added). Rather than focus on escaping the city, God’s people were to positively affect the quality of life in the city.<sup>104</sup>” They were to seek the peace or “shalom” of the city. “Shalom” had a full meaning for the Israelite nation. “Shalom” means, “a place where stewardship of God, creation, justice, compassion and righteousness lead to harmony and family building and cultural development under God.<sup>105</sup>” Its meaning conjured up images of peace, wealth and prosperity. In Jeremiah, the people were exiled in pagan cities. God called them to pray for the cities, to pray for those around them and work for the good of the city. They were to pray for their captors and seek the benefit of those that forced them into exile.

---

<sup>104</sup> John Fuder, ed. *A Heart for the City: Effective Ministries to the Urban Community* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 174.

<sup>105</sup> Keller, “A Biblical Theology of the City” 5.

A suburban church committed to prayer for the city will pay close attention to the particular issues confronting their city and pray that God would bring healing and prosperity. They will pray for city councils and other elected officials, police departments, city workers, and fire departments. They will uphold churches, communities of faith, and other non-profit organizations that are in the city.

### Training and Raising Up of Urban Leaders

If the history of most suburban churches includes gradual flight from the city, then something must be done to reverse the trend. This may come in the form of thoughtful training and discussion concerning the importance of urban engagement. Perhaps the pattern of urban flight can be reversed by a generation who has recovered a heart for the city.

This may come in the form of education. Suburban Christians can be led to open their ears and eyes to what is happening in our modern cities. Caution and wisdom must be exercised. Perkins wrote:

Affluent Christians may be drawn to work with the poor because they feel guilty about their own abundance. White Christians may be motivated to work among blacks to try to atone for racial injustices. Such volunteers may find themselves so preoccupied with trying to relieve their own guilt that they fail to freely and wholeheartedly express Christ's love to those they are there to serve. While there is a legitimate need to serve, we must be sure that the needs of those we are serving, not our own needs, set the agenda. Otherwise we are not servants, but exploiters.<sup>106</sup>

Suburban Christians must be led in considering their motives for serving our cities.

Perkins is correct in his assessment that guilt is a significant motivator in service.

However, motives are notoriously difficult to judge, even in ourselves. This is where

---

<sup>106</sup> Perkins, *With Justice for All*, 85.

the suburban church must be led in thoughtful and wise avenues of urban engagement. The church must be led in way that its role is service, not exploitation.

The suburban church must also be thoughtful about raising leaders who will commit their lives to the city. Again Perkins writes:

We must raise up leaders, filled with the Spirit of God, who will go back to our ghettos and depressed rural communities and administer healing. Leaders who will forego “the treasures of Egypt” for a season and choose rather to suffer affliction with our own people (see Heb. 11:26). Their leadership cannot be styled after the old leadership nor after the white suburban church. It must be uniquely designed to respond to the specific needs of a people trampled by society.<sup>107</sup>

The suburban church can raise up individuals who will sacrifice the comforts of the suburbs to engage the brokenness of the city. They can be thoughtful about training pastors to plant churches, leaders to found or support existing non-profits, and Christian activists who lobby for the healing of the city. These leaders need to be trained in the ability to think biblically, theologically, sociologically, anthropologically, and culturally about the city.<sup>108</sup>

In *The Urban Face of Mission*, Edna Greenway calls for a change in how seminaries train leaders in urban engagement. She writes, “The seminary world has begun to recognize the importance of preparing men and women for gospel ministry in metropolitan areas of the world.<sup>109</sup>” Yet, she concedes that there is much still to be done to educate and train young leaders to engage the City.

Conn and Ortiz honestly write, “Most guidance available concerning church leadership tacitly assumes a suburban context. Very little is written or taught

---

<sup>107</sup> Perkins, *With Justice for All*, 40.

<sup>108</sup> Fuder, *Heart for the City*, 127-133.

<sup>109</sup> Conn, *Urban Face of Mission*. 241.

concerning leadership that consciously address the urban context.<sup>110</sup> In their educational work at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia and curriculum development in *Urban Ministry* they advocate for careful selection of urban leaders and specific training.

The suburban church can begin to reverse the trend by committing to thoughtful and intentional prayer for the needs, issues, and oppression of the cities in their immediate context. They can also raise up thoughtful and educated leaders who will return to the urban context to minister amongst the “least of these.”

#### Support Mercy Ministries

Every city contains organizations (both Christian and secular) that attempt to bind the wounds of brokenness in America’s cities. These are “front line” organizations that deal day in and day out with the needs of the city. The suburban church can work to support these organizations prayerfully, financially, and through acts of service.

Simple acts of service through existing ministries in the city can help contribute to the renewal of the city and transform the heart of the servant. “Community impact is making a positive difference (physically, emotionally, economically, socially, educationally, spiritually, and so forth) in the lives of people of a specific locale or people group. Serving others is a biblical and powerful way of making a positive difference.<sup>111</sup>” A servant coming from the suburbs is confronted first hand with the needs of the city. Fuder notes, “Because many urban communities tend to be clusters of people with little power and many needs, service provides an

---

<sup>110</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*. 377.

<sup>111</sup> Fuder, ed. *A Heart for the City*, 179.

open door into the lives of people who need Christ. Because the needs are seemingly endless, so too are the ministries that can be developed to serve people.<sup>112</sup>”

Serve Greater Baltimore has intentionally made no efforts to begin new ministries in the city. Their efforts have been to utilize and support existing ministries and Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) that are already doing works of mercy. After all, those organizations best know the needs of the community in which they are located. Suburban churches must intentionally support what is already happening and be cautiously hesitant to start new organizations. It is best that NPOs or new ministries are formed by those committed to and most intimately involved with the needs of the community.

#### Support Inner City Churches

The New Song Community Church is situated in the Sandtown neighborhood of Baltimore. Sandtown is one of the most economically depressed sections of Baltimore. Vast sections of the neighborhood have absentee landlords and are boarded up, becoming hidden hotbeds for the drug and sex trade. New Song started in 1986 with a commitment to not just building a church, but rebuilding a community with the Gospel lived out in word and deed. Mark Gornik, one of New Song’s founders, writes:

Without a holistic faith, there is no gospel in Sandtown. Living out the gospel in this context has meant building a collaborative network of church- and community-based institutions that focus on housing, job development, education, and health care. In 2001, the full-time staff numbered over eighty, of whom more than 75 percent were neighborhood residents. For New Song, seek the *shalom* of Sandtown means a concentrated effort to eliminate vacant and substandard housing, a K-8 school that has high standards and an excellent record of achievement, a job placement center that links over one

---

<sup>112</sup> Fuder, ed. *A Heart for the City*, 180.

hundred residents a year to employment, and a family health center that serves all residents regardless of ability to pay. At the center of all this is a worshipping community.<sup>113</sup>

New Song is an example of the type of church that can greatly benefit from the support of suburban churches in the area. They are a church *in* the city that exists *for* the city. In fact, New Song's history has been to receive significant support, both through finances and volunteers, for the suburban churches in Baltimore.

### Community Development

Suburban churches can renew a sense of concern for the city by supporting urban churches and starting new church plants in the city. Both need to be done with a comprehensive sense of mission and a sensitivity and humility to the needs of the city.

Tom Maluga tells the story of a troubled church on the North Side of Chicago named the Uptown Baptist Church. "The founding pastor, Jim Queen, came into the area screaming with need and began to reach out with compassion. Churches in the suburbs and from across the country linked with Jim and helped start ministries through which people were brought to Christ and became part of the church.<sup>114</sup>" Pastor Queen was able to partner with suburban churches in a way that shared resources in a way that birth and benefit new ministries. The church is now "a catalyst for other churches to be started in the urban context.<sup>115</sup>" This story underscores the fact that suburban churches can have profound influence on the city through supporting inner-city churches and community development

---

<sup>113</sup> Conn, *The Urban Face of Mission*, 194.

<sup>114</sup> Fuder, ed. *A Heart for the City*, 173.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

organizations. It may and is often unlikely that a church can return to the city but, if it has recovered a heart for the city, it can become a source of tremendous support to struggling inner-city congregations.

Many urban churches struggle with two distinct issues. One is financial. They have committed themselves to care for the poor and oppressed. They have thoughtfully engaged the needs of the community in a comprehensive way but struggle with the pressures of financial viability. The suburban church can meet the financial needs of these churches. Whether it's through the creation of support networks or adoption of local congregations, the suburban church can aid the urban church in financially tangible ways.

The other issue is a missional issue. Many of the urban churches of today are labeled "commuter churches." They are churches with a profound and rich history. Their members have worshiped in the church for decades. Yet, for various reasons mentioned above, they have moved out of the neighborhood. Instead of following the membership to the suburbs, these churches have remained in the city, yet their membership commutes in from the suburbs. Again, caution must be exercised in judging the motives of each member and why they have chosen to commute into the city for worship. But one must ask, what perceptions do their neighbors have of these congregations? Can a church maintain a sense of mission for the community while living outside of it? Is this what Perkins calls "insulation?"

In the face of such spiritual and human need, the Church's flight to the suburbs cannot go unchallenged. How can we forsake the inner city so that our lives will not be inconvenienced by the sufferings of the neediest among us? We flee the very mission fields we should be invading. We try to soothe our consciences with such token ministries to the poor as tracts and media –

nice, safe “ministries” that do not require living and working among the poor, “ministries” that insulate us from sharing in their sufferings.<sup>116</sup>

Much can be said here about these congregations, but that is for another discussion.

However, as a suburban church considers what urban churches to support, it would be wise to take into consideration the particular urban church’s posture toward its neighborhood. The most effective urban churches adopt a holistic approach to ministry that includes efforts in community development.

John Perkins, pastor and founder of the Voice of Calvary Ministry, has been credited with crafting the community development strategy of urban missions. It is generally considered to be the most Biblical and effective way an urban congregation can engage its surrounding neighbors because of its holistic approach to ministry. Perkins wrote “I am persuaded that the Church, as the steward of this gospel, holds the key to justice in our society. Either justice will come through us or it will not come at all.<sup>117</sup>” He believed that the church, working for justice, is the answer to the city’s need. It is the path to healing our neighborhoods for Christ. It would be helpful to pause and consider Perkin’s three elements of community development. The principles are called the “3 R’s of Community Development”: Relocation, Reconciliation, and Redistribution.

Perkins first principle is “Relocation.” He wrote, “To minister effectively to the poor I must relocate in the community of need. By living as a neighbor with the poor, the needs of the community become my own. I am no longer isolated in the

---

<sup>116</sup> Perkins, *With Justice for All*, 57.

<sup>117</sup> Perkins, *With Justice for All*, 11.

suburban community.<sup>118</sup> This has been also called an “incarnational” model of ministry, based on the incarnation of Christ. He became one of His own in order to redeem His people to Himself. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14a).” Christ, as it were, moved into the neighborhood to bring restoration, healing, and peace. “Jesus relocated. He didn’t commute to Earth one day a week and shoot back up to heaven. He left His throne and became one of us so that we might see the life of God revealed in Him.<sup>119</sup>” Perkins argues that the “urban minister” must live within the context of the people he is striving to serve. Their needs must be his for him to truly minister.

How should a suburbanite embody this principle? Perkins has strong thoughts on the subject:

But you ask, “Can’t a suburban Christian minister to those who are aching without becoming one of them?” And I answer, “Why on earth do you suppose these people have a welfare mentality?” It’s because outside “experts” have come up with programs that have hampered them and dehumanized them. Yes, our best attempts to reach people from the outside will patronize them. Our best attempts will psychologically and socially damage them. We must live among them. We must become one with them. Their needs must become our needs.<sup>120</sup>

According to this view, can a suburban Christian do anything in the city without “hampering or dehumanizing them?” This quote seems to leave no room and is reductionist in its scope. There is room for good to be done by the suburban Christian in the city if done in the name of Christ. “And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me (Matthew 25:40).’” There is meaning in deeds of service done in the name of

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. 90.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. 93.

Christ, no matter where you live. However, Perkin's overall point is well worth noting. Lasting change for Christ in a community comes through the "relocation" or "incarnation" of God's people within that community.

Perkins' second principle of community development is "Reconciliation." Perkins wrote, "The gospel has the power to reconcile people both to God and to each other. Man's reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ is clearly the heart of the gospel. But we must also be reconciled to each other. Reconciliation across racial, cultural, and economic barriers is not an option aspect of the Gospel. I need you and you need me, and we need each other."<sup>121</sup>

Our cities are full of diversity with a wide variety of classes and ethnicities. The potential for division due to racism, classism, and lifestyle choice are a pressing reality for the church. Perkins argues that the Gospel is the most reconciling truth. It reconciles God's people to Himself and to each other. He writes, "the only purpose of the gospel is to reconcile people to God and to each other. A gospel that doesn't reconcile is not a Christian gospel at all"<sup>122</sup>.

Harvie Conn spoke and wrote of evangelism as "doing and preaching grace." His point was that proclaiming the Gospel is both a word and deed event. Luke 24:19 speaks of Jesus as "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all people." The Gospel cannot be reduced to simply declaring the message, nor can it be reduced to deeds of mercy. The Gospel is both deed and word functioning together. This was Perkins' point. The Gospel reconciles humanity to God and, in turn, reconciles humanity to each other. This message of reconciliation is crucial to

---

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. 55.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. 116.

the transformation of our neighbors. The Gospel must be the core declaration of the church to the city. Without it, no true healing can occur.

Two Christian ministries to the homeless in Baltimore City co-exist blocks from each other. Each believe in the reconciling work of God, but how that is applied illustrates Perkins' point and the nature of word and deed ministry. The Helping Up Mission (HUM), established in 1885 is located on E. Baltimore Street. They minister to Baltimore's homeless and drug-addicted population. Overnight guests are given a meal, a clean-shower, and a bed to stay in. After the evening meal, guests are invited to attend a chapel service and are invited to interact with counselors on staff. Some take advantage of this, others don't.

Just blocks away, the Baltimore Rescue Mission (BRM) is at the corner of E. Baltimore Street and N. Central Avenue. Just like the Helping Up Mission, BRM guests are given a meal, a clean-shower, and a bed to stay in. However, they must sit through a required chapel service, where the Gospel is preached, before their needs can be met.

One Mission chooses to first meet the need, and then present the Gospel. The other presents the Gospel, and then meets the need. Both see the value of sharing the Gospel and meeting the need. Looking through Scripture, especially as Christ related to people, we consistently see God meeting the need, and then sharing the declarative Truth. 1 Kings 19 finds Elijah exhausted, oppressed, and hungry. God offers Elijah food, shade, and sleep. God meets Elijah's need, and then shares his Word with Him.

The order may or may not matter but the principle remains the same. The message of reconciliation, the Gospel, is both word and deed. It promotes reconciliation with God and with our brother. As the church embraces the city, it cannot neglect the deeds of mercy or the proclamation of the Good News. For effective ministry to the city, both must be present.

The third and final principle of community development is “Redistribution.” Perkins writes, “Christ calls us to share with those in need. This calls for redistributing more than our goods. It means sharing our skills, our time, our energy and our gospel in ways that empower people to break out of the cycle of poverty and assume responsibility for their own needs.<sup>123</sup>” The end goal must be underscored. The redistribution’s end is to empower individuals to break the cycle of poverty. This may come in the form of training individuals in financial solubility, wise spending practices, and Biblical living that highlights obedience and proper stewardship. One must be careful that their redistribution of goods and wealth work to empower individuals to break the cycles of sin and poverty, not further cement those cycles.

All this further highlights the deed function of the Gospel. The Gospel is poured out in deeds of mercy and service to our neighborhoods. John Fuller writes:

Many people don’t reject Christianity or the church; they see it as irrelevant. Since being a servant is so contrary to the self-centered, control-obsessed ways of the world, it gives us credibility that we can’t have any other way. Instead of being a mirror to the world, we become a miracle to the world. It also brings us into contact with the world. Too many churches and Christians are trying to shout to the world from a safe distance. As a result, a lot of them are only talking to themselves (which usually ends in arguing with

---

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 56.

themselves!). Through service we become the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” that Jesus called us to be (Matthew 5:13-16).<sup>124</sup>

This service should be done with the end in mind of breaking the cycles of poverty and oppression in our cities.

Acts 4:32-33 reads, “Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them.” A radical generosity, displayed by the early church, demonstrated well the power of the resurrection of Christ. Perkins writes that the unequal distribution of wealth in America greatly affects our cities. “In 1998, the wealthiest group of Americans controlled about 49.2 percent of the nation’s wealth, with the richest 5 percent controlling 21.4 percent of the wealth. On the other end of the scale were the 35.9 million Americans who lived below the poverty level.”<sup>125</sup>If the bulk of America’s upper and middle classes live in the suburban areas, there is great inequity of financial resources between the urban and suburban areas. This is no surprise based on what we’ve noted throughout the study. Perkins advocates for a sharing of resources with local congregations and the church at large. This provides a distinct opportunity for suburban churches to support struggling urban churches, along with teaching them a radical obedience to God and the stewardship of the resources He bestows.

---

<sup>124</sup> Fuller, *Heart for the City*, 180.

<sup>125</sup> Perkins, *With Justice for All*, 160.

Relocation, Reconciliation, and Redistribution are the principles behind Perkin's holistic Community Development Strategies. His model has been applied in cities across the country, including Baltimore City.

Again, wisdom is required for a suburban church as it considers which urban congregations to partner with. Ortiz, quoting Conn, notes, "Churches appear to be in the city but not really of it. City and not church occupies the periphery."<sup>126</sup> As a suburban church evaluates which urban churches to adopt or support, they must consider the urban church's posture to its surrounding neighbor and the city as a whole. Is a church that exists for the city, a church that exists to pronounce the kingdom in word and deed to its surrounding neighborhoods? Does it reflect the comprehensive model outlined by Perkins? Suburban churches must ensure that their financial and volunteer support is given to those congregations that best embody the kingdom in the city.

### Church Planting

Suburban churches can also renew their concern for the city by intentionally planting new churches in the city or supporting urban church planting networks. The suburban church must be cautious and intentional about what kind of church they are planting in the city. Again, is it a church that exists for the city or for itself?

In answering these questions, leadership immediately becomes the most pressing issue. If a suburban church makes efforts to plant a church in the city, it must consider carefully what leader is best suited to lead this new work. Conn and Ortiz outline three types of urban leadership models: indigenous leaders, relocated

---

<sup>126</sup> Conn, *The Urban Face of Mission*, 44.

leaders, or multi-ethnic leadership teams. They define indigenous leaders as “those who have been raised in an urban context in a particular cultural and sociological milieu, who consider this context their own, psychologically and sociologically.<sup>127</sup>” The obvious benefit of the indigenous leader is his familiarity with the context in which the church is being planted. The learning and enculturation process has the potential to be quicker. The second type of leader is the relocated leader. For the relocated leader, “the urban scene is unfamiliar and foreign to these leaders’ way of living and doing ministry. They come from homogenous communities that usually represent a different socioeconomic stratum.”<sup>128</sup> “ In this respect, they are like foreign missionaries.<sup>129</sup>” In this respect, the studying, learning, and evaluating of the new culture and its values become the first objective. The relocated leader will need to take considerably more time in these initial phases of the church planting process. Suburban churches that relocate their own leaders must be cognizant of these particular challenges for the relocated church planter.

The last leadership model is the multi-ethnic leadership model. “This type of leader can be found in a church in the U.S. center city area or close to the center city where cultural diversity is evident.<sup>130</sup>” The suburban church must consider whether the context in which it intends to plant is multi-cultural or multi-ethnic. If so, it must be prepared to deal with the racial tensions that exist in many of those urban neighborhoods. Will the church appeal primarily to one ethnicity or many? Will the church be capable of displaying the “major socioeconomic differences within the

---

<sup>127</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 381.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 379-380.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* 380.

<sup>130</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 380.

makeup of the church?<sup>131</sup> If this is the context chosen, multi-ethnic leadership teams may prove the most capable for reaching each ethnic group in the neighborhood.

If such a multi-cultural context is chosen, certain principles must frame the strategies behind the planting effort. John Fuder offers these principles: (1.) Build conviction about diversity, (2.) Affirm diversity as part of the Church's identity and vision, (3.) Build a multi-cultural leadership team and staff, (4.) Enjoy progress and anticipate problems, and (5.) Keep growing and planting new multi-cultural churches.<sup>132</sup> Any church planter hoping to start a work in a multi-cultural, urban context must approach the task with an openness and humility to the cultures he hopes to reach. He must become a student of those cultures in order to best reach them and unite them in service.

Leadership is one of the most crucial elements in planting churches in urban contexts. It is important that planting churches evaluate well both the leadership and the context. "The issue of knowing the context in which we serve must be taken seriously, especially as we see the continued urbanization and globalization of the world.<sup>133</sup>"

As mentioned above, the church must exist for the community. It must be marked by the advancement of the kingdom through word and deed. This "deed" ministry through bold acts of service is crucial for any church in an urban context.

---

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. 380.

<sup>132</sup> Fuder, *Heart for the City*, 184-185.

<sup>133</sup> Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 379.

Fuder writes that community impact through service is an essential part of any church plant:

It is particularly key in the inner city where “snake oil peddlers,” whether preachers or politicians, have come in with big promises that left people poorer and more disillusioned. Community impact is making a positive difference (physically, emotionally, economically, socially, educationally, spiritually, and so forth) in the lives of people of specific locale or a people group. Serving others is a biblical and powerful way of making a positive difference. The way that Jesus most often developed relationships with others was through serving them according to their needs.<sup>134</sup>

Deeds of mercy and service, in the name of Christ, are integral to building relationships in the community and tearing down walls built by racism and systematic oppression. The proclaimed Word, when demonstrated through deeds of service, will powerfully demonstrate the Gospel in the urban context. A church built on anything else will struggle in its effectiveness to reach the urban centers.

---

<sup>134</sup> Fuder, *Heart for the City*, 179.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

As quoted earlier, “For many churches the diversity of the city is a barrier to a universal witness and ministry in the name of Christ. But to allow any geographic, social, cultural, or economic barrier to hinder the church in this mission is to be less than the church of Jesus the Lord of all.<sup>135</sup>” Such diversity has proven to be a significant barrier for many churches, even today.

History has traced the evangelical church’s withdrawal from the urban centers of North America. For a multitude of reasons already examined, the church, with few exceptions, has lost its influence in cities. Much has been lost. Evangelicalism has lost its influence in the formation of culture and its presence in caring boldly for the poor and oppressed.

But as we have seen, God has a specific design and concern for the city. Our cities have played and still do play an integral role in the unfolding history of God’s redemptive plan. Adam and Eve were called to build culture through the formulation of cities. The consummation of history will find God’s people in the heavenly city, with Christ at its center.

---

<sup>135</sup> McSwain, “Understanding Life in the City”, 19.

As the suburban church returns to the city, finding inroads to meaningful impact in the city will be difficult and caution must be exercised. But the church can make a difference through prayer, raising of leaders, supporting churches and mercy ministries, and planting new churches. Only then will the suburban church stem the tide of flight through meaningful engagement. After all, the city is close to the heart of God. Therefore, it should be close to the heart of his people.

## REFERENCE LIST

- Andreasen, Niels E. "Town and Country in the Old Testament." *Encounter*, 42 no. 3 (Summer 1981): 259-275.
- Bakke, Ray. *A Theology as Big as the City*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Urban Christian: Effective Ministry in Today's Urban World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1987.
- Callahan, Daniel . *The Secular City Debate*. New York: Macmillan, 1996.
- Conn, Harvey M. "Lucan Perspectives and the City." *Missiology: An International Review* 13, no. 4 (October 1985): 409-28.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Rural/Urban Myth and World Mission." *Reformed Review* 37, (Spring 1984): 125-136.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1982.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds: Theology, Anthropology, and Mission in Trialogue*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1984.
- Conn, Harvie M. and Manuel Ortiz. *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City & The People of God*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_ et al. *The Urban Face of Mission: Ministering the Gospel in a Diverse and Changing World*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2002.
- Cox, Harvey. *Religion and the Secular City: Toward a Postmodern Theology*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective*. New York: MacMillan Company, 1965.
- Fuder, John, ed. *A Heart for the City: Effective Ministries to the Urban Community*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999.

Foundation, Larry; Peter Tufano; and Patricia Walker. "Collaborating with Congregations: Opportunities for Financial Services in the Inner City." *Harvard Business Review* 77. no. 4 (July-August 1999): 57-68.

Garriott, Maria. *A Thousand Resurrections: An Urban Spiritual Journey*. Washington D.C.: City Songs / Riott Publishing LLC, 2006.

Gornick, Mark R., *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002.

Steve Hanke, Stephen Walters, "Blame Taxes for Baltimore's Rot" *The Wall Street Journal* (July 5, 2008)

Keller, Timothy. "A Biblical Theology of the City," *Evangelicals Now*, posted July 2002, <http://www.e-n.org.uk/1869-A-biblical-theology-of-the-city.htm>, (accessed October 9, 2009).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters*, New York: Dutton, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Our New Global Culture: Ministry in Urban Centers." *Redeemer City to City*, [http://redeemercitytocity.com/library.jsp?Library\\_item\\_param=469](http://redeemercitytocity.com/library.jsp?Library_item_param=469), (accessed October 2010).

Larsen, Samuel H. "A Christocentric Understanding of Linguistic Diversity: Implications for Missions in a Pluralistic Era."

McGavran, Donald., *Understanding Church Growth*. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980.

Meeks, Wayne A., *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. London: Yale University Press, 1983.

Miller, Mike. "Community Organizing: Lost among Christians?" *Social Policy* 31, no. 1 (Fall 2000): 34-41.

McSwain, Larry L. "Understanding Life in the City: Context for Christian Ministry." *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, no. 24 (Spring 1982): 6-19.

Perkins, John. *With Justice For All: A Strategy for Community Development*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Ventura: Regal Books, 2007.

Ramsay, Meredith. "Redeeming the City: Exploring the Relationship between Church and Metropolis." *Urban Affairs Review* 33, no. 5 (May 1998): 595-626.

Plantinga, Cornelius, and Sue A. Rozeboom. *Discerning the Spirits: A Guide to Thinking About Christian Worship Today*. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003.

Van Engen, Charles. "The Complementarity of Universality and Particularity in God's Mission: Reflections on Planting Multi-Ethnic Congregations in North America"

Worth, Robert. "Amazing Grace: Can Churches Save the Inner City?" *Washington Monthly* 30, nos. 1-2 (January/February 1998); 28-31.

Wright, Christopher J.H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006.