

**Urban Ministry Seminar
Inter-City Baptist Church**

**June 15, 2010
Dr. Jason Ormiston**

Session 1: Why Urban Ministry? (a look at the needs of cities, changing landscape of America and the world, etc.) **1-2 pm**

Break 2-2:15 pm

Session 2: Philosophy of Urban Ministry (differences between urban and suburban ministry, strategies, pitfalls, avenues of urban ministry, etc.) **2:15-3:15 pm**

Break 3:15-3:30

Session 3: Where do we go from here (what can/should we be doing to promote and help in urban ministry) **3:30-4:30**

Break 4:30-4:45

Session 4: Q & A (panel discussion) **4:45-5:30**

Session One: Why Urban Ministry?

As evangelical churches and mission organizations awaken to the challenges of a rapidly expanding urban world, there is the danger that the urgency of the task will cause them to neglect biblical foundations. The needs in the city are so many and so pressing that we are tempted to move in multiple directions without pausing to take our theological bearings.

–Roger Greenway, *Cities: Missions' New Frontier*

Introduction:

The United States of America is quickly becoming a multi-ethnic melting pot. The church must prepare to meet the challenges associated with making disciples from every tribe, tongue, people and nation. Instead of engaging in a political discussion about the value of preserving the English language in our school systems, the need to tighten boarder security, or the tensions surrounding illegal immigration, believers should pause to give God praise for the tremendous privilege of taking the gospel around the world by simply crossing the street in front of their house. Participating in the Great Commission has never been more accessible in the continental United States!

I. Viewing the cities within the United States as a mission field

A. The definition of urban:

1. **Physical description** – concrete jungle (buildings everywhere)
2. **Social implication** – population explosion (people everywhere)
3. **Present limitation** – urban obstacles (challenges everywhere)
(Taken directly from Ray Bakke. *A Theology as Big as the City*, 12-15.)
 - a. The Urban Challenge – population shift from rural to urban
 - b. The Numerical Challenge – 1 billion people added to the planet between 2000-2010
 - c. The Migration Challenge – shift from a world of nations to a world of interconnected multinational cities (the frontier of mission has shifted).
 - d. The Ecclesiastical Challenge – shift from one form to a variety of forms incorporating the same biblical aspects of worship
 - e. The Financial Challenge – shift from raising funds in rural America with relative economic comfort to urban America in economic crisis

4. **Working definition** – The urban centers include both the lower economic neighborhoods plagued by crime and violence and the university towns blessed with the world’s finest scholars and future political leaders.

B. The definition of mission:

1. **Geographical limitation:** missions is not limited to overseas ministry
2. **Social implication:** urban missionaries to American cities must learn the skills of cross cultural ministry
3. **Working definition:** crossing cultural and/or geographical barriers with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

According to Robert Linthicum, the time to act is now!

It is incumbent upon Christians today to recognize and enthusiastically enter into the challenge of the new, emerging world. God is calling the church into the city. Our world is becoming an urban world – and this is an inevitable and irreversible trend. Only our Lord’s return or humanity’s destruction of itself in a mushroom cloud will prevent the urbanization of the world. The primary challenge is learning how to reach the people in the city by crossing ethnic and cultural barriers with the gospel. (Robert C. Linthicum, 19.)

II. Addressing presuppositions about the city:

(The content of III. A-B is taken directly from Harvie Conn and Mannuel Ortiz. *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City, and the People of God.* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 83-100.)

This process of crossing ethnic and cultural barriers with the gospel of Jesus Christ demands theological contemplation. An urban pastor or parishioner must begin to see the Scripture through an urban lens. “What we need is a new theological praxis in the city that seeks to find new ways by which the churches of the city can become a ‘hermeneutic of the gospel’ for the people of the city.” (Charles Van Engen and Jude Tiersma, 275).

A. The Significance of Ancient Near Eastern Cities to the inhabitants.

1. **The city meant security from one's enemies.**
 - a. Located on an elevated place.
 - b. Surrounded by a wall.
2. **The city represented the center for religion in the ancient world.**
 - a. The city was a shrine.
 - (1. On its streets the gods and humankind lived in community.

- (2. Its walls surrounded a miniature cosmos, the four points of the compass joining at the center.
 - (3. The walls were viewed as "magic defense" against the spiritual world.
- b. The City of Babel was built for religious purposes (Gen 11:1-9, 31).
- (1. The people were not trying to "reach God."
 - (2. They were building a shrine to show their independence from God. (v.4)
- c. Abram's departure from Ur (Gen 12:1) holds greater significance when one understands the security and religious implications of leaving the city.
- (1. Ancient extra biblical texts appear to indicate that in the work of temple building there was self-glorification and name making for the builders
 - (2. By contrast, Abram's departure from Ur is rewarded by the assurance that God would make his name great (Gen 12:2).
 - (3. In confidence in that promise Abram builds neither tower nor city. He erects instead an altar to the God who made the moon and its heavenly retinue [*entourage*] (Gen 12:7).
 - (4. The patriarchs who followed him pitched their tents and built altars as he did (Gen 12:8:13:18), on the outskirts of the shrine centers (Gen 33:18-20; 35:27).
 - (5. The "habitations of Jacob" (Ps 79:7; Lam 2:2) became "edge cities," encampments that affirm urban reality without embracing urban shrine theology.
 - (6. Abram was in search of a city "whose builder and maker is God." (Hebrews 11:10)

Application:

We must recognize the power and spiritual dimension in urban centers. As Abram, we must fight against embracing the prestige and power that the city can offer. Instead, we must seek the glorification of God while arming ourselves against the intense spiritual battles that we will face.

B. Is the City the Enemy or Ally?

“Since those days, almost three millennia ago, other pilgrims have continued to wrestle with choices similar to Abram's. The shrine cities of the ancient world with their integrated network of totalitarian theological demands have disappeared. Today our choices to obey God may involve less radical breaks than Abram had to make. But the choices are still difficult.” [85]

1. The Anti-urban debate presented.

2. The Anti-urban debate rejected.

3. The City as divine intention.

- a. The natural response to the cultural mandate found in Gen 1:28 was the formation of a city (central location of the people to dwell).
- b. The subduing of the earth and the mandate for multiplication has its logical conclusion in the creation of a city.
- c. It would 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 boundaries of the garden (Gen 4:17).

4. The city after the fall of man.

- a. The city remained a place for shelter and protection (cf. Cain in Gen 4:14, 17 and the City of Refuge found in Num 35:25).
- b. The city contains common-grace potential for unification (cf. Unity of People Building the Tower of Babel in Gen 11:6).
- c. The city provided a place to train and spread religion. 48 cities were set apart for the tribe of Levi at the conquest of Canaan (Josh 21:1-42; I Chron 6-7).
- d. Justice and order throughout the history of Israel's sojourn in the land should be expected at the gates of the city (Duet 21:19; 22:15; Ruth 4:1-12; Job 29:7-11; Amos 4:10, 12, 15; Zech 8:16).

*When these common-grace blessings of justice and order are transformed instead into displays of violence and oppression, God hears the outcry of those offended (Gen 18:20).

5. The Missionary intention of God's cities.

- a. The Lord chose to work first through the Jewish people.
- b. We know that in the New Testament, he broadens the scope of blessing to the church (Gal 3:14).
- c. However, it is important to note that in God's plan, the peoples of the earth will flow to the holy city (Is 2:2-4).
- d. Jerusalem will become "the joy of the whole earth" (Ps 48:2; 68:31; 86:9; 137:1-2, 5-6).
- e. Prophetic examples of the nations coming to Jerusalem can be seen in the Old Testament.
 - (1. Gentile cities would come in pilgrimage to participate in Jerusalem's messianic feast (Is 60:3; Ps 25:6)
 - (2. Hiram of Tyre who helped build the city (2 Sam 5:1) and Cyrus of Persia who rebuilt it (Ezra 1:2-3) were only forerunners of a new registry role of citizens.
 - (3. The census of a future Jerusalem would include Rahab and Babylon, Philistia, Tyre and Ethiopia (Ps 87:4-5; Is 56:3-8).
 - (4. Egypt and Assyria would worship the Lord with Israel (Is 18:9-24).
 - (5. Philistia would be like a clan in Judah (Zech 9:7).

III. Developing a theology for the city (*brief overview to be discussed in greater detail later in the next session*)

Clearly, we are trying to avoid bringing our own agenda to, and superimposing them on, Scripture. Liberation theologians made this mistake, and have not recovered from it. What we sought is a way to bring a new set of questions to the text, questions that might help us see in the Scriptures what we had missed before.

In *God So Loves the City*. eds., Charles Van Engen and Jude Tiersma, each of the essays in this book is structure around the following outline: (1) Approaching the city (2) Providing a story from their particular context (3) Reading the context (4) Rereading the Scriptures (5) Suggesting new mission insights (6) Encouraging mission action (7) Retelling the story. I believe the approach used in this book provides a helpful guideline for future students seeking to develop an urban theology through exegesis of both the biblical text and the local community. (258)

- A. Viewing the Scriptures through an urban lens**
With over 1,250 references to the word *city* in the Bible, Ray Bakke, in his book, *A Theology as Big as the City*, illustrates this hermeneutical approach to the text with the following chapter titles:
- B. The need to seek the shalom of the city (Jer. 29:7)** – Seminar on the Biblical Boundaries for Benevolence
- C. The power of incarnational ministry (Phil 2:1-11)** – Seminar on the Basic Building Blocks in the Multi-ethnic Church Planting Process
- D. The inclusion of the outsider (Eph. 2:19-22; James 1:27)** – Seminar on the Biblical Boundaries for Benevolence
- E. The impetus for justice and reconciliation (Micah 6:8)** – Seminar on the Biblical Boundaries of Benevolence
- F. Ministering across ethnic barriers**
1. The role of the New Testament church in making disciples of all nations (Matt 28:16-20) is strengthened by a proper understanding of God's plan to shine His light of hope through the nation of Israel. (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; 60:1ff; Acts 13:44-49)
 2. Due to their rejection, the nation of Israel was temporarily set aside to create a path for a new group of people, the church, to spread the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations (Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:25).
 3. God has chosen to use the New Testament ecclesia, during the dispensation of grace, to shine the abandoned light of the gospel to every tribe, tongue, kindred, and nation (Revelation 5:9-10; 7:9-10).
 4. The church is privileged to participate in reaping the harvest of souls among the Gentiles while waiting for the nation of Israel to respond in obedience during the Millennial Kingdom (Romans 11:11-12).

Session 2: Philosophy of Urban Ministry (differences between urban and suburban ministry, strategies, pitfalls, avenues of urban ministry, etc.)

Introduction:

Community development is all about people. It is the process of finding shalom in the lives of people, the structure that supports them, and the buildings that surround them. As image-bearers of God, each person possesses an innate desire to grow spiritually, intellectually, and physically. Unfortunately, the average urban neighborhood fails to cultivate a structure that promotes healthy growth. It is not uncommon to find inadequate health care, understaffed public-safety, and a dysfunctional legal system at the root of most communities. The dilapidating conditions of the homes, businesses, and schools further accentuate the problem. Never has the message of the gospel been in higher demand in our cities than today.

I. Theological Support for Community Development

Community development was part of God's plan from the beginning of time. In Genesis 1:28, God told Adam to have "dominion" over all the earth and to "subdue it." The process of bringing order to a chaotic neighborhood is one of the reasons man was created on the earth. In a very real sense, community development is part of image-bearing God.

Before an image-bearer can "image bear," an urban worker must address the root problems of poverty and racism. Inevitably, this will also necessitate a proper definition of biblical shalom. Apart from a proper understanding of how to address poverty, how to address racism, and how to define shalom, community development will flounder.

A. Addressing the Problem of Poverty

1. Developing a working definition of poverty

- a. Poverty is an inability to meet the minimum standard of well-being and life.

Poverty is a condition in which a person or community is deprived of, or lacks the essentials for a minimum standard of well-being and life. Since poverty is understood in many senses, these essentials may be material resources such as food, safe drinking water, and shelter, or they may be social resources such as access to information, education, health care, social status, political power, or the opportunity to develop meaningful connections with other people in society...

However it is defined, poverty naturally causes suffering because it involves the lack of something essential to human life. In the ideal, all people should be able to satisfy their needs and experience lives of health, happiness, and prosperity, not poverty. (The New World Encyclopedia)

- (1. The minimum standard of life is relative

(2. The minimum standard of life is deceptive

(a. Homelessness in America presents a formidable challenge

This is not to say that the poor in the United States do not suffer. One of the primary means of suffering is experienced by those who lack shelter or those counted as homeless. After all, homelessness in America is a growing problem.

Experts agree that it is close to impossible to get an accurate count of just how many people are homeless in the U.S. Some believe it is well over a half million; others project it is less. They do not know that homelessness has increased considerably in the last decade owing primarily to two trends: a growing shortage of affordable rental housing and a simultaneous increase in poverty. (Keller, 16)

(b. The cause of homelessness is debated

Unfortunately, the average believer approaches the topic of poverty and homelessness from a cynical point of view. Many are convinced that the poor struggle economically due to irresponsible behavior. While slothfulness by adults can be a cause of poverty, statistics prove it is not the main cause:

Approximately one-third of the poor are children. Another third are adults who are working, but not making a wage that lifts them out of poverty. A sixth consists of the elderly and the mentally or physically disabled. Only the final sixth consists of the “controversial” people – single parent homes with children, and persons who are able-bodied but not working. It is not fair to simply consider all these people “lazy.” A great number of them suffer with debilitating social and emotional problems. But even if we did count many in this group as the “shiftless” poor of the popular imagination, we see that it is only a fraction of the massive group of needy North Americans. (Keller, 19)

b. A more precise definition of poverty makes a distinction between relative poverty and absolute poverty.

Viv Grigg. *Cry of the Urban Poor: Reaching the Slums of Today's Mega Cities*. (Federal Way, GA: Authentic Media, 2005), 42. Grigg makes a similar distinction between absolute poverty and relative poverty. He defines absolute poverty as a term used to describe poverty when people have an absolute insufficiency to meet their basic needs – food, clothing, and housing. Indeed, many who are in absolute poverty starve to death. He defines relative poverty by looking at a person's standard of living relative to others in the community or nation.

(1. Relative poverty is the condition of having fewer resources or less income than others within a society or country, or compared to worldwide averages.

(2. Absolute poverty is a person or community that lacks the following essentials for life:

- Material resources – food, safe drinking water, and shelter
- Social resources – access to information, education, health care, social status, political power
- Relational resources – that which is necessary to develop meaningful connections with other people in society.

2. The cause of poverty

- a. Unavoidable circumstances
- b. Lack of personal character

3. The biblical response to poverty (Keller, 38-42)

How can the church engage in addressing the problem of poverty and begin to reach this massive number of unreached? Timothy Keller provides the following helpful suggestions to motivate the church to engage in mercy ministry:

- a. Mercy is not optional – James 2:15-16; I John 3:17-18
- b. Mercy is a test – Matthew 25:31-46
- c. Mercy is not new –
 - The first act of mercy immediately follows the Fall: God clothed Adam and Eve with animal skins (Gen. 3:21)
 - Job, who lived in an early pre-Mosaic age, knew that the righteousness God requires includes providing food, shelter, and clothing to the needy (Job 24:1-21; 29:16-17; 31:16-23)

- Mosaic Law
 - Individual Israelites were forbidden to harvest all their produce, so the poor could glean from the fields for free (Ex. 23:10-11).
 - Israelites were told to give to the poor until his need was gone (Deut. 15:8, 10), especially if the poor man was a kinsman or neighbor (Lev. 25:25, 35-38).
 - The priests gave to the poor out of the tithes to God (Deut. 14:28-29).
 - The poor were to be given more than just a “handout.” When a slave was freed from debt and servitude, he was not to leave empty-handed, but had to be given grain or livestock so that he could become economically self-sufficient (Deut. 15:12-15).
- The basis of the later prophets
 - They taught that materialism and the ignoring of the poor’s plight are sins as repugnant as idolatry and adultery (Amos 2:6-7).
 - Mercy to the poor is an evidence of true heart commitment to God (Isa. 1:10-17; 58:6-7; Amos 4:1-6; 5:21-24).
 - The prophets predicted that the Messiah, when he came, would be characterized by mercy to the poor (Isa. 11:1-4; 61:1-2).
 - The heart of God (Is 1:10-17; 58:6-7; Amos 4:1-6; 5:21-24)
- The example of Christ
 - First sermon addressed the poor (Matt 11:1-6)
 - “Moved in” with the poor (2 Cor 8:9; Luke 2:24; Lev 12:8)
- The teachings of the early church
 - Help brothers in need (I John 3:16-17; Deut 15:7)
 - Share wealth with those in need from the body (2 Cor 8:13-15)

- Sign of true faith (James 2:1-3; Is 1:10-17)
- Remember the poor (Gal 2:10)
- Minister to the widows and orphans (James 1:27)
- Practice hospitality to strangers (Heb 13:2)
- Denounce materialism (I Tim 6:17-19)
- Show mercy to all people (Gal 6:10)
- Priority of the office of deacon (Rom 15:23-29; I Tim 3:8ff)

Summary:

The definition of poverty demands a distinction between poverty that is relative and poverty that is absolute. Relative poverty is the condition of having fewer resources than others within a society, country, or global context. Absolute poverty is a person or community lacking the resources necessary to sustain life. Although much of the poverty in the urban centers of the U.S. would be classified as relative, the problem of homelessness and inadequate resources presents a legitimate need. The body of Christ must embrace this need and engage in ministries of mercy to assist those who are hurting.

II. The Response of Believers toward Urbanization and Poverty

A. The options each church has when confronted with the reality of urbanization and the problem of poverty.

1. It can ignore the city and the needs of the people around it as it fixates on preserving its own life. It can view itself as a fortress.
2. It can provide social services and do good works for and to the people in the city. It can view itself as the savior of the community.
3. It can join the community's struggle to determine what kind of community they want to have, a community with justice for all. The church can view itself as a partner with the community.

<p>Linthicum, Robert. <i>Empowering the Poor: Community Organizing Among the City's "Rag, Tag and Bobtail."</i> (Monrovia, CA: World Vision International, 1991), 24.</p>

B. The options each church member has when personally confronted with the reality of urbanization and the problem of poverty.

Community development is greatly enhanced when a collection of individuals address the problem of poverty through the context of the local church. Mark Gornik provides four unique and interrelated features important in Christian common life. They are as follows:

1. The church as a community of grace (Eph 2:8-9; 2 Cor 12:9; Gal 3:28)
2. The church as a community of welcome (Ps 137; Rom 12:13; 15:1-7; James 1:27)
3. The church as a community of reconciliation (John 17:11; Rev 7:9; Gal 3:28; Eph 2:16-18; I Cor 11:17-23)
4. The church as a community of sharing (Rom 12:5-8; I Cor 12:12-27; Deut 15:4; 2 Cor 8:14; Acts 2:47; Gal 6:10)

Mark R. Gornik. <i>To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City</i> . (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 76-90.

C. The Reasons the Church Fails to Minister to the Poor.

1. A lack of desire to engage in the community

Unfortunately, the average church is full of professing believers who lack the desire to engage in the community. Viv Grigg provides several reasons why he believes the traditional church in the 21st Century is in serious trouble unless the church returns to social activity.

- a. *Lack of prophecy* – As mission leaders, we have failed to foresee both the urban growth and the fact that most of the urban growth will be in squatter areas.
- b. *Poor Methodology* – Some missions have made a deliberate strategy to go for the rich, believing a sort of religious “trickle-down theory”... (in reality, the gospel usually “trickles up”).
- c. *Spiritual Apathy* – The failure in the great American mission thrust is, at its roots, not a strategic but a spiritual failure. The church has failed the community spiritually.
- d. *Failed Ingenuity* – Some have concluded that the poor are unreachable.

- e. *Shirked Responsibility* – The propensity for the American church to accept the agenda of the aid organizations as focal to the Great Commission has seriously skewed mission.

Viv Grigg. “Sorry! The Frontier Moved: Misconceptions or ‘the Great Misconnection.’” in *Planting and Growing Urban Churches from Dream to Reality* ed. Harvie Conn (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 159-161. Viv Grigg provided six reasons for “the Great Misconnection.” Because of the similarity in content, I took the liberty of combining points three and four and providing a title for all five points.

According to Griggs, “it is far easier for churches to give thousands of dollars than to find one of their members who would walk into the slum for a decade.”(161) Failure to respond to “felt needs” is a dangerous business.

2. Approaching the problem with the wrong cognition

- a. Greek-mindedness – the ability to divide the whole into parts leading to sharp divisions based on analysis
 - (1. Division of the person:
 - (2. Division of methods to help people
- b. Class captivity – modern theology has been generated by the theologians who come from the socio-economic context of the middle class.
 - (1. Personal Values:
 - (2. Perspective on Poverty:
 - (3. Homiletics:
- c. Professional Priesthood – institutionalized training of technicians who are highly skilled in the art of running a church
 - (1. Many pastors are expected to do it all, while the laity becomes spectators

- (2. Because of specialized training in spiritual ministry, the limits of time and energy, and the passive role of the laity, the minister is restricted to activities within the church
 - (3. The church is self-focused, non-evangelizing, and usually boring unless the technical skills of the preacher are so advanced that the people are drawn by the drama of superb rhetoric
- d. Self-defense – fear of losing what one possess
- (1. Addressing felt needs involves the possibility of releasing monetary resources to support such outreach, and it involves resetting priorities from self-aggrandizement to sacrifice.
 - (2. Instead of limiting one’s concern to self and the nuclear family, the Christian must broaden the circle of love. This will mean time spent to help others, energy expended rather than guarded, and orientation of giving rather than getting.
 - (3. Comfort and recreation time may have to assume a secondary role to compassion and redemption time.
- e. Misunderstood Mandate: viewing the Great Commandment (Mark 12:30-31) to love your neighbor as yourself philosophically instead of practically
- (1. As we are filled with the love of God, we are moved to reach out to our neighbors in a variety of ways which will encourage their redemptive relationship with him.
 - (2. If we love, we care. (The ministries John Wesley and George Whitefield)

Craig W. Ellison. “Addressing Felt Needs of Urban Dwellers.” in *Planting and Growing Urban Churches from Dream to Reality* ed. Harvie Conn. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 97-102.

The appeal made by Ellison to change improper thinking is vital to effective ministry. Proper thinking inevitably leads to right action. Heading the warnings of both Ellison (cognition) and Griggs (action) will help a church engage in community development and ministry to the poor.

3. Approaching the problem apart from Christ

- a. Failure to reflect on the theological reason behind ministry to the poor

- (1. Ephesians 2:8-10 – believers were saved for good works
- (2. James 1:27 – pure and undefiled religion involves looking after the orphans and widows
- (3. James 2:26 – faith without works is dead
- (4. I John 3:17-18 – love with more than words or tongue, love with actions and in truth
- (5. Titus 3:1, 8 – be ready to do whatever is good and be careful to devote yourself to doing good
- (6. Titus 3:14 – teach the believers how to provide for themselves the daily necessities
- (7. Galatians 6:9-10 – do good to all people, especially to those belonging to the household of faith

Craig W. Ellison. "Addressing Felt Needs of Urban Dwellers." in *Planting and Growing Urban Churches from Dream to Reality* ed. Harvie Conn. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 97.

Ellison aptly cites the Apostles Paul and James in dismantling the argument that social activity was reserved for those living under Mosaic Law.

Evangelicals who try to distinguish between Pauline faith theology and a secondary Jamesian works theology not only fail to properly interpret these authors, but also are guilty of imposing a dual standard of scriptural inspiration. Furthermore, Matthew 25:31-46 records one of the most chilling passages in the Bible, the words of Jesus describing the separation of the sheep from the goats on judgment day. The evidence of genuine saving faith recorded there are practical, caring actions addressing felt needs. The expression of righteousness is in an ethic and lifestyle of compassion. Those who will be invited to join the King will be those who have given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the needy, health care to the sick, and comforting presence to the imprisoned. Jesus says there that as they ministered to the needs of the needy, they showed their love for the Son of Man. (Ellison, 96)

- b. A tendency to get overwhelmed with social activity and fail to share propositional truth
- c. A constant battle with sin
- d. A desire to help everyone

Summary:

- The local church is vital – The practice of community development is most effective when run through the local church. Local churches would benefit greatly by following the advice of some seasoned missiologists.
- Direction is essential – John Perkins provided an excellent guide for churches to follow when he developed the three R's – relocation, reconciliation, and redistribution.
- Modeling Christlikeness is the only lasting answer to addressing community needs.

Conclusion:

Community development is all about people. It is the process of finding shalom in the lives of people, the structure that supports them, and the buildings that surround them. As image-bearers of God, each person has a desire to grow spiritually, intellectually, and physically. Unfortunately, the average urban neighborhood fails to cultivate a structure that promotes healthy growth. The solution is to minister shalom or the gospel of Jesus Christ to communities in need through the context of the local church. Support in this chapter for encouraging the church to engage in community development has included a biblical theology for urban development, biblical illustrations of urban development, and practical application leading to urban development.

I. Theological Support for Community Development

The theological support for community development began with the original commission at creation in Genesis 1:28 to “subdue the earth.” It included the Scriptural mandate to address the problem of poverty, the problem of racism, and the need to embrace a working definition of shalom. When dealing with poverty, a distinction must be made between that which is relative and that which is absolute. Although much of the poverty in the urban centers of the U.S. would be classified as relative, the problem of homelessness and inadequate resources presents a legitimate need. The body of Christ must embrace this need and engage in ministries of mercy by assisting those who are hurting.

II. The Practice of Community Development

The practice of community development is most effective when administering the gospel of Jesus Christ through the context of the local church. Local churches would benefit greatly by following the advice of seasoned missiologists to admit the failure of the church to adequately address the problem, reorganize ministry around the central goal of meeting the needs of the community, and reflect upon how to model the person and work of Jesus Christ in ones present context. Never has the message of the gospel been in higher demand in our cities then today. The gospel compels believers to embrace a Kingdom-based ethic that produces sound reflection and definitive action.

Session 3 – Where do we go from here?

Multiplying Urban Churches through Developing Leadership

One might think that to inaugurate a significant worldwide ministry you would need to focus attention on the crowds, solving crisis after crisis. In contrast, the Gospels show Jesus spending 50 percent of his three-year ministry time with twelve people and perhaps another 25 percent with only three people – Peter, James, and John. So I surmised, to lead God’s church in megacities, I should think small.

– Ray Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City*

Introduction:

Church leadership is essential for consistent church planting and growth. A leader must develop a strong ecclesiology, a clear vision of what God wants to accomplish through him as the result of his efforts, and a willing desire to meet the needs of others.

I. Equipping the congregation with a proper ecclesiology

Much has happened since Pentecost. While thousands of churches have been started by the power of the Holy Spirit, the guidance of Scripture, and the leadership of gifted pastors, many are either in decline or have closed their doors.

American pastors stand at a crossroads. One path leads to effective ministry, revitalization, and growth. The other road accommodates the value systems of a secularized culture and allows the church to slide further toward the irrelevance and impotency that has eviscerated Christianity elsewhere.¹

Therefore, in order to make the process of starting and reviving churches sustainable for the unforeseeable future, the subject of church planting and growth must also include the necessity of church and leadership development. We must return to the biblical definition of a church and seek ways to equip pastors to lead. This chapter will focus specifically on presenting helpful principles to guide an urban church planter toward a successful start and a bright future. With regard to the value of identifying church planting and leadership development as important, note the epigram composed by an anonymous student at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School:²

¹ James E. Means, *Effective Pastors for a New Century*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 13.

² David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond*. 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 31.

If you want to grow something to last a season – plant flowers.

If you want to grow something to last a lifetime – plant trees.

If you want to grow something to last through eternity – plant churches

II. Identifying Leadership within the Church

Without effective leadership training church planting and growth efforts will fail. The Scriptures are not silent when it comes to leadership development. In particular, the Apostle Paul provides the most concise direction for prospective church planters when it comes to the motivation for leadership, qualification of leadership, and selection of leadership.

A. Motivation for Church Leadership

1. Investing in a legacy

A quick survey of the Apostle Paul’s life will reveal him to be a man in a constant state of disciple-making. The collection of his disciples included Silas, Timothy, John Mark, Titus, Demas, Tychicus, Priscilla, Aquila, Lydia, Philemon, Onesimus, and Trophimus. While Paul was no doubt motivated by his conversion experience on the road to Damascus, he summarizes his personal impetus for disciple-making when writing his final letter to Pastor Timothy. (2 Tim 2:1-2)

In this passage, Paul acknowledges four generations of discipleship:

- a. Christ to Paul³
- b. Paul to Timothy
- c. Timothy to faithful men
- d. faithful men to others.

2. Embracing leadership as a gift from God (Eph 4:11-14)

The gift of leadership does not imply that skills required for a leader cannot be developed. We are all in a constant state of growth and learning. However, Paul finds motivation behind the reality that leaders he invests time in were selected by the Holy Spirit and therefore enabled to fulfill God’s purpose for the growth of the church. In other words, leaders are not merely the result of new teaching techniques.

³ Galatians 1:12, 15-17 – “For I did not receive it (*the gospel*) from any man, nor was I taught it, but received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ... [15] But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, [16] was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; [17] nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned to Damascus. [18] Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem...”

Robert Linthicum views this passage from a different perspective. He suggests that the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 do not refer to leadership offices in the church.

Paul points out that, in every church, there are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. I would suggest that the people to whom Paul is referring are not people occupying offices, but church members performing specific functions. There are those in any church, Paul is saying, who perform the function of apostles, of prophet, of evangelist, of pastor, and of teacher. In the New Testament, all references to these positions, whether in a local church or in the universal church, are functional references – that is, people performing particular tasks. Over the centuries, however, the church has turned these functions into offices that a person often occupies for life.⁴(Robert Linthicum, 189)

Discussion: Do you agree or disagree with Linthicum’s statement?

B. The Qualification for Church Leadership

Pastoral leadership demands preparation. The ministry provides challenges unique to other vocations. These challenges include spiritual warfare, external pressure to model holiness before the congregation, internal pressure to build intimacy with God in the midst of a chaotic schedule, numerous demands to please your congregation, the ability to balance a church budget, and the weekly preparation for sermons and Bible studies. Because of these pressures, many denominations have embraced the concept that a man is not qualified for pastoral leadership until after he has completed a Master of Divinity work in a reputable seminary. While I am personally in favor of encouraging pastors to receive all the education they can in preparation for ministry, one struggles to defend an academic standard in the pages of Scripture. This is not to mention the fact that most seminaries today fail to adequately prepare men and women for the challenges of ministering in the context of a changing culture.

Discussion: How prepared do you feel for future ministry as a result of your current seminary training? What are the positive and negatives to the current curriculum? How would you change your training?

C. Ordination of Leadership

1. Ordination must be taken seriously
2. Ordination should be a milestone experience for the pastor
3. Ordination is a process of God calling and the church confirming

⁴ Robert Linthicum, *City of God, City of Satan* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 189.

III. Equipping Leadership to Serve in the Church

A. Understanding Your Ministry Context

Chaotic mutations in society take place constantly. Urbanization, pluralism, materialism, scientific discovery, technological breakthroughs, media domination, and relativism indicate a changing world. We live in the age of microelectronics, instant world-wide communication, exploding technology, sophisticated weaponry, family breakdown, and information overload. Those who have traveled overseas realize the mind-boggling cultural differences in our world, but one needs only to travel across town to see cultural diversity. The urban church is almost always multicultural. (James E. Means, 28)

Such an adjustment demands a close walk with the Lord and prophetic view of the future. Unless an urban pastor is able to envision what could be, he will be overwhelmed with what is.

1. A Fresh Approach to Scripture

Note the transformation in each of these men when they began to identify an urban theology in their daily reading.

Ray Bakke in *A Theology as Big as the City*:

In 1966 I began to read the Bible with urban eyes. I looked at the 1,250 uses of the word *city* in Scripture and developed case studies on cities and persons who lived in cities. Then, because I taught church history at McCormick Seminary in Chicago from 1969 to 1977 while pasturing an inner-city church, I had the wonderful opportunity to study and preach the texts of both testaments and try to make sense of them for a largely unlettered congregation in a public-aid and mixed-racial context. I likened it to Moses' experience of pasturing a largely unemployed community of mud-brick-making migrants in a bad neighborhood for forty years on "food stamps" called manna.⁵

Robert Linthicum in *City of God City of Satan*:

While we are rediscovering the city's mission field and introducing an urban methodology, our biblical and theological reflection is limited. We enter the city equipped with an urban sociology and urban tools for ministry, but we carry with us the baggage of a theology designed in rural Europe. Even the way we formulate theological questions and the framework we use to construct our theological thought have been forged by our rural past...

In 1969 I began an intentional search for an urban theology that would work for me. I have been caught up in biblical research on this issue ever since; for the past eleven years I have devoted one hour a day to the task. This "movable feast" has gone with me throughout the world wherever I have worked. I continue to delve into Scripture to

⁵ Bakke, Ray, *A Theology as Big as the City* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1997), 15.

formulate a theology that realistically and accurately understands the city in all its complexity and uncovers biblical principles for ministering within that complexity.⁶

- a. Dedicate a time each day to view the Scripture through an urban lens
- b. Record your findings in a journal to be reviewed at a weekly accountability meeting

2. The Commencement from Theological Education

The time has come to rethink our programs of preparation for the various Christian ministries... Negatively, we can no longer afford to take young men and women, send them off to schools which effectively seal them off from both the church and the world for a longer or shorter period, and then thrust them into the work at home or abroad. Positively, we must find ways of bringing the church and the school closer together by providing training where churches exist and where they are yet to be established.”(David Hesselgrave, 107)

- a. Identifying the problem
 - (1. A misconception by the graduate
 - (2. A miscalculation by the seminary
 - (a. General institutional direction

In his book, *Crisis in the Church*, John H. Leith provides insight regarding why he believes the modern seminary is failing to adequately prepare prospective pastors. After presenting a general outline of nine reasons for the incompetence found in most seminaries:

“(1) Loss of tradition, (2) Loss of Gratitude, (3) Loss of Church Orientation, (4) Loss of Sense of Mission and Direction, (5) Loss of Curriculum Focus on the Congregation, (6) Loss of Ecclesiastical Commitment, (7) Loss of Accountability, (8) Loss of Academic Freedom, and (9) Loss of the Ability to Educate Graduates Who Are Effective Pastors” (13-24).

- (b. Ministry experience of the faculty
- (c. Technicality of the Curriculum

Discussion:

If you had the authority, how would you suggest addressing the problems listed above?

⁶ Robert Linthicum, *City of God, City of Satan* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 20.

- b. Presenting a solution
 - 1. Balance the faculty with a handful possessing pastoral experience

Every faculty ought to have at least one person who has brought into membership of the church a *net* number of people whose contributions would pay the salary and expense account of the faculty member. Until a minister or a faculty member has been effectively involved in such an increase in church membership and therefore in giving, that person is living on the labors of those who have gone before. (Leith, 8.)

- 2. Embrace a “missional model” for theological education
 - a. Combining lectures with mentorship
 - b. Teaming students with veteran minister

Overview of the Missional Model:

In *Revisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*, Robert Banks provides six essential components to guide institutions seeking to incorporate the *missional model* in theological education: (126)

1. It (*theological education*) ought to comprehend the broader people of God.
2. It should orient itself primarily around “in-service” ministry.
3. At its center should be a living and working partnership with an experienced person.
4. The break with home, occupation, and often family, involved in attending a seminary, or the residential requirements in extension centers, mirrors something of what we find in the biblical narratives.
5. The growing desire to have a strong interconnection between the seminary and the church, and between study and practice, is well based.
6. In a limited way echoes of Paul’s collegial approach appear in the one-on-one small-group academic mentoring of advanced students, who are regarded as junior members of the community of scholars.

3. Embrace a mentorship model
 - a. More effective in the majority world context

In an article, “Education for Ministry in an Urbanized World,” Stockwell stresses the importance of pastoral candidates learning from those who are actively involved in urban ministry. Note his perspective on the current seminary model:

While the established models have served the churches well, new models are necessary, especially ones that address issues arising in the two-thirds world. The emerging realities require an innovation and a rethinking of how we train emerging pastoral leadership – clergy and laity. Such training must be developed with indigenous people everywhere. This is the essence of the mentoring program, Globalization for Theological Education. (Beyond Theological Tourism, 53)

- b. Heavy emphasis on experience

Overview of the Pastoral Mentorship Model:

Stockwell makes six observations of the common themes found in effective mentorship programs. These observations are worth noting for pastors seeking to engage in a mentorship process with ministerial candidates. (54-57)

1. Most programs that seek to prepare people for ministry in urban or multicultural contexts stress the importance of *experience* and so-called “*action-reflection*” methodology.
2. Many of these programs are linked institutionally to churches and judicatories, contexts, and situations.
3. Teaching is *interdisciplinary*. A holistic and comprehensive vision of ministry and ministry-preparation needs to bring experts and practitioners together for dialogue and mutual exchange.
4. Such programs have *small groups* to allow people to discuss issues articulate their theologies, and identify skills or ministry.
5. Students must have opportunity to learn *public skills*. The skills should include community organization, administration, fund-raising, leadership development, program development and implementation, advocacy, and networking or coalition building.
6. *Relationship building* or personal contact over an extended period of time between the mentor and student.

- c. Teachers follow an established pattern that provides practical experience for the student

Summary:

By combining the reasoning for mentorship provided by Banks and the practical steps provided by Stockwell, any one who desires to mentor pastoral candidates will have a jump-start in the process. Bottom-line, a need exists in urban training for a return to a hands-on mentorship model. A hands-on approach will involve an established process to ensure long range success.

3. Personal Commitment to Christ

- a. Establish Boundaries to enable a close walk with Christ
 - (1. The ministry of the Word is primary (Acts 6:4)
 - (2. The meeting of needs is secondary (Acts 2:45; 4:32; 11:29-30; Gal. 2:10; 6:10; James 2:14-17)
 - (3. Time alone with Christ each day is vital (Ps 1:2)

Application:

What pastors need is a return to the established boundaries of “prayer and the ministry of the word.” Pastors-in-training, must give attention to these disciplines if they desire long-term effectiveness in urban ministry. A good place to begin is with a scheduled reading and discussion of the three volume series offered by Peterson. Students should catalog a list of positive and negative discoveries from each of the chapters to serve as a basis for discussion in a one-on-one or small group setting.

- b. Model servant leadership (Mark 10:42-44)

A prospective urban pastor should also remember that effective leadership is not a matter of acquiring power, demanding authority, or creating a bureaucracy. Genuine leadership begins with a sincere desire to serve others. When the disciples wanted to know who would receive honor in the kingdom by sitting at his right and left hand, Jesus responded by calling the them to forsake status for a life of service (Mark 10:42-44). A prospective urban pastor must fight the temptation to “lord over” his congregation and instead seek the mind of Christ.

In chapter three entitled: “Foundational Perspectives for Developing Urban Christian Leaders,” Edgar Elliston and J. Timothy Kauffman provide the following eight suggestions to promote a ministry of service from their book *Developing Leaders for Urban Ministries*: (110)

- Christian leaders should function as servants. They are to be evaluated primarily by the criteria of the servant model of leadership lived and taught by Jesus and His apostles as the norm for Christian leadership.

- Christian leaders should behave in ways which are above reproach in their communities.
- Christian leaders should be distributed within the church with different persons leading according to the particular gift they may have, e.g., teaching, pastoring, or showing hospitality.
- Christian leaders should not base their leadership on their own rank, status, or power for personal gain.
- Christian leaders should contribute to the purpose, fullness, and function of the Church.
- Christian leaders should reproduce themselves through others, by such means as contextual preparation, discipleship, empowerment and legitimation.
- Christian leaders should be selected for a particular purpose based on the person's calling, demonstrated commitment, and competence.
- The primary constraining and guiding value for Christian leaders is love.
 - c. Delegating Responsibilities
 - (1. Delegation is biblical (Eph. 4:12)
 - (2. Delegation is critical for success (Exodus 18)
 - d. Developing a Vision of Kingdom Involvement
 - (1. Common citizenship (Phil 3:20)
 - (2. Transfer of authority (Col 1:13)
 - (3. Spiritual family (Rev 1:9)
 - (4. Shared goal (Matt 6:33)

Summary:

Equipping leaders for 21st Century urban ministry is a complicated process. While formal theological education is not a biblical requirement, those who have the opportunity to pursue a seminary education will greatly benefit from their investment. The greatest benefit will come from institutions who emphasize the exegesis of both the text of Scripture and the context of the culture, the location, and the congregation. However, this type of education will only happen in the seminary training if institutions are willing to make radical changes. Therefore, it will most likely necessitate a pastoral mentorship. During this mentorship the pastor should guide the student in the understanding of basic missional terms and a willingness to approach the Scripture through an urban lens. He must encourage each candidate in his personal commitment to Christ by teaching the necessity of establishing boundaries, delegating responsibilities, and maintaining a vision for kingdom involvement.

IV. Equipping Leaders to Grow the Church

Church growth does not happen by chance. A pastor must give constant attention to the work of the ministry. Unfortunately, many pastors resort to gimmicks and manipulation in an effort to “make” God bless the church. Instead of resorting to the base methods promoted by the church marketing movement, prospective urban pastors must return to the exegesis of the text and the community to develop a plan for sustained church growth. In the end, the plan should include a combination of gleaning from the church planting ministry of the Apostle Paul, learning how to incorporate the social sciences, and becoming skilled in leading small group ministry.

A. The Pauline Church Planting Model

David Hesselgrave provides a concise church planting paradigm from his studies on the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul (47-48):

1. Missionaries Commissioned – Acts 13:1-4; 15:39-40
2. Audience Contacted – Acts 13:14-16; 14:1; 16:13-15
3. Gospel Communicated – Acts 13:17-41; 16:31
4. Hearers Converted – Acts 13:48; 16:14-15
5. Believers Congregated – Acts 13:43
6. Faith Confirmed – Acts 14:21-22; 15:41
7. Leadership Consecrated – Acts 14:23
8. Believers Commended – Acts 14:23; 16:40
9. Relationships Continued – Acts 15:36; 18:23
10. Sending Churches Convened – Acts 14:26-27; 15:1-4

B. Incorporating the Social Sciences

1. Assessing the need

In the Manila Manifesto of the second Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1989, Ralph Winters provided the following scientific reasons why cross-cultural planting was needed in order to effectively reach the world.

(Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond, 29-30)

- a. 570 million (10% of the world’s population) are Bible-believing Christians.

- b. 1,300 million (20% of the world's population) are other Christians... those standing within the Christian tradition but not committed.
- c. 1,660 million (30% of the world's population) are culturally near non-Christians... those living in cultures that have already been penetrated by the Christian faith.
- d. 2,170 million (40% of the world's population) are culturally distant non-Christians.

2. Addressing the need

- a. Learn how to communicate the gospel across cultural boundaries
- b. Learn how to qualify the level of cross-cultural communication necessary to reach each people group
- c. Learn how to conduct demographic research
 - (1. Select a location – target city
 - (2. Research the city on the internet – www.uscensus.gov & www.city-data.com
 - (3. Develop a series of question
 - (4. Observe the community in person
 - (5. Interview selected people
 - (6. Write a report
 - (7. Review the report with others on your leadership team
- d. Learn how to conduct ethnographic research

Application:

Prospective urban church planters must seek a better way to connect with their community. Connecting anthropology with a Christian witness involves teaching prospective urban pastors how to develop the skills of social analysis with a particular emphasis on demographic reports and ethnographies.

Conclusion:

I. Equipping the congregation with a proper ecclesiology

In an effort to appreciate the significance of the local church, a prospective urban church planter will benefit greatly from a careful study of the biblical metaphors used to describe the church. In addition to reviewing the biblical metaphors for the church, a prospective urban church planter will find hope by examining the biblical background for the inception of the church, the expansion of the church, and the expectation for the church.

II. Identifying Leadership within the Church

Equipped with a proper understanding of what the 21st Century church can glean from the 1st Century church, prospective church leaders must learn how to serve and participate in ongoing church growth.

The primary method for facilitating church leadership development is a one year mentorship between a seasoned pastor and a prospective church leader that would lead to ordination. Identifying prospective leaders for the church includes a proper motivation for leadership development and recognition of leadership qualifications. Pastors should be motivated to develop future leaders in the church because it is the only way to effectively reproduce the church and because of the confidence that leadership is ultimately a gift from God. In other words, the sovereign Lord ordained the process of leadership development.

Before ordaining a prospective church leader, pastors and congregations should carefully examine the qualification of potential candidates by looking for evidence of a clear calling and a strong moral character. Academic credentials alone do not make one qualified for pastoral ministry. In the end, the ordination process should be taken seriously and viewed as an act of worship. If handled creatively, the ordination process provides a wonderful vehicle to train future leaders in an urban context.

III. Equipping Leadership to Serve in the Church

During the ordination process the pastor should guide the student in the understanding of basic missional terms and a willingness to approach the Scripture through an urban lens. He must encourage each candidate in his personal commitment to Christ by teaching the necessity of establishing boundaries, delegating responsibilities, and maintaining a vision for kingdom involvement.

Throughout the one year mentorship, a prospective pastor must constantly reevaluate the value of any formal education he received prior to the mentorship. While formal theological education is not a biblical requirement, those who have the opportunity to pursue a seminary education will greatly benefit from their investment. The greatest benefit will come from institutions who emphasize the exegesis of both the text of Scripture and the context of the culture, the location, and the congregation. However, this type of education will only happen in the seminary training

if institutions are willing to make radical changes. Therefore, it will most likely necessitate adjustment in ministry philosophy as he engages in hands-on ministry.

IV. Equipping Leaders to Grow the Church

Finally, we examined the reality that equipping leaders to grow the church is a necessity for the prospective urban church planter. The process should include an examination of the Pauline cycle, the implementation of the social sciences, and the organization of small groups for the following three reasons: The Pauline Cycle proposed by Hesselgrave provides a wonderful standard for prospective church planters to consider. Of course, each of the descriptions must be contextualized to meet the needs of the current context. The need for contextualization gives credence to using the social sciences to better understand his ministry context. By implementing the social sciences, a prospective church planter will have a realistic perspective of the current challenges yet to be faced in the community. After a biblical model is identified and the data has been collected, the prospective church planter will need to determine how to address the needs found in his community. While small group ministry is not the solution to every challenge faced by an urban church planter, by organizing a church around small groups the church will develop an atmosphere where every member counts and multiplication that could lead to future church planting, is encouraged. In the end, the investment in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission through planting urban churches and training urban church leaders has eternal value that provides genuine purpose to life.