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Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

THE VINEYARD MOVEMENT AND CITIES:
A THOUGHTFUL ENGAGEMENT


Written by

CHRISTOPHER MEEKINS

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary
upon the recommendation of the undersigned reader:


Kurt Fredrickson

Date Received: September 14, 2015

THE VINEYARD MOVEMENT AND CITIES:
A THOUGHTFUL ENGAGEMENT

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

CHRISTOPHER MEEKINS
AUGUST 2015

ABSTRACT

The Vineyard Movement and Cities

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Doctor of Ministry

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2015

The world is urbanizing. Cities continue to grow and thrive. Local churches in the Vineyard Movement are faced with the challenge of considering how their contextualized ecclesiology can and should be expressed in growing metropolitan regions. To address this challenge, this ministry focus paper seeks to consider how these imminent urban complexities should be interpreted and engaged by existing local Vineyard churches and church plants as well as embraced by future metropolitan planters.

The purpose of this project in three parts is, through the lenses of a renewal theological position, to equip, connect, and mobilize Vineyard national leaders, Vineyard local pastors, and Vineyard church planters for the challenges that lay ahead. First, the project will equip these groups to understand how renewal theology matches with Vineyard empowerment theology. They will understand the growing reality of metropolitan regions in the United States. Second, the project will connect churches and their members who desire to engage strategic metropolitan areas throughout the United States. Third, the project will mobilize the Vineyard Movement and local Vineyard churches to engage with new tools and resources for developing a contextualized urban ecclesiological strategy.

In order to aggregate Vineyard pastors and leaders around a new urban ecclesiology, a pilot project will be created. This metropolitan strategy and network initiative will serve as the connection point for Vineyard pastors and leaders. It will equip, connect, and mobilize leaders to understand their cities and how to missionally contextualize their faith. Qualifying churches and leaders will be identified. Resources for equipping will be developed and shared. Events combining both learning and connecting will be launched. Special consideration will be given to the “equip, connect, mobilize” strategy structure.

Content Reader: Kurt Fredrickson, PhD

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To my parents, Chris and Joyce Meekins, who always encouraged me to love God and
love others.

To my wife, Nicole, you have always believed in me. You are my love and my world.

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PART ONE
MINISTRY CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Friedman once wrote: “Change is hard. Change is hardest on those caught by surprise. Change is hardest on those who have difficulty changing too. But change is natural; change is not new; change is important.”¹ This project is an examination of changes taking place in our cities today—social, spiritual, cultural, and economic. Vineyard Churches must learn how to respond to it.

The future of the United States will be exciting and promising but different from the experience of the last century. Many assumptions about life with God, family dynamics, real friendships, effective politics, and the built environment will change. Yet people will likely reminisce and nostalgically yearn for the old. The future will certainly mean change, but our memories will remember the way life used to be.

Much of the change that is expected will be catalyzed in our urban centers. Ed Glaeser, professor of economics at Harvard University says that cities are, by definition, “the absence of physical space between people and firms.”² All areas of life will be affected. Just as one domino stacked in a row can affect all the other dominoes, so too, does geographical proximity affect almost all areas of life. Consider just two dominoes: population and influence.

With regard to population, more than half of the United States lives in a large city. Recent data indicates that metropolitan populations continue to grow exponentially and show no signs of slowing. Such growth is significant in two ways. First, and most

¹ Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, rev. ed. (New York: Picador, 2007), 21.

² Edward Glaeser, *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), 12, Kindle Edition.

surprisingly, most American principal cities have either maintained or grown in the urban center demonstrating the rise of the consumer city. Second, despite how they have seem to have fallen out of favor among the hip culture, the suburban regions surrounding urban centers cities continue to multiply at a faster rate than city centers. The growth of the suburbs and the trend of single use planning is so strong that a new academic geographical category has been created: the megapolitan. A megapolitan is a region containing large city and suburban sprawl covering hundreds of miles and sometimes crossing state boundaries (Southern California, I-35 Belt, the Sun Belt, Boston to DC). Yes, the future of the United States will look very metropolitan. A rise in density will affect many aspects of the urbanite including housing stock, transportation issues, political values, spiritual values, and even our family values. The more people are closely connected, the more they must comprehend the vast differences and intricacies related to such aggregation.

With regard to influence, cities continue to maintain it and will only continue to grow in it in the future. In fact, cities will become even more important than they are right now. They are the influencers and the culture makers. Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City writes, “The significance of cities today lies not only in their growing size but also in their growing influence, and this influence is due to the rise of globalization.”³ Cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and DC (just to name a few) will continue to influence the United States. The people living in those cities have a disproportionate impact on the rest of American

³ Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 137.

culture. Cities will continue to influence the decisions and the trajectory of the nation because on many levels that is where cultural and economic decisions are made.

Currently, I live in Columbus, Ohio. The fact is that people in Columbus pay attention to and care what happens in New York and Los Angeles—not the other way around.

Yet cities are so much more than the sum total of their population and their influence. Harvie Conn argues that “cities are not isolated blips of society, independent nodes of administration and commerce. They connect things rural and urban, powerful and powerless, religious and cultural in connecting networks of dependency, holism and mutual interaction.”⁴ In cities, we find the sum of humanity connecting with one another to share their lives and their cultural goods. It is the place where beings made in God’s image choose to engage others.

While some American Christians may be hostile to the city and may have developed a reactionary ecclesiology, the Bible paints a different picture. Tim Keller writes, “The biblical view of cities is neither hostile nor romantic. Because the city is humanity intensified — a magnifying glass that brings out the very best and worst of human nature — it has a dual nature.”⁵ Christians are called to manage the tension of engaging the best of human nature and rejecting the worst. They are called to engage the city because that is where God’s image is found—in people. They are called to reject the sins and brokenness of the city but remain committed to it. It is my belief that Christians have a duty to engage people where they can be found. In the future, most people will

⁴ Harvie M. Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City and the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 532-33, Kindle Edition.

⁵ Timothy Keller, *Center Church*, 135.

dwell in cities. Therefore, because God loves people, we need to be able to effectively, responsibly, and dutifully carry out in obedience God's love for cities.

However, Christian engagement is not an easy task. John Stott articulates two types of needs. First, he calls for social engagement. He writes, "This process of urbanization... constitutes a great challenge to the Christian church. On the one hand, there is an urgent need for Christian planners and architects, local government politicians, urban specialists, developers and community social workers, who will work for justice, peace, freedom and beauty in the city."⁶ Stott's doctrinal view of God's primacy and sovereignty inform the Christian's authority to engage culture and to transform it. Second, Stott recognizes that Christians must suffer and must live in relationships of reciprocity in order to communicate another aspect of the Gospel. He writes, "On the other, Christians need to move into the cities, and experience the pains and pressures of living there, in order to win city-dwellers for Christ. Commuter Christianity (living in salubrious suburbia and commuting to an urban church) is no substitute for incarnational involvement."⁷ Missional living—living in a way that demonstrates authentic sympathy—is an essential value of Jesus's message and is therefore an essential central component to a Christian ecclesiology in cities.

As a pastor and leader within the Vineyard Association of Churches, I have felt a specific call to prepare others and myself for the coming changes in the United States. My call has been informed in three ways. First, my personal call to cities has been born out of my natural love for them. Nothing excites me more than to watch the flourishing

⁶ John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church and the World* (Leicester, England: IVP Academic, 1994), 292.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 293.

and creativity of people operating in our urban centers. Naturally, I have felt that it is our duty to pay attention not only to the Holy Spirit's direction by joining him in his specific work, but also to pay attention to the changing context around us.

Second, my reading of the Bible has driven my call. From the prophet Jeremiah calling for God followers to seek the prosperity of the city to Paul the Apostle's overall argument that the Christian's duty was to join God's renewal work. I feel that it is just not my personal call. Rather, it is a large theme important to our God.

Third, I strongly believe the Vineyard Movement is uniquely positioned in the United States to effectively join God in his work to our cities. From John Wimber to Rich Nathan to Jay Pathak and others, the Vineyard Movement has sought to understand the heart of the Father as well as the heart of the contexts we seek to reach. While the financial and time obligations required to engage cities are great, it will be easier for the Vineyard Movement to adjust early on and make the jump to embracing the coming realities of cities.

In my experience with the Vineyard, I have found an opportunity to further develop our desire to see the miraculous healing of people and our land as we embrace the engagement of our cities. We must move beyond simply acknowledging the importance of cities by activating the network toward long-term commitment to engagement. We must also move beyond treating cities as equals to easier rural and outlying towns. Yes, small towns and rural areas are important, but will be easier to reach long-term if we effectively engage the city.

My project will equip, connect, and mobilize Vineyard national leaders, Vineyard local pastors, and Vineyard church planters for the challenges that lay ahead. This will be

accomplished in three ways. First, the project will equip these groups with resources on the basics of Vineyard's Kingdom theology and renewal and its connection to thoughtful engagement of cities. The project will also provide its readers with an understanding of the growing realities of metropolitan regions in the United States. Second, the project will connect Vineyard Churches with one another so that they may create organic and thoughtful strategies for engagement throughout the United States. Third, the project will provide a framework for mobilizing the Vineyard Movement and local Vineyard churches to engage with new tools and resources for developing a contextualized metropolitan ecclesiological strategy.

The project will be offered in three sections. The first section will explore the realities of cities in North America. Great changes should be expected in the United States. These changes will not only affect the way city dwellers live, work, and worship but also their suburban and rural equivalents' way of life. The section will also explore large pieces of the theological framework governing the general thought life of Americans which will lead to how the Vineyard is uniquely positioned to join God's work in specifically in cities.

The second section will engage the doctrinal, theological, and sociological data pertinent to the explicit challenges surrounding the development of a metropolitan ecclesiology on both a national and local level. The project will review central theological sources by addressing a specific ministry challenges while supporting a renewal Kingdom theological viewpoint. This section will explore a handful of the leading ideas among respected sociologists and urban planners, and how these concepts can and will affect the American public. Special consideration will be given to

comparable similarities between the process of an urban planner and a local metropolitan pastor.

In the third section, I shall offer a pilot project for the Vineyard Movement that will focus on the adoption of a new idea: metropolitan ecclesiology. The Vineyard Metropolis Initiative will serve as the equipping, connection and mobilization point for pastors and leaders. It will teach, link, and activate pastors to understand their cities and how to missionally contextualize their faith together as an association. The goal of the pilot project is to offer a strategy that will guide the movement to work together over the next twenty years.

I honestly believe that God is renewing all things. I love the fact that I am a part of a group of churches that loves to watch God work. My hope and prayer for my readers are that God might stir something in them and consider the amazing potentiality of God found in our cities among people made in his image. May you feel a sense and direction from God's Spirit as you seek to ask and understand if God is leading you to embrace a part of his call to love our cities.

CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO CITIES AND THE VINEYARD MOVEMENT

The United States is on a sharp trajectory towards urbanization. In the year 1800 in the US, the urbanized population was roughly 300,000. By 1900, it was roughly 3 million with a national population of 76 million.¹ The forces behind such urbanization were natural population growth, side effects from the industrial revolution, and the development of low cost transportation.² Most of such development was concentrated and built in high density.

However, as the values and the appetites of the twentieth century began to change, a new kind of population growth began to emerge: the suburbs. Metropolitan areas were still growing at an exponential rate, but were doing so through a process of decentralization. The suburbs began to boom. In fact, according to the 2010 census, “The suburban population of the United States is now larger than the nonmetropolitan and central-city populations combined. For population, the big decentralizing force was the

¹ John M. Levy, *Contemporary Urban Planning*, 10th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2013), 9.

² *Ibid.*, 10.

automobile. Its speed and flexibility of route and schedule were preconditions for large scale suburbanization.”³

Furthermore, in the late 1950s the US prioritized the building a national interstate highway system. This system changed the way American thought about distance. With automobiles and highways at their fingertips, Americans rapidly chose to suburbanize to take advantage of both the city and some sense of safety and space offered by a metropolitan region.

Today, the US population is roughly 318 million people. The majority of Americans live in large cities—both metropolitan and megapolitan regions. Much of the most recent census data reveals that many of America’s largest cities are getting even bigger.⁴

The top ten largest metropolitan statistical areas starting with the largest are: New York-Newark-Jersey City, Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, Dallas-Fort-Worth-Arlington, Houston-TheWoodlands-Sugarland, Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, Miami-Fort-Lauderdale-West Palm-Beach, Atlanta-Sandy-Springs-Roswell, Boston-Cambridge-Newton. The approximate population of these areas is 80 million. It makes up roughly 25 percent of the US population.⁵

The top twenty-one largest metropolitan statistical areas include: San-Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, Riverside-San-Bernardino-Ontario

³ Levy, *Contemporary Urban Planning*, 17.

⁴ “2010 Census,” <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf> (accessed March 12, 2015).

⁵ Ibid.

(shockingly not included in LA but connected), Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, Minneapolis-St-Paul-Bloomington, San-Diego-Carlsbad, Tampa-St.-Petersburg-Clearwater, St-Louis, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, and Denver-Aurora-Lakewood. The approximate population of these areas is 37 million. It makes up roughly 11 percent of the US population.⁶

The top twenty-one metropolitan statistical areas make up a total of 36 percent of the total population. The top fifty-one metropolitan statistical areas all rank over 1 million in population and total approximately 144 million people, or 45 percent of the total US population. Furthermore, approximately 51 percent of all Americans live in cities containing populations of 500,000 or greater.⁷

This urbanizing trend is not limited to the US. The entire planet is urbanizing at an incredible rate. Glaeser writes, “Five million more people every month live in the cities of the developing world, and in 2011, more than half the world’s population is urban.”⁸ Yes, it is true, the world is urbanizing. It is urbanizing for good reasons too. The future of Americans is an urban one, which leads to an enormous amount of complexity and trends for a variety of peoples and contexts.

Most recently in the past ten years, there has been a surge toward New Urbanism in American cities. So even within the metropolis, there is noticeable cultural interest in dense living in America’s urban centers. According to John Levy, “In the first decade of this century the population decline of the nation’s largest cities appeared to come to a

⁶ “2010 Census,” <http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk> (accessed March 12, 2015).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 50-51.

halt. Of the fifty largest cities in the United States in 2010 only three—Detroit, Chicago, and Cleveland—lost population between 2000 and 2010.”⁹ The United States has shifted from existing as a relatively unpopulated agrarian countryside into becoming one of the most populated nations with an interesting mix of urban, suburban, exurban, metropolitan, and megapolitan planning.

It could be argued that the world will look very different in the next twenty-five years. Glaeser writes, “Two hundred forty-three million Americans crowd together in the 3 percent of the country that is urban. Thirty-six million people live in and around Tokyo, the most productive metropolitan area in the world. Twelve million people reside in central Mumbai, and Shanghai is almost as large.”¹⁰ The entire human experience may change before our very eyes within one generation.

Committed Christians must consider the realities of an urbanizing world. They must understand and adapt to the cultural landscape and the implications for a city’s inhabitants. From the dense urban environments of Manhattan to the endless suburban sprawls of Houston, Christians must embrace this changing experience affected of modern cities. Below, I highlight five new realities.

First, as cities continue to expand, more poor people will choose to live within its city limits. Glaeser makes an interesting point about the opportunities of cities. He writes, “Cities don’t make people poor; they attract poor people. The flow of less advantaged people into cities from Rio to Rotterdam demonstrates urban strength, not weakness.”¹¹

⁹ Levy, *Contemporary Urban Planning*, 21.

¹⁰ Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 45.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 202-03.

Therefore, in a seemingly backwards yet genius logic, it could be argued that a city's large poor population is a testament to its strength. The challenge for the American church is to understand and engage the inevitable growth of the urban poor and their needs.

Second, the future of cities is connected to harder work environments. Its inhabitants can and should expect to work harder and longer because “statistical evidence finds that young professionals today work longer hours if they live in a metropolitan area with plenty of competitors in their own occupational niche.”¹² Corollary research also finds that organizations located near inventive activity within their industry see an increase in competitive productivity.¹³ People who live in cities may get to enjoy the consumer benefits of the region, but must also be willing to welcome greater competition for their jobs. Longer and harder work is simply a byproduct of a highly competitive market. The challenge for the American Church is to learn how to assist people who feel such pressures and to provide them with the tools they need to succeed.

Third, the future of cities will demand more face-to-face contact. Contrary to the current popularity of telecommuting jobs as well as social networking websites, most research find that technology does not replace the benefits of face to face interactions within a given geographical proximity. According to Jevons's Complementarity Corollary, “improvements in information technology can lead to more demand for face-to-face contact, because face time complements time spent communicating

¹² Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 638-39.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 659-60.

electronically.”¹⁴ The jobs of the future within cities will likely involve a stronger human connection. The challenge for the American Church is to decipher whether this trend affects multisite strategies, online churches, and how true biblical community can be built sustainably within a metropolitan context.

Fourth, the future of cities will be affected by the population growth of consumers. The consumer city is on the rise—meaning that there is a growing segment in the US population that can and will choose to live in a particular metropolitan region in order to take advantage of its amenities. In fact, “Counties in the bottom quarter of areas based on this index had no population growth, on average. The high-amenity counties also saw real median incomes grow by 28 percent, as opposed to 14 percent in the low-amenity counties. The consumer city is on the rise.”¹⁵ The wealthy can and will choose neighborhoods, schools, and business opportunities that enable the type of lifestyle they prefer. Cities of the future will not be filled with just the poor—although we should expect this too. Rather, cities will be filled larger concentrations of the wealthy—not just financially well off, but those who are culturally wealthy. The challenge for the American church is to consider how it might effectively engage and empower city dwellers across socio-economic lines.

Fifth, the future of cities will likely become more homogenous and more segregated. According to Bill Bishop, sociologist, there is growing segregation in the United States not driven by migration alone, which he calls “The Big Sort.” Americans are sorting themselves into ideological enclaves. This cultural shift is enormous in size. It

¹⁴ Glaeser, *Triumph of the City*, 688-89.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 297-99.

is “a cultural shift powered by prosperity and economic security. People are reordering their lives around their values, their tastes, and their beliefs. The Big Sort is big because it constituted a social and economic reordering around values, ways of life, and communities of interest.”¹⁶ The American metropolis of the future may look diverse, but deep within it there will be a homogeneous sorting taking place. People will be searching for their tribe—the community of others who look, think and act similarly. They will be sorted and segregated on every possible ideology: social, political, cultural, spiritual, religious, economical, and sexual. The list could go on and on. The challenge for the American church is to consider the implications of the Big Sort. Should it simply accept homogeneous sorting as an inevitable reality of pluralism and globalization, or should it consider how to counter such mono-cultural momentum by prioritizing opportunities to develop of multicultural communities?

All of these trends (along with many others) affect the beliefs of Americans and American Christians. The increase in pluralism as well as competing trends in American cities leads most theological interpreters to conclude that while Christianity is a major influence in the culture, it is not the only influence. Furthermore, it is unhelpful to refer the nation as distinctly Christian—even when examining its founding connection and influence by and from Judeo-Christian principles. There are those within the American Christian Church who will lament the loss of a common language and simple culture associated with Christianity and the West. Due to the rise of various competing philosophies, scientific method and assumed familiarity, there are many who have chosen

¹⁶ Bill Bishop, *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America Is Tearing Us Apart*, (Boston: Mariner Books, 2009), 12.

to disregard the common culture of Christianity in the United States leading the nation to the acceptance of the new reality of a post-Christian culture.

There is a noticeable correlation between post-Christian Western European cities and growing US cities. However, most experts agree the US may not become as post-Christian as Europe has become in the last half of the twentieth century. Oddly enough, there is new evidence to suggest that parts of Europe may be entering a time of desecularization. If this is the case, it is possible to conclude that the secularizing effect that became popular in Europe may not do so to the same extent in American cities. The trend may skip past the US. Yet sociologists are aware that there may be a co-occurrence of secularization and desecularization taking place simultaneously in a given context. I shall return to this topic in Chapter 3.

Regardless, even if the trends toward or against desecularization are unclear, Christians can no longer assume their language and subcultural practices can and will be understood by the general public. Craig Van Gelder writes: “The erosion of functional Christendom and the advent of postmodernity have revealed the limitations of [various] approaches in the face of an increasingly complex and differentiated cultural situation. No single size fits all, and postmodern generations tend to be highly suspicious of prepackaged versions of church.”¹⁷ He continues, “There is now an opportunity to participate in a powerful new era of missional innovation, experimentation, and diversification regarding how church is organized. Church organization must emerge organically from the Spirit’s work in local contexts as congregations and other forms of

¹⁷ Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 158.

Christian community are gathered, renewed, and sent. This transformation begins with attending to the missional Triune God's movement in our midst and in the world."¹⁸

Post modernity has many shades, colors, and textures. It is simply not enough to disregard the entire line of thinking without seriously considering the myriad of ways it can function within a given American city. John Franke and Stanley Grenz articulate a popular American sentiment: "Post modernity embraces the narratives of particular peoples and celebrates the diversity and plurality of the world without attempting to discover a grand scheme into which all these particular stories must fit."¹⁹

The challenge for the American Church will be to consider the breadth and spectrum of ecclesiology that can address the hopes, fears, dreams, and suspicions of metropolitan populations. A one-size-fits-all mentality regarding church will most likely fall to the wayside in favor of spectrum thinking. Depending upon one's perspective, the challenges of the church could seem to be detrimental while others may view this shift in the American mindset as a pathway toward new possibilities for expansion into new and healthy expressions of ecclesial diversity.

Vineyard Movement has enjoyed a recent history of engaging the postmodern culture. John Wimber, a musician with The Righteous Brothers, had a radical conversion experience in the 1960s. Later in his pastoral career, he embraced a radical shift toward practicing supernatural power through miracles that might lead to inward regeneration and conversion among Southern Californian baby boomers in the growing post-modern and post-Christian context of the 1980s and 90s. Eventually, through trial, error, and

¹⁸ Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 158.

¹⁹ Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 23.

God's leading John and his friends formed a loose association of churches called the Vineyard.

Bill Jackson, a historian on the Vineyard Movement, highlighted John's fundamental belief that "Christians had been called to heal the sick in the same way as they are called to evangelize. Not only was healing to be a normal part of church life, but Christians had also been commissioned to heal and to cast out demons."²⁰ In fact, in his book, *Power Evangelism*, John articulated that he desired to be connected to the power of God for the purpose of seeing people's hearts and minds changed and oriented toward the person of Jesus.

Early on in the development of the Vineyard, John Wimber prioritized church planting. John had been quite connected with Peter Wagner and the Church Growth Movement ideas happening at Fuller. He believed that church growth research verified that the best way to build a healthy community so the general public could be introduced to the person of Jesus was to plant new churches.²¹ New churches created new opportunities to make new friends and bring all that a Christian was learning to a new segment of the population. To summarize the ingenuity of the Vineyard under the leadership of Wimber, we should point to his desire to develop new churches through conversion growth by using power evangelism as a central method.

My home church, Vineyard Columbus, has continued to develop the initial ideas set forth by Wimber and the Vineyard Movement. Vineyard Columbus experienced

²⁰ Bill Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle: A History of the Vineyard* (Cape Town: Vineyard International Publishing, 1999), 890, Kindle Edition.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1214.

incredible church growth in the late 90s and early 2000s. Rich Nathan, the senior pastor of Vineyard Columbus has continued to develop Wimber's ideas through preaching and the writing of books.

Rich has written extensively on his support of Kingdom theology embraced by the early Vineyard beyond just the observance of power encounters for the purpose of personal conversion. He writes, "We want to be a church that does everything with great passion, great intelligence and great integrity. We want to embrace the message of the kingdom of God and see people experience salvation both in their spiritual and material lives. We want to see the shalom of God come to our city, our nation and the world! We are absolutely committed to being a Both-And church."²² Rather than feeling forced to choose one particular direction and ignoring the other, Rich desires the church to be both-and in every area.

For example, God's people are to be both committed to power encounters with the Holy Spirit, and committed to serious theological understanding. God's people are to be committed to both the economic prosperity of all people, and committed to take responsibility for the poor, the widow, the immigrant, and the orphan. According to Rich, Christians are called to live in the tension of the culture which demands that we choose one or the other and we are to be an act as both for the sake of Christ.

Rich's views also reaffirm a commitment to the Holy Spirit's leading in all aspects of life. He writes: "Apart from the Holy Spirit, we Christians have nothing. Our coming to Jesus is the product of the Holy Spirit. Our Christian growth is a result of the

²² Rich Nathan, *Both-And: Living the Christ-Centered Life in an Either-Or World*. (Boise, ID: IVP Books, 2013), 19.

Holy Spirit, and our unity in the church is created by the Holy Spirit.”²³ Our evangelism is empowered by...and our knowledge of God’s Word is a result of... the Holy Spirit. Our healing, our casting out of demons, the restoration of marriages and families, our insight into the things of God, our servanthood, our Christian character: these things all come from the Holy Spirit. The Christian life is life “in the Spirit.”²⁴ For Rich, not only are all aspects of our faith connected to the Holy Spirit, but we also see signs of something new emerging. Rich’s posture welcomes the work of the Holy Spirit into opportunities beyond functional dualism. I will explore this idea further in Chapters 3 and 4 because I believe it holds the key to something unique regarding the Holy Spirit’s influence into various Kuyperian spheres of influence.

Jay Pathak is another pastor in the Vineyard exploring the idea of the Holy Spirit influencing various areas of life. His congregation in Denver, Colorado has taken the concept of renewal and developed a strategy for engaging people on a neighborhood level. He writes, “The majority of the issues that our community is facing would be eliminated or drastically reduced if we could just figure out a way to become a community of great neighbors.”²⁵ Rather than becoming reactively paralyzed by the overwhelming amount of challenges in a city, Pathak’s desire is to teach every Christian how to interact with other through developed capacities in which they have been circumstantially empowered to do so. He argues that being a good neighbor can lead to

²³ Nathan, *Both-And*, 43.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁵ Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon, *The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 19.

increased interaction, networking, and eventually organization that addresses various district, city, and regional issues.

The Vineyard's history, theology, and values make it suitable for metropolitan engagement. Its current thinkers and leaders are continuing to develop an ecclesiology that makes it adaptable to pluralistic contexts often associated with cities. One way to measure its current influence and status is to assess its total amount of established churches and church plants and their geographical locations.

Today, there are approximately 1,500 Vineyard Churches in the world, and there are over 550 in the United States located within sixteen regions of the country.²⁶ In 2013, Vineyard USA launched a massive effort to plant 750 new Vineyard Churches in the next ten years. In 2013, twenty-nine new Vineyard churches were planted. In 2014, twenty-three churches were planted.²⁷ Of these fifty-two churches, nine were planted near a top ten metropolitan statistical area, and five were planted either in the city proper or fairly close to traditional urban density.

According to the Vineyard USA website, there are approximately eighty-eight established churches and forty-eight church plants within the ten most populated metropolitan statistical areas in the United States. In New York-New Jersey-CT Metro, there are nine churches and four church plants. In LA/Orange Country Metro, there are twenty-seven churches, and seven plants. In the Greater Chicago area, there are eleven churches and seven plants. In Dallas Metro, there are three churches and four plants. In Houston metro, there are eight churches and one plant. In Philly Metro, there are four

²⁶ "Vineyard USA," <http://www.vineyardusa.org/site/about/vineyard-history> (accessed March 12, 2015).

²⁷ Multiply Vineyard, <http://multiplyvineyard.org> (accessed March 12, 2015).

churches and one plant. In DC Metro, there are two plants. In Miami Metro, there are two churches and one plant. In Atlanta Metro, there are four churches and two plants. In Boston Metro, there are two churches and one plant.²⁸

Certain patterns emerge within these metropolitan regions with most Vineyard churches and plants tend to be suburban. Nearly all congregate far from the urban center and principal city. For example, of the nine churches and four church plants in greater New York area, there is one established church and one missional home church plant in New York City. Of the twenty-seven churches and seven plants in LA/Orange County Metro, there are three established churches and one church plant in Los Angeles city proper. It should be noted that an additional three churches and one plant are within LA's considerably urban landscape while the rest are located in the suburbs or Orange County. The pattern is consistent throughout the other top ten cities.

Currently, there is no official specific strategy for engaging large cities, high-density urban centers, or high population metropolitan areas. The attitude towards cities and the popular trends in Christian literature (such as Timothy Keller) has been anecdotally positive among Vineyard leadership. The only specific church planting strategy is the Vineyard's Small Town Initiative designed to help church planters who "have a heart to plant" in rural America.²⁹

Just as there are many new realities facing cities and their inhabitants, there are new realities Vineyard Churches and their plants must consider now so that they are

²⁸ Vineyard USA, "Vineyard History," <http://www.vineyardusa.org/site/about/vineyard-history> (accessed March 12, 2015).

²⁹ Multiply Vineyard, "Small Town USA," <http://multiplyvineyard.org/small-town/> (accessed March 12, 2015).

ready for the future. cursory research into the majority Vineyard churches' locations reveals most are located outside of the urban center and most are not located in our country's most populated areas. Most of the churches located somewhat nearby large cities, are smaller in attendance with a corresponding influence.

PART TWO
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout the development of this project, scores of resources served to guide and instruct the author. In particular, there were seven resources that served the project in a profound way. In this chapter these resources will be evaluated through the lenses of the project's thesis. The contribution of each resource to the topic of city renewal and a metropolitan ecclesiology will be identified, and the limitations of each resource will also be outlined.

Surprised by Hope

by N.T. Wright

N.T. Wright explores how to adequately frame the Christian worldview of the future, and how to reframe questionable eschatology for those who proscribe to a dualistic reductionist soteriology. He accomplishes these goals in two ways. First, he clarifies the Christian Gospel, the hope connected with Jesus's death, and the resurrection's implications for his followers' concept of eternal life. Second, he argues for Christians to choose to explore the untapped dimensions and implications of

resurrection hope in the present world and how this new empowered reality affects our current church communities and our neighborhoods.

Wright clarifies that everything the Christian believes is contingent upon the resurrection, and that that single event should lead Jesus followers to participation in the renewal of all things. He accomplishes these goals by asking two questions: What is Christian hope, and what does hope have to do with our present world? He writes, “But if the Christian hope is for God’s new creation, for “new heavens and new earth,” and if that hope has already come to life in Jesus of Nazareth, then there is every reason to join the two questions together. And if that is so, we find that answering the one is also answering the other.”¹ Christians are called to hope by joining God in his redemptive and restoring work here and now.

Wright argues that when the Bible refers to heaven, it does not necessarily refer to the human’s ultimate destination. He writes that Heaven, as we have come to understand it, is not our destiny. Wright argues, “God made heaven and earth; at the last he will remake both and join them together forever. And when we come to the picture of the actual end in Revelation 21–22, we find not ransomed souls making their way to a disembodied heaven but rather the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven to earth, uniting the two in a lasting embrace.”² According to Wright, heaven is good and desirable, but it is not the final objective. Christians should welcome the realities of heaven to transform the brokenness of the current world now while hoping for a completely restored earth similar to heaven.

¹ N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 5.

² *Ibid.*, 19.

Surprised by Hope makes numerous contributions to my work. I will highlight three. First, the book provides a clear definition of the church's role irrespective of challenges and consequences of a city context: "The mission of the church must therefore reflect, and be shaped by, the future hope as the New Testament presents it. I believe that if we take these three areas—justice, beauty, and evangelism—in terms of the anticipation of God's eventual setting to rights of the whole world, we will find that they dovetail together and in fact that they are all part of the same larger whole, which is the message of hope and new life that comes with the good news of Jesus's resurrection."³ Resurrection hope informs our actual choices and action in the world.

Second, the book specifically mentions the vocation of city planner—a major component of my work: "The church that takes sacred space seriously not as a retreat from the world but as a bridgehead into it will go straight from worshipping in the sanctuary to debating in the council chamber—discussing matters of town planning, of harmonizing and humanizing beauty in architecture, in green spaces, in road traffic schemes, and (not least in the rural areas, which are every bit as needy) in environmental work, creative and healthy farming methods, and proper use of resources."⁴ Wright continues, "If it is true, as I have argued, that the whole world is now God's holy land, we must not rest as long as that land is spoiled and defaced. This is not an extra to the church's mission."⁵ As I will argue later in Chapters 3 and 4, the built environment is the stage upon which the human experience takes place. It is upon this stage that humans

³ Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 230.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 265-66.

⁵ *Ibid.*

either allow or disallow others to flourish. Wright sees a connection between the built environment and the Church's commitment to Christian hope.

Lastly, Wright provides a detailed understanding of how the Apostle Paul was very much concerned with human flourishing by helping his readers understand the first century context. This has proved to be very helpful in my work because part of my role in the past has been to influence and convince other Christians to read the New Testament differently. It is much easier to influence new Christians, or even Christians who have little theological training. However, it is those who have been steeped in traditional readings of Scripture that have trouble relearning how to interpret Paul's intentions within the text. The reality is that Christians must recognize their need for assistance and support other Christians as they seek to shape culture and influence the built environment. Wright's deep understanding of the first century world is understandable scholarship that assists and empowers Christian leaders toward a more comprehensive view of God's renewal work.

To Change the World

by James Davison Hunter

James Davison Hunter argues that the Christian's desire to change the world is possible, but more complex and misunderstood by the current American theological landscape. His implicit argument suggests that the average impulsive Christian ought to consider a plan for learning about the failed attempts to change the world throughout history or the broken past is bound to repeat itself. Hunter deconstructs many popular Western Christian cultural world changing ideas arguing that the "dominant ways of

thinking about culture and cultural change are flawed, for they are based on both specious social science and problematic theology.”⁶ Ultimately, he concludes in the book that, “The practice of faithful presence, then, generates relationships and institutions that are fundamentally covenantal in character, the ends of which are the fostering of meaning, purpose, truth, beauty, belonging, and fairness—not just for Christians but for everyone.”⁷ Essentially, for Hunter, the practice of faithful presence is a theology for the church to harness a variety of ways of engagement required to see elements of human flourishing in one’s context.

Hunter builds his argument by detailing how American Christians have fundamentally misunderstood the essence of culture and its connection to values. He contends the Christian witness of the last twenty years has been largely a political one with little demonstrable lasting contribution. He highlights the shortcomings from politicized Christian engagement, failings of the Christian right, deficiencies of the Christian left, and the insufficiencies neo-Anabaptism. The nuances of Hunter’s argument reveal the deep complexity and variety of Western thinking and life leading his readers to conclude that one’s ability to change the world is dependent upon a multitude of factors—many of which are uncontrollable at an individual level.

Hunter’s concept of faithful presence is rooted in four main ideas about God: First, God pursues us. Second, God identifies with us. Third, God offers true life. Fourth,

⁶ James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 263.

the life God offers is intertwined and possible through his sacrificial love.⁸ As the Christian contextualizes these truths to a specific context, the principles should become more active and applicable. A theology of faithful presence is “a theology of engagement in and with the world around us. It is a theology of commitment, a theology of promise. It is disarmingly simple in concept yet in its implications it provides a challenge, at points, to all of the dominant paradigms of cultural engagement in the church.”⁹ The Christian’s motivation cannot “be rooted in a desire to change the world for the better but rather because it is an expression of a desire to honor the creator of all goodness, beauty, and truth, a manifestation of our loving obedience to God, and a fulfillment of God’s command to love our neighbor.”¹⁰ According to Hunter, there is a fundamental problem when a human steeped with the complexity of history and life attempts to make the world a better place because she thinks that she can. Instead, the underestimated essential shift necessary toward effective cultural engagement is when the Christian chooses to respond and celebrate the goodness and flourishing around her by doing the obvious.

The most helpful element in *To Change the World* is Hunter’s understanding of how change actually takes place in a context. He explains that some argue that all real change happens when there is a democratic groundswell of interest from the common person. He also shows that others argue that all lasting change happens when powerful people make it happen. Hunter argues that both co-occur and are codependent and cooperative relationship. This is when true cultural change begins to take place. He

⁸ Hunter, *To Change the World*, 241-43.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

writes, “I would argue (along with many others) that the key actor in history is not individual genius but rather the network and the new institutions that are created out of those networks. And the more ‘dense’ the network—that is, the more active and interactive the network—the more influential it could be. This is where the stuff of culture and cultural change is produced.”¹¹ When considering how pastors might be able to learn about the cultural, social, and planned aspects of their city, they can and should consider how and where these ideas are formed. To put it in layman’s terms, good ideas are usually formed from old ideas among people who connect regularly and originate from a variety of social statuses.

The Death and Life of Great American Cities

by Jane Jacobs

The Death and Life of Great American Cities is written by an untrained female journalist tired of the bizarre ideologies of urban planners from the first half of the twentieth century. Today, in almost every college in American, every Urban Planning student reads this book in preparation for a career in urban planning. The book is groundbreaking because Jacobs approached cities from an organic perspective arguing that cities should work for people—not the other way around. Her thesis from the very beginning is clear: “This book is an attack on current city planning and rebuilding.”¹²

Jacobs builds her case for a city that works for people by discussing ordinary things like: safe city streets, city parks, slums and regenerative slums, how downtowns

¹¹ Hunter, *To Change the World*, 38.

¹² Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Vintage ed. (New York: Vintage, 1992), 3.

actually work, and what an actually healthy city neighborhood looks like. She argues against the Urban Renewal policies of the mid-twentieth century and their imperialistic overtones. Jacobs was, in a sense prophetic, regarding the failure of housing projects: “There is a quality even meaner than outright ugliness or disorder, and this meaner quality is the dishonest mask of pretended order, achieved by ignoring or suppressing the real order that is struggling to exist and to be served.”¹³ She explores how planners have sought to tear down existing neighborhoods that seemed to be in decay (from the planner’s perspective) for clean new projects that disregarded the needs and functionality of the previous community. The consequences of housing projects built during the 1960s and later have been a dismal failure. Jacobs highlighted the particular failures of such a built environment decades ahead of the rest of the country.

The author builds a strong case for urban density, mixed use, the failure of public parks, diversity of buildings and their economic impact, false notions about slums, and even the limits and failures of suburbanization due to the rise in popularity of the automobile. The book is written for the common reader. Common sense rules the thoughts of Jane Jacobs—not impractical notions, ideas or extravagant art projects.

The Death and Life of Great American Cities is most helpful for my work because it provides a template for the kind of missional thinking that could be adopted by metropolitan pastors and their churches. Jacobs’s book exposes pastors to details about cities that they may have never considered. Readers are plunged into considering the implications of the built environment in which they live. They are forced to reconsider their notion of safety in the streets and in the suburbs. They are required to reflect upon

¹³ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 15.

their past and whether certain environments they were exposed to as children did actually help or hinder them long-term.

When leaders finish reading the book, they must then reenter into the real world in which they live with new eyes—observing new elements of Jacobs’s argument coming alive at every corner and every turn of the built environment. They are more likely to begin to see the connections between public transportation and economic homogeneity. They are now educated regarding how mixed-use buildings create safer streets throughout the day and night. They are encouraged to reconsider whether driving long distances is good stewardship of the earth’s resources. On a fundamentally realistic level, they must evaluate how a metropolitan area contributes and/or hinders human flourishing.

Such feelings and observations help the project because they train Vineyard leaders to think in real and concrete terms. In general, missional theology is helpful but often can feel disconnected from the way the real world actually works. Jacobs’s insights have the potential to teach pastors and leaders how to better understand and interpret the cause and effects of the built environment. When we better understand the realities of the built environment, we are better equipped to participate with the Spirit in God’s renewal work.

Contemporary Urban Planning

by John Levy

Contemporary Urban Planning is a textbook used by college students who aspire to be urban and regional planners. The book is in its tenth edition—a sign of its helpfulness. John Levy explores every aspect of urban and regional planning. The

resource is a textbook that teaches its reader about all aspects of urban planning. It does not have a traditional thesis, but the recurring theme is clear: all future planners need to understand the reality of urban planning and immense complexity of such an undertaking. The genius of the book is Levy's ability to incorporate the human reality into planning. People lead planning. Planning involves other people. Planning affects other people. Whenever any people are involved in planning together, challenges and complexity will likely arise. This book is a key resource because it provides a comprehensive understanding of urban planning, and such philosophy of planning teaches pastors, leaders, how to better contextualize the Gospel in cities.

First, Levy teaches his readers about the history of planning. Readers learn that planning is a response to the rise in urban density. In the early days of the United States, planning was not as necessary—although signs of it were present in the building of Washington DC. Readers also gain a first hand look at the rise of zoning laws and urban planning commissions. Second, Levy discusses the laws, politics, and social dynamics of planning. In this section, readers are hit very hard with the realities of a career choice in urban planning. Again, when people work with other people, things can get messy. Third, Levy explores the various particular fields of urban planning: urban design, urban renewal, transportation planning, economic development, smart growth, environmental planning, and metropolitan planning. This section helps readers to get a glimpse into the various areas in which one may choose to specialize. The fourth and final section explores national planning, international best practices, and planning theory. Levy's discussion of planning theory leans heavily into epistemological relativism as well as other philosophical "bigger questions" not as clearly defined in previous chapters.

Contemporary Urban Planning is full of resourceful information as a missional pastor. I desire my tribe and myself to understand the basics of our city context, and studying a textbook on urban planning has helped further knowledge of how contexts actually work. The book particularly assists my work because it is an extra-biblical source arguing for thinking and acting incarnationally. In order to seek the flourishing of one's city, one must understand how it works. In order to understand how a city works, one must understand how it is planned. In order to understand how a city is planned, one must learn to observe and interpret one's surrounding context.

The Space Between

by Eric Jacobsen

The Space Between is a primary source in this project because it provides a theological basis for considering the built environment. Eric Jacobsen builds seeks to build a strong connection between the built environment and human prosperity. He writes, "One of the benefits of paying attention to the built environment is that it can help us think through settings that support human thriving."¹⁴ The built environment is the canvas upon which the human experience is painted. It is the stage upon which its human actors interact and make it a better or worse place. Much like Jane Jacobs's attack on modern urban planning, Jacobsen's argues against many of the choices made by American planners in the twentieth century. To a large degree, he is in fact, influenced by

¹⁴ Eric O. Jacobsen, *The Space Between: A Christian Engagement with the Built Environment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 14.

Jacobs. He sees many failures in the built environment but his motivations are different from Jacobs.¹⁵

Jacobsen constructs a unique argument for a particular kind of urbanism using biblical support. The book's view of the built environment has a clear connection to a renewal theological perspective. Jacobsen spends a good portion of the book developing this idea: "In John's vision of the coming reign of Christ, he is given an evocative picture of our lives when our relationship with God is fully restored. And that picture is not of a garden or a wilderness, but of a city. The story of the Bible, then, provides an important reminder that whatever we may think of it, the built environment will be an important and inescapable aspect of our future."¹⁶ The author strengthens a logical connection between the Christian's role in shaping the built environment right now and God's promise to redeem and restore the built environment in the future.

Specifically, the book connects the biblical creation mandate with the human opportunity to consider how to shape the built environment in a redeemed way. Jacobsen writes, "'Fill the earth' (or the cultural mandate) has to do with developing inherent potentials by making something out of creation. When we build a house, paint a picture, arrange a bunch of flowers, or enact a piece of legislation, we are making culture and thus fulfilling our creation mandate."¹⁷ Therefore, it is the Christian's duty to consider all aspect of the built environment, to question when necessary, and to shape it as we see fit.

¹⁵ Jacobsen, *The Space Between*, 14..

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

The Space Between is particularly helpful for my doctoral project because it actually considers how Christians should view the built environment. My thesis argues to adopt a similar approach to Jacobsen's argument with the exception that mine is tailored for leaders within the Vineyard Movement and addresses city engagement in general. Jacobsen's desire to move Christians to consider all the ways our urban planning, architecture, and in fact, the spaces between, shape and mold how human interact and live.

Both/And

by Rich Nathan and Insoo Kim

Both/And is the leadership of Vineyard Columbus's attempt to lead Christians to avoid polarization and to flee the temptation of either/or thinking so prevalent in the culture today. Rich Nathan explores how disciples of Jesus are called to live in the tension of our day. He writes, "To be a disciple of Jesus is to live in tension. The kingdom of God that Jesus announced is both already here and is still yet to come. This tension exists not only in what we believe and experience but in who we are: both sinner and saint."¹⁸

Nathan builds his argument by exploring many of the common flashpoints among evangelical North American Christians. First, Nathan argues for a marriage between the evangelicalism and the charismatic traditions. He defines what evangelicalism is and what he believes it is not. He also spends time exploring how the two traditions would

¹⁸ Nathan, *Both/And*, 21.

can and will benefit from each other: “There is more to Christianity than something to believe; there is also someone to receive and to experience.”¹⁹ Earlier in his career, he coined the phrase and wrote a book called *Empowered Evangelicals*—which was an attempt to bridge the best of both the charismatic traditions with the best of modern evangelicalism. *Both/And* is a deeper and more comprehensive exploration of the empowered evangelical argument.

Second, Nathan explores the tension in community between unity and diversity. He argues for a strong sense of unit among followers and Jesus and their public discourse. He provides examples of how the general public disdains Christian rhetoric because of its unhelpful backbiting tendencies. Nathan also argues for intense diversity of all kinds—particularly for socio-economic and racial diversity to be present within the congregation. Using the church of Antioch as an example, Nathan calls for retroactive actions to be put in place within church systems to correct the monocultural tendencies of our local congregations.²⁰

Third, Nathan explores the tension of justice and mercy and how local churches must understand the difference between the two and act in both spheres. Fourth, Nathan argues that *Both/And* Churches prioritize both proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel. On this topic, the author is calling for clear and intelligible communication of the Gospel message to work alongside and welcome true and powerful demonstrations of the Spirit’s work. Fifth, Nathan explores the tension of the personal and social ethic. Christians are called to pursue holiness and also called to make room for the social ethics

¹⁹ Nathan, *Both/And*, 45.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

of our day and age including women in ministry and ways to think about same sex marriage. Sixth, Nathan explores the tension between the already and the not yet. Ultimately, his position is that Christians are called to lean into and expect the Spirit to do more, but also recognize that they will not yet fully experience God's fullness and full restoration until Christ returns. Lastly, Nathan argues that Christians in the local church must be both relevant and orthodox. They must do everything in their power to communicate Jesus in ways that are understood by receivers, but they must also remain faithful to the vetted traditions that have been handed down over the centuries.

Both/And is helpful for my doctoral work because it provides specific ideas on how churches should engage both their members as well as the community. It leans toward action and involvement. Nathan prioritizes engagement with the assumption that Christians are to ask God for more in the here and now and to default less into the "not yet" tendencies of modern Christianity. The book encourages pastors to consider a plethora of ways to engage their community.

Power Evangelism

by John Wimber

Power Evangelism is a famous work by one of the key founders of the Vineyard Movement. The book is a review of John Wimber's journey from identifying with the fundamentalist Christian movement of the 1960s and 70s toward an embrace of spiritual power for the sake of conversion to Christ. Wimber's view rests on his high view of scripture: "Jesus always combined the proclamation of the kingdom of God with its demonstration (the casting out of demons, healing the sick, raising the dead, and so

on).”²¹ Wimber believed that the gifts of the Spirit are still active in the church today and that they should be used to help people in the Western context to experience Jesus as well as personal regeneration.

Wimber’s argues that Western Christians have neglected the power and authority given to them by Christ to do his work. He is very explicit that this power is not given to operate independently from God, but it is given as Christians seek to join him what he is already doing. The assumption for Wimber is that God is doing his work, but there is some work that God will not do in the world unless his followers learn to observe it, participate in it, and participate in its fruition. Wimber writes, “Power is the ability, the strength and the might to complete a given task. Authority is the right to use the power of God.”²²

Yet Wimber is very clear to differentiate his view of authority and power from other views. He is not interested in demonstrations of the Holy Spirit’s power just because they are available to the believer. He aligns his interest in power demonstrations with what he sees as the Bible’s view: signs and wonders assist in evangelism and personal conversion. He writes, “In power evangelism, we do not add to the gospel, or even seek to add power to the gospel. But we do turn to the Holy Spirit in our evangelistic efforts and consciously cooperate with His anointing, gifting and leading. Preaching and demonstrating the gospel are not mutually exclusive activities; they work

²¹ John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Evangelism*, 2 ed. (Ventura, CA: Chosen Books, 2009), 18.

²² Wimber and Springer, *Power Evangelism*, 38.

together and reinforce each other.”²³ The Holy Spirit provides signs to help move people into a relationship with Christ.

Power Evangelism also develops the concept of centered-set thinking and the Christian faith. Rather than viewing Christianity through the lenses of a bounded set—determining who is a Christian based solely on beliefs and behaviors—the centered-set focuses on relationship and trajectory toward the living person of Christ. Power encounters assist the pre-believer as well as the believer in trusting the true personal reality of Christ in every day life. Wimber notes this shift in discipleship by stating that, “The goal of the evangelism process is to move people along the scale from A to Z, not only to a personal conversion experience, but also to maturity in Christ.”²⁴ The reality of the risen Christ is an essential component connected to how God develops people in their maturity and faith.

In a prolific way, Wimber argues that power encounters and power evangelism overcome certain skepticisms—while still acknowledging that it is difficult for Westerners to accept spiritual encounters as legitimate verification of the divine. He maintains the following: “Power evangelism cuts through much resistance that comes from ignorance or negative attitudes; that is, it moves people along the Engel Scale quickly, especially in overcoming negative attitudes toward Christianity.”²⁵ It is unclear if Wimber understood the implications of the coming age of late modernity and post-foundationalism. His view of power encounters, if such expressions are verifiably

²³ Wimber and Springer, *Power Evangelism*, 78.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

legitimate, can be quite helpful to the Christian who struggles to convey the reality of Christ. By leaning into power evangelism, a relatively unlearned Christian may be able to help non-spiritualized Westerner to encounter Jesus. Again, the “primary purposes of signs and wonders: to demonstrate the kingdom of God.”²⁶ Wimber always hoped that people who had not yet experienced the reality of God would powerfully do so—even if it required using ways and means not typically and contextually accepted.

Power Evangelism is helpful for this project because it creates a new category for healing of the built environment. The helpfulness can be found in a quote from Wimber: “Faith for healing means that we believe God is able to heal specific persons today and there is a specific sense of God’s working.”²⁷ Wimber believed Christians are called to have faith that God can heal specific persons from specific physical ailments. He also believed that God often gives special words of knowledge for one person to deliver to another—prophecy. I am interested in building upon this concept by exploring what it looks like to have faith for healing the built environment and the surrounding cities, to have power encounters in the work that we do beyond physical healing and personal prophecy, and to be a prophet in urban contexts. While the book does not provide specifics on how to do these things, it provides an excellent start place with principles that can be applied to cities.

The limits of *Power Evangelism* are Wimber’s views on personal conversion. While personal conversion is important, the book leans too heavily into the reductionist soteriological mindset popular during its writing. It is true that personal regeneration is an

²⁶ Wimber and Springer, *Power Evangelism*, 147.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 196.

important theme in the Bible. Also, in the Gospels it was an important theme in demonstrating a shift in lifestyle among people who encountered Jesus. While the book is specifically about power evangelism for the purpose of conversion, it does not reach deep enough into power discipleship or the subject I hope to explore, power engagement.

CHAPTER 3
DOCTRINAL REFLECTION ON RENEWAL THEOLOGY,
CITIES, CONTEXT, AND ECCLESIOLOGY

A well-articulated doctrinal foundation of cultural renewal will serve the development of a comprehensive theological vision of cities. God is interested in the renewal of all spheres of life because he loves his creation. A strong doctrinal foundation rests upon the biblical narrative of creation, fall, redemption and restoration.

Creation

There are two parts to the creation mandate. First, God commanded human beings to be fruitful and multiply through procreation in Genesis 1:28. Second, God commanded humans to have dominion over the earth and participate in the creation by naming the animals and to express creativity. In Genesis 2, God called humans to participate in the creation, to be creative, and to develop and improve upon all that has been created. Andy Crouch argues that humans are, “To imitate his creativity and gracious dominion over the creation, and... to imitate him by cultivating the initial gift of a well-arranged garden, a world where intelligence, skill and imagination have already begun to make something of

the world.”¹ Humans were created to participate in cultivating every bit of creation through various culture making activities. Timothy Keller contends that the Christian doctrine of creation is unique among other ancient narratives. He writes, “The doctrine of creation tells us, first of all, that the material world is important. Unlike other ancient creation accounts, the earth is not the result of a power struggle between deities, but is a work of art and love by one Creator. A major part of God’s work is his delight in continuing to sustain and cultivate creation.”²

The doctrine of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 can be summarized in three parts. First, God created the world out of love. Second, God created human beings in his own image. Third, God created human beings to participate in the creation through procreation and the cultivation process.

Fall

The doctrine of the Fall is described in Genesis 3, but the effects of the Fall are present throughout the Scripture. The story describes a personal evil force (the serpent), and its success in tempting humans to contradict the decrees of God. The choice to disobey God’s decree released a new toxic dimension into the human race called sin. The initial violation created an inherent sinful nature connected to all generations of humans. Consequently, humanity would experience difficulties in their work, relationships, and nature. Beyond Genesis 2, Scripture reinforces a tension between God and sinful humanity as it began to permeate everything. It destroyed, hurt, and killed others. Yet God remained faithful to love his creation.

¹ Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 108.

² Keller, *Center Church*, 226-27.

The doctrine of the fall can be summarized in two parts. First, men and women have broken relationship with God, each other, other humans, and the creation. Second, there has been the violation against God's commands by humans (sin) permeates every area and depth of the creation.

Redemption and Restoration

The doctrine of redemption is centered in the story of God becoming a human (Jesus of Nazareth) and taking responsibility of human beings' choices made toward sin in The Fall. He demonstrated his acceptance of humanity by taking responsibility for human sin by dying on a cross. His resurrection from the dead three days after his death validated his authority and power to take such responsibility. When a human chooses to accept unmerited favor (grace) demonstrated by Jesus, they are beginning the process of conversion and both personal and corporate transformation.

The story of redemption is also known as the Gospel. Tim Keller defines the Gospel: "The gospel is good news, not good advice."³ Advice may lead a person to take action to achieve a new reality. News simply articulates the new reality. Jesus's redemptive work on the cross is news that changes that way we live today and how we choose to live tomorrow. Keller continues, "Religion says, 'I obey, therefore I am accepted by God.' The Gospel says, 'I am accepted by God through what Christ has done, therefore, I obey.'"⁴ Religion requires the individual to achieve benchmarks to be accepted by God. The Gospel offers God's assurance of love to the individual so they are now free, not obligated, to do good deeds.

³ Keller, *Center Church*, 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

Christ has broken the power of sin and sin's affects. The Cross released tremendous potential for restored relationships between humans, God, and creation. Richard Mouw writes, "Jesus came to redeem the creation, to cleanse it from the depravity that permeates the cosmos. And this redemptive operation is restorative in character. Once again God is working to fulfill the original purposes of his creating project."⁵ Individuals can now freely participate in remaking the creation through creating and cultivating culture.

Mouw summarizes type of restoration that will take place: "Jesus did not come to do something brand new, but to fix what had been broken by sin."⁶ Throughout biblical history, God consistently desired to partner with humans to restore creation to its original purposes. Abraham Kuyper argued, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry 'Mine!'"⁷ This "mine" includes all families systems, businesses, the arts, the natural world, education, politics, government, and even religion.

In Jeremiah 29, God's commands the Israelites to seek the prosperity of Babylon. While the false Jewish prophets in exile were prophesying that the Israelites should remain separate from the Babylonians, Jeremiah prophesied that God's people were to remain morally separate but very much connected in other ways. They were to plant vineyards. They were to raise their children in the city. Furthermore, they were called by

⁵ Richard J. Mouw, *He Shines in All That's Fair: Culture and Common Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 1, Kindle.

⁶ Richard J. Mouw, *Abraham Kuyper: A Short and Personal Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 159-60, Kindle.

⁷ James D. Bratt, ed., *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 488.

God to seek the well-being and flourishing of the city. Such a call from God may have seemed crazy to Jeremiah's listeners because of the pagan rituals and accepted cruelty among the people. Yet it made no difference to God who seemed perfectly content with the Jewish people seeking their own flourishing through the thriving and success of their enemies. God desired his people to integrate faith and work within the Babylonian culture. In fact, faith and cultural engagement were not mutually exclusive.

Jeremiah 29 informs how today's Christian should engage modern culture. God caused flourishing among the Babylonians through the participatory renewal efforts of the exiled Israelites. In the same way, Christians are called by God's Spirit to seek the flourishing of their city as a sign and witness of God's renewal work. It is this unique form of exilic discipleship that can and should be considered among Christians in cities today. The integration of faith and work in Jeremiah is a perfect example of cultural renewal theology.

God's commitment to renewal is not only connected to flourishing but is explicitly connected to preservation and restoration of the works of humanity. Isaiah 60 provides examples of cultural goods and services created by various cultures being accepted as offerings of worship to God. Different people and cultures, both by God followers and non-God followers alike, cultivated these goods and services are now present in the new heaven and new earth.⁸

Mouw eloquently summarizes, "God's people must imitate God's attitude. They too must hate those things that cause their idolatrous neighbors to boast. But their hatred

⁸ Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching In*, 190.

must take the form of waiting for the day of transformation, when the camels of Ephah and the ships of Tarshish will be made into fitting vessels of service for the Lord and his people.”⁹ Undoubtedly the affects of sin are serious. Yet Christians must adopt a mindset of hope, which welcomes the restoration of all things—not their destruction. According to Isaiah, cultural renewal participation means that Christians develop openness to the many types of cultural goods that God many want to renew in the age to come.

In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus echoes Isaiah 61’s declaration of the new Kingdom. (Luke 4). Jesus is the clearest representation of God and the most persuasive demonstration of comprehensive cultural renewal. James Davison Hunter summarizes the incarnation: “Needless to say, for the Christian, the incarnation is not only a manifestation of the reality of God and the trust they can put in his word, but also the most breathtaking demonstration in history of the reality of God’s love for his creation and his intention to make all things new.”¹⁰ Jesus’s plan was always to make all things new again through empowering individuals human choice and participation.¹¹ When the Christian seeks God’s will, they are perfectly positioned to participate in cultural renewal (John 5; 14; 15).

In the New Testament, Pauline theology is renewal-oriented emphasizing the role of the Holy Spirit, renewal of the mind, confrontation of evil, a robust view of justification, and a vigorous view of eschatology. First, cultural renewal doctrine values

⁹ Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching In*, Kindle Location 307-09.

¹⁰ Hunter, *To Change the World*, 240.

¹¹ For more on unforced human choice, see: Eugene H. Peterson, *The Jesus Way: a Conversation On the Ways That Jesus Is the Way*, Reprint ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2011).

the role of the Holy Spirit. Jesus's intentions were to empower his followers to do greater things than he did (John 14:12). In Acts 1, Jesus delivered the gift of the Holy Spirit 40 days later after his ascension. As a result, believers shared their possessions, healed the masses, and participated in conversions experiences (Acts 2-4). The Holy Spirit's role is integral because it demands dependency from individuals and serves as the portal to all cultural renewal. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he argued for the Gospel's intelligibility, credibility, and plausibility through the Holy Spirit's power (1 Corinthians 2:1-4). Miroslav Volf contends, "The Spirit is the giver of life, and hence all work, they work only because God's Spirit has given them power and talents to work... The Spirit of God calls and gifts people to work in active anticipation of the eschatological transformation of the world."¹²

Second, Pauline theology relies upon Holy Spirit's desire to renew the mind of the Christian. If the mind of the Christian is renewed, then the Christian's activity in the world will seek renewal. Christians must, therefore, seek to renew their minds in order to adequately participate in the renewal of their city.

In Philemon, Paul wanted to abolish slavery, but also desired reconciliation. He believed reconciliation is connected to internal renewal first, and then moving outward. Paul wanted Christians to think Christianly: "Paul wants all Christians to have their minds renewed, so that they can think in a different way. We all face many challenges, not only in the sphere of morality as such, but in a thousand different contexts... Being trained to think 'Christianly' is the necessary antidote to what will otherwise happen:

¹² Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work*, Reprint ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2001), 121, 123.

being, as Paul says, ‘squeezed into the shape dictated by the present age.’¹³ Thinking Christianly is essential for thoughtful cultural renewal activities in cities.

Third, New Testament and Pauline theology of renewal includes a robust eschatology of renewal in light of Christ’s return. Christians live in a time period of the already-and-the-not-yet motif—the idea that Jesus’s power and presence is here, but his perfect presence and reign is not fully here yet. The view welcomes the activity of the Holy Spirit for breakthroughs now, yet it prevents Christians from developing a triumphalistic renewal perspective.

N.T. Wright argues for the already/not yet reality. “We live in the period of Jesus’s sovereign rule over the world— a reign that has not yet been completed, since...he must reign until ‘he has put all his enemies under his feet,’ including death itself. But Paul is clear that we do not have to wait until the second coming to say that Jesus is already reigning. In fact...the reign of Jesus, in its present mode, is strictly temporary.”¹⁴ Christians are called to welcome the end of the story—Jesus perfect reign over all things.

Christians are called to expectantly posture their lives toward participation by welcoming the kingdom. They are to actively partake in renewal activities now: “We are called to be part of God’s new creation, called to be agents of that new creation here and now. We are called to model and display that new creation in symphonies and family life, in restorative justice and poetry, in holiness and service to the poor, in politics and

¹³ N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2012), 151.

¹⁴ N. T. Wright, *Simply Jesus: a New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did, and Why He Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 229.

painting.”¹⁵ Christians are called to be a sign, a model, and a foretaste of all that is to come.

In Revelation 21 and 22, God’s eschatological vision of renewal resembles a human city—a well-tended city—with countless cultural products gathered throughout the years of human productivity.¹⁶ Revelation proclaims God will dry every tear, right every wrong, and make all things new (Revelation 21:1-5). God will make new things, but he will keep many of the old things that have experienced his touch of restoration.

Furthermore, Revelation’s message is a call to choose regarding how a Christian will engage in the restorative work of the Spirit. Mouw writes, “Human culture will someday be transformed...Are we as Christians called to transform culture in the present age? Not, I think, in any grandiose or triumphalistic manner. We are called to await the coming transformation. But we should wait actively, not passively. We must seek the City which is to come.”¹⁷ Christians do not have the power to establish the Kingdom. Rather, they welcome, receive, observe, seek, and await the Kingdom through the Spirit’s direction. Humans are partakers and participants, but God is the transformer.

In summary, the biblical narrative will be the guiding framework and basis for sociological and cultural interpretation and contextualization. When Christians involve themselves in their local culture, they are participating in the biblical narrative. The Holy

¹⁵ N. T. Wright, *Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2010), 236.

¹⁶ Keller, *Center Church*, 150.

¹⁷ Mouw, *When the Kings*, 1098-1101.

Spirit plans to bring the creation back to its original pre-fall status through participatory interaction with all who are willing to join him in his work.

Missio Dei and the Church

Viewing the church through the lenses of the biblical narrative informs an interpretation of its role. Lesslie Newbigin, writes, “The church lives in the midst of history as a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the reign of God.”¹⁸ God’s activity is central and operates both inside and outside of the church. In fact, “We have begun to see that the church of Jesus Christ is not the purpose or goal of the gospel, but rather its instrument and witness.”¹⁹ God is active and is the very center of the mission. The church is integral, but not central.²⁰ God is interested in expressing himself and offering renewal in and through local culture and particularities.

Missio Dei “is the understanding of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection that is centered on God rather than on meeting personal needs.”²¹ *Missio Dei* leads individuals to “grapple with this: (1) What is God doing in this world? This calls for discernment to recognize what God is doing in our neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and so forth. (2) What does God want to do in our world? Each direct our attention and energy in a very

¹⁸ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 110.

¹⁹ Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: a Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America (gospel & Our Culture)* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 197-99.

²⁰ Newbigin, *The Open Secret*, 150.

²¹ Alan J. Roxburgh and M. Scott Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church: What It Is, Why It Matters, How to Become One (Allelon Missional Series)* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 70.

different direction.”²² Craig Van Gelder argues, “In this approach, God is understood to already be present and active in the world, with the church being responsible for discovering what God is doing and then seeking to participate in that.”²³ Within the *Missio Dei* model, God initiates, sustains, and fulfills. The willing participant(s) join him in his work.

Christians are participating in the renewal of all things: “We have come to see that mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather, mission is the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purposes to restore and heal creation. ‘Mission’ means ‘sending,’ and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human history.”²⁴ The church must prioritize participation and sensitivity to the work of the Spirit as He moves at his pace to restore and heal His creation.

In Tim Keller’s *Center Church*, he uses a helpful illustration to describe the three parts necessary for building a healthy ecclesiology. He says that, “if you think of your doctrinal foundation as ‘hardware’ and of ministry programs as ‘software,’ it is important to understand the existence of something called ‘middleware.’ I am no computer expert (to say the least), but my computer-savvy friends tell me that middleware is a software layer that lies between the hardware and operating system itself and the various software applications being deployed by the computer’s user.”²⁵ Keller continues, “In the same way, between one’s doctrinal beliefs and ministry practices should be a well-conceived

²² Roxburgh and Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church*, 70.

²³ Van Gelder and Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective*, 31.

²⁴ Guder, *Missional Church*, 178-81.

²⁵ Keller, *Center Church*, 17.

vision for how to bring the gospel to bear on the particular cultural setting and historical moment.”²⁶ It is this idea of “middleware” that permeates the rest of this chapter.

Before this project can adequately develop a metropolitan ecclesiology for the Vineyard Movement, it must paint a clearer picture of the realities in the North American context. The next section is an attempt to build the bridge between the doctrinal foundations of the biblical meta-narrative and the practical applications of chapters four and five. It will serve as a brief exploration into the new world in which churches and Vineyard leaders will find themselves. It is both challenging and a great opportunity for consideration.

Trends in Urban Centers

American urban centers are changing. There are countless variables influencing the urban landscape. Nonmarket interactions and the rise of the consumer city are two contributing factors trending in American urban centers. Both factors are predicated on evidence that urban centers in the United States are growing again.

Ed Glaeser places a high value on social capital theory in urban centers. He argues that "social capital, connections, social networks are much more correlated with human happiness than is financial capital."²⁷ Within this assumption, he defines nonmarket interactions: “Nonmarket interactions occur when one individual influences another without the exchange of money.”²⁸ Usually, such influential interactions occur in

²⁶ Keller, *Center Church*, 17.

²⁷ Edward Glaeser, Vernon Henderson, and Robert Inman, “The Future of Urban Research: Nonmarket Interactions,” *Brookings-Wharton Papers on Urban Affairs* (2000): 101-49, accessed June 1, 2015, 101.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 102.

two major ways. First, “These interactions involve voluntary participation of both individuals. Neighbors' doing favors for one another is an example of this kind, and this fits our usual paradigm...In dense urban areas, where the extent of the market is great, these interactions may evolve from nonmarket interactions into market interactions.”²⁹ Voluntary participation assumes a non-financial reciprocity—the helping of one another toward a personal/professional goal. Glaeser defines a second of interaction: “The second kind of nonmarket interactions are classic externalities—for example, the positive effects of role models, or acquiring human capital through the observation of a neighbor's successes and failures.”³⁰ When living, working, and playing in close proximity, urbanites can more quickly and efficiently learn from others leading to quicker and more powerful breakthroughs in their industry.

Demand for nonmarket interactions is affecting our densest US cities with primary evidence found among soaring real estate values. Glaeser's report argues that property values, “Do not just represent a general rise in asset values, as the central-city property values have seen a greater increase than property values in outlying areas. More technically, demand for the densest areas seems to be high. The continued preeminence of New York...suggest that the demand for urban density is based on many factors beyond reduced transport costs formal market transactions.”³¹ Nonmarket interactions and their essentiality for principal city living, contributes to the wider trend of the

²⁹ Glaeser, “Nonmarket Interactions,” 102.

³⁰ Ibid., 103.

³¹ Ibid., 106.

consumer city. The consumer city describes the type of growth in principal city populations driven by the desire to consume urban amenities and not the traditional assumption of production and high paying jobs.

According to Glaeser, wages have been falling in dense urban areas.³² He argues, “Urban resurgence is not primarily the result of rising urban productivity. Instead, falling relative real wages is better seen as evidence for an increased desire of people to live in urban areas. Big cities are having a renaissance as places of consumption, not production.”³³

Evidence for the consumer city can also be found in commuting trends. Evidence shows that the growth in popularity of reverse community, “Further supports the notion that the urban renaissance is driven by consumption, not production.”³⁴ In the future, individuals will choose to live in urban centers and commute for their work.

Trends in the Metropolis

As stated earlier in the project, over half of the American population lives in a suburb. Metropolitan regions are booming at an exponential rate. There are many trends taking place in suburbs including the values behind suburban flight, civic participation trends, megapolitans, and geographical sorting.

³² Edward Glaeser and Joshua Gottlieb, “Urban Resurgence and the Consumer City” (Harvard Institute of Economic Research Discussion Paper Number 2109, Cambridge, Massachusetts, February 2006), accessed June 1, 2015, 2.

³³ Ibid., 3

³⁴ Ibid., 14.

The suburbs continue to grow as individuals desire new jobs. They are willing to travel to the principal city for work, but also to other suburbs nearby.³⁵ Suburban growth is primarily understood by its ability to build and maintain highways and driving corridors. A powerful suburb is measured from the sky by looking at the roadways and how they provide access to the good, services, and jobs in the community.³⁶ Suburban time is measured by how quickly a destination can be reached by using an automobile. Proximity and density is secondary. Harvey Conn writes, “The supermarket is ten minutes away in one direction. The shopping mall is still 30 minutes in another direction. And one’s job is an hour away still by another route. The new city suburb is not defined by political incorporation; it is created by the destinations that define each person’s movement—household, consumption, and production.”³⁷

Surprisingly, there is little evidence to support that the sprawl contributes to a decline in civic involvement and in civic organizations. Civic associations in high-density areas tend not to flourish—perhaps preferring to engage in nonmarket interactions. In fact, “Across metropolitan areas, density is associated with less, not more social capital, perhaps in part because density is associated with longer commutes. Sprawl may have negative consequences along other dimensions, but it cannot be credited with killing social capital.”³⁸ Empirical evidence for increased civic engagement among suburbanites

³⁵ Harvie M. Conn, *The American City and the Evangelical Church: A Historical Overview* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Pub Group, 1994), 135.

³⁶ Conn, *The American City*, 135.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.

³⁸ Glaeser, “Consumer City,” 29.

challenges the new urbanism ideology to appreciate certain qualities in its neighbor. Furthermore, such data helps to explain some of the appeal suburbs: suburbs can be places filled with deep and meaningful connection.

Another major suburban trend is the megapolitan. The Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech “identifies ten US ‘Megapolitan Areas’— clustered networks of metropolitan areas that exceed 10 million total residents (or will pass that mark by 2040).”³⁹ Megapolitans combine at least two metropolitan areas. They project populations exceeding 10 million by 2040. They are contiguous metropolitan and micropolitan areas. They have distinct regional cultural identities and histories. They are linked through major transportation infrastructure and form a functional urban network of goods and services.⁴⁰

Megapolitan growth is and will remain bullish. In fact, “Megapolitans outpaced the national growth rate for the first three years of the decade. The United States gained 3.3 percent more people from 2000 to 2003, while the Megas added 3.9 percent. The Megapolitan Areas gained 7.5 million new residents over the period.”⁴¹ The fastest growing megapolitan is the Sunbelt experiencing 3-year gains exceeding 5 percent growth. By 2040 megapolitans are expected to add 83 million people—which will match

³⁹ Robert E. Lang and Dawn Dhavale, “Beyond Megalopolis: Exploring America’s New ‘Megapolitan’ Geography,” *METROPOLITAN INSTITUTE CENSUS REPORT SERIES* (May 2005): 1.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.,15.

the population of the rest of the country. Over 32 million new housing units will be built and such regions are predicted to create 64 million new jobs.⁴²

Lastly, the national trend of ideological sorting and geographical homogeneity is on the rise and affects the suburbs strongly. Americans are sorting themselves in geographical enclaves along religious, political, and various ideological lines. Perhaps the rise in pluralism in the country has contributed to the individual's felt need to seek tribal ideological connections.⁴³ Another theory is that Americans have always felt the need to sort, but now finally the financial mobility to do so. Irrespective of speculation, the evidence demonstrates choice patterns among American Christians. In a nutshell, Christians are persistently moving to the suburbs and are reproducing more children.

The Glenmary Research Center found in a longitudinal study of election data that church members are more and more concentrated in Republican counties. Bishop writes, "From 1971 to 2000, the number of church members increased 33.8 percent in Democratic landslide counties. In the same period, the number of church members jumped 54.4 percent in Republican landslide counties. From 1990 to 2000, Democratic counties lost churchgoers, while Republican counties continued gaining."⁴⁴ They found even more: "We even discovered a difference in migration patterns between counties with a high percentage of churchgoers and those that were more secular. Only 11 percent of the people who moved out of the counties with the most churchgoers moved to the

⁴² Lang and Dhavale, "Beyond Megalopolis," 18.

⁴³ For a deeper understanding of tribes and inclusion, read: Seth Godin, *Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us* (New York: Portfolio, 2008)

⁴⁴ Bishop, *The Big Sort*, 51.

most secular counties. The reverse was true, too: only 5 percent of those who left the most secular counties migrated to the counties with the highest percentage of churchgoers.”⁴⁵ Christians are moving to suburbs and are continuing to vote Republican.

Such data complicates the anecdotal notion of national diversification. There is little evidence that contradicts homogeneous sorting. It is quite possible that two trends are occurring simultaneously: geographical sorting and increased cultural awareness. Today’s average American is more culturally aware which has been intensified through persistent traditional media outlets and social media. For example, a happily married Christian housewife and mother to three children from New Albany, Ohio can become quickly informed and aware of celebrity Bruce Jenner’s gender identity beliefs and practices, but will choose to live in what they perceive as a practical, safe, white, Christian suburb with a good school system. Perhaps diversity of viewpoints and general awareness of them is increasing along with the increase of desire among individuals to live near those who are like them.

Further evidence also suggests “birthrates are higher in Republican areas than in Democratic areas.”⁴⁶ These areas are in the suburbs. High density and secularized principal cities have fewer children and less childbirth. In 2006, it was speculated, “In Seattle, there are nearly 45% more dogs than children. In Salt Lake City, there are nearly 19% more kids than dogs.”⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Bishop, *The Big Sort*, 52.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁷ Phillip Longman, *The Liberal Baby Bust*, *USA TODAY*, 3/13/2006 10:41 PM, accessed June 1, 2015, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/editorials/2006-03-13-babybust_x.htm.

New York Times Columnist David Brooks argues that childbirth and notions about child rearing is the single biggest explanation for suburban growth. He writes that parents of the sprawl are having three or more children citing, “They are more spiritually, emotionally and physically invested in their homes than in any other sphere of life, having concluded that parenthood is the most enriching and elevating thing they can do.”⁴⁸ Brooks points out the discrepancy of viewpoints between urbanites and their suburban neighbors: “Some people see these exurbs as sprawling, materialistic wastelands, but many natalists see them as clean, orderly and affordable places where they can nurture children.”⁴⁹ He concludes his argument by informing his readers that parents of a certain age have little interest in fighting culture wars. Their disinterest is expressed in their voting: both in the polls on Election Day and in their real estate purchases in the suburbs, exurbs, and outlying areas.

The rise of the megapolitan and the national trend of geographical sorting means that a two-thirds of next generation American children will be born in a suburb and will be exposed to a sizeable amount of Christianity. Despite the data that indicates that children are leaving the faith at the age of eighteen it does not change the potential for exposure. Nor can we build a direct correlation between suburban trends and life-long devotion to Christ. However, the reality is that the future of America will appear to be more culturally Christian than expected. Regardless of speculation, suburban churches—not urban—are places of future influence simply because of the amount of children being born and raised.

⁴⁸ David Brooks, “The New Red Diaper Babies,” *New York Times*, December 7, 2004, accessed June 1, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/07/opinion/07brooks.html>.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

Trends in the Cosmopolis

Cosmopolitan cities have a disproportionate influence on other regions of the country and throughout the world. They are economic and cultural centers known for their great sophistication. There have always been cosmopolitan cities—from London, to Rome, to ancient Cairo. It is important to acknowledge that globalization has intensified the status of many American cities. Also, it is essential to recognize the resurgence of thoughtful Christian witness in many American cosmopolitan contexts.

First, the status of cosmopolitan cities will grow due to intense globalization. In fact, recent globalization has, “Spurred a renaissance of major cities across the world, and a new economic configuration is emerging based upon cities. This is not to say that states are no longer significant in their international relations, but the rise of transnational interactions has produced a new economic globalization in which cities and their regions are the prime nodes of a nascent network society.”⁵⁰ In the future, people may choose to identify themselves by leveraging their urban location instead of their nationality for both personal and professional benefit. Cities, even by the simple mention of their name invoke influence and a reality— London, Shanghai, New York, Los Angeles, and Dubai—and demand our attention.

There are great social and financial benefits for those associated with a globally networked city. Strategic planners should notice that, “While New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles are the U.S. leaders in global connectivity, San Francisco, Miami, Atlanta,

⁵⁰ Peter J. Taylor and Robert E. Lang, “U.S. Cities in the ‘World City Network’,” *The Brookings Institution Survey Series* (February 2005), 2.

and Washington are also important nodes in the world city network.”⁵¹ The future world will be more connected, and the market will pay dearly for an organization’s or an individual’s ability to connect. Therefore, thriving in and proximity to such cities is in the best interest of individuals, entrepreneurs, businesses, and churches.

Beyond globalization, there is an interesting trend among evangelicals in cosmopolitan cities and in contexts of institutional power. These Cosmopolitan Christians desire “to bring Christian principles to bear on a range of social issues. It is a vision for moral leadership, a form of public influence that is shaped by ethics and faith while also being powerful and respected.”⁵² Yet Cosmo Christianity is unique because it does not overly emphasize reductionist soteriological tenants descriptive of twentieth century evangelicalism or evangelism techniques. Instead, they prioritize their, “Responsibility to care for society. This notion of being entrusted with a mandate to work for the ‘common good’ is seen as a covenant between God and His people.”⁵³ From politics to academia to entertainment to business, the Cosmopolitan Christian is engaging not to tear down culture, but to improve, grow, and cause such spheres to flourish.

Cosmopolitan Christians differentiate themselves from Populist Christians.⁵⁴ Populist Christians depend on mass mobilization. They write and appeal to the Christian subculture market. Leadership is derived from the subculture rather than from influence

⁵¹ Taylor and Lang, “U.S. Cities,” 6.

⁵² D. Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 264, Kindle Edition.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 314.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 4350.

among the general public.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Cosmopolitan Christians are different: “They travel frequently, are involved in the arts, and live affluent lifestyles.

Cosmopolitan evangelicals have greater access to powerful institutions, and the social networks they inhabit are populated by leaders from government, business, and entertainment...It is ‘move-the-dial Christianity’ in which evangelicals are in a position to use their faith to influence the rest of society.”⁵⁶ Furthermore these Christians have been found to be equally as fervent in their faith. There is simply no nominalism to be found in their personal devotion. They have simply chosen to express their faith commitments differently than the populist Christian.⁵⁷

Trends in the United States and Globally

There are national and international trends influencing American cities. Two trends are important for the project: Immigration is growing. Desecularization is increasing. Lastly, there is an increase in spiritual activity among secularized westerners.

Immigrants continue to see value in relocating to America. Cities are the places where they launch their lives. These cities are known as immigrant gateways. There are six kinds of immigrant gateways: former, continuous, post-WWII, emerging, re-emerging, and re-emerging.⁵⁸ The names speak for themselves. The important

⁵⁵ Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power*, 4364.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4382.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 4391.

⁵⁸ Audrey Singer, “The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways,” *The Living Cities Census Series* (February 2005): 1.

information is to understand them and to incorporate this trend into a faith metropolitan ecclesiology.

In the future, New York and Chicago will continue to be immigration gateways. Since WWII, LA, DC, Miami, Atlanta, and Dallas have continued to draw immigrants and show no signs of slowing. Lastly, while Seattle has re-emerged as a gateway, consideration must be given to the pre-emerging gateways in Salt Lake City and Raleigh-Durham.

Interestingly, research shows that today's immigrants are increasingly choosing to live in large metropolitan regions and not simply the urban. In fact, "By 2000, more immigrants in metropolitan areas lived in suburbs than cities, and their growth rates there exceeded those in the cities. Most notably, immigrants in emerging gateways are far more likely to live in the suburbs than in central cities."⁵⁹

The surprising emerging reality is that the world may be desecularizing, including the United States. Desecularization is "a process of counter-secularization, through which religion reasserts its societal influence in reaction to previous and/or co-occurring secularizing processes."⁶⁰ Peter Berger writes, "To be sure, modernization has had some secularizing affects. But it has also provoked powerful movements of counter-secularization...My point is that the assumption that we live in a secularized work is false."⁶¹ Berger and others have successfully demonstrated that the world is not

⁵⁹ Singer, "New Immigrant Gateways," 1.

⁶⁰ Vyacheslav Karpov, "Desecularization: A Conceptual Framework," *Oxford Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 2 (July 2015): 232-70, accessed June 2, 2015, <http://jcs.oxfordjournals.org/>, 250.

⁶¹ Peter L. Berger, ed., *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 2-3.

secularizing as expected. The Global South continues to Christianize at a much faster rate than expected.⁶² Western cultures are now experiencing new waves of desecularization with the clearest case being found in post-communist Russia.⁶³

The result is a desecularization/secularization co-occurrence. Research shows secularization is not completely retreating. It is still advancing in new ways and in many new places.⁶⁴ In the future, “Counter-secularizing trends [will persist] or [deepen] secularization in some societal domains and, furthermore, [are] latently interdependent with them.”⁶⁵

Karpov and Berger both demonstrate the connection between desecularization rising birthrates: “There is massive evidence that, among groups in comparable socioeconomic conditions, those with higher religiosity and/or more conservatively religious have considerably higher birth rates.”⁶⁶ Studies have shown that when European families had the same religiosity levels as American counterparts, their birthrates would be 19 percent higher than their current status.⁶⁷

Birthrates among the religious are significant evidence supporting the potentiality of desecularization, but it remains unclear if such trends will create a new type of

⁶² For an in depth analysis of growing Christianity in the Global South, see: Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: the Coming of Global Christianity (Future of Christianity Trilogy)*, 3 ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁶³ Karpov, “Desecularization,” 234.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 250.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Christendom. The desecularization process “may be as gradual and lengthy as was the centuries-long advent of modern secularity or the transition from late Roman ‘sensate’ secularity to the Christian “ideational” era.”⁶⁸ The American co-occurrence will likely create a new culturally influential category similar to what Miroslav Volf calls “committed pluralism.”⁶⁹

Moving Toward an Urban, Metropolitan and Cosmopolitan Ecclesiology

Given the urban, metropolitan, and national trends in cities, Vineyard Churches must move toward developing an ecclesiology that engages the metropolis in all of its forms. The ecclesiology must be incarnational, thoughtful, and most of all loving. The Vineyard must commit to urban, metropolitan and cosmopolitan living, learning, and loving.

First, the future likelihood of nonmarket interactions can and should stir the church to deepen its role within this sophisticated form reciprocal economy of sharing. It must understand the networks and empower individuals to participate in them. Moreover, both the Christian Church and individual Christians must consider both corporate and personal engagement strategies. Christians must recognize that they can give and receive in stream of nonmarket interactions all while learning from the successes and failures of others. Not only will Christians personally benefit from such placement, they may over time have the opportunity to influence decisions and ideas toward God’s Kingdom and cultural renewal. Living in urban centers is essential.

⁶⁸ Karpov, “Desecularization,” 268.

Second, churches must prepare for the rise of the consumer city. In the future, as individuals prioritize cities to consume urban amenities, churches should learn the identifiers of urban consumption and how it differs from suburban consumption. Christians must articulate their place in the city –not simply as a consumer but as a faithful presence of the Gospel. Jesus followers should reflect upon their own motivations for choosing to live in the principal city center and not simply follow the tide of cultural consumerism.

Third, Christians must study and appreciate the complexity of the megapolitan and welcome various ecclesial models of engagement. This means that we must not quickly and efficiently deconstruct the mega church. The mega church— usually characterized by easy automobile access, a large parking lot, and a particular kind of architecture—reflects the attributes of the megapolitan. It fits within the streets, zoning and planning of its respective metropolitan contexts. They are the byproduct of a fifty-year national trend toward megapolitan regional planning.

This is not a prescription for more mega churches, but rather a call to recognize contextual complexities. Christians are called to evaluate their theology and ecclesiology open-handedly. Many mega church strategies and assumptions should be challenged and improved upon. Mega church is a cultural condition that caters to the general public's whims and preferences for geographical density, front yards, single use zoning, and decent schools for children. If the Christian church really desires to address the profound issue of mega churches' relationship to the built environment, it must learn about how city planning works and love the city enough to prescribe a healthier and less car-dependent way of life.

Fourth, the notion of suburb civic engagement challenges the Christian to contemplate flourishing from a metropolitan level. Regardless of personal living preferences, the Christian must acknowledge the current symbiotic relationship between city and suburbs. It simply is not enough to write off either way of life as irrelevant or to live in a silo.

The wise Christian will learn to love the people living within the regional ecosystem. In particular, it should be quick to learn regional cultural patterns as well as historical competence of both the region at-large as well as micropolitans. The church must familiarize itself with how these regions function and how local Christian witness will engage it. For when we can understand and construct our best understanding of all aspects of the metropolis, we will have a better chance to cast meaningful vision toward a cultural renewal mobilization plan.

Fifth, New Urbanists must remember that the built environment may never change. The urban Christian must learn to love and support their suburban counterparts. Yes, the suburban mentality has many unhealthy aspects including consumerism and environmental waste. However, just as Paul the Apostle was willing to overlook certain cultural trends and injustices in order to promote the Gospel, so too must New Urbanist Christians be willing to build a long-term strategy toward engaging suburban culture.

The American Church must take responsibility for the types and quality of churches it plants. As more children are raised in the suburbs, the church must consider a thoughtful strategy effectively communicating authentic and missional Christianity. The suburbs need fewer churches focused on conservative politics, reductionist soteriology and premillennial eschatology. They deserve churches that challenge parents to press into

their faith while seeking neighborhood cultural renewal and long-term thoughtful missional engagement.

Sixth, the trend of the Cosmopolitan Christian should encourage churches and church leaders to engage cities and respective halls of power. Christians are everywhere—both the suburban cul-de-sac and the highest positions of power in urban centers. The opportunity to support such Christians is available if churches choose to do so. When we thoughtfully live in cosmopolitan cities, we are creating opportunity for authentic nonmarket interactions. When we seek to understand cosmopolitan cities, we are demonstrating our care for such contexts. Intelligent incarnational living and engagement creates opportunity for individual transformation resulting in greater national impact among populations over whom cosmopolitans have influence.

Seventh, a metropolitan ecclesiology must be carefully considered before implemented. Cities are immense. Cities are complicated. Richard Sennett writes, “In the United States, people flee decaying suburbs rather than re-invest in them... ‘renewing’ the inner city most often means displacing the people who have lived there thus far.”⁷⁰ He challenges the average notion of metropolitan development: “‘Growth’ in an urban environment is a more complicated phenomenon than simple replacement of what existed before; growth requires a dialogue between past and present, it is a matter of evolution rather than erasure.”⁷¹ In light of this observable reality, it is essential for the Christian to consider both the upside and consequences of renewal activity by understanding the past,

⁷⁰ Richard Sennett, “The Open City.” Accessed June 3, 2015. <https://www.richardsennett.com/site/senn/UploadedResources/The%20Open%20City.pdf>, 3.

⁷¹ Ibid., 4.

present, and future of a given city. We must learn the “love language” of our city and its various subcultures.⁷²

⁷² For more on loving in ways that are understandable by the receiver, consider a resource used in interpersonal relationships: Gary D Chapman, *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love That Lasts*, Abridged ed. (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 2015).

PART THREE

PLAN, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION

CHAPTER 4

A MINISTRY PLAN FOR THE VINEYARD MOVEMENT

The Vineyard Movement's pneumatology provides the basis for future potential as it engages the metropolis. Both its emphasis of the Holy Spirit and post-modern engagement strategy make it unique. Yet no potentiality can be realized without a thoughtful consideration of particular US cities targeted for engagement. A Vineyard metropolitan ecclesiology could easily be adopted and implemented.

The Movement's pneumatology has historically sought to balance the word and spirit tension. Bill Jackson writes, "History shows that the Word without the Spirit quickly becomes dead orthodoxy, and the Spirit without the Word quickly becomes cultish."¹ The role of the Holy Spirit has always been a keystone value of the Vineyard Movement. It has consistently desired to experience and participate with the full power of the Spirit in daily situations to glorify God's Kingdom. Moreover, John Wimber always intended to align everyday living with the Holy Spirit's work by inviting God's presence and power into everyday situations.²

¹ Jackson, *The Quest for the Radical Middle*, 214.

² Wimber, *Power Evangelism*, 207.

Wimber did not encourage demonstrations of signs and wonders simply for the sake of seeing the miraculous. Rather, his pneumatological position was a consistent biblical alignment for seeking cultural renewal. He wrote that Christians are to, “become a greater source of spiritual renewal and evangelism in the [world]. We might be homemakers, factory workers, secretaries, salespersons or teachers, [and must] yield control of our lives to the Holy Spirit, learning to hear and do His will, risking all... to defeat Satan and to advance the kingdom of God.”³

The Vineyard Movement should explore the ideas of John Wimber along with the theology of Abraham Kuyper. Kuyperian sphere sovereignty alerts Christians to the particular cultural areas requiring careful consideration for Gospel contextualization. When married with the Vineyard’s pneumatological bend toward paying attention to the Spirit the result could be dynamic and phenomenal. The Vineyard’s approach toward power evangelism could be extended far beyond demonstrations of signs and wonders for the purpose of personal conversion toward the engagement of all aspects of culture. Power Engagement could be the term to describe attentiveness to the Holy Spirit and cultural renewal.

The Vineyard Movement’s opportunities for the next fifty years are contingent upon its ability to identify and develop young leadership. As the Movement continues to age, its pastors will age with it. There must be a strategy for gathering, discipling, and training young leaders both for ecclesial ministry and cultural engagement of spheres.

The Vineyard Movement must equip, connect, and mobilize the local professionals to succeed in their work. All work matters to God, and Christians represent

³ Wimber, *Power Evangelism*, 209.

the Kingdom when they go to work. He is just as pleased with their Kingdom extending efforts in the various spheres as he is with the obedient pastor. The dichotomy between sacred and secular must continue to die in Vineyard Churches.

The Vineyard Movement has an opportunity to specifically encourage and train individuals on how to invite God's Spirit into their work and in their business dealings. In any given Vineyard Church, leaders are trained to pay attention to the signs that God may be at work in somebody through physical manifestations or otherwise. This dedication to recognizing the signs of God's activity must also extend into the spheres of business, arts, politics, family, and other religious activities. With the exception of Pathak's discussion on neighboring, this is an unexplored area for the Vineyard.

As stated earlier, principal cities are predicted to grow, and their surrounding metropolitan area will see new heights of population and wealth creation. Rich Nathan sees the Christian as a surfer riding a wave of God's activity. He writes, "What if God, has decided to take this moment to create a surge of spiritual interest across this country and around the world? What if the wave is building and the church begins to awaken from its long slumber? What if churches across America and the West were suddenly not characterized by dead orthodoxy or dead liberalism but by conversions and miracles and transformed lives?"⁴ Riding the wave of God's activity is part of Vineyard DNA. Vineyard Churches have an opportunity to learn every conceivable cultural shift in America and join God's work in them.

The Vineyard Movement must move toward a metropolitan ecclesiology which is a massive and multi-faceted shift. Even though the Movement would need to figure out

⁴ Nathan, *Both/And*, 41.

many things, praying, planning, and planting are healthy activities to do while this shift is underway. Praying simply means that we commit to pray for cities. We pray to understand our church's role in city engagement. Lastly, we pray for ourselves that God might show us how to engage the cities of the future. Planning means that we commit to planning for the coming changes. We plan for the retirement of many Vineyard pastors. We also conduct financial planning to determine the cost of city engagement in the future. News flash: it will be expensive. Planting means that we commit to planting churches. Church planting is the easiest and most productive way to engagement new segments of the general public with God's Kingdom. We also consider how to plant churches with foci: urban, metropolitan, and cosmopolitan.

Conclusions for the Vineyard Movement

As this project moves towards the practical ministry plan, it must develop conclusions regarding the evidence that has been provided thus far. These conclusions will serve as the basis for motivation and action. They mark the clear pathways for establishing action.

The first conclusion for the Vineyard movement: it must embrace cultural renewal theology for at least five specific reasons. First, cultural renewal theology is faithful to the biblical account. Second, it reinforces Vineyard's belief in the already/not yet motif. Third, it provides energetic hope to explore and participate in every inch of the cosmos. Fourth, it encourages Christians to be a faithful presence in all places—in every conceivable sphere. Fifth, it inspires Christian leaders to encourage the faith community to rethink and embrace a holistic ecclesiological approach instead of the old sacred/secular mentality.

The second conclusion for the Vineyard movement is the acceptance and understanding of the imminent urban reality. Cities are growing and will have more—not less— influence on the United States. Certain cities like New York and Los Angeles will continue to exude cosmopolitan influence throughout American culture and the world. A majority of Vineyard churches are not located in major US cities. Most Vineyard church planting efforts are not engaged in planting in large metropolitan areas. As Vineyard churches choose to accept the imminent urban realities that will shape North American culture, they are preparing themselves for real change. Movement-wide education will empower the Association to become more thoughtful in their strategy, mobilization, tools, resources, and events.

Preparing for this culture-wide imminent reality is not a short-term strategy. It requires energy for a vision that may take 100-200 years. It may seem crazy, but it is important the Vineyard to think about how to align itself with God’s work in cities for the next few hundred years. In 200 years from now, in cities across North America, we want people to be free from the unhealthy Iberian religious notions unfortunately associated with Christianity. We want them to be free to be able to choose or reject our personal convictions without fear of human consequences or harm. But we do want them to say, “I may not be a Christian, but I am grateful for their contribution. If it weren’t for their contribution to politics, war and peace, economic development, and human right and social justice, our very religious world would be a very dark and dangerous place. Christians have helped our world to flourish.”

The third conclusion for the Vineyard Movement is a commitment to a theology of work. Work in cities is and will always be important. The Bible sees all work as

unique among human beings and that even menial work is dignified.⁵ It is in the minister's best interest to understand and support business and other work-related endeavors as culture renewing activities.⁶ For when we "Have an integrated and non-dualistic understanding of work, we know that many people who are not believers are, through God's providence and common grace, given the gifts to do excellent work."⁷ If the Vineyard Movement can find a way to empower individuals to flourish in their work, they will succeed in relating to urban and metropolitan contexts.

The fourth conclusion is a commitment to a metropolitan, cosmopolitan and urban ecclesiology. Our local church expressions must both reflect and engage our respective contexts. The Spirit will lead pastors to engage suburban contexts different than he will lead others to engage cosmopolitan cities. The point is this: each Vineyard expression should evaluate the contextual appropriateness of its ecclesiology for the sake of the Gospel.

The fifth conclusion is a commitment to city planning and metropolitan place making knowledge. Urban planners understand something that pastors do not. They know how cities actually work. They are also able to connect how planning, density, and the built environment are connected with sociological trends and patterns. When a pastor can learn to think, love, and sympathize like an urban planner, he or she will be a better leader not only in the local setting but also in the community.

Objectives, Goals, and Strategies

⁵ Keller, *Center Church*, 48.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 221.

The objectives for the Vineyard Movement Metropolitan and Networking Initiative are six-fold. first, to understand the renewal theology and its implications; second, to understand the reality of cities, urban centers, and the future of humanity; third, to activate an ecclesial network within participating Vineyard Churches; fourth, to activate an urban ecclesiology among a network of churches; fifth, to develop and implement urban ecclesiology learning resources; and sixth, to develop an urban planning and urban place making learning strategy.

The Initiative's first objective is to encourage a culture of renewal theology and its implications throughout the Vineyard Movement. Since Vineyard has long embraced Kingdom theology and post-millennial eschatology, renewal theology will hardly be an adjustment. In fact, most Vineyard leaders will probably assume that they already have renewal theology implemented in their church. In any case, the motive behind this goal is to deepen the practice of renewal theology through the Vineyard tradition.

The three goals to achieve this objective will focus on movement-wide competency in understanding: renewal eschatology, the biblical meta-narrative, and the *Missio Dei* concept. The eschatology should reflect a post-millennial view which seeks to participate with God's Spirit to bring more of Christ's reality into today. The biblical meta-narrative should include a proficient understanding of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. Proficiency in *Missio Dei* should include understanding of God's mission and the Christian's role in discerning and joining him in it. In all three of the goals designed to meet the overall objective, the Initiative will aim for 100 percent participation and interaction with the content among all new church plants after 2017. It will aim for

100 percent participation among missionally-engaged sending churches. It will seek 50 percent participation among established Vineyard Churches.

When Vineyard parishioners better understand renewal theology, it provides them with an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak to them about action. It creates potential to lead them to bring goodness into their work. A deeper communication of renewal theology could lead to more purposeful engagement in the culture—if the Spirit so chooses.

The Initiative's second objective is to understand the reality of cities, urban centers, and the future of humanity. Cities are growing and cities are changing. Metropolitan and megapolitan regions are diversifying—adding additional complexity to the national landscape. Participants in the Initiative should become proficient in their understanding of how cities work, awareness of major urban and cosmopolitan centers, and a grasp for the sociological shifts taking place in American cities.

Three goals to achieve this objective will focus on movement-wide competency by understanding: the demographic trends in the 100 largest US cities, the demographic trends in one's own city, and metropolitan literary and expert awareness. When a Vineyard leader understands American demography, he or she will be able to more fully consider the place of the local church within the greater trends. Gospel contextualization is always improved when one understands his/her own demographic. Lastly, no pastor or church leader within the Vineyard Movement will be able to match what the various experts have been able to research and discover. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the Initiative to encourage and develop a culture of learning and study of experts' research.

Literary competency in the area of cities will only lead to further proficiency and better local ecclesial choices.

In all three of the goals designed to meet the overall objective, the Initiative will aim for 100 percent participation and interaction with the content among all new church plants after 2017. It will aim for 100 percent participation among missionally engaged sending churches. It will seek 50 percent participation among established Vineyard Churches.

The Initiative's third objective is to activate an ecclesial network within participating Vineyard Churches. Vineyard Churches must work together on a national level in order to be aware of others' efforts, and to provide support as they all move towards the same goal. The reality is that many local Vineyard Churches are interested and currently engaging their local context, but do not have access to the best practices or the relational camaraderie necessary for long-term sustainable engagement. An activated ecclesial network will provide a community of support and national awareness. It may even result in cross-country partnerships on particular projects.

The goals to achieve this objective: a measurable network among metropolitan planters, a measurable network between culturally engaging individuals, and a measurable network among key existing metropolitan churches. All individuals need community, and this is especially true for church planters. Therefore, the Initiative will seek to address this need by networking planters who are proactively seeking the flourishing of cities. It is also in the best interest of the Initiative to gather and network individuals who are thinking missionally, but may not attend a Vineyard Church who's

leadership is interested in pursuing such goals. Lastly, it is vital to rally, encourage, and support existing Vineyard Churches near large metropolitan regions.

In all three of the goals designed to meet the overall objective, the Initiative will aim for 100 percent participation and interaction with the content among all new church plants after 2017. It will aim for 100 percent participation among missionally engaged sending churches. It will seek 50 percent participation among established Vineyard Churches.

The Initiative's fourth objective is to activate an urban ecclesiology among a network of churches. The plan will be to identify and engage urban churches, peripheral urban churches, metropolitan churches with urban influence, and urban church plants. Once they have been identified and engaged, the Initiative will integrate them with one another for learning and networking purposes. Ongoing education modules will also be created in order to continue to coin and clarify the meaning of "urban ecclesiology". This goal will be reached by creating a 100 percent response survey to uncover the ecclesial trends and successes among urban and metropolitan Vineyard Churches. Once the data has been aggregated, it will be compared and contrasted against national urban church trends. The final research will then be presented back to participating churches to learn about the Vineyard's best practices as well as areas for improvement.

The Initiative's fifth objective is to develop and implement urban ecclesiology learning resources. Lifelong learning is a universal value among smart and open practitioners. The Initiative will leverage this value by developing resources that will continue to educate and develop urban planters. Education and development could

include awareness of other best practices as well as direct teaching from national and local experts.

The Initiative will aim for 100 percent participation and interaction with the content among all new church plants after 2017. It will aim for 100 percent participation among missionally engaged sending churches. It will seek 50 percent participation among established Vineyard Churches.

The Initiative's sixth objective is to develop an urban planning and urban place making learning strategy. Many pastors and church leaders do not realize how much of the built environment affects their local expression and witness. My guess is that the general public even fails to grasp how urban planners and developers understand many issues that affect the quality of life and the flourishing of communities and neighborhoods. In order to accomplish this objective, the Initiative will provide educational resources and events in order to leverage all that the urban planning field has to offer.

The Initiative will aim for 100 percent participation and interaction with the content among all new church plants after 2017. It will aim for 100 percent participation among missionally engaged sending churches. It will seek 50 percent participation among established Vineyard Churches.

Program Content, Tools, and Resources

The Initiative will create resources and tools for understanding renewal theology. The best way to create a sustainable set of theological resources is to leverage Vineyard's Vineyard Institute. Vineyard Institute, or VI, is an online education program created by Vineyard Churches and leaders from different parts of the world. The plan is to bring the

Initiative together with VI to create an education track that marries renewal theology with metropolitan ecclesiology. The renewal theology aspects are already within the educational content of VI. The adjustment would require simply adding a few course options to allow those who wish to study urban trends to do so. The second tool for further deepening renewal theology is to provide lists of further reading resources and leaders who understand the subject. By providing recommending reading to leaders, the Initiative will be giving curious individuals the opportunity to self educate. These lists of resources can be provided in card form or on the Initiative's website.

The Initiative's plan to provide sociological education tools for city learning will focus primarily on reading and eating. First, the Initiative will provide a reading lists featuring 101, 201, 301, and 401 headings to participants to feel as if they are progressing toward a deeper and more comprehensive American sociological reality. Second, the program will provide tools and inspiration to teach participants where to eat in a city. This follows the notion that when individuals eat where locals eat, and talk with locals, they are not only improving their social skills, but they are improving their sociological and cultural awareness of a neighborhood. Getting out of the office is essential for learning. A perfect example of this is found in TV personality Anthony Bourdain. The way to learn a city is to meet and eat your way through it.

The Initiative's program will include the development and activation of a national network towards city engagement. The Initiative will seek to be present at all Society of Vineyard Scholars events. It will promote and encourage the development of local dream cohorts that will empower and introduce like-minded leaders and pastors to learn and engage their city. Regular presence at national and regional events will be accompanied

by creating content and presentations at such events. Knowing that most future urban engagers will be planters, the Initiative plans to have a pulse and influence on the pipeline of young church planters as well. Lastly, the program will include quarterly events in high interest metropolitan areas and will host a city reaching conference every year.

The Initiative's program will develop an education plan for an urban, metropolitan, and cosmopolitan ecclesiology in the Vineyard Movement. The education plan will focus primarily on self-directed field education. Most importantly, the hope is for the content to autonomously educate toward participatory calling.

First, it will create an easy to follow urban ethnographic workbook allowing planters and urban engagers to more fully grasp the reality of their neighborhood. There are many techniques that should be leveraged including: participant observation, mapping systematic observation, and interviews.⁸

Second, it will create an urban church-planting workbook that leverages the best language and values of the Vineyard Movement. Redeemer Presbyterian Church's Church Planting Manual will serve as a template for the Vineyard version.⁹ The workbook should be challenging yet easy to understand and complete.

Third, it will create a resource that brings Vineyard's well known "ministry time" out of just thinking about the Holy Spirit within the context of the church, and into every sphere of the public realm. In this manual, writers will lean heavily into John Wimber's *Power Evangelism* and *Power Healing* as well as Rich Nathan's *Both/And* for ministry

⁸ Roger S. Greenway, *Discipling the City: a Comprehensive Approach to Urban Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2000), 188-92.

⁹ J. Allen Thompson and Timothy Keller, *Redeemer Church Planting Manual* (New York: Redeemer City to City, 2002).

time principles. Then, writers will engage Kuypertian sphere sovereignty thinkers and writers to see where the two align for practical ministry application.

Fourth, it will create “God in the Metropolis” workbook that teaches the basics of metropolitan realities, and how to think and research a large area in order grasp each neighborhood’s interdependence upon the other. It should be noted that metropolitan realities often change, and new research sometimes disproves even recent theories. Therefore, this particular workbook should work hard to articulate the need for “middleware” in order to thoughtfully engage long-term.¹⁰

Fifth, and along the same lines as the fourth workbook, it will create “God Among the Cosmopolitan” workbook to consider the trends, realities, and opportunities to influence cosmopolitan cities. Unlike like the fourth workbook, this particular opportunity will require deeper research to discover ongoing trends. It will likely require regular updating.

Sixth, it will create a starter kit called “Launching a Faith and Work Initiative at Your Vineyard Church” which will provide easy steps on how encourage, empower, and release huge Kingdom potential through parishioners missiological engagement at their workplace. While it has yet to be confirmed or even suggested, it makes sense to try to partner with Redeemer Presbyterian Church’s Center for Faith and Work to provide elements of the training.

The Initiative’s program will develop resources and an education plan for understanding urban planning and metropolitan place making in the Vineyard Movement. First, it will create a workbook that introduces the Vineyard leader to the best practices of

¹⁰ Keller, *Center Church*, 16.

the urban planner with the hope that such leaders might leverage the wealth of insightful knowledge obtainable from the urban planner mindset. Second, it will create a workbook that teaches pastors the need to know information of how cities work so that they will be more knowledgeable on how to appropriately begin to think about the flourishing of their city. Third, it will create a workbook that welcomes the Holy Spirit into consideration and engagement of cities' economic realities with the goal of marrying Vineyard's ongoing participation with Spirit beyond the realm of physical healing and into the realm of economic healing. Fourth, it will create a position paper called "The Vineyard and the Importance of Immigrants" and will help Vineyard pastors understand the reality and enormous opportunity among American immigrants. Fifth, it will create a Vineyard version workbook teaching asset based community development (ABCD). ABCD offers an alternative option to traditional community development by mapping assets and resources already in a community and then creating the network to support self-sustaining neighborhood thriving.¹¹

Lastly, the Initiative's program will develop resources to encourage the role and value of excellent research. A shining but hardly unique example is The Thriving Cities Project.¹² Based out of The Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at The University of Virginia, Thriving Cities recognizes that there are thousand of research projects developing thousands of various indicators to determine the wealth, health, and needs of particular segments of neighborhoods and cities. So rather than follow this trend, the TCP seeks to aggregate the data and to show the relationships between each sets of assets.

¹¹ John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: a Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (Evanston, IL: ACTA Publications, 1993).

¹² Thriving Cities, www.thrivingcities.com (accessed June 10, 2015).

Basically, they are discovering that there are keystone variables in each community that tend to have a disproportionate influence over others factors. TCP is trying to demonstrate the connectedness and interdependence. This is an example of research that can and should be understood by pastors at the local level. The Initiative plans to develop ongoing awareness articles to keep pastors and leaders aware of such trends. The format will include a website, blog, and newsletter.

Target Population

The target population for the Initiative's program will look and feel narrow. It is essential to focus its efforts on key leaders and interested parties. While some effort will be made to widely gather interested parties, a majority of the energy will be spent deepening and educating those who have influence over others. It is the best way to steward limited resources and energy.

It is important to recognize the role of the author as network activator and resource developer. The author will seek develop the network through ongoing and persistent relationship building through regular contact. Some of this contact may be in person at conferences and events; other contact may be through phone calls and emails. It is essential that the network activator maintain a healthy and connected relationship with the development of written resources. As the network is developed, there will need to be adjustments and pivots regarding the language and resources developed. Both pieces must work well together which is why it makes sense to have the author develop both. Lastly, the author has found that while there is pocketed interest in building national momentum towards urban engagement, nobody else has taken the lead. The author has no problem stepping aside if a more qualified candidate can be found to lead the charge to

engage the target population. The target population includes: particular Vineyard Churches located in a certain sized metropolitan area, Vineyard Churches committed to planting and city reaching, Vineyard National Church Planting network, and Vineyard Church planters.

First, the Initiative will engage Vineyard Churches located in certain sized metropolitan areas. Some of these areas are obvious: New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Antonio, San Diego, Dallas, San Jose, and Austin. Yet it is important to also recognize massive metropolitan areas as well. Boston, Atlanta, Miami, Bay Area, and Washington DC are all areas with massive metropolitan populations.

In each of the areas listed above, Vineyard senior pastors will be contacted. Relationships with regional overseers will be developed. The engagement will first seek to understand the church's unique placement in each context and learn if any movement has been created locally or regionally. Irrespective of existing momentum, trust will be built and discussions will begin. Questions will be placed to pastors and leaders in each region to determine what resources would be most helpful for them and their congregation.

Beyond the largest cities, there are plenty of mid-sized cities that must be engaged. These cities usually have high principal city populations and even greater metropolitan populations. It is unnecessary to determine a hard and fast bottom line number, but a good goal should be to connect with churches located near principal cities of 200,000 or greater. These cities make up a major piece of the country and have unique challenges different than coastal cosmopolitan cities. The same connection strategy will

be used, but the interpretation of interest will result in different categorizations. For example, Los Angeles and New York City face vastly different challenges than Cleveland and Detroit. A one-size-fits-all strategy makes no sense. Instead, a truly helpful approach must celebrate and define differences in order to be successful.

Second, the Initiative will engage Vineyard churches committed to planting and city reaching. It is a well-known fact in the Vineyard that most of the reproductive churches planting churches are located in places not known for their large populations. A local Vineyard church's ability to plant is more squarely built on the senior leader's commitment to church planting. Church planting churches are strong allies for the Initiative. They are usually more likely to consider urban engagement because they already have the mindset of preparing and developing their planters for some type of engagement. By building trusting relationships with high yield planting churches, the Initiative will be able to provide resources to shape and influence planting churches to encourage planters towards cities. Also, there are many churches in the Vineyard Movement who are engaging particular subcultures and people groups. Some read deep and wide in the Christian world. Some may live in the middle of nowhere but have a profound understanding of pastoral strategies like Tim Keller's from Redeemer Presbyterian Church. These individuals can and should be engaged. They will serve as advocates for the cause.

Third, the Initiative will engage the Vineyard National Church Planting network. The National Church Planting Initiative known as Multiply Vineyard desires to assist and amplify the efforts of the local church on a national level. They help local pastors determine if a planter is qualified and ready. They also provide resources for both pastors

and planters to help them learn the necessary pieces for a successful church plant. Engagement of Multiply Vineyard will include developing strong relationships at the national level. The Initiative desires to be a resource and create resources that will actually be used. By combining MV's pulse on up and coming planters, and the Initiative's written resources, there is a chance the Movement could see an increase in urban, metropolitan, and cosmopolitan focused plants.

Fourth, the Initiative will engage church planters. It will engage church planters at-large as well as Vineyard church planters. By engaging church planters at-large, it will narrow in on individuals who desire to incorporate Kingdom-oriented pneumatological elements into their planting efforts but have not yet identified with a tribe or denomination. By engaging directly with church planters within the Vineyard, the Initiative will be able to better resource future and current planters without any middle management in the way. Specifically, planters in pre-plant mode often have specific questions and needs. While Multiply Vineyard may be resourcing them with clarity of calling, the Initiative will focus on specific knowledge that assists them in their particular metropolitan endeavor. By engaging current church planters who are within the first few years of the church plant, the Initiative will again be able to better resource planters and learn more about how to engage cities so that such information can be shared nationally.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The pilot project will be called The Vineyard Metropolitan Strategy and Network Initiative. The project will have an established timeline for: pilot cities, target churches, resources and tools developed, city learning tools, events, conferences, and evaluation of the project. The project will identify and develop leaders and establish essential criteria. The implementation process will also require clarity on resources: budget, website, locations, written materials, and conference resources. Lastly, the implementation process will review the assessment criteria to determine the success and sustainability of the project. As stated earlier, the Initiative will develop a city strategy in cooperation with local Vineyard churches and will strengthen the network and relationships between metropolitan focused Vineyard churches and city focused church plants. The hope is that within three or four years, the Vineyard Movement would be very clear about where it is going and what it plans to do to join God's work in cities.

The Initiative will be designed to equip, connect and mobilize churches, church planters and laity to bring the Gospel to bear—both short and long term—in various city contexts. The programs and the networking events will draw upon several of the innovative components featured in Redeemer Presbyterian Church's Center for Faith and

Work. Initiative participants will be officially involved for at least three years, but the hope is that they will continue on to be autonomously involved for at least ten years.

Also, like any relationship, it must be maintained.

Similar to the program offered by Redeemer, the “equip, connect, and mobilize” motif will take on specific forms. The first portion of the program will focus on equipping—giving participants the chance to bring doctrinal clarity, theological vision, and interpreting and understanding the context. The second portion will help participants to connect with one another. The third will focus on application and mobilizing laity in various contexts.

Regarding equipping, the Initiative will focus the first three years on developing materials that can and will be used by their intended audiences. Time and resources are very limited. Therefore, we must make sure that the resources will be used. In order to achieve usefulness, relationships with both planters and established city churches is necessary to fully understand the needs and concerns as well as best practices. While the organizers of the Initiative have a robust understanding of both cities and other successful church movements within cities, it is important to understand the needs of the local churches we will be working with in order to obtain a clear grasp on what and how to write. Once context and relationships have been established, the Initiative will start to produce the written materials outlined in the previous chapter. Some workbooks and studies will take longer to produce, but are nonetheless necessary. Unlike the other materials that require more research, the equipping aspects of the blog, email list, online presence, and marketing presence will begin immediately. The Initiative sees no time in

waiting by proclaiming its excitement for cities and its passion to realize the opportunities found within.

Regarding connecting, the Initiative will focus the first three years on developing not only vertical relationships but horizontal ones as well. We see a number of concerns. First, we are concerned that there are many church planters who are near large metropolitan cities but are connected in a coaching system with other local pastors who may not share the same passion for cities. As an extra benefit to planters, we hope to be able to connect them with each other around the idea of serving and engaging cities. Camaraderie among individuals in similar circumstances creates greater opportunity for community. Second, we are concerned that there are city-engaging pastors, both associate and senior, who lack the encouragement to deeply engage their city. We believe that both network introductions and networking events could help improve the communication lines towards thoughtful mobilization. In essence, we are creating a tribe within the tribe.

Regarding mobilization, the Initiative will focus the first three years on developing the healthy foundation for thoughtful engagement for the next fifty years. In many denominations and in the Vineyard as well, churches sometimes act brashly or too quickly. They move forward on a single idea with clear measurables and wins so they can show that they are getting something done. It is simply not enough for church leaders to quickly run out and engage their city with singular projects that people can rally behind. A hunger to transform culture for the long-term can only be satisfied through thoughtful mobilization. It also requires autonomous mobilization—meaning that the Initiative does not intend to manage cultural engagement in cities, but rather it hopes to catalyze it. It desires to be both a thought and action leader and perhaps even an authority on such

knowledge and scholarship. However, it does not intend to overly manage projects of churches or demand action from its leaders. The Initiative seeks to catalyze mobilization for the long-term benefit of the city.

Timeline

The timeline for accomplishing the three-year goals of the Initiative is aggressive but can be accomplished. Cities, churches, and church planters will be selected, contacted, and developed. The goal is to obtain useful data by the end of 2017 for review.

The timeline for pilot cities will depend upon a number of factors: interest and strategic opportunity. The Initiative will refuse to enter into a context without local participation. It will also refuse to enter into a context deemed too small either by population or influence. At this time, the Initiative will consciously hesitate on defining clear and minimal numbers required for participation. Preference will be given toward larger contexts. In the fall of 2015, the Initiative will reach out to the churches in the twenty largest US cities. In the winter and spring of 2016, the Initiative will be clarifying the needs and expectations of each region and continuing the discussion with potential planters. By the end of summer 2016, the pilot cities will be selected. Our hope is to engage New York City, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, and Denver.

The timeline for target church and planters selected is somewhat connected with the selection of pilot cities. Yet this target timeline is based upon interested parties who may not be near a metropolitan region, but still retain special interest in our project. Far be it from us to withhold connection and support toward our goal. By the end of fall 2015, churches and planters will be contacted. By the end of winter 2016, these individuals will have an ongoing relationship with the Initiative. By the end of summer

2016, churches and planters will have been selected for participation. Selection means that there will be a formal agreement to provide feedback and agree to connect with others toward the vision.

In the summer of 2016, the selected churches and planters will be offered opportunities to make initial connection with one another. In the fall of 2015, the Initiative will begin to lay the groundwork for this connection through survey and understanding of the needs of these two groups. By the end of Winter 2016, the Initiative plans to have a firm grasp on the learning components most desired, but more importantly, most needed. We anticipate that most of the interested parties will already know each other. The Vineyard believes itself to be a very connected group of people. Therefore, at this time, we plan to introduce educational components to challenge their assumptions and to deepen their relationships with one another. If the education and learning components work, they will provide the foundation for new levels and focus of relationship to take place.

The timeline for creating renewal resources and tools will take place over a two-year period and will be completed by the end of 2017. The requirements for creating the renewal resources include: pragmatic usability and originality. First, we plan to create resources and tools that will be used by the Movement—not applauded and shelved. Second, we want the resources and tools to compliment those that have already been created by Vineyard writers and other outside sources that have a healthy pulse on urban ecclesiology. In the fall of 2015, the Initiative will provide a proposal for the Vineyard Institute for review. By the end of spring 2016, the Initiative and VI will come to an agreement on the terms of the arrangement as well as the scholarship needs for the

coming school year. Ideally, the resources will be beta-tested throughout the 2016-2017 school year and will leave time for adjustments and finalization by the end of 2017. In the short term, the blog and Initiative's website can start to produce regular posts and articles starting in the fall of 2015.

The timeline for creating sociological tools for city learning is simple. These tools focus primarily on teaching people where to go to learn and read on their own. The reading lists (101, 201, 301, 401) will be created by the end of 2015. The Initiative will also create a series of articles celebrating how to enjoy culture. These articles will be published in as many Vineyard contexts as possible, the Initiative's website, outside websites, and in print. The celebration of culture through food, arts, entertainment, etc. is something that will be an ongoing effort with hope of producing a sizeable body of respected work by the end of 2017.

The timeline for launching metropolitan ecclesiology events is set for spring of 2017. The hope is to create breakouts at each regional conference leading up to the Initiative's city reaching conference in the fall of 2017. Some of these events will be launched by mid 2016 and will consist of Google Hangouts. While other meetings will be regional discussions about materials. Our hope is to provide a vision of what could be autonomously possible without interfering too much. The goal is to have at least four events per year per region starting in 2016. So each region would have a total of at least eight official events by the end of 2017.

If the progression is healthy and momentum is building, a city reaching conference will be organized and planned for the fall of 2017. If each momentum continues to build in each pilot city, the launch of a national conference simply makes

sense. The decision for deciding if there will be a conference will need to take place in the first quarter of 2017.

The timeline for evaluation, analysis and future projections will be based upon regular check-ins and observation. The regular contact with the hopeful participants and actual participants will give us anecdotal evidence of both success and failure. However, at the end of 2017, the Initiative will evaluate the two-year strategy as well as the specific wins and losses coming out the conference held in the fall. As the conference approaches, more specific wins will be established to determine if it led toward further lasting engagement with both the Initiative and the cities participants live in.

Leadership Identification and Development

In order to successfully grow the Movement's interest in cities and city reaching, the Initiative must work with existing Vineyard leadership—both national leaders and local pastors. It must decide upon criteria for involvement and detail the types and frequency of gatherings it hopes to achieve in the next three years. Also, it must determine development tools, best practices, and ecclesiological training to be shared to accelerate the development of a dense network.

Leadership identification and contact is essential. In order for the Initiative to work, qualified leaders from regions and urban localities must feel led to participate. Again, to reiterate the values guiding the Initiative, we have no desire to demand or force participation, but are simply calling leaders and churches to respond to what we see God doing. In order to identify leaders who want to move towards achieving the Initiative's goals, we will set forth the follow action and criteria. First, the Initiative will leverage its involvement in Society of Vineyard Scholars events, regional conferences, and the

national conference. It will not only attend these events but will create both public and guerrilla marketing techniques to offer the Initiative to all leaders within the Vineyard. Second, the Initiative will spend significant times developing relationships with key pastors and church leaders within local churches in large metropolitan centers. The top twenty-five statistical metropolitan areas will be the first focus. We will also be reaching out to area pastors and overseers in these regions too. Third, the Initiative will reach out to key national leaders and create interest to garner visible and verbal support for it.

Facilitating gatherings will be an essential piece of the Initiative's three-year goals. These gatherings will honor the value of democratic participation, localized ownership, and group-based commitment. It is our role as the Initiative to serve as the catalyst for such discussions. Once the Initiative has successfully developed trusting connections with a group of church leaders in a particular city, it will offer to serve as a coordinator and facilitator for a city-focused discussion on topics of interest for the region.

Leadership cohort development and the sharing of best practices will be an essential piece of each localized network. If national, regional, and local networks seem to be forming around city reaching, the Initiative will suggest and offer a format for national, regional, and local cohorts. Each cohort could be formed based on unique criteria—anything from senior leaders of churches in large cities to every local pastor from a particular city—and all will be encouraged to meet as long as it makes general sense. The Initiative desires more connection resulting in more discussion, prayer, and openness to city reaching. Based upon the availability of financial resources, the Initiative can run the cohorts. These cohorts can meet anywhere from 4-10 times per years

depending upon the agreement created by each cohort. Once cohort meetings start to take place. The cohort format will provide valuable data to the Initiative by supplying its best practices. These best practices will be collected and then aggregated and distributed to others cohorts around the country. Sharing of data will not only encourage other members of the Vineyard community, but may actually catalyze new ideas for a different region.

Leadership development should also include training on metropolitan ecclesiology. A robust metropolitan ecclesiology includes: a narrative form doctrinal foundation, theological framework for city engagement, current broad-stroke trends and changes in city culture, and clarity various opportunities. Training can and should take on proactive and reactive forms designed to meet the needs of the requesting and/or interested constituency. Such forms may include: seminars, online cohorts, recorded teachings, an informal blog, scholarly articles, a self-guided reading and study guide, and breakout sessions.

Clearly, the main goal of the leadership identification and development arm of the Initiative is to increase and catalyze meaningful relationships and networking. These friendships and connections can create what James Davison Hunter calls “dense networks”—a point discussed earlier in this project. When educators, intellectuals, and leaders network together, there is often an organic groundswell of activity that provides the basis of imagination and change. Hunter writes, “Together, these overlapping networks of leaders and resources form a vibrant cultural economy that gives articulation, in multiple forms, and critical mass to the ideals and practices and goods of the alternative culture in ways that both defy yet still resonate with the existing social

environment.”¹ Within the Vineyard, there is a great need for a “vibrant cultural economy” in which the fluidity and rapidity of imaginative and quality ideas are exchanged. An emphasis on developing autonomous and organically catalyzed dense networks honors the values of the Vineyard Movement because it reinforces the notion that everybody gets to participate. It also preserves the Vineyard’s heritage of making room for the Holy Spirit to speak locally and to give leading to the precise way to develop a course of action for city engagement and city reaching. The activities and strategies listed above practically apply to our desire to see dense networks form throughout the Vineyard.

Resources

In order to successfully achieve the goals of the Initiative in the first three years, the project must understand, develop, and utilize resources wisely and with great prudence. A budget must be established in order to clearly cast vision and raise funding. A website must be built and maintained. The Initiative must create a catalog of local real estate resources available for meetings, conferences, etc. Lastly, conference resources must be created.

No project will be faithful executed without financial provision. The project leaders should raise or receive approximately \$25,000 in compensation. The travel budget should be approximately \$25,000 per year for the first two years. An additional \$50,000 will be allocated for the development of resources, outsourcing specific development tasks, creation of literature, events and additional stipends for experts.

¹ Hunter, *To Change the World*, 78.

The website will be the clearest expression of the Initiative. It will develop its brand by creating regular posts from both the leader of the Initiative as well as from contributing authors. The website will develop its platform by connecting with pastors and leaders who have given permission to receive emails and other information. This platform will be further developed through permission-granted Facebook posts.² While there are limits to all that a website and Facebook can accomplish, the hope is to provide outlets for sharing best practices but also to create insider momentum for interested Vineyard leaders and beyond.

Network meetings, conference locations, and cohort meeting spaces will be dependent upon buy-in from national, regional, and local leadership. As leaders choose to become involved in the project it can and should be assumed that they will offer their spaces for use. Again, we want to reinforce that this Initiative is a leader-driven project that must be resourced locally in order to be successful.

As discussed earlier, the written materials that need to be created will be done so by both the project director as well as other experts. Hopefully, as resources become available the Initiative will be able to leverage the best thinking from the Vineyard Movement and beyond by fairly compensating contributors. Ideally, over time, the Initiative would support influential leaders within the Vineyard to write a book together about cities.

Conference resources will include everything necessary for an event. This will include a conference meeting space, volunteers, written materials, stipends for speakers

² For more on “permission marketing, see Seth Godin, *Permission Marketing*, New ed. (New York: Pocket Books, 2007).

and breakout session, and living accommodations and transportation. It is too early to say precisely what kinds and amounts of financial resources will be needed for the conference. Since this is an interest driven Initiative, the conference is dependent upon the driving interest entering into the spring of 2017. At that time, in-depth research and determinations will take place in order to determine all the resources needed for the conference.

Assessment Plan

Depending upon one's experience within the church growth movement, one may be very prone to provide ample negative visceral reactions to measuring, metrics, and assessment plans. Some conclude that the New Testament rarely contains examples of metrics. Despite the absence of regular measurements in the biblical witness, setting healthy measurements can accurately describe the heart of the Gospel and the multiplicative values behind Kingdom growth.

Pastor Andy Stanley, North Point Community Church, compares measuring (metrics) with the dashboard in a car. A car dashboard is very helpful because it can indicate a car's temperature, battery life, speed, distance traveled, time for a tune up, tire pressure, etc. A car without dashboard instruments would be dangerous. Yet using a dashboard in a car should never replace the experience of driving the car. The point is this: metrics are helpful, but they should never replace the experience and enjoyment that God intended for his church. A balance of both metrics and experience is necessary in order to determine the health of the Initiative's goals. Stanley asks the question, "Is what

is hanging on the wall happening down the hall?”³ If, for instance, the Initiative’s mission is to lead the Vineyard Movement toward passionate, mature, reproducing commitment to Gospel contextualization in cities, how will we know if we are on track? Do our metrics only take into consideration simple increases and/or decreases in meeting attendance and donations? The Vineyard Movement can find better ways of measuring the activity of the Holy Spirit in our churches resulting in better information in determining the success and/or failure of projects. Better measurements will mean better-set goals and probably more specific productivity. With all of this being said, the Initiative must set clear goals and metrics as it seeks to develop better and more advanced ways of measuring the qualitative elements of its mission.

Regarding church leader metrics, faithfulness means that the Initiative will reach out to every Vineyard church within the largest twenty-five metropolitan regions at least once a month for two years until the church either agrees or declines to be involved with the project. In the first year, the Initiative plans to conduct at least one-hour phone or Skype meetings with the point person from each interested church once per month for the first twelve months. Throughout the three years, the Initiative will seek to conduct presentations at a minimum of 25 percent of all regional conferences. Throughout the three years, the Initiative will seek the same speaking goals for breakout sessions as well as for the national conference. Obviously, we want 100 percent participation from all Vineyard churches because we believe cities are important.

³ Andy Stanley, “Systems: Liberating Your Organization,” DVD. (Alpharetta, GA: North Point Ministries).

Regarding church planting metrics, faithfulness means that we will commit to regularly contact key church planting churches and church planting events to ask how we can be a resource to specific events and planters. The hope is to encourage a culture shift within the Vineyard by focusing more planting efforts in cities. The Initiative hopes that these efforts will result in at least five new church plants in each of the twenty-five largest US metropolitan regions.

Regarding church planter pipeline metrics, faithfulness means that we will contact every church planter in the church-planting pipeline to set up a one hour meeting discuss planting in cities. This goal will be contingent upon permission granted from the National Vineyard Movement. However, convincing planters who are already in the Vineyard planting pipeline will be difficult because most of them will have already identified a context or have begun the process of planting. Therefore, the Initiative will seek to identify new planters who have yet to enter the pipeline by discussing church planting along with city reaching. This language should be integrated into 100 percent of all speaking engagements, one-on-one opportunities, and recruitment events.

Regarding church involvement metrics, faithfulness means that the Initiative will be available and resource 100 percent of all Vineyard churches while they are determining their involvement level. The Initiative's hope is to achieve 100 percent participation from all churches in the twenty-five largest metropolitan regions. While we understand that 100 percent participation is highly unlikely, we hope that this stretching goal will lead us to act in ways that lead toward cultural change within the Vineyard Movement.

Regarding Vineyard churches' use of created tools and resources, faithfulness is tied to the Initiative's ability to discern and decide upon which resources will be used. As stated earlier, our hope is that local and regional networking events and cohorts will provide feedback on the variety and types of needed resources. Therefore, the metric will be that feedback questionnaires will be provided in every possible setting—small group gatherings, events, cohorts, one on one meetings—in order to understand the needed resources. If feedback loops are provided in 100 percent of all meetings, we anticipate 90 percent to 100 percent usage of materials created by committed churches.

Regarding church attendance of quarterly meetings, faithfulness means that we have successfully implemented local agreements and/or covenants among participating members. When we adequately call leaders to commit, we are hoping that this will create 100 percent participation in the quarterly gatherings. Furthermore, the Initiative hopes that covenant driven participation will lead to 100 percent committed attendance in cohorts as well.

Church leadership attendance at a city reaching conference will be dependent upon cohort and regional gathering commitments. Obviously, the Initiative desires 100 percent participation in the national conference because the very existence of the conference is tied to perceived momentum developing among churches and leaders by the first quarter of 2017. The hope is observe at least 250 churches involved in the conference especially 100 percent attendance from the twenty-five largest metropolitan regions.

Lastly, in the fourth quarter of 2017, the Initiative will evaluate itself. It will evaluate how many planters it assisted into the pipeline as well as how many of said

planters choose urban planting contexts. It will measure attendance of all events, cohorts, and conferences. It will create a survey to determine the deepening of city-focused ecclesiology among involved leaders and churches. Finally, the Initiative will survey uninvolved Vineyard churches and leaders to assess if their knowledge regarding city reaching has grown anecdotally through its efforts.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This project opened by considering the elements of change: it is hard, natural, but nothing new. When we consider how to internally process the change that is taking place around us in our urban centers, it should feel hard. Yet if and when we press into our feelings more deeply, we know that it is natural—that the world created by God is not static but a dynamic place. Lastly, no cultural artifact, value, or belief system has ever remained the same. There is nothing new about change. It is happening now, but it has always been happening.

This project also affirms that God is good, and that he loves the people of his creation. He loves cities because they are full of people. The theological concept of *Missio Dei* demands that we continue to focus on him—the author and perfecter of our faith and our world. When God is the center of our focus, we are able to better determine his overall and contextual vision for cities.

Building friendships, nurturing family, finding true love, and succeeding in the workplace can dominate the forefront of the mind of the average Christian. Additionally, it is understandable if most Vineyard pastors and leaders are focused on keeping their church afloat. It is not easy or prudent to judge the overall health of the Movement. It is fair to say that if I took time to research every Vineyard Church in America, I might find that a multitude of other issues that might take precedence over a long-term, expensive, and risky city-focused initiative. Yet the implications of narrative theology are clear: God loves people and more and more people will be found in cities. They are the holding place for those made in God's image. Cities are the future of the Movement even though they seem to be short-term pressing issues.

Within the Vineyard Movement, the opportunity to explore and engage cities with a long-term strategy has yet to be widely embraced with real decisions and action. There are a few who are interested in exploring it more—particularly Vineyard Columbus, Mile High Vineyard, and few small church in and around New York City. It will be interesting to see if the Vineyard Movement rises to the challenge of discerning metropolitan trends and if their desire to missionally engage cities grows.

This study has sought to show the imminent changes in America due to the rise of urban life are both complex and interesting. Trends show this complexity especially in the areas of urban revitalization, metropolitan growth, and cosmopolitan influence. The Vineyard Church must learn to create a mental spectrum that sees the urban, suburban, and cosmopolitan as unique synergistic contexts worthy of particular engagement. Each context contains different subgroups of people requiring various types of contextual engagement.

Individuality in cities will continue to grow, and we can predict that there will be less common groups among Americans—especially in the area of religion. Therefore, if the Vineyard Movement continues to desire to plant more churches, to grow its current churches, and to reach more people for Christ, its willingness to join the Holy Spirit in particular contextualization must also grow. This growth in willingness is not selling out or giving up on Vineyard Values but it is a willingness to press into the mysteries of the Holy Spirit as he pushes us out of our comfort into situations requiring faith so that we may experience his presence as well as new growth that leads to cultural renewal.

As the Vineyard considers its willingness to move toward metropolitan complexities, it can and should embrace metropolitan living, learning, and loving. It must

live in cities the way others do. It must learn as much as it can from the city—not just to better evangelize, but in a reciprocal and communal way. And it must love—love in a way that various cultures and subcultures can comprehend.

It is my hope that the potential ministry of Vineyard engaging cities in this project can serve as a model for other aging Movements and denominational revitalization efforts. It is also my hope that the project will model intelligible and plausible engagement of cities through passionate engagement and active participation with the Holy Spirit. The pneumatological leanings within the Vineyard Movement give it a unique opportunity to invite the Holy Spirit to do greater things in the particular spheres of culture. It is my prayer that we, as followers of Jesus would continue to look to God for his specific direction as we seek the flourishing and renewal of all things.

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