Theology News & Notes   Fuller Seminary Publications

10-1-1991

Theology, News and Notes - Vol. 38, No. 01

Fuller Theological Seminary

Kenneth L. Luscombe

R. Stewart Culbard

Alan Foster

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THEOLOGY, NEWS AND NOTES

Doing Ministry in the City

FULLER
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

OCTOBER 1991

Keeping Faith in the City

BY KENNETH L. LUSCOMBE

A growing challenge for the Christian Church facing the first truly "urban" century is "keeping faith in the city." In reality, the city stands over against the church; resilient and overwhelming. It is the city rather than the church which demonstrates the power to shape the spirit, space and style of contemporary society. In many ways the agenda of the church is being shaped by the demands of the city. Meeting the challenge of "keeping faith in the city," therefore, requires an expanding vision and growing resolve no less powerful and pervasive than the urbanizing forces at work in our world.

What is meant by "keeping faith in the city?" Three aspects of challenge are suggested in the phrase. First, the challenge is keeping faith in or with *the city*. Powerful forces are at work in and through the city today, influencing the way we think and act, and the things we value.

Urban power is in the hands of a few, and the benefits of urban growth and accumulation do not accrue to all. A casual drive around any major city today will quickly reveal the geographical segregation of society into communities of advantage and disadvantage, of growth and decline, of "center" and "periphery." The city is indeed an ambiguous reality, but for this very reason we cannot give up on it.

Second, the Church is challenged to keep faith *in* the city. It is no secret that conservative evangelicalism is most at home in the suburbs. The "white flight" from the city to the suburbs in pursuit of a more homogenous community is well documented.

Third, the Church is challenged to *keep faith* in the city. The city exerts a powerful and seductive influence on its citizens, especially those who enjoy its wealth of benefits. Therefore, while the church is called to engage rather than escape the city, it must not allow its faith to be absorbed into the urban process. The principle commitment of the Christian is to Jesus Christ, and the appropriate form of this faith commitment is discipleship. Ultimately, this will lead us back into the city, for it is here that discipleship will engage life in the world.

God's Urban Mission

The church committed to keeping faith in the city will need to address each aspect of this challenge. The city demands it. Urban living is the norm. The city is here to stay. Therefore, it is in the midst of the joys and pains of urban life that the church is called to minister.

God requires it. The city is at the heart of God's mission. God is present in the brokenness and pain of the city as the One who restores to dignity that which has been marred, reclaims that which has been discarded, and saves that which is lost.

The Church cannot avoid it. The Church is not at liberty to withdraw, or in withdrawing to claim to be Christ's Church. The Church bears God's mission for the sake of the city.

Characteristics of God's Urban Mission

I would like to highlight three characteristic marks of urban mission which flow from the divine activity. The first is the movement of "Incarnation." Since God was pleased to take on human flesh and blood, thereby investing human life with divine dignity, and since God was pleased to take the form of a servant and become expended for the sake of those who could no longer lay claim to life, so too, the church is called to pattern its commitments on the life, ministry and destiny of Jesus of Nazareth.

His whole life was an embodiment of the love of God for a lost world. His death was the inevitable consequence of daring to suggest that the poor may not be poor because of their own fault, but rather because of the injustice of the systems and structures of the city which support the rich and powerful.

The second characteristic mark of urban mission is "discipleship." We are empowered by the Spirit of God in order that we might stand with those who are without power and share in their journey of empowerment. Discipleship is nothing other and nothing less than following Jesus.

To be a disciple, then, is to stake our lives on the things for which Jesus lived and to give ourselves to the same persuasive Spirit. The Spirit empowers the church to manifest concretely in the places of disempowerment the grace of God which restores human life and dignity.

The third characteristic of urban ministry is that of "celebration." Celebration has to do with the awareness of the kingdom of God as a present reality in the midst of life in the city, with all its pain and ambiguity.

The kingdom of God, Jesus said, is like a glorious banquet, a wedding feast. When Jesus is present in the city a party breaks out. God chooses to party with those whom society leaves without voice or power. The urban church celebrates the surprising presence of God as pure gift in the midst of its life among the poor.

Ultimately, keeping faith in the city is grounded in an urban spirituality. This urban spirituality has to do with living out a relational vision which embraces the presence of God in the Holy Spirit as the One who is redeeming our lost estate, restoring our fragmented identities, healing our deepest wounds, empowering our timid actions, and reviving our diminished dreams. This is "good news" to urban Christians.

An Invitation to Discover Something New

In this edition of *Theology, News and Notes,* the reader is invited to enter the struggles of those who are attempting to

> *"God chooses to party with those whom society leaves without voice or power."*

address the role of the church in the city today. The articles are grouped into three sections.

The first two articles attempt to set some parameters for understanding what we mean by "urban" in "urban mission" Stewart Culbard shares with us some basic definitions of the urban gained from his research in Melbourne, Australia. From the same city comes a short article by Alan Foster which contrasts two ways of perceiving the city: from above and at street level, in other words, as a spatial form and as a set of social processes and actors.

The next section deals with the question of methodology, but firmly within the parameters of "incarnation" and "empowerment" as discussed above. Vladimir Korotkov shares with us a process of ministry geared to the culturally alienated church. The material first appeared in the newsletter *Intermesh* which is produced in Sydney by an urban ministry network called Scaffolding. I wish to thank Scaffolding for the opportunity to bring this important material to a wider audience.

Likewise, the materials presented by Robert Linthicum address the question of how we go about ministry in the city. A fuller account of Linthicum's ministry process can be found in his recent publication *Empowering the Poor,* produced by MARC publications. Their permission to draw on this material is gratefully acknowledged.

The final two articles are case studies. Andrea Stephanous takes us into the world of the urban slum in Cairo and introduces us to the empowering ministry of community organizing, while Sara Pilling raises the fascinating possibility of understanding the spirituality of a city in terms of its "brooding angel."

The reader is invited to join in the conversation as these urban specialists share their learnings as they attempt to keep faith in the city. The hope is that you may discover something new to inspire your own commitments. ■

KENNETH LUSCOMBE, the integrator for this issue of *Theology, News and Notes,* is Associate Director of World Vision International's Office of Urban Advance. A Baptist minister, he has wide international experience as a teacher and urban strategist. He is an Australian by birth, but currently lives with his wife Joy, and children, Marcus and Amber, in Claremont, California.

Defining the Context of Urban Mission

BY R. STEWART CULBARD

The urban mission of the Christian Church is carried out in the context of the city. There is no single nature that characterizes the city, as cities reveal highly varied physical forms and manifest the particular ways in which urban life is worked out in them at different locations and different times. No single account is adequate to explain cities in general; no specific city is fully explained in terms of a general theory. It is possible, however, to offer a general explanation of cities, including the city of Melbourne. Before doing so, it is appropriate to specify what is understood by the terms "city" and "urban mission."

We look first at the term "city." Generally speaking, there are two dominant approaches to the study of the city. There is, the "geographical approach," in which the focus is on spatial distribution and growth of people and populations, and there is the "socio-cultural approach," where the focus is on the cultural, psychological, and social processes and functions among city dwellers. Defying simplistic analysis, the city must be studied through a combination of approaches for, in reality, no single approach or definition is sufficient. A definition of the city that combines several strands is that provided by Amos Hawley: "A city is ... a permanent, relatively densely settled and administratively defined unit of territory, the residents of which gain their living primarily by specializing in a variety of non-agricultural activities."[1]

The second term requiring definition is "urban mission," a term that encompasses the concepts of the "urban church" and "mission." Although the urban church can be defined in a variety of ways, we understand it as being "a more or less formally organized community of Christ's followers in the city." In the context of the Christian Church, mission is to be understood as being "those activities and tasks the followers of Christ are sent into the world to do." Mission is to be differentiated from evangelism; mission includes evangelism, but

> "Urban mission incorporates the tasks of evangelism, service and stewardship."

a lot more as well. Evangelistic work is missionary, but not all missionary work is evangelistic. Evangelism can be appropriately thought of as "naming the Name"—making Jesus known as the Christ, Lord and Savior of men and women—or, as Thomas McAlpine has stated it: " ... this business of inviting and incorporating people into the Kingdom."[2] Evangelism is, therefore, the process of persuading people to become the followers of Jesus and responsible members of his Church—understood in terms of both its local and universal identity.

The Task-relatedness of Urban Mission

I contend that the urban mission of the Christian Church includes evangelism, together with the other task-related ministries of service and stewardship. With an orientation external to the Church, task-related ministries are to be contrasted with what may be termed the experiential ministries of worship and Christian education, and the relational ministries of discipleship and fellowship. The experiential and relational ministries of the Church are to be thought of as ministries internal to the nature and purpose of the Church, what the Church is and does within its own structures and fellowship rather than relating to its external stance and application.

The "service" ministry of the urban church, however, is the addressing of immediate physical, social, psychological, and spiritual needs of the people in the city. It may be thought of as the "loving concerns of the church"[3]—the concern for the welfare of the city, its communities and persons. The "stewardship" ministry of the urban church focuses on responsible citizenship in society, aimed particularly at improving the quality of life for the people in the city through the advocacy and practice of social justice. The urban mission of the Christian Church, therefore, includes those things done in, for, and with the city. Specifically, urban mission incorporates the tasks of evangelism, service and stewardship. These ministries are integral to the nature and purpose of the church in the city.

The urban context within which the Church pursues its mission is not simply the central business district, the inner city or inner suburbs of a city. The urban context is more a situation and a style of life in which social, economic, and political factors are determinative for the life of the city, rather than the specific and localized places or parts of it. More poignantly, urban mission is the Church's task with the lower socio-economic groups and fringe members of urban society. It is the Church's ministry with the poor. Until at least the closing decades of the twentieth century, in the cities of the Western or developed world, the poorer groups in society have been spatially located predominantly in the inner areas of the city rather than in the suburbs. It is my contention that in contemporary international cities, i.e. those with a population of at least one million persons, urban mission has to do with the Church's ministry with people living and working in areas containing densely populated housing developments (e.g. high-rise), concentrated secondary industry, and overflow residential estates on the outer fringes of the metropolitan area.

The City and the Needs of an Industrial Society: Looking at Melbourne

As with cities of similar international status and stature, and until relatively recent times—the decade beginning 1960 providing a focal point of transition—Melbourne functioned to make industry possible. The physical and social structures of Melbourne ensured that industry and labor existed in close proximity to one another and that the nexus between them was firm and, for all practical purposes, indissoluble. Living in the city implied the abandonment of any hope of a rural self-sufficient lifestyle. People flowed into the city in search of work and, once there, were tied to industrial imperatives.

The manner of the city's development in physical form and social structure was a continual response to the developing and changing needs of industry. A principal need of industry is the ready supply of appropriately skilled and housed labor. The demands of a required body of labor, available at the right time and the right place, made it necessary for state and local governments to supply a general set of amenities—roads, power, education, and housing. Over time this process involved residential segregation of various income groups.

In more recent decades, especially since the early 1960s, the residential nexus of industry with labor has been substantially severed through the more general access of the population to the motor vehicle. The result has been a rapid expansion of the city, the pushing out of the city limits, with little or no reduction in the intensity of residential segregation. Urban sociologists refer to this general function that the city performs in assuring the availability of labor, and nonlabor, too, as the "locational function of labor

> "In industrial societies the Church has been more successful with the middle and upper classes ... than it has been with the working classes."

reproduction." It is only in consequence of having people located in large and relatively densely populated urban units that industry can function for the production of marketable goods and capital wealth with anything like optimal efficiency. The city is the repository and generator of labor. In a paper that sought to provide some general analysis of cities like Melbourne, Karel Reus-Smit commented:

> Cities such as Melbourne are necessary if the rapid translation of products into re-investable capital is to be achieved. Thus the city may be said to be necessary to the rapid circulation of capital. Within a large and relatively densely populated urban unity the costs of distribution and transport are kept to a minimum while selected income and status

groups can be identified through the process of residential segregation ... we (the people of the city) exist for the goods and services. It is the product, and the requirement that it be translated into capital, that lays down the fundamental conditions for our urban life ... Yet it must also be true that the middle and upper ranks of Melbourne society are free to make many more decisions about the direction of their lives. They can more freely choose where to live, how to live, and where and how their children will be educated.[4]

The Christian Church in an Industrial Society

In industrial societies the Church has been more successful with the middle and the upper classes, i.e. those who have considerable personal and group choice and power, than it has been with the working classes, i.e. those with little personal or group choice and

STEWART CULBARD has recently taken up an appointment as the domestic programmes manager for World Vision of Britain, based in Northampton, England. Prior to this he was the coordinator and ministry consultant for the Ecumenical Coalition for Urban Ministry, Melbourne, Australia. Born in Scotland, Culbard is an ordained Baptist minister and has worked as an inner-city urban pastor and organizer in London and Melbourne for twenty years. He has specialist training in youth ministry and extensive experience in Christian education. Culbard is currently working on a D. Min. in urban mission through the San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Urban Ministry in Perspective: A Room with a View

BY ALAN FOSTER

The view from a nineteenth-floor apartment of a Ministry Housing high-rise tower block is most interesting. Perched atop this vertical street I can, in a matter of seconds, survey the neighborhood in which I attempt to live out the ministry to which God has called me.

Almost within arms reach are the other four apartment tower blocks, along with numerous four-story "walk-up" apartments which make up this public housing estate. This estate, typical of high-rise public housing estates, is bounded by major arterial roads. Semitrailers, buses and innumerable cars constantly choke these roadways. The narrow roads are crammed to overflowing as the freeway disgorges its commuter traffic. Just beyond the perimeter of the housing estate are the railway lines and freight yards, where the movement of freight continues day and night. And beyond the freight yards, the chemical storage area, which yet again has just recently erupted into flames, sending a pall of toxic black smoke skyward to blot out the sun. If I move my line of view to the factories near the creeks, I can see the industries making plastic products, metal attachments and clothing. The noise of the traffic and the mechanical pounding from within the factories below manages to drift upwards and cannot be escaped even from nineteen floors above. Altering my gaze eastward, I can clearly see the small area of Victorian terrace houses, home now to an increasing number of young urban professionals, for just behind these houses, only two kilometers away is the very center of downtown Melbourne.

And, oh yes, down below is the church building, nestled on the corner near the four-story walk-up apartments and the local shops. Strange, but from this high vantage point the church doesn't seem so dominant, so central or so much of a focus in the local neighborhood.

The view from the nineteenth floor of a high-rise building is different from that at street level—but uncannily accurate.

However, from my perch atop one of the vertical streets, there is still much which goes unnoticed. The elderly living in isolation behind locked doors cannot be seen. Neither can the diversity of nationalities be perceived. Those fleeing various types of persecution in their homelands cannot be identified, nor can the sole parents struggling to survive on welfare benefits. The highly transitory nature of the area cannot be appreciated, nor can I from so high up see the emergency relief being distributed or the crisis intervention taking place. I notice some people moving about, but whether they are unemployed, on shift work, on their way shopping or cutting classes from school, I cannot tell.

From nineteen floors in the air people seem insignificant. Structures dominate. This is the view from far above the street.

In my urban setting many people are told where they will live. Public housing means that when a housing vacancy occurs, and you are next on the list, you move. Along with location, the health, child care and other services you can use are prescribed. Because of location, your choice is also limited in regards to available employment, if indeed any is available locally. Structures and systems dominate; people are deemed insignificant.

The heart cries of the people of this urban setting have taught me that the church must be about the work of conversion—especially the conversion of structures. The call to change individual lifestyles has always been part of the church's message. Far less emphasized has been the willingness to call, and indeed work for, the converting of structures and organizations which demean people, strip them of their dignity and make them feel insignificant.

Structures and organizations which are meant to service a local neighborhood must do so. Such bodies are unjust if they do not achieve this objective. When such unjust situations exist, the church is called to work with the people of the neighborhood for the change, conversion and transformation of such organizations and structures.

In Melbourne, and in Australia generally, urban churches usually no longer have significant financial resources. Many indeed struggle to maintain their presence within inner-city neighborhoods. Gone therefore are the days of churches setting up organizations and structures parallel to those already existing in the community. (Indeed, this seems a questionable philosophy even given the resources.) And so, rather than work beside the community, or parallel to it, the urban church must work with and in the local community if it is to affect change—to convert.

Yet in order to affect such change, the church is no longer able to rely on the simple fact that it is the church, and as such should be listened to and obeyed. Within Australian cities many people bear scars inflicted by the church. Insensitive adherence to traditional and/or biblical authority have alienated many within Australian society from the church. Thus, in an urban setting the local church like all other groups which vie for people's attention and interest must first of all become involved in a community and "earn its stripes." A genuine seeking of the welfare of the community, a preparedness to invest time and energy in community endeavors, even when they may not lead to additional church members, and a willingness to sit and listen, rather than preside and pronounce, are all ingredients of a church gaining credibility within its community. The lessons learned by listening to the stories of this community indicate that it is the process of sitting, sharing, listening, and learning, which allows the human face of the church, the face of the servant church, to be seen and appreciated.

People who have undergone much hurt and pain at the hands of structures and organizations have shown me that it is this human face of the servant church which ensures that the church does not become yet another dominating, repressive structure. To people familiar with being abused, neglected and demeaned by seemingly immovable structures and organizations, the church can easily become yet another forbidding structure and organization. Unfamiliar rituals, esoteric language and unusual customs can all serve to alienate—unless the life and work of the church can authentically show a genuine acceptance of, and preparedness to work with the dispossessed of the community.

To be a church with a human face requires being genuinely involved in the life of the neighborhood to such a degree that the church is part of the very fabric which helps to create community. A church with a human face can truly be at the hub of its neighborhood, working to create community; even when that neighborhood is highly transitory and diverse. Church buildings and facilities must be resources available to and used by the neighborhood generally. Indeed, church facilities need to be accepted and owned by the wider community. But the church as hub is not meant in the sense that everything happens at the church buildings as in times past. Rather, a church needs to be at the hub of a community's life because it is

> "To be a church with a human face requires being genuinely involved in the life of the neighborhood... ."

there, as the church, that people who are integral to the life of the neighborhood gather week by week. Such a gathering of people—people who are part of the fabric of a community; people who are involved in everyday grassroots networks of the neighborhood; people who are committed to changing oppressive structures; people who know the hurts and apprehensions, fears and hopes of the wider community—is that which constitutes the human face of the servant church. People, not a structure, are primary. This is the view from down on the street.

Yes, the ability to quickly survey my neighborhood is useful. From this room with a view, I can in just a few short moments be reminded of the complexity of the area in which I live and minister. But a reminder is all that the experience can be. For without the knowledge that being out on the street brings, my overview becomes nothing more than a view from a tower—albeit concrete rather than ivory. For it is only down at street level, where the races can be seen, the conversations heard, the pain felt and the situations and events entered into, that an accurate understanding of my neighborhood is to be gained. It is at street level that I come to understand the very fabric which holds my community together. It is at street level that I enter into, and am part of the stories of my community. And here on the ground God is discovered. So too, it is here at street level that the mission and ministry of the servant church is fleshed out—is made incarnate. ■

ALAN FOSTER has been involved in urban ministry for 11 years. For the past six years he has served as the priest of the Anglican Church of Saint Albans in North Melbourne, Australia. Saint Albans is part of the Anglican Inner-City Ministry. He is a member of the National Executive for the Australian Association for Urban Ministry, and a member of the committee of management of the Ecumenical Coalition for Urban Ministry in Melbourne. As founding coordinator of the Anglican Urban Working Group, Foster has played a significant role in advancing the understanding and practice of urban ministry within and beyond the Anglican community.

The Urban Church: in, to or with the City

BY ROBERT C. LINTHICUM

How can the Church empower the poor? The very way we ask a question reveals a great deal about the assumptions we bring to an issue. For example, the above question is the wrong question. I would be immediately suspicious of anyone who posed that question that way. Why? Because such a question reveals that the person asking it neither understands the nature of empowerment nor what are the appropriate or inappropriate roles for the Church to play in its ministry with the marginalized, oppressed and impoverished around it.

The Church in the City

There are three distinctly different responses that any church or mission organization can make to its city. The response the church chooses to take decides whether that church will play a significant role in the poor's empowerment, will provide social services out of its largess or will simply ignore the needy around it. What are those three responses which are liberating good news or stifling repression to the city's poor and powerless?

The first response of the church to its city is to see itself as being *in* that city and *in* its community. It does not feel any particular attachment to that city. It does not particularly identify with the community. That happens to be where its bricks and mortar meet the ground. It may have no particular relationship to the people of that community.

Now, often a church that sees itself as "in" but not "of" its community will have in earlier days had a significant commitment to that community. The church may have been created as

a parish church, a church of that specific neighborhood. But then the neighborhood began to change and decay. As that neighborhood began to deteriorate, the people who had lived in that neighborhood and who went to that church began to move out. So, increasingly the church becomes a commuter congregation with the people traveling into the city and into that neighborhood in order to attend the

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church, but whose lives are lived out in another community. The result is that they have no stake, no psychological ownership in that community. To be a church *in* the city is the first response of the church with regard to the city and to its neighborhood.

The Church to the City

The second response is for a church to perceive itself as a church *to* the city and a church *to* the community. In due time, many churches following the scenario I just described, will begin to realize that if they do not interact with their geographical community in some way, they are going to die. If the church is to live, it will have to find some way of reaching out to its neighborhood. So the church begins to become concerned about its city,

its neighborhood and its problems. This, of course, is a much more holistic approach because of the recognition that the church must be present to the people around it and must be concerned both with evangelism and social action. It is inadequate to be concerned with the souls of the people around the church—particularly if those people are poor—unless the church is also concerned about the social and economic needs of the people.

There is great potential in this kind of approach but there is also a fatal flaw. The Achilles' heel of this approach is the perception that the church knows what is best for that neighborhood. Those Christians look at the neighborhood and say, "Look at all those poor people here; what these people need is a youth program for their teenagers to get them off the streets." The church says, "Look at all these children running around the streets here; they have no place to play. What the church needs to do is to develop a program for those children." Or the church looks at the number of senior citizens sitting on their porches and it says, "What our church needs to do is to develop a ministry to senior citizens."

Do you see the common element there? The common element is that *the church decides what is best for the community.* A primary assumption of effective urban ministry is to recognize that the people who are best able to deal with the problem are the people most affected by that problem. The people best able to deal with teenagers who are running amok in their neighborhood, for example, are the people who live in that neighborhood.

Now, although that seems self-evident, that concept is one of the most difficult insights for Christians to apply. We can understand it intellectually, but it is extremely hard for us to implement that perspective in our own ministries.

The reason is that the church operates out of the unbiblical

assumption that, because we know the gospel, we know what is best for that community. Therefore, we undertake ministry in that community out of our "definitive" understanding of the needs of that community ("What this slum needs is a child-sponsorship, health care and family education program.") This, in turn, robs the people of that community from the responsibility of dealing with their own corporate issues.

The fate of any program or project developed under such assumptions is inevitable. It will function successfully only as long as the church or mission agency is willing to commit its people, money, materials and buildings to the program. But "burnout" will eventually happen. And once programmatic exhaustion has occurred, so that the well-intentioned pastor or mission executive can no longer raise sufficient money or resources or workers to maintain that program, it will die. And it will die because it has never been a project of the people. They never perceived it as their program, but rather a program of the church or mission agency. And because the people have no ownership in the program, they will always remain spectators and clients of it, never participants and goal-owners. Therefore, its death is inevitable.

It is not appropriate for the church—in fact, it is strategically a very bad thing—for a church to look at its community and decide what it needs to do to that community in order to change that community. It is not appropriate because that approach is to perceive the community and its people as an object to be ministered to and the church as the subject—the only viable change agent in that community. Such an attitude is actually colonialist in nature, and reveals a paternalistic attitude toward people.

The Church with the Community

The third response of the church in the city is to be the

church *with* the city. There is a profound difference between being a church *in* or *to* an urban neighborhood, or being a church *with* its neighborhood. When a church takes this third approach, that church incarnates itself in that community. That church becomes flesh of the people's flesh and bone of the people's bone. It enters into the life of that community and becomes partners with the community in addressing that community's need. That means the church allows the people of the community to instruct it as it identifies with the people. It respects those people and perceives them as being people of great wisdom and potential. Such a church joins with the people in dealing with the issues that the

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"There is a profound difference between being a church in or to an urban neighborhood, or being a church with its neighborhood."

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people have identified as their own. That is the approach in which the most authentic urban ministry is actually done.

The third response of the church—to be the church *with* the people of its neighborhood—is an approach which enables the church to join with the people in addressing the issues of that community, recognizing that the only people who in the final analysis have the capability to change that community and to deal with its problems are the people of that community. The church comes alongside them and supports them in that endeavor, sharing with those people the particular gifts and strengths the church has to contribute to that

situation. It is the body of Christ which identifies with the people, casts its lot with the people, works along with the people. But it cannot and will not do the people's work for them. Only the people can assume responsibility for their own empowerment.

Now can you see why the question, "How can the Church empower the poor?" is the wrong question? It is the wrong question because no one can empower anyone else! Only you can take charge of your own situation. The task of the church is not to empower the community. The task of the church is to join the empowerment of the community—to participate in it, to be an integral part of it.

As we can see from this exploration, there are three essential responses of the church to the city.
■ First, it can ignore the city and the needs of the people around it as it fixates on preserving its own life. It can view itself as a fortress.
■ Second, it can provide social services and do good works for and to the people in the city. It can view itself as the savior of the community.

ROBERT LINTHICUM is director of the Office of Urban Advance, World Vision International, serving networks of urban Christian workers in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as a speaker, counselor and trainer in community organizing. He has been an urban pastor in Chicago, Rockford, Milwaukee and Detroit. He is the author of *City of God, City of Satan* (Zondervan) and *Empowering the Poor* (MARC) and other books on the church's urban mission.

Mobilizing the Urban Church: an Australian Urban Ministry Process

BY VLADIMIR KOROTKOV

Much of the church's ministry suffers today because we still operate from a rural or village understanding of life. Yet wherever we live in today's society, we are deeply immersed in complex urban processes. Unless we understand these processes, and in fact, enter them more deeply and profoundly, we will continue to be the casualties of our own self-imposed ignorance.

However, to make sense of our urban experience and to create relevant ministry responses involves utilizing new and special tools and skills appropriate to the urban situation. As always, the wider human community has already passionately struggled to find new ways of describing, understanding and responding to urban life. These are the new disciplines of urban sociology, cultural anthropology, structural analysis, process philosophy, urban planning, biology and other social, economic and political disciplines.

In this article I describe an approach to ministry in Australian society, looking firstly at the cultural distance between the church and society with the help of insights from cultural anthropology, and secondly at a proposed method for community entry and ministry.

The Church Is Culturally Distant from Its Community

There is a growing gap between the church and its surrounding community. Recent studies by the Australian sociologist, Peter Kaldor, and the Christian Research Association have convincingly documented this gap. Raymond Bakke talks about this gap in terms of *the culturally distant church*. In other words, people outside the church "are unused to, and alienated by, traditional church culture, language and worship forms."[1]

Even unchurched people from social classes and ethnic origins similar to church-goers in large suburban churches feel culturally distant. Let me share a personal example. Friends recently recounted such an alienating

> *"What I am calling for is an experience of people and contexts different from 'us'."*

experience about which they expressed great sadness. They had been struggling through life issues with other friends. So they decided to go to church to seriously learn about God. They had never been to church before. On their arrival at the local church they were given colored ribbons to wear. These were a sign that they were visitors. They were welcomed as strangers, but what they described as an overly friendly and smothering congregation. This made them feel very uncomfortable. What really put them off was the language and style of worship which confused rather than opened up their search for God. Now the sincerity of their search has not subsided, but where do you encourage them to go? How many such experiences close

people off? There really is a deep cultural gap which exists even between people from similar social classes.

How much wider and deeper is the cultural distance between the white, Anglo, middle-class church of the suburbs and the inner-city communities of the poor, the low-income earners and the multicultural groups. Even inner-city and outer suburban churches struggle constantly to bridge the enormous gap between their members and the culturally distant groups in their communities. How then can we overcome this enormous gap?

How Can We Deal with This Cultural Gap?

Valuable steps have been taken to describe this enormous gap. Even denominational leaders and theological educators have acknowledged the research documenting a church *disconnected* from its community. There is a great deal of talk about *building bridges*.

However, left at the describing and talking stage all this still remains only an objective exercise. That is, it remains a rational exercise taking place outside of the actual subject(s) of consideration, namely, those culturally and socially distant from us. Further questions illustrate problems with this approach. Even if bridges are built, who builds them? Who decides they are the appropriate bridges? How do we "know" they will be culturally and socially relevant to outsiders? Why are we so anxious to build them so quickly "for others"? We must move beyond this rational, reflective stage and enter the different world of other *subjects*, and only after we have first moved through the gap that exists between all cultures.

Overcoming the Cultural Gap: the Example of Jesus of Nazareth

What I am calling for is an *experience* of people and contexts different from "us." This is what the kingdom of God is all about. It is similar to the entry or immer-

sion of God through Jesus of Nazareth into human history. Jesus encountered various cultural expressions and social diversity and transformed them from within an experience of them. His parables were born out of a deep and prolonged listening, observing and intimate association with the lives and struggles of the people. The kingdom of God was an expectation, a value, something extremely worthwhile, which already existed among the various social groups of Judaism. Interestingly, different social groups had their own particular understanding about this kingdom. Jesus confirmed this preexisting value of his time as well as correcting and defining it in his own unique way. Even more, Jesus thereby began his ministry by affirming social groups and individuals by his association with them (entering their culture), and out of this contact he presented, refined and also challenged shared values.

Today, particularly in some of our church circles, we tend to begin by correcting the other culture and defining our expressions of so-called gospel truths in intellectual terms without a prolonged association with that culture. If we take this approach we will be unable to uncover those deep, hidden preexisting values which all human beings hold in common. Uncovering these common values is a complex task because they are expressed in symbols and images unique to each culture. Once uncovered, we will be able to affirm certain values and challenge others in the light of Scripture read by both unchurched and churched people.

Furthermore, this task can only be accomplished by entering the cultural and social context of the unchurched, and by listening humbly, in a prolonged, deep listening. This is certainly not to suggest that we totally deny either our own culture or expression of faith. This only romanticizes the other culture. Rather, both cultures contain both good and bad elements. God is at work in both contexts, therefore both can learn

from the other. However, only by listening to the other culture can such mutuality emerge. The only way to begin to do this is to be guided to leave our familiar cultural and social contexts where we exist as "insiders" and immerse ourselves in another socio-cultural context where we initially become "outsiders." Let me elaborate further on entering other cultures and contexts.

Entering Other Cultures: Beyond "Us" and "Them"

The church is similar to every social group in that it develops its own culture—its beliefs, values and feelings. This is essential for its own identity formation. However, this does not mean that a particular church culture, either

> *"It was only when Peter moved into another culture that aspects of his own culture were able to be challenged."*

in the suburbs or in the inner city, is sacred and normative for every other social group!

Peter's experience in Acts 10 is a reminder that any social or ethnic group has cultural expressions which can stand under the judgement of God. Peter was encouraged to move from the position of insider (in his Jewish Christian culture) to outsider within the Gentile culture of Cornelius. Peter experienced the discomfort and shock of moving outside his comfort zone. The rigid boundary between "us" and "them" was loosening up, or if you like, was being bridged.

Note a crucial point here. It was only when Peter moved into another culture that aspects of his own culture were able to be

challenged. That is precisely where cultural anthropologists learn most about their own and the other culture, by extended visits to another culture. This experience of *contrast* is essential both for recognizing what makes up our own culture, and also for understanding the other culture.

Similarly, the church today unwittingly not only sacralizes the cultural values of its dominant social class, but it also sees everything through these cultural glasses. We in the church stubbornly resist what sociology of knowledge has long ago discovered, that every social group creates its own world of meaning and then uses every means to maintain this cultural creation.

We can only move beyond our cultural meaning-system and build real and relevant bridges by: 1. stripping ourselves of our insider culture (which paradoxically only happens on the journey into another culture, at which time our own cultural biases emerge, and we need guidance from either aware local people or a cross-cultural facilitator); 2. finding entry points into other social groups (through a strategy of networking—to be explained below); listening humbly and deeply to this local expression of life.

Why Has the Church Become So Culturally Distant?

This is a very complex question, made even more disturbing once we realize that the

VLADIMIR KOROTKOV is an ordained minister in the Uniting Church in Australia. He is presently working in an inner-city parish in Adelaide, a southern city in Australia. His is both a missional ministry and one which involves learning ways of dealing with resistance to change by an established traditional congregation in an urban context. He pioneered an action-reflection course for final-year ministry students at the United Theological College in Sydney. He has also been the coordinator of Scaffolding, an urban ministry network in Sydney. Korotkov has been a leading figure in urban ministry at the local, state and national levels over the past decade.

The Garbage Dump of Cairo: Community Organization for a Recycling Project

BY ANDREA STEPHANOUS

> *"Let us not love with word or tongue, but with actions and in truth."* (I JOHN 3:18 NIV)

These words, written long ago, are as fresh today as on the day the ink went to the parchment. They express what the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS), a private volunteer agency registered with the Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs, is all about.

CEOSS has been working in community development since 1952. From simple beginnings in literacy work, programs have been added in home economics, agriculture, health, education, training, publishing and rehabilitation. But CEOSS does not just provide services. Field staff actually live in the communities in which they work, helping people to help themselves in ways that create local initiative and encourage self-reliance.

The work of CEOSS is organized in various sectors, one of which is the Comprehensive Development Program. The guiding philosophy of this sector is the belief in the absolute necessity for the local people to participate in the process of community development. CEOSS staff working in local development operate as catalysts rather than initiators, partners rather than leaders. After moving into a community they begin the process of community organizing, which usually takes from four to five years. Their aim is to bring the people of the community together in order to stimulate their thinking about the problems of their community, and to explore potential solutions. They concentrate on developing local community leaders so that the community can move toward greater self-reliance and grow beyond dependence on CEOSS assistance.

Theology of Development

It is very clear to all of us in CEOSS that the process leading to peace and equanimity only begins when individuals are given opportunity for personal growth, when people are viewed as people and not defined by labels or geographical boundaries. We believe that God created all people equal, and that the maldistribution of resources creates injustice, poverty and oppression. Speaking personally, development means mobilizing a community's resources and using them in the creation of a better future, or, in other words, making the kingdom of God a present reality. From the very beginning, CEOSS has worked with the Muslims and Christians of Egypt alike and without discriminating on the basis of race, sex or color.

Garbage Collector Settlements

In 1982, CEOSS began its urban development in the garbage collector settlements in Cairo. Up until then, CEOSS had worked in rural development. Its concepts of development and its method of approach were rural in orientation. The temptation at this time was to apply a rural perspective to its urban development.

There are seven garbage collector settlements around Cairo. CEOSS works with two of these settlements. Before describing the situation in one of these settlements, I want to explain that in the city of Cairo we have a society of isolation caused by a particular geographical and economic situation—every rich belt is surrounded by a poor belt, and every poor belt is surrounded by a rich belt.

El Mohatamdia Garbage Dump

This community, with a population of 5,000, is located outside of the southern part of the city of Cairo. It was formed in early 1970 by the immigration of poor people from upper Egypt looking for better incomes, and by fugitives from the law.

The people of the garbage dump live in shacks made from iron sheets in conditions made unhealthy by mounds of waste, garbage, wandering pigs and goats, and burning refuse. There is no clean water, no sewage system, and no electricity. The rate of illiteracy is very high (95 percent among the women and 80 percent among the men). There is no school in the community, and 70 percent of the children work with their family in the dump. Most of the people have tuberculosis as a result of the smoke which comes from the burning garbage. The lack of protein in the diet causes brain damage among the children, and 90 percent of them are malnourished. Infant mortality is very high, and the average life expectancy of a person is 40 years. There is no hospital in the community, and the midwives, who act as medical doctors, have no formal training.

The women of the community are oppressed. They do not participate in decision making in the home, or in the community.

They have no opportunity for an education, and are not allowed to participate in any community activities. They have no right to choose whom they will marry, since the father of the family will select a husband for his daughters. They will be married off by the age of thirteen, and will work every day in the dump with their husbands.

In terms of religion, the people have a fatalistic mentality in which they attribute everything that happens in their lives to the "will of God." They accept their situation because they believe that this is the will of God. They are also affected by their superstitions, in which they practice magic and believe in abstract power. Female circumcision is practiced for religious purposes. Visiting the tombs to get support from the dead is widely practiced, especially by the religious leaders of the community.

The daily life of the community is concentrated in the collecting of the garbage from the city and bringing it back to the dump where it is sorted out. Plastic, tin, paper and glass are separated out and sold to a middleman. They feed the soft garbage to their animals and burn the remainder.

Economically, the community is divided into three levels or classes. The first level, the middlemen, are the rich. Some live in the community, and some live outside it. They purchase the paper, tin, plastic and glass from the garbage collectors for a few dollars, and then resell them to the factories for thousands of dollars. They represent 2 percent of the population.

People who own their own homes and who are working for themselves make up the second level. They are considered to be a middle-class community. Their average income is between $50 and $100 per month. They represent 15 percent of the population.

The third level is composed of those who work for the middlemen, who do not own property and live in houses provided by the middlemen. They have nothing and are the majority of the population.

The people of the community do not participate in the political life of the city for two reasons: 1. they are living in an isolated and marginalized community; 2. they are afraid of the governing powers because of their involvement in previous crimes or illegal activity. In terms of the political life inside the community, the middlemen are the economic leaders who control the life of the people. There are no strong leaders in the community so the middlemen control the situation for their own economic benefit.

> *"The task of leadership in community development is to enable the people to face their problems with prudence."*

The Principles of Community Organization

It is very clear to me that the people themselves are the best resource for community organization. In my context, community development *is* community organization. Let me develop the principles of community development as follows.

■ Disadvantaged and deprived people deserve the opportunity of personal development. Such people live in the worst socioeconomic conditions. They are silent in their plight. Should they be given only the economic opportunity to rise out of their poverty they would tend yet to remain spiteful of society and despised by society, refusing to work in the interest of the public. Standing alone in poverty, they would also tend to stand alone in plenty. Therefore, the first point of development is to provide fully integrated development for these disadvantaged persons who are the key factor in creating progress.

■ It is vital for society's leadership to lead in ways that truly develop the community. Very early in Egyptian society the Pharaohs modeled aggressive leadership. Such strong leadership resulted in a disciplined, productive society. Yet, in order to work together, society needs leaders who will actively represent all of the groups that make up the society, and who will help the people to realize their own visions, dreams and goals rather than imposing their will on society. Community development depends on such prudent and representative leaders who will forgo domineering and despotic control and maintain a social order in which the people participate in decision making.

The task of leadership in community development is to enable the people to face their own problems with prudence—to facilitate the people in identifying, articulating and addressing these problems at every level of society. Leadership will motivate people to act on their problems, and then to reflect on these actions in such a way that further decisions to act can be taken.

■ A community must be able to carry out its decisions once they are made. Through the decision-

ANDREA STEPHANOUS is associate director to comprehensive development programs in the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services (CEOSS) in Egypt. A student in the MATS program of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Rev. Stephanous works in Cairo with and among the garbage collectors and the poor of urban communities.

Discerning the Spirit of a City: The "Brooding Angel" of Chester

BY SARAH PILLING

The city of Chester is located in the southeastern corner of Delaware County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Designated as a third-class city, with 41,856 residents, Chester is the second poorest city of its size in the United States. It was once a thriving, welcoming small city; today it seems to be a dying city.

Come with me to discern from the people the "brooding angel" of Chester, and also, if there is a wind of change passing over the city.

Whether one enters Chester from the east, along the banks of the Delaware River as did the Swedish settlers in 1643, or from the north, from where the English came to supplant the Swedes—or from the south, from where black slaves sought safety and freedom and later on other blacks sought jobs and opportunity—or from the west, where the affluent or upwardly mobile population fled—no matter which direction you enter Chester, within a few blocks, wherever you look, the impact of modest-sized, shabby, dilapidated and deteriorating buildings assault the eye.

Traveling east on Providence Road through affluent Swarthmore, I approach Chester. After passing several large and well-tended funeral homes as well as Widener University, and turning left onto Upland Street, crossing over the superhighway I-95, I am immediately struck by the poverty of the surroundings. Boarded up houses and stores, neat and tidy homes, burned out buildings, dilapidated houses hardly fit for habitation, half-destroyed houses, trash and litter—it's all there together. Once Chester was a thriving small city, where many,

even those living in the suburbs, came to shop—now on nearly every block, only boarded up storefronts are seen. The only viable business seems to be the bars.

Once welcoming, Chester is now a frightening place. A strong aura of hopelessness clogs the air. Shame? The aura of the shame of the once proud city which has failed its people now hangs heavily. The house stands empty where an old woman I know once lived. Piles of shabby furniture—sofas, tables, chairs, lamps and

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"Once welcoming, Chester is now a frightening place. A strong aura of hopelessness clogs the air."

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beds—stand forlornly in the adjacent, vacant lot. There are houses seemingly stuffed with building debris; in point of fact, they are. It is cheaper for a building contractor to purchase a "shell" ($800.00 at judicial sale), which is then packed with debris than it is to pay the tipping fees at the distant landfill. It happens all the time.

Discarded furniture, appliances and litter "decorate" almost every vacant lot. And there are many. The city's Redevelopment Authority tears down dozens of houses each year. The same authority rehabilitates only one or two houses within the same time period. In the spring of 1990, it

took five trash trucks to haul away the debris on six contiguous lots in order to create a community garden. Five trucks! There are few if any trees to relieve the sense of desolation. Chester does not have a tree ordinance, and any trees planted between the street and the sidewalk are the responsibility of the adjacent home owner. For that matter, so is the sidewalk. No one plants trees.

After traveling through several blocks of mostly deteriorated neighborhoods, I enter the east side. As I approach McIlvain Street the surroundings change. Automobile tires turned inside out and filled with bright, everblooming annuals stand at attention along both sides of the street. Although there are nine abandoned houses and three empty lots in one block alone, the remaining 15 dwellings are painted and there seems to be an attempt to keep the sidewalk clean. Cars line either side of the street. Last year, the children played in the street, dodging the rapidly accelerating cars speeding away from completed drug deals. But now they play in safety; swinging on swings, climbing up and down ladders and sliding down sliding boards on two sets of wooden playground equipment set up on a double empty lot. This is the neighborhood called "Community Togetherness," a newly fledged, organized community of people struggling to know each other, working together to redeem their neighborhood. They are serving as a role model for other groups in Chester wanting to change the direction of their city and their lives.

Frances, the spirit behind "Community Togetherness," a 59-year-old African-American woman, meets me at the "totlot." While we talk, she keeps her eye on Andre, Darrell and James, three brothers, four, three and two years old, who are her 19th, 20th and 21st foster children since she came to Chester 10 years ago. Many of her grandchildren play nearby; she is raising four of them

as their parents have basically abandoned them. Frances has an incredible story.

She was born on a farm in South Carolina, near the Georgia border. Her daddy grew vegetables and cotton, and she spent all of her childhood working in the cotton fields. Oldest of five, from the age of seven she was allowed to attend school only when it wasn't planting time, or weeding and hoeing time, or picking time or time for clearing the land. Several weeks ago, while sharing our stories, I heard her say, "I always wondered why they didn't give me away; they seemed to want me that little." Frances has described to me how she and her mother would go and pick cotton for someone else on Saturday mornings in order to earn some cash to go to town. Then her mother would send her to the movies while she visualized how a dress hanging in a store window could be made for Frances from feed sacks.

When she was old enough Frances refused to work in the fields any longer and moved to town to care for white babies. She began to take "the freedom bus" north to Newark where better opportunities for domestic employment could be found. She saved her money and was finally able to move there permanently. During the next 20 years she worked for a laundry and then as a cook for the Newark School System. Raising five children wasn't easy. She described how she'd get up at 3 a.m. to read the Bible, get the children up and dressed, walk them across town to the sitter's, retrace her steps and then take public transportation to her job. In the evening she completed the same route in reverse.

Her apartment was near the epicenter of the action during the race riots in Newark. For five days, she and the children crawled around their apartment. To raise their heads above the window sill, or to open the refrigerator door

and have the light go on, was to invite a sniper's bullet.

Finally, she left and moved to Chester. When I asked her why, she replied, "It wasn't the riots that drove me away. I couldn't stand the style of living; everyone on top of each other, no privacy. I'm a country girl and I wanted windows on three sides, and trees, and porches to sit on. And I found

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"God has his way of delivering people; we are in bondage and we need him to hear us."

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that in Chester." Frances stated that she had seen little discernable change in the last 10 years.

After sharing our journeys as women, I explained the biblical concept of 'the brooding angel' of the city. "How would you describe this angel, Frances?" I asked. Almost before she could gather her thoughts she blurted out the word— *"Bondage!"* "Bondage?" I asked, "What do you mean?" "Egypt," she replied. "Because the people in Chester are the Israelites and we need a Moses to lead us through the Red Sea. Chester is being maneuvered by Pharoah's army. We need a Moses; a spirit of Moses." I asked her if she meant one man, one leader. "Not necessarily one man", she replied, "but Moses, the spirit of Moses. God has his way of delivering people; we are in bondage and we need him to hear us."

"What is the role of the churches in Chester?" I asked. "The churches are the power of Chester, but they do not use it for the people's benefit. 'I can't help you,' they say. 'I don't know what to do; I don't have the answers.' They should be saying, 'Let's pray together for the answers.' The city is running the churches. The

churches are afraid of losing their power, they don't speak out."

The land grant universities of the United States (through Cooperative Extension) and the Kellogg Foundation have formed a partnership—to train volunteers to teach others leadership skills. A young woman Rosalynne, Frances, and I, spent 30 hours learning leadership skills as well as techniques for teaching others. I initiated this training for them because I recognized their own untapped leadership potential.

Frances said that she saw the leadership program as a way for people to cry out in their pain, to name the powers holding them in bondage, to recognize their own complicity, to realize the resources within their own neighborhoods, and to develop an action plan to initiate change. When I asked her if she saw women as the new leaders of Chester, she replied, "It will have to be. The men are like dogs with their tails between their legs. But the women are still strong. They have to be. If we can get enough women in Chester to come for the training we can turn Chester around." Frances is becoming one of those leaders.

After a few more words together I say goodbye and leave the neighborhood to travel across town towards Thelma's house on the west side. Passing one of our community gardens along the way, I pause to admire this oasis in the otherwise dreary landscape where only last year trash, household castoffs and the skeletons of old automobiles filled the space. Now the mulch-carpeted lot is surrounded by a fence made from old ceiling joists and turkey wire—made by the gardeners themselves—and filled with rectangular raised beds, densely planted vegetable gardens, and turned-tires overflowing with bright annuals. Not only does the garden brighten up the neighborhood, the nutritious food produced supplements the gardeners' meager diets. Working together to create and maintain the garden

builds bridges between strangers and provides a way to build new friendships and, hopefully, to bring the neighborhoods together as a community. And it works! This is my ministry; meeting people where they are, sharing their joy with my joy, my pain with their pain, and planning together how to make a viable difference in their neighborhood. Although the program has a secular base, the gardeners and I meet Christ together while gardening.

Thelma lives on one corner of West 6th Street. A Baptist church occupies another corner, a bar and a store the other two. Thelma is an 83-year-old African-American woman who is badly crippled from polio contracted at age two. She lives alone in a three-story, dilapidated house which she rents for $150.00 a month, plus utilities. There is no handle on the screen door and no door bell. I bang on the door and wait for what seems an interminable time until she hobbles to the door. We greet each other with a hug and gradually move through the darkened hallway toward the only light, which is in the kitchen. We settle down, brushing cockroaches off the chairs before we sit and share a visit. I have come to ask her to talk about her life in Chester, and to ask her the same question I asked Frances. What would the "brooding angel" of Chester look like?

Thelma was born in Chester and has spent virtually all her life here. She was raised by foster parents, who lived near the bordellos with the constant comings and goings of black women and white sailors. But her parents were respected friends of the alderman, and it was understood that no one should 'mess' with Miss Thelma. She was raised a Methodist, but 21 years ago felt that she was to be a prophet to the Seventh-day Adventists, where she has worshiped ever since.

After commiserating over the state of affairs in Chester, I asked her what was her message for the city. "Go back to a Bible-based society," she said. "We spend too much time worrying about tomorrow. We worry so much about the future that we are not enjoying what God gives us for today."

As to the "brooding angel" of Chester, "Once upon a time Chester was safe; you could walk anywhere. It was a friendly place; a place of cooperation and hospitality. If you needed a cup of sugar you just stood on your back step and called out, 'I need a cup of sugar.' From somewhere down the street you'd hear, 'I've got one; come on over.' Now you hardly dare stick your head out the door. Chester is a hostile place; everyone is out for what *they* can pick up. Everything is 'me, myself and

"This system of life is headed for doom— God is going to bring about a new system. You just watch!"

mine'. Even the preachers, those self-caring shepherds, are only interested in power and money." As to the future? "Hope," she says. "The people are down, and they've had it. God cares."

Finally and briefly, I traveled two blocks further to Rosalynne's house. Lynn, a single mother of five, and I shared what it is like to be a woman today. We sat in her bare living room. A fan in the middle of the floor futilely attempted to stir the air, while all around us flies swirled. The front door was wide open; the screen door torn irreparably. The TV droned in the background. Rosalynne's descriptive word for Chester is "hopeless."

"This world's in such a mess. Yes, even the churches. We have to go back to the Bible and do it God's way." She became extremely animated. "This system of life is headed for doom, she said.

"God is going to bring about a new system. You just watch! Watch when government gets involved with holding religion down. Religion is beginning to get active in community development and it is going to get on the government's nerves. The churches are doomed; they have been co-opted. The ministers here have to be ministers, not Cadillac owners. Churches, with their false religion, government and big business are what is running the world now. But God is going to set it up another way." I was stunned by her passion.

Rosalynne's passionate conviction that the city of Chester is in a downward spiral of hopelessness is reflective of the political, economic, social and religious strife in which the city is caught.

A cursory reading of the local newspaper reveals a pattern of corruption in city government. Recently a mayor was convicted of racketeering and sentenced to prison. The current administration has been charged with remarkable ineptitude and incompetence in the management of a major trash-to-steam development project which has never been completed. A $350M bond issue was sold, the money is gone, the plant has not been built and either the individual bond holders (who thought they were purchasing tax-free bonds) or the city itself must pay a $23M IRS bill[1] It was Rosalynne's well-founded feeling that things in Chester were beginning to unravel very fast.

It seems that once an official is accused of corruption, no sooner does he or she resign from that post than they are appointed to yet another position in city government. I have been told that city officials and their families fill all the available positions and are enough of a voting block that they can keep the machine in power. During a recent primary, only 50 percent of registered voters exercised their right to vote. A community organizer estimates that it would only take 6,000 votes to bring in a new administration. But the people are so demoralized that they do not see another way. As Robert Linthicum has said; "The dark forces invade the systems at the point of their greatest vulnerability ... their lust for power ... their avarice for money and possessions ... their need for control that makes them seek to control the minds and spirits of all the city's residents."[2] That is the truth of what has happened in this city!

Because of the Chester administration's mishandling of federal, state, county and private funds the city has been mandated to develop a community-based master plan, addressing such issues as economic development, transportation, adequate and affordable housing, recreation and African-American culture.[3] Through a series of five town meetings, each held in a different section of the city, the retained consultants and a volunteer task force hope to elicit from the community the direction and form of the Comprehensive Master Plan.

The residents with whom I have spoken are skeptical. The first two meetings were scantily attended, as there was little advertising. On Tuesday evening, April 9th, I accompanied Frances to a third meeting of the task force, held in the auditorium of Chester High School. The auditorium is ramped with a seating capacity of about 500. When I arrived, 50-55 persons were present, scattered throughout the room. What message were they sending by sitting so separated form each other? In my view, it reinforced their underlying distrust of each other. The residents have never been a unified force. The task force sat at a table in the front and the lighting was so poor that their facial expressions were hardly visible. The consultant stood above them on the stage.

After introductions, opening remarks, and an invitation to become involved in the process, residents began to ask such questions as, "Why should we trust you?" "How can we know that this time it will be different?" "Will our input be taken seriously?" Many expressed doubts that they would see any real change. Their attitude was, "Show me!" "Earn our trust!" "We've heard all this many times before."

After settling down, the people expressed concern for adequate recreation facilities for youth, protection of their local African-American museum, adequate and affordable housing, effective tenant councils in the housing projects, a better image of the city in order to attract new industry

"The people are slowly coming together, sharing their pain and finding solidarity."

leading to more employment opportunities.

What excited me most were those people who challenged others in the audience to take the matter in their own hands and begin cleaning up the city themselves. "If we don't do it, nobody will. Let's get to work."

Three hours later the meeting adjourned. But many lingered on to meet each other, to make plans to get together again to talk and plan or to join forces and begin cleaning up their neighborhoods. There was an undercurrent of excitement and a sense of empowerment.

There is something "brewing" in Chester. I feel very much a part of it. While many persons perceive our program as just building gardens, it is clearly more than this. Oh, yes, we are building gardens, but, more than that, we are empowering people to take responsibility for their own lives and to seek their own way. We are advocating for change. Through gardening, we provide the opportunity of bringing people together around a seemingly innocuous, but almost instantly gratifying,

project which serves as an example that they can do something positive. And the myth that they live under of "I can't do anything" begins to fade. In the process of gardening they meet their neighbors on neutral ground, they begin to share their stories, and if and when their dreams coalesce, they begin to have a vision of living life another way. I am a part of this community— and proud of it.

I agree with Frances and Thelma and Rosalynne; the brooding angel is one of bondage, hopelessness and powerlessness. But like them, I believe that the Exodus experience, shared in community and through Bible study, will provide a road map for their liberation, and mine as well. The people are slowly coming together, sharing their pain and finding solidarity. They are naming the powers, and the masks of oppressive action perpetrated against them are being stripped from the faces of the oppressors. Through reading the Bible they are realizing that God does care for them; God hears their cries and will lead them to help themselves out of bondage and into liberation.

Notes
1 *The Daily Times*, April 9, 1991
2. Robert Linthicum, *City of God, City of Satan* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991) p.72.
3. *The Daily Times*, April 9, 1991

SARA PILLING, a native of Philadelphia, has been involved for the past three years in community development work in Chester, Pennsylvania. There she established a community vegetable garden enterprise. Pilling is the mother of three children and a graduate student at Eastern College, St. Davids, Pennsylvania, where she is pursuing a masters in economic development.

Defining the Context of Urban Mission

power. In Marxian terms of politico-economic theory, the Church is more comfortable with the owners and the managers of the means of production and capital wealth in an industrial and manufacturing culture than it is with the producers.

Urban mission, therefore, refers to the Church's ministry in those locations where social and economic processes take a particularly acute and visible material form. The city is composed of impersonal systems which breed their own contradictions; these tension points demand attention. Furthermore, society as a whole, including the rural areas, share these urban problems. Notwithstanding, in the urban arena, and in consequence of the extraordinary intensity with which these problems occur there, they assume peculiar aspects.

Personal stress is also a product of city life, and the Church's response to this has led to a burgeoning of counseling and therapeutic ministries. It has been a ministry to the "poor in spirit." Recent decades have seen a major renewal of interest in the personal aspect of spirituality, adjustment, and salvation. In contrast, the condition of the "poor in the flesh" has received comparatively little attention. It is possible, of course, to relieve immediate physical and financial distress, but the problem of poor skills, poor command over resources, and all those critical material problems that arise out of being at the bottom of the social scale are particularly intractable and unresponsive to individual solution. In this context—and in a most incisive address in May 1980 to the World Council of Churches' Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Melbourne—Raymond Fung, a Baptist layperson from Hong Kong and secretary of CWME's Department of Evangelism, said:

> So let me report that the greater reality of the poor is that of the sinned-againstness whereas the greater reality of the affluent is that of sinning ... God has a preferential love for the poor. God also has a preferential love for the poor in spirit. But may I suggest that God accepts the poor in spirit because God has already accepted the poor? That the poor in spirit and their suffering is an approximation of the poor and their suffering? The Good News is for the poor and those who approximate the poor, i.e. the poor in spirit. The poor is the original; the poor in spirit the copy.[5]

Fung's words are part of an argument for a missionary movement among the world's poor. They challenge us to build witnessing Christian communities

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"When the Church is for the poor—to take a political stand is to take a pastoral stand."

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of the poor which will discover and live their expression of the faith among the poor and oppressed—even to the extent of becoming powerless through self-emptying love in order to become powerful with and on behalf of the poor. He identifies this as the legitimate bias of the ecumenical fellowship that is the WCC, it's primary responsibility and strategic step. Fung believes this should be the fundamental response of the universal Church to God's action in the twentieth century and beyond—as it was in the first.

Confronting the Principalities and Powers

If there is to be a meaningful Christian presence in the city, if the suffering of the poor is to be shared by the Church and the good news of Jesus Christ is to be meaningful and empowering for the poor, then the Church, in conjunction with the poor, is required to engage in social, economic and political analysis. This analysis prefigures involved action against social, economic, and political exploitation, for, if men and women are sinned against, then these forms of exploitation amount to spiritual exploitation. When the Church is for the poor—to take a political stand is to take a pastoral stand.

Melbourne, and cities of similar size and nature, function to serve the interests of those who require a particular supply of labor and who demand a rapid circulation of capital. To understand how the city works, therefore, requires social analysis. The solution to the "poor in the flesh" necessitates collective political action. The focus is on "principalities and powers" and the argument is waged against the systems and the structures. Fung is again instructive:

> We would like to report to the churches that man is lost, lost not only in the sins of his own heart but also in the sinning grasp of principalities and powers of the world, demonic forces which cast a bondage over human lives and human institutions and infiltrate their very textures.[6]

In a similar manner, and speaking of mission, Walter Wink reminds the Church of the realities involved in these principalities and powers:

> ... they were the actual inner spirituality of the social entity itself. I will argue ... that the gods or angels of the nations have a discernible personality and vocation; that they, too, though fallen, pernicious, and insatiable, are a part of the redemptive plan of God; and that our role in this redemptive activity is to acknowledge their existence, love them as creatures of God, unmask their idolatries, and stir up in them their heavenly vocation.[7]

Wink echoes the words of Jeremiah who encourages the people of Judah to settle down and enjoy domestic life in the cities of their Babylonian captivity,[8] as well as the psalmist who requests Israel's intercession on behalf of the welfare and prosperity of the city of Jerusalem.[9] Both prophet and psalmist exhort God's people to be in the city, know the city, be content living in it, and work for its renewal.

Seeking the Welfare of the City

Urban mission, the Church's ministry within and for the city, requires concerned and concentrated knowledge of urban society and a wise strategy that seeks to bring about radical and redemptive social change within it. Urban mission deals not only with symptoms, but also with causes. In seeking the welfare of the city, urban mission advocates and models a readjustment of the relationships which pertain in the systems and structures of the city. The difficulties involved in this process have been amply demonstrated by David Sheppard, the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool. In the prologue of his book, *Built as a City: God and the Urban World Today*, Sheppard says:

> The growth of large cities that separate human beings into large, definable groups is the most characteristic development problem of the whole modern world ... The Church's life in big cities has been marked by its inability to establish a strong, locally rooted Christian presence amongst the groups that society leaves without voice or power ... The Christian gospel should both bring hope to those who are enslaved by urbanization, and challenge those who, knowingly or unknowingly, contribute to that enslavement. A distinctive mark of the mission of Jesus Christ is the "good news" that is proclaimed to the poor. Today's poor can be described, at least in shorthand form, as the powerless. The Church of Jesus Christ must admit that it has not discovered how to convince today's poor that the gospel is relevant. It has only succeeded in reflecting society's fatalism and withdrawal. It has

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"Both prophet and psalmist exhort God's people to be in the city, know the city, be content living in it, and work for its renewal."

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failed to see compellingly enough that the gospel implied involvement in tackling those contemporary enslavements, by word and action.[10]

In emphasizing the importance of urban mission, and prior to outlining what he believes to be God's purpose for the city, Sheppard gives the Church a warning and offers a challenge:

> Society today is expressed in urban living, so trying to understand what the big city does to people and what is Christ's mission within it is not a marginal subject for Christians. Urban mission is one of the priorities today in God's work. If we fail here, if we ignore the city and its pressures, there is no gospel which we can preach anywhere else with integrity.[11]

It is Sheppard's conviction that the Christian Church has failed in its mission with the people of industrial society. This is as true of the Church in Melbourne as it is elsewhere. This failure is seen in words addressed to the Autumn Meeting of the Baptist Union of Victoria in April, 1921; "In inner urban areas, where the democratic vote is strongest, churches are fighting to keep doors open."[12] In 1935, a correspondent to *The Victorian Baptist Witness* wrote; "The problem of the inner suburban churches is becoming increasingly difficult. Situated in the center of a great population, it does seem a paradox that these churches should have the smallest congregations."[13]

Let me conclude this brief introduction to the context of urban mission with the words of Mark and Susan Garner, who, in concluding their historical survey of the Newmarket Baptist Church, a paradigm of Melbourne's urban churches during the city's development prior to 1960, state that:

> By and large, however, the church in general, Newmarket Baptist included, had become aloof, conservative, and unable to identify with the needs of the less fortunate. Newmarket, the focus of our attention, even while drawing large attendances, seems to have started on the road to decline by losing the crucial feeling with the neighborhood; it was becoming an institutional outpost of the middle classes and the fortunate, and was not genuinely reflecting the character of the community.[14]

and,

> Perhaps the most important lesson to learn from the story of one inner-city church is that far too often, instead of being a cause in their neighborhood, Christian congregations are simply at the mercy of the local sociological pressures. If we are to learn from our past, we must rediscover the sense that we are citizens of two worlds, and we must identify with, but not become changed into, the social identity of the locality into which we are called.[15]

The Urban Church: in, to or with the City

■ Third, it can join in the people's struggle to determine for themselves what kind of community they want to have, a community with justice for all. The church can view itself as a partner with the community.

The task of the poor in the city is empowerment. The unbelievable living conditions of the urban poor—wretched jerry-built housing, polluted water supplies, open sewers, a lack of balanced food, terrible health conditions—are essential manifestations of a far deeper problem. For the primary problem is a distribution of power. A few have considerable wealth and political clout—and back up that clout with the laws of the state, their control of the city's economic machinery, and often with military hardware, guns, police dogs and even tanks. Unless the poor can find ways to affect an economic and political redistribution of power, all the efforts to feed, house, and clothe them will only be palliatives that will never significantly change their estate.

The task of the poor in the city is their own empowerment. And the task of the Church is to come alongside the poor, both becoming their advocates before the rich and joining with the poor in their struggle to deal with the forces that are exploiting their community. The most effective means for bringing about such empowerment in the city is community organization.

What is Community Organization?

Community organization is the process by which the people of an urban area organize themselves to "take charge" of their situation and thus develop a sense of being a community together. It is a particularly powerful tool for the poor and powerless as they determine for themselves the

actions they will take to deal with the essential forces that are destroying their community and consequently causing them to be powerless.

The assumption upon which community organizing is built is that "united we stand; divided we fall." It recognizes the tremendous power generated by people acting collectively. Particularly, the poor and powerless of a city are excluded from full participation in the social, political and economic life of their city. Community organization empowers them to meaningfully encounter, cope with and sometimes change these urban structures and systems. But only if they act collectively!

The organizing of a community occurs around the continuous

"The task of the poor in the city is their own empowerment."

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use of the process of reflection and action. Reflection enables the people to identify both the systemic causes and their personal attitudes and actions which have led to their powerlessness. It provides the means for continually evaluating the actions the people take to address these causes and attitudes.

But words without action are meaningless rhetoric. The process of reflection and action also provides the opportunity to take concrete, specific actions that come out of reflection. These actions are always undertaken and developed by the people themselves. And no action is complete unless its results are analyzed by the people and inform both their corporate reflection and their next actions.

Why Should the Urban Church be Involved in Community Organization?

What does the Church have to do with community organization? If community organization is the process of mobilizing the poor to take responsibility for their situation, what place does the urban church have in that? Why, of all institutions, should a body that names its Lord as "the Prince of Peace" fully participate in an organization that confronts, resists the authorities, empowers the poor and generally makes trouble? And what does this have to do with the gospel?

There is, of course, no Scripture which says, "Thou shalt be involved in community organization!" But the themes of justice and of commitment to the empowering of the poor dominate the Scriptures. Shaping the entire biblical message is a profound social analysis evangelicals miss because we interpret the passages making a social statement from an individualistic perspective.

For example, we miss the power of a primary command such as: "Listen, Israel: Yahweh our God is the one Yahweh. You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength ..." (Deuteronomy 6:4-4).

Because of our bias toward the salvation of individuals, evangelicals automatically interpret this passage individualistically whenever we read it. But look at that statement. It is not a commandment given to Israelites, but to Israel. It is a corporate statement, a social statement— calling the nation to love God with every fibre of its being.

The Scriptures present nations, cities, businesses, churches, and even families as bodies that are made up of these interlocking systems—a religious system (that is, the structure by which that social institution moves into relationship with God), a political system (that structure which orders

the life of that community) and an economic system (that structure which provides the material support of that nation, city, business, church or family). These systems have been created by God to make of our corporate bodies a paradise for humanity and, consequently, to bring glory to God.

The religious system has been created by God to bring that nation, city, religious institution or family into relationship with God. The political system was created by God in order to bring a godly order to the institution—an order based on equitable justice for all as the inevitable outworking of a corporate deepening of relationship with God. Finally, the economic system was created by God to responsively steward the resources of the nation, city, business, church or family. God was perceived as the owner of everything and the people as God's trustees, caring for God's wealth by using that wealth to maintain economic equality and justice for all its citizens.

Of course, we know society does not fit that description. Greed, avarice, the lust for power, the need for prestige seems to dominate all individual and corporate human relationships. And the Bible is not shy about analyzing what went wrong. Whether describing the confrontation between Moses and Pharaoh, the gradual corruption of Israel's kings, the misuse of power by Nebuchadnezzer in Babylon, the coterie who put Jesus to death or the systems of Satan and God as represented in the whore Babylon (Revelation 17-18) and the New Jerusalem (Revelation 20-21), the Bible analyzes the gradual corruption of the system God has created.

That corruption begins with money. The economic leaders determine that they are not stewards but owners of an institution's wealth. Eventually they will not only seek honest gain but will cheat in business, charge unfair interest and find legal ways

to steal from the people—thus exploiting an increasingly vulnerable people in order to build their own estates (Ezekiel 22:27,12). The political system, seeking to protect the wealth of the increasingly affluent (and thus protecting the source of the politician's wealth and power) will create laws which oppress the people while protecting the powerful (22:23-25). The religious system will then support this political and economic collusion

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"The church is to be on the side of the poor, the oppressed, the exploited."

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by "blessing" it (for they will be amply rewarded). This they will do by using their access to God by keeping the people from God, thus creating a religion of control while seeking their own power (22:26). The voices of accountability to that institution—the prophets— will gradually be seduced by money, power and prestige, and thus will be stilled (22:28). The people, oppressed, exploited and controlled by the systems created to serve them, will themselves become the exploiters of each other (22:29-31). Thus, the essential spiritual nature of the nation, city, business, church or family which has been created by God will become irredeemably evil (22:3-12).

Perhaps the most profound analysis of this corrupting power of systems was given by St. Paul. Faced with an increasingly oppressive Rome, Paul promulgated the doctrine of the "principalities and powers." The increasing evil in an institution, Paul taught, is not simply because of

the evil that is within humanity. It occurs because the systems are particularly vulnerable to the demonic. Because they deal with the most primal realities of life, the systems can become demonically possessed. The struggle in the nation, city, business, church or family is not simply "against flesh and blood;" instead, it is against "the rulers, the authorities, the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm" (Ephesians 6:10-12). And that is why it is a particularly pervasive and intense battle.

More than social analysis, the Scriptures are concerned about what the people of God—Israel, the remnant, and finally the Church—are to do to challenge the corruption of the systems. The essential vocation of the church is to expose the systems for the demonic exploiters of the people that they are (Colossians 2:11-15) and to work for the transformation of the people and their institutions into the corporate entities God created them to be (Ephesians 3:8-12, John 9:1-39, Jeremiah 22:1-5,13-17).

What this means, in practical outworking, is that the church is to be on the side of the poor, the oppressed, the exploited. It is to work for their empowerment— both by the gospel and by their own self-determination (Isaiah 58:6-7a; Amos 5:21,24; Deuteronomy 15:7-8,10).

Because of the overwhelming dominance of the political order by Rome and because of the church's exclusion from the political process, little is said in the New Testament regarding political justice. But the Christians did have control over their own pocketbooks. Therefore, the thrust of the New Testament call to the church regarding the poor is in terms of economic responsibility. Thus, Jesus spoke more about money than any other subject because he perceived money as the most powerful vehicle to either keep a person from God (Luke 18:18-27) or to enhance his or her relation-

ship with God (Luke 19:1-10). But perhaps the most substantive call to the church to use the power given it (whether economic or spiritual) to work for humanity's liberation is sounded by St. Paul.

The book of Ephesians is about the liberation that comes to humanity through Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:1-22), who defeats both the heavenly principalities and powers and their possession of the systems and the structures which drive humanity's institutions (1:15-23; 3:1-13). When the church becomes a body of believers committed to each other's liberation and empowerment in Jesus Christ (4:1-16), this will have a profound impact not only on each other, but on all society around them. It will radically alter the Christian's lifestyle into a pure, disciplined life (4:17-23). It will create a body of Christ truly liberating (5:1-20). It will profoundly change the relationships in marriage, empowering the woman (5:21-33) and protecting defenseless children (6:1-4). It will transform the economic institutions of society, especially protecting the rights of the employee (6:5-9). Finally, it will equip the church to engage its city's or nation's political, economic and religious systems in a spiritual warfare that will cause those systems to become what God intended them to be (6:10-17).

The primary way such commitment to the poor is to be lived out by the church is through empowerment. God's people are to practice charity toward the poor (Deuteronomy 15:10-11), are to be concerned about deteriorating human conditions among the poor (Isaiah 61:1-9) and are to advocate the cause of the powerless before the systems of power (Jeremiah 22:13-27). But of far greater emphasis throughout Scripture is the commitment to the self-determination and self-initiative of the poor. Pharaoh

could only be faced down by one who cried, "Let my people go." In the Promised Land debts were to be periodically forgiven so that the poor could undertake the rebuilding of their lives (Deuteronomy 15:7-11), and the corners of a threshed field were not to be harvested so that the poor could gather grain for themselves (Deuteronomy 24:19-22; Ruth 2:1-23). Jeremiah instructed the Israelites enslaved in Babylon to build a life for themselves there (Jeremiah 29:1-7). Nehemiah called the defeated people of Israel not only to rebuild their own walls (Nehemiah 2) but also their corporate life as well (Nehemiah 8-11). Jesus required the blind man to wash in the Pool of Siloam if he was to receive his sight (John 9); he consistently stated when he

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> *"When Jesus sought to win humanity to God, he became one of us, lived among us."*
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healed people, "Your faith has made you whole." Paul stressed that a person's initiative plays a strong role in his or her salvation (Romans 1:16-17; 12:1-2). The consistent theme of Scripture—whether dealing with the liberation of the impoverished powerless or the salvation of the spiritually impoverished—is that of self-initiative, of empowerment through self-determination.

This is why it is biblical for the church to be involved in community organization. The organizing of the community to identify and seek to address their own needs is simply another way of acting out the biblical injunction to work for your salvation in fear and trembling, for it is God who puts both the will and the action into you" (Philippians 2:13).

Participation in community organization provides the church with the most biblically directed and most effective means for bringing about the transformation of a community—through the assumption of responsibility by the community's residents to corporately solve their own problems.

We Can't Save the City, but ...

We can make a difference! The church should approach its urban ministry with a sober awareness of the overwhelming predicament of the poor and the exercise of power in today's cities. But we are not left without an example. When Jesus sought to win humanity to God, he became one of us, lived among us, voluntarily took upon himself our limitations, and "was humbler yet, even to accepting death ... on a cross" (Philippians 2:6-8).

That is exactly what Jesus calls the Church to be and do in the city. If we are to win the city's poor for Christ, we will do so only as we become one with them, live among them, voluntarily take upon ourselves their limitations and join with them in addressing our common problems and issues. That is what the Bible calls "incarnation;" that is the imitation of Christ to which God calls the Church in the city, with the city, for the sake of the city. ■

Mobilizing the Urban Church: An Australian Urban Ministry Process

church has always been distant from various social classes, not to mention, in our Australian context, its distance from the aboriginal community. Therefore, the following comments are tentatively offered as some possible reasons for the present situation.

The church has operated and viewed the world and Scripture from a monocultural perspective. This monoculture has been a white, Western, middle-class, male, village-rural culture.

Raymond Bakke has a number of observations regarding the monocultural nature of the church which are relevant to the Australian scene. He describes the movement of the church out into the suburbs out of the cities in the 1960s as a "white fright, white flight." He writes: "I returned as a pastor to Chicago in 1965, and just as I came the church passed me by. It was leaving. The evangelical establishment fled."[2] The church in the suburbs lives in comfortable surroundings, although now that is also slowly changing.

Ray Bakke also believes that church leaders and theological educators are responsible for the monocultural nature of the church. They themselves come "overwhelmingly from the existing professional classes which are located in suburbs and small towns."[3]

Theological education also only prepares ministers for this prepackaged monocultural view of life and Scripture. Very few tools

are given to clergy to help them to interpret the city:

> pastors are not given methods of diagnosis—the capacity to survey, observe, analyze and interpret either their complex multicultural communities or their churches.[4]

There are few theological colleges that have courses in social psychology, urban politics, cultural anthropology or urban history. Instead, Bakke correctly suggests, they provide prepackaged formulas of ministry which are presumed to work anywhere. Culture, in their understanding, is the same in all environments.

So how does this monocultural or cultural-sameness-of-all-environments perspective affect our understanding of Scripture and theology? In the words of Ray

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> *"Initially, all of us will undergo discomfort and even shock if we move into another culture."*
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Bakke again:

> So much theological education is middle-class culture with a smattering of the gospel. What students are given works only in cultures similar to those in which their professors live and work. The lecturers teach theology from their middle-class contexts and values without even realizing it. Theirs is a local theology all right—small-town and suburban.[5]

Finally, one of the strongest and the least conscious factors for our cultural isolation is a psychological one which is universal to all human beings—the fear and anxiety of entering unfamiliar contexts. The more monocultural our experience, and the more we are in the center of our context,

the more are our feelings, beliefs and values deeply comfortable there and the harder it is to cross over into another culture. Initially, all of us will undergo discomfort and even shock if we move into another culture.

The Way of the Cross Today: Becoming a Multicultural Church

The call of God to our monocultural church today is to "go into all the world." In our context it means moving farther than our comfort zones and entering other diverse social and cultural contexts, which now exist in our own suburbs. Before we enter these different cultures, we will have to realize that fear and anxiety will accompany us on this cross-cultural journey. It will be a way of the cross, even though we can affirm that the grace of God undergirds and empowers our movement through this struggle.

The inevitability of this process was strongly reinforced in a course on ministry in Australian society I taught with Jean Gledhill at the United Theological College. Most students were from suburban and rural backgrounds. As part of the course we provided a guided experience of urban ministry in the inner city. Before this event, during the introductory session, throughout the weekend and after the event, the students were honest and courageous enough to share that they felt a great deal of fear and anxiety about this experience. Yet there was no other way that they could grow or build resources for their future ministry in diverse contexts without facing this discomfort or pain.

Now this is not a self-inflicted pain we are talking about; it is not that masochistic messiah complex. It is the necessary disciplined discomfort without which we cannot become a multicultural church! Even more, without facing our diverse and changing interde-

pendent urban world, we will only increase our own discomfort and also fail in liberating our communities from theirs! Let me illustrate this point from a personal development perspective.

Scott Peck is a responsible psychiatrist who has reminded our middle-class culture of its obsession with comfort and the avoidance of suffering and difficulty. "Life is difficult" he tells us, "it is a series of problems. Do we want to moan about them or solve them?"[6] He goes on to say that these problems and difficulties evoke feelings which can be "very uncomfortable, often as painful as any kind of physical pain."[7] Yet he reminds us that life has its meaning in facing up to this discomfort and associated pain. Courage, wisdom and growth arise out of this meeting. On the other hand, fear associated with avoidance and an attempt to ignore the difficulty and suffering produces mental illness. Peck suggests that we all experience this fear and avoidance and therefore, "most of us are mentally ill to a greater or lesser degree."[8] He notes that, in the end, avoidance of legitimate suffering produces greater problems than confronting suffering—the human spirit begins to shrivel. In summary, he counsels us to "face the problems directly and to experience the pain involved" through a disciplined approach to life whereby "we experience the pain of problems in such a way as to work them through and solve them successfully, learning and growing in the process."[9]

These insights from psychology are relevant for our discussion of discomfort and pain in socio-cultural terms. They are equally relevant for theological reflection and the practice of the church, especially the practice and example of its leaders and teachers. Nevertheless, this movement outside our comfort zones and into different social and cultural contexts is a community movement. We move together.

A New Approach to Ministry

A definite process is essential for effective cross-cultural ministry. In my work I have developed a comprehensive process involving four moments or steps. The four moments include:

Community Entry—entering the lived experience of our neighborhood by:

- uncovering our own basic beliefs and primary values
- getting in touch with why we are motivated to enter and minister to our community
- creating a preliminary commu-

"Avoidance of legitimate suffering produces greater problems than confronting suffering. ..."

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nity description through secondary data; social profile data, reports on the area, community surveys

- networking—making direct contacts with the various groups in the community with the aim of listening and learning about their experiences of life
- learning how to listen to and hear the local culture and not our own.

Community Analysis—making sense of the encountered lived experience by asking:

- what is the history of the area
- how do the major institutions and the key values influence and determine how this society is organized, and how do these affect the quality of life
- how do we discern and identify the basic causes of the struggles and lack of quality of life?

Biblical and Theological Reflection—reflecting on the encountered lived experience in the light of Scripture, tradition and lived faith.

Planning Appropriate Responses—planning together with the local community and community of faith out of a prolonged experience of the context.

Many sources and people have been drawn upon to create this process. Basically, I have adapted to the Australian urban context the four-step process of ministry Holland and Henriot describe in their book, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*. Their four moments, which form a pastoral circle, are: 1. *insertion* into the lived experience of the community; 2. *social analysis*, making sense of this experience by examining causes, probing consequences, finding interconnections, and identifying actors; 3. *theological reflection*, bringing the Word of God "to bear upon the situation [which] raises new questions, suggests new insights, and opens new responses;" 4. *pastoral planning*, which emerges out of this experience and reflection. In what follows I want to look at the process of networking as it relates to the first of these four moments.

Networking: a Method for Community Entry and Ministry

We All Belong to Networks

You are already regularly engaged in networking. You do so because you belong to networks: you make links with various people and groups to satisfy your personal needs and interests. These include your friends, family contacts, leisure and sporting interests, educational interests, your life-stage needs and interests (youth seek out other youth, mothers seek out other mothers etc.), vocational interests, church interests and so on. Often this net of chosen contacts or relationships spans across the whole of a city. These links are so vital to us that

we even travel close to an hour to maintain them. Sadly though, this long-distance networking often stops us from developing links within our own neighborhoods. So, because you already belong to and actively engage in "working" this net of contacts you have already exercised this skill. It is a part of your everyday experience. We all have this skill, but we are seldom aware of it or apply it intentionally for ministry and mission. Therefore, it is important to know how to move from the informal practice of networking to a more intentional and conscious one, and to show how intentional networking can be developed as a crucial strategy for ministry and mission in diverse and changing communities, especially where the church is socially and culturally removed from its community.

What Is Networking?

The most helpful material on networking has been written by Raymond Bakke and Robert Linthicum. According to Robert Linthicum the term "comes from the world of business, and it simply means the creation or maintenance of a 'net' of contacts through which one effectively carries out an enterprise."[10] So, networking is simply a strategy which contains three movements: 1. creating or building a net of contacts; 2. maintaining or working the net; 3. empowering and organizing the net to transform itself and the community. In what follows we will look only at the first movement of networking, that is, the process of creating and beginning to build a net of contacts in your community.

Before we look at how networking operates within this first movement, let me make the following points.

Every Community Is Open to Networking

Sociologists have informed us that individuals and groups overcome isolation within cities by searching out networks. Their survival is dependent on the links they build with other people. Thus

there is a deep yearning for human community where they can be sustained, encouraged, supported, affirmed and re-created. These networks "are the *web of relationships* that support an individual, a neighborhood, a community, an ethnic group."[11]

Individuals and groups from various social strata search out contacts that are *common* to all these strata, namely, corner shops, hairdressers, social workers etc.

"Individuals and groups overcome isolation within cities by searching out networks."

However, supportive relationships are usually sought from among their own social and cultural groups.

Church Members Seek Their Own and Common Networks

The church seems to be largely unaware of the desire and openness of persons in its surrounding neighborhood for community through networking. Yet, sociologically, the church, as individual members and as a group, also searches out networks. People in churches yearn for human community; they approach others to satisfy needs held in common with other social groups. They prefer those groups and individuals who are from similar socio-cultural backgrounds.

So at this level the church functions like every other social group in its area. It is both open to building relationships with others to satisfy common needs, and yet it is locked into that which is similar, known and comfortable.

Openness to Networking—a Sign of Hope

We are well aware that the church in Australia develops its Christianity within and out of its own culture, and that it is often socially and culturally disconnected from its surrounding community. This isolation and parochialism, however, only presents half the picture, for church members in their everyday lives are also open to and engaged in building relationships with a variety of people in their neighborhood.

This is indeed a sign of hope for ministry and mission within our neighborhoods. Yet it exists only as a possibility until clergy and lay leaders enable the church to see how to transform informal personal networking into intentional networking for ministry and mission.

You cannot proceed to enable people to network intentionally, however, until you help them understand what ministry and mission means. The fundamental problem lies here, and has to do with theology.

What Theology Guides our Networking?

Socio-Cultural Influences on Theology

Our theology—our understanding of who God is and what God requires of us—emerges out of our reading of the Bible. Yet both the human subject and the biblical text belong to their own unique cultural context. If we do not take this fact into consideration, our reading of the Bible will produce a theology unconsciously determined by our psycho-social context. Thus, a theology which comes from an understanding of the text involves the task of identifying the socio-cultural contexts of both ourselves as hearers and of the biblical text. In this way we are more open to really hearing what God is saying to us in our culture and to others in their culture. This does not mean an "anything goes" theol-

ogy! It allows God to speak meaningfully to each of us in our context, and it involves ambiguity, something which the church and the more conservative and fundamentalist among us seek to avoid.

When networking then, be aware of your own cultural baggage which influences your theology. Be aware and respect the culture and way of life of people in your area. Help your parishioners reflect on both of these elements.

Socio-Cultural Influence on Ministers/Ministry

David Claerbaut, in his book, *Urban Ministry*, describes how the socio-cultural context of middle-class ministers influences their values. These values (of education, property, work ethic, economic know-how, appearance of respectability, future orientation), are in turn found in Scripture and made normative for every culture, even for the urban poor.

This values-formation is an inevitable and necessary process called socialization. Claerbaut defines this process as one whereby "an individual learns his culture and internalizes it. The term 'culture' refers to the socially standardized ways of acting, feeling, and thinking characteristic of the community or society in which the person lives."[12] He suggests the only way a middle-class pastor can minister effectively in an urban area among the poor is to be resocialized. This involves understanding, appreciating and identifying with the way of life of those from other socio-economic groups. It is not an easy process, he says, for middle-class ministers:

... almost every behavioral precept taught in his [her] family, school, and church is rooted in the unconscious and almost certainly unarticulated assumption that the individual comes from a background with a sufficient amount of money, education, status, and most importantly, opportunity to

find this precept meaningful and constructive.[13]

Networking, contacting people in our neighborhood, is the best way ministers and lay workers can become aware of their socialization. Take your parishioners with you and together reflect on your culture and the culture of others. Too few people go out and contact the community, so resocialization seldom takes place. Our fear, avoidance of discomfort, and uncertainty reflects a middle-class need for control and success. Our socialization indeed runs deep.

A Theology of Holistic Ministry and Mission

What is God concerned about? The Bible informs us that God is the creator, redeemer and

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"A God concerned only with personal conversion on the basis of a response to verbal statements is a narrow, powerless and loveless God."

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transformer who desires to bring vitality and joy to the whole of life. This involves a concern for the total well-being of women and men, which also includes the social, cultural, economic and political dimensions of their neighborhood (see Jeremiah 29:4-7;11 & Acts 14:15-17).

Social gospel? Denial of the priority of evangelism? Unfortunately, there are those among us who would say it is. Yet such a position is biblically selective and reductive, thoroughly middle-class and privatized. A God only concerned with personal conversion on the basis of a response to verbal statements is a narrow, powerless and loveless God. Such a God is the concern of only those whose social, economic and

political environment is friendly and supportive to them and their families.

Evangelism and Mission

Evangelism involves sharing the good news. Sharing cannot be reduced to mere verbal proclamation. It certainly demands the spoken word, but words and images that can be clearly and meaningfully understood by each culture. Sharing the gospel equally involves living the gospel. When people see it they will be more open to believe it.

Networking is a part of living out the gospel. It is a sign that the God of the church is concerned for the well-being of the community. In fact, you will discover that once you remain in the area for a significant period of time, people will begin to explore what God is about more seriously.

Mission and Evangelism

Mission involves evangelism but is not reduced to it. It involves being sent out into the community to serve in and with it. Our model is the incarnational mission of Jesus. In our networking, one long-term aim will be to join in solidarity with various groups and individuals to bring healing, reconciliation and new life at all levels: personal, inter-relational, social, cultural, economic, political etc. This process includes affirming them and learning from them. The church is too often paternalistic—it believes it knows what is best for others. It makes its decisions for people on the basis of its own experience and culture.

Repentance and Transformation

No, repentance is not neglected in this holistic approach. Yet repentance is not enough. God desires more than a mere "change of heart," or a "turning away from our sins." God calls for a change which embraces renunciation *and* empowerment, that can free individuals and relationships and institutions *for* new life. The renewing power of God's grace is made available for everyone in

Jesus Christ, and we as the church are invited to respond to and with God in this renewing of our own lives and our communities. It involves the ministry of advocacy and justice for all socioeconomic groups.

The Ministry and Theology of Networking

Ministry in this first phase of networking, then, means entering the community to discern the quality of life in that area—the struggles and joys of local people, especially the poor and needy; the people's sense of God; how social, economic and political institutions contribute to or deny quality of life; the individual and structural evil; what interconnections exist between cultural groups and institutions. These are the learning and listening phases of the ministry of networking. Such ministry affirms that God is already involved in the community (see Acts 14:15-17) and that we need to discern the movement of the Spirit of God within it.

That God goes before us does not mean that we will avoid the discomfort, uncertainty and ambiguity of entering other cultures and of being resocialized. Resocialization is like a second conversion; like the pain which precedes the birth of a child. We discard what seems precious. Only then do we receive, to our surprise and joy, a new appreciation of another way to be human. Our faith reminds us that the God of the crucified and risen Christ is with us during the pain.

Networking involves the courage of faith to enter and contact the unknown in our area and to be transformed through the encounters. Thus networking involves mutuality. It includes an expectant and open attitude with the readiness to learn from the accumulated experience and wisdom of other Christians and local people. We come to listen and learn from our contact with individuals and various groups in the area, and we offer what we have.

How to Network Your Community

Let me remind you that we are only dealing with the first movement of networking, the process of creating and beginning to build a net of contacts in your community. It is the only way to directly experience life (of persons, groups, institutions) at its many layers in your community.

Our aim in networking involves and emerges from the following elements:

- experiencing life through those we contact
- asking these contacts the right questions
- being aware of our own socialization
- selecting certain people who represent various social groups and institutions so as to identify the most appropri-

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"Resocialization is like a second conversion; like the pain which precedes the birth of a child."

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ate persons with whom on-going cooperation continues for the purpose of planning for ministry in and with the community in the future.

Whom Do You Contact?

Both Ray Bakke and Robert Linthicum suggest that once you have defined your geographical area you proceed to meet with the following people: 1. ministers and workers in other churches; 2. providers of human and social services; 3. the political decision-makers; 4. shopkeepers and business people; 5. local residents, especially the poor and those from diverse cultural backgrounds.

I prefer to place the last group of people, the locals and the poor, first. Seeing the community from their perspective assists in asking

the right questions about the church's ministry and of those responsible for the services and quality of life in the neighborhood.

How Do You Make Contact, What Do You Say?

Again, I draw your attention to the Ray Bakke and Robert Linthicum materials which provide a more lengthy description of the following and which I have adapted.

■ *Local People.* Here we must be most sensitive. I usually proceed through an intermediary person, unless I already have a relationship with the person. Say you choose to experience how life is for an ethnic person from a representative group in your area. Find someone in your church, or in one of the social agencies and ask them if they know someone or can find someone you can meet with. Ask them to gain permission for you to talk to this person. Maybe they can come with you. Meet them in their situation, not on your sacred ground. The same process applies if you choose a single parent, an unemployed person, a homeless person, an elderly shut-in person or a long-term local. If a male is to meet a female, it will be culturally sensitive to go with another female.

When you meet, introduce yourself and tell them why you are interested to meet them. Guide the discussion by asking what life is like for them—their struggles, joys; what changes they have seen in the area; whom they would go to for access to services (gatekeepers); whom they would turn to if they were in trouble late at night (caretakers); if they have a sense of God or something greater than themselves, and how the church can become relevant to them and their lives. Before you leave ask them if they could suggest and introduce you to another member of their socio-economic group.

Make no notes during the meeting, but be sure you do later.

Reflect on your encounter with your partner if one went with you. Be sure to use confidential information wisely.

■ *Ministers and Church Workers from Other Churches.* You can call on this group directly. Ray Bakke encourages clergy to meet with all clergy when you first arrive in the area. Some will not want to meet, but most will appreciate a visit, particularly in difficult areas.

Bakke's opening introduction informed the ministers that he was new and was keen to hear what were the most important lessons they had learned while ministering in that community. You can also ask how they have seen the community change.

■ *Human Services and Social Agencies.* Contact officials of the local agencies including public sector services; police, schools, prisons, hospitals, Social Security, legal aid, and the courts. Ask them how the people they serve experience life and what needs they perceive exist. Also inquire about their own struggles and joys and how the church can cooperate in their work. Affirm and encourage their work.

Visit the courts; sit in them for a few hours. You will see many cases of unfair and discriminating decisions. Students from the course I taught visited three different courts and were angered by the injustice they observed. Also visit the private and community services; hostels for the homeless, aged persons homes, service clubs, medical doctors, meals-on-wheels etc.

■ *Political Decision Makers.* Call local politicians, aldermen and other pivotal decision makers in your area. They will certainly love to see you. Once again, ask them how they perceive the quality of life, especially as experienced by the needy. There will be those who hold a self-righteous blame-the-victim attitude, but others will share a deep concern for your shared community.

■ *Shopkeepers and Business People.* Bakke suggests visiting all kinds of businesses, beginning with those closest to your church and progres-

sively moving outward. These include shops, garages, factories, banks, shopping centers, pubs and restaurants. Each of these serve the community and your church members who work, shop, save or spend in these places. Meet with these people, ask about the community, inquire about their business, and how they see the church. Affirm their contribution to the quality of life. Some may be taking advantage of their customers. Note this for a future justice strategy.

Conclusion

This is the suggested method for the first movement of networking. It sounds massive, doesn't it? However, as a long-term strategy for experiencing and understanding your community, it is achievable. Put aside about one-fifth of your weekly time, as Ray Bakke suggests, and the investment will be priceless. Networking reconnects a socially and culturally disconnected church with its surrounding community. You will discern the concrete evil and sinfulness that exists, how God is at work and what the good news is for this situation. ■

Notes

1. Raymond.Bakke, *The Urban Christian.* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1987) p.45.

2. *Ibid.*, p.56.

3. *Ibid.*, p.51.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p.52.

6. M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978) p.15.

7. *Ibid.*, p.16.

8. *Ibid.*, p.17.

9. *Ibid.*, p.17f.

10. Robert Linthicum, "Networking: Hope for the Church in the City," *Urban Mission, 43* January 1987, p.32.

11. Robert Linthicum, "Doing Effective Ministry in the City," *Together,* April-June 1988, p.1.

12. David Claerbaut, *Urban Ministry.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) p.163.

13. *Ibid.*, p.166f.

The Garbage Dump of Cairo: Community Organization for a Recycling Project

making process, a community learns to overcome differences and conflicts, and learns cooperation. Group meetings, disciplined leadership, and a community spirit will focus attention on carrying out decisions. The group process builds on the motivation of the people, and focuses their commitments to act.

■ Communities do not live in isolation, they are part of a large reality. Each family is part of a larger group, each group of a larger class, each class of a larger society, each society a part of the world. The stress today is upon the interconnectedness of the many small parts which make up global society. Community organization works with groups rather than individuals in the building up of the whole community.

Community Organization in El Mohatamdia

A result of living in degraded housing is that it degrades the humanity of the people. My commitment is to the people of El Mohatamdia garbage dump. I can see how they are oppressed and exploited, and I have learned that the best way to help people is by letting them help themselves. I have learned that when an idea comes from the people it will be more powerful as a catalyst for change than if it came from me or my organization. I also believe that changes should come through movements or groups rather than individuals.

In the remainder of this article I outline the strategy of change through which the garbage collectors of El Mohatamdia are identifying their real needs, organizing themselves and empowering themselves to find solutions to these needs and to move toward community transformation.

Strategic Steps

■ *The Networking Process.* The first step was for me and others to move into the community, to live with and listen to the people in order to understand their perspective about the situation in which they are living. From interviews and conversations we discovered that their greatest concern was not so much with their poor housing conditions as it was with their extremely low income.

We then set about identifying the community leaders. We were introduced by the people to the religious leaders, the only formal leaders in the community. Their understanding of the community's problems were very different from what we had heard from the people. This was because they were not living in the community.

As we visited the people in their homes it became clear that Jacob was the strongest and most respected person in the community. In the week prior to our visits he was able to stop television cameras from shooting footage of the garbage dump. Last year he fought the government social workers in their attempts to collect information about the community. But these were not the only stories we heard about Jacob. His home was always open to the community, and he was known for being available and able to solve family problems. From these stories we identified Jacob as the gatekeeper and the caretaker of the community.

We listened to stories about the community from Mohamed, and discovered through our home visits and conversations in the coffee shop that the issues raised in our discussions with Mohamed were indeed the concerns of the community. We were surprised, however, when we also found that all our stories were widely known by many different groups in the community. When we investigated this we discovered that Mohamed was responsible for spreading these stories. Mohamed became our flak-catcher.

In one of our home visits we found a particular child who was

unable to obtain a birth certificate because James was out of town that week. When we asked why he had to wait for James, we were told that James is the person who knows the government regulations, and has friends in different government offices. Furthermore, James used to go with the people into the city when they needed help with official needs. James became our community broker.

After identifying who were the informal leaders of the community we came to the critical question of finding the people most strongly committed to addressing the issue of low incomes, who could become vital participants in the process of organizing for change. It was very important to us that the people realize how this issue was impact-

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> *"The first step was ... to move into the community, to live with and listen to the people. ..."*

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ing their lives, and how strongly they needed to face up to it. We found that only the victims identified themselves with this issue.

It took four to five weeks to build the network, but after the network was established we were able to see with the people the importance of moving toward a community organization to address the needs of the community.

■ *Coalition Building.* The issue before us was low income and the oppressed were the target group. In the process of coalition building, two concepts dominated our thinking. First, that the people who are affected by the issue are the best people to build the coalition to address the issue. Second, that the most effective way to handle the issue was by

collective rather than individual action. By means of these two principles the people were brought together to analyze the root causes of the problem.

In the process of discussing the issue, the people articulated for themselves the nature of the problem. They received a low income because they were selling their sorted garbage to the middlemen for very little while the middlemen turned around and sold it at a large profit. The middlemen dictated the price paid to the people. They were making a lot of money while the people made next to nothing.

Furthermore, they discovered that if the middlemen refused to purchase their assorted garbage they were not able to sell it directly to the factories because it needed to go through a first stage of recycling before the factories would buy it.

The people identified that the solution to their problem was a recycling project. They started by setting out the steps to be taken to achieve this project, and by forming particular groups to suggest solutions to various problems. A first group was to look at the problem of supplying electricity, a second to prepare a feasibility study (with professional help), a third to get government permission, and a fourth to study the question of land.

■ *The Process of Action and Reflection.* Each of the four groups examined the root causes of the problem they were addressing, and decided upon the critical actions which they should take. They analyzed their motivations as well as the reactions from the wider community to their actions.

In the case of the electricity group, their objective was to provide the community with electricity. They were stymied in their attempts by government officials who wanted bribes in order to allow the project to go on. The group met to reflect on the resistance they were receiving and came to the realization that the

officials wanted bribes because their salaries were very low. After asking why the government salary was so low they discovered that a large number of officials were paid even though they did not work. Obviously this was meant to keep them under control and thereby avert rebellion against the government. It became clear that the political system oppressed the people, and in turn the oppressed became oppressors themselves.

The electricity coalition concluded that they would not participate in bribery, but that they would fight against this systemic evil. They decided to invite the local representative of the Egyptian Congress to visit their community and to share with him their vision. Through the broker of the community they got an appointment to go and meet with him. The representative of the Congress accepted their invitation and selected a day to visit the community. The group subsequently reflected on how this action had helped them to overcome their previous fears concerning government officials. The coalition then set about planning the day.

The representative visited the community and was shocked by their situation. He promised to help. A few weeks later, after a hard process of negotiation, the community was provided with electricity.

The coalition which was examining the issue of land was shut down by the middlemen. The land in and around this community was owned by the middlemen. When they heard about the project they used their power to stop the project. But the group came together and started to analyze the power of the middlemen, concluding that the middlemen exercise power by virtue of their economic strength. Not only did the middlemen control the buying of the sorted garbage, and the prices paid, but they also had friends in the factories who helped them in the reselling of these materials. They had a strangle hold on the recycling project.

Having reflected upon this situation, the land coalition set out the following objectives: 1. to collect the sorted garbage from the people by offering better prices; 2. to communicate with other recycling projects outside the community, and to recycle their materials there; 3. to find factories which would purchase their materials. This was a transition strategy until they were able to set up their own recycling process.

Having set out the action plan, the coalition began to implement it, with the result that some of the middlemen softened and agreed to rent some land to them. The coalition reflected upon

> *"Because they were aware of their own problems, and now trusted in their capacity to solve these problems, the recycling project was achieved."*

this new situation, and then took the actions needed to raise the capital to rent the land.

The other two coalitions benefitted from the gains made by the electricity and land coalitions, and went on to achieve their own goals through the application of the action and reflection method. The four coalitions came together and shared their experiences and achievements, and drew up a plan to integrate their objectives. They had seen how the systems and structures had conspired to oppress the people—the geographic structure isolated them, the political system marginalized them, and the economic system of the community and the city made the rich richer and the poor poorer.

In the light of this, the coalitions developed their own organizational structure in order to achieve their objective of achieving higher family incomes. They struggled hard with the power of the middlemen, who tried to invade their organization. But because they were aware of their own problems, and now trusted in their capacity to solve these problems, the recycling project was achieved, and fifty families eventually participated in different recycling projects.

■ *Leadership Development.* It was clear to us from the beginning that the project was a project of the people. During the action and reflection process we concentrated on identifying and assisting those who had the potential to lead the community. We stayed with the community while they identified and defined the problems and issues, explored alternative solutions, mobilized resources, raised the awareness of the whole community, and brought about a new degree of self-confidence and competence. Thorough intentional leadership development assistance was given in problem solving and organizational skills, group skills, communication skills, and building the trust necessary for forming an effective community organization.

From Weeping to Rejoicing

When people were able to achieve their objectives, especially when these objectives were an impossible dream, the rejoicing rolled down like a river. The community organization of El Mohatamdia decided to celebrate their achievements by organizing a congress meeting to which they invited government leaders, CEOSS leaders, and the entire community to witness how their project had helped transform their community. They wanted everyone to see that their incomes had increased, and that they were no longer under the control of the middlemen.

Incidentally, the project not only increased their income levels, it also contributed to improving the environment through the recycling of garbage and the reduction of the pollution which came from burning the garbage.

The people of the garbage community of El Mohatamdia now see their history with the strength of an Egyptian Pharoah, and as they behold their achievement together, their weeping is transformed into rejoicing. ■

Defining the Context of Urban Mission

—from page 19

NOTES

1. David Claerbaut, *Urban Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) p.12.

2. Thomas H. McAlpine, "Evangelism is the Second Event", *Urban Advance, 3*, Number 1, 1991.

3. From a suggestion offered by Denham Grierson during a D.Min. seminar in the Autumn of 1989.

4. Karl Rues-Smit, from a paper delivered to a meeting of the Melbourne Region of the National Urban Network, April 28, 1981.

5. Raymond Fung, address to WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Melbourne, Australia, May 1980.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

7. Walter Wink, *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Forces That Determine Human Existence* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) p.88.

8. Jeremiah chapter 29.

9. Psalm 122.

10. David Sheppard, *Built as a City: God and the Urban World Today* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974) p.11.

11. *Ibid.*, p.16.

12. Mark and Susan Garner, *A Cause In Their Neighbourhood* (Melbourne: On Being, 1978) p.19.

13. *Ibid.*, p.26.

14. *Ibid.*, p.17.

15. *Ibid.*, p.22.

Presidential Search

After thirty years of distinguished service as president of Fuller Theological Seminary, Dr. David Allan Hubbard will be retiring on June 30, 1993. The Board of Trustees has appointed a Presidential Search Committee to seek a person to fill this important position. A description of the responsibilities and qualifications is listed below. Term of office will begin July 1, 1993.

Nominations, applications, or inquiries should be addressed to: Presidential Search Committee, 1085 Riviera Drive, Pasadena, CA 91107. Telephone and FAX (818) 351-0124.

We welcome your response. All names will, of course, be prayerfully considered by the committee and treated in confidence.

RESPONSIBILITIES: The president is the chief executive officer of the institution. Subject to the oversight of the Board of Trustees, the president has general supervision and direction of the academic programs and personnel in the Graduate Schools of Theology, Psychology, and World Mission, the various institutes, and the seminary library. This includes responsibility for long-range development and stability of the schools, selection and orientation of key personnel (trustees and top administrators), establishing sound procedures for fund raising, and accurate representation of Fuller Theological Seminary to its various publics.

QUALIFICATIONS: Applicants should have a commitment to the evangelical and ecumenical mission of Fuller Theological Seminary, and

■ firm personal dedication to biblical and historical Christianity

■ vision for the integration of the Christian faith and the needs of the world we live in

■ demonstrated leadership

■ administrative and relational skills

■ academic experience

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