ally sensitive? Does he understand the power of culture? Does he understand the assimilation process faced by each new immigrant group? Is he cognizant of the fact that our ministry approach will depend upon the cultural setting of the group?

A fifth dimension is that of focus. Is he the type of person who is able, despite distractions, to "Keep the course"? Is he able to methodically accomplish specific, designated tasks to reach goals? He must not get lost in the things of today.

Lastly, does he have a mind to work without the discouragement that often besets those with the "instant success" syndrome? Can he put faithfulness to God over professional ambition?

If there is anyone who needs an enlarged understanding of our living God, it is those who have been gripped by the urban challenge and have set about to be redemptive channels. To those, we give the Apostle Paul's encouragements:

> Now to him who is ABLE to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever, Amen. (Ephesians 3:20,21)

Endnotes

1. Samuel Wilson, "Update on Unreached Peoples: Theory and Practice," *His Dominion*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1989): 20.

❏

The Church and the City: A Five-Stage History

Clinton E. Stockwell

Vol 11:1

While it is true that, until recently, most people have lived in places of 20,000 persons or less, the history of the world is essentially a history of cities. In the ancient world, one need only mention capitals like Rome, Memphis, Thebes, Athens, Sparta, Babylon, and Nineveh to note the disproportionate influence that cities have played in the development of civilization.

Numerous factors account for the rise of cities, including the human needs of defense and protection and the development of commerce, administration, and culture. Technological innovation has also played its part in the development of cities. It is possible to note at least five urban periods in world history and to note particular responses by the Judeo-Christian community. What follows is meant only to provide a framework for further reflection and discussion.

Stage One: City-States

In the first stage of urban history, city-state systems developed initially in the Nile and Tigris-Euphrates river valleys. The city-state system later spread to Palestine, and was perfected as a system by the ancient Greeks. A key ingredient in the city-state was the phenomena of kingship, as smaller scale empires were dominated by the city-capital. Jerusalem and Samaria were part of this culture, each city dominating its countryside in military, administrative, religious, and cultural matters. Each city had its own set of

deities and was generally in close interdependence with the surrounding countryside. Historian V. Gordon Childe lists the following as "urban characteristics":

1. Permanent settlement in dense aggregations
2. Specialization of labor in nonagricultural vocations
3. Taxation and capital accumulation
4. Monumental public buildings
5. A ruling class
6. A technique of writing
7. Development of sciences
8. Artistic expression
9. Trade and commerce
10. Residential replacement of kinship as the basis for membership in the community.

The patriarch Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees and, after a time of nomadic shepherding, established Bethel. Jerusalem and Samaria became the capitals of the Southern and Northern Israelite kingdoms a thousand years later. In each case, the Old Testament patriarchs and kings valued such centers as religious high places, as administrative centers, as places for defense, trade, and socialization. After the conquest, David may be said to have established a theocracy under divine and human kingship. Such a theocratic ideal stressed religious and cultural homogeneity, which would later be revisited somewhat by theocrats John Calvin and John Winthrop of Geneva and Puritan Boston.

Stage Two: Greco-Roman City

The second phase of urbanization was the Greco-Roman city. Alexander the Great, in 331 B.C., established an empire that dissolved the old city-state system. He sought to Hellenize the known world, bringing to it a common language and a common culture—Greek. The Septuagint and the synagogue reflect these patterns in Jewish life. Palestine, after captivity and resettlement, was absorbed into Alexander's empire.

Despite Pompey's defeat of the Seleucids, the phenomena of Hellenized empires remained. As one

Paul knew that cities were the high point of cultural slopes.

person put it, "When Rome conquered Greece, Greece conquered Rome." The phenomenon of Greco-Roman civilization continued. Alexander brought with him the concept of the *polis* (city), with an elected political body, the *boule.* This was continued by Rome in its Senate. Further, the pluralistic nature of the empire was homogenized by a common culture, and divided up into administrative districts called provinces, each of which was subject to the centralized rule of Rome.

It was into this Greco-Roman centralized civilization, highly political, cultural, and militaristic, that Christianity came. Paul's Bible was the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Masoretic text. While Jesus probably spoke Aramaic and some Hebrew he was also exposed to Latin and Greek, two of the three languages that marked his cross. For Paul, the gospel took on a shape that was Greek in nature, though Jewish in content. As the missionary to the Gentile nations (the Greeks), Paul

went to the cities of the Greco-Roman world. Paul no doubt knew that cities were the high point of cultural slopes. If one established a "beachhead" in a city, the "news" would eventually spread to the countryside around it. Such appeared to be Paul's strategy of evangelization.

Recent New Testament scholarship has demonstrated the urban presence of the first Christians. These books include *The First Urban Christians* by Wayne Meeks, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* by Abraham Malherbe, and *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity* by Gerd Theissen. Each of these writers has noted the relationship of early Christianity to the cities of the ancient world. Early Christianity spread because the movement penetrated the cities, demonstrated compassion for the poor and outcasts, and included in its community a diversity of people that was "neither Jew nor Greek, Scythian nor barbarian, male nor female." Gerd Theissen, in another book, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity,* concluded of Christianity in the first century:

A movement which was formerly connected with the country became a group based [in] the cities. When Pliny the younger writes that Christianity spread "not only through the cities but also through the villages and countryside," ...it is clear where Christianity has its focal point. Developing cities with their new increase in population were more open to the new message than the country, with its traditionalist attitudes. Groups of this kind in particular, whose roots in the cities were not too deep, could

find security and support in the communities. It is probably a consequence of the change from country to city that the vivid concrete pictures of the synoptic tradition increasingly give place to abstract argumentation. (p. 117)

Stage Three: the Medieval-Renaissance City

The third great "urban explosion" was to be found in the Medieval-Renaissance city. For historian Henri Pirenne, the rise of the medieval city noted the cultural shift of civilization from the Mediterranean basin to Northern and

Clinton Stockwell, Th.D., D.Min., Ph.D., currently serves as faculty associate and small group supervisor of the Chicago Metropolitan Center of the Chicago Metropolitan Center. The Center serves a number of Christian colleges in the midwest, providing their students with concentrated exposure to urban needs and public policy. Before coming to his present post, he served as Director of the Chicago Center for Public Ministry. Address: 407 S. Dearborn, Suite 1675, Chicago, IL 60605.

Western Europe. The medieval town began as the center of a feudal manorial system, a continuation of the kingship ideal. However, trade began to quickly connect the cities, contributing to the rebirth of classicism in the Renaissance. Cities like Venice, Florence, and Rome began as the hubs of a renewed classicism. The Moors rediscovered Aristotle, and the Florentines rediscovered Plato.

In the medieval city, phenomenal cathedrals were built, especially in France and Germany. These cathedrals dominated their cities and the bishops dominated the government and civic affairs of the towns. When the Reformation appeared, cities politically went one way or the other. Some chose to remain as "Catholic cities", others accepted the Reformed cause. The story of Calvin's Geneva illustrates the political nature of the Reformation as the city elders voted to go the way of the Reformation, chasing out the Catholics.

According to historian A. G. Dickens, the Reformation was "an urban event." It was in the cities of Renaissance Europe that the Reformation took place. The bulk of the imperial cities of Germany went to Luther, and Luther's support of the princes against the political hegemony of the Pope and the "Babylonianish captivity" aided both nationalism and the Reformation. Zwingli was able to capture Zurich, and other reformers were able to exert their authority in cities like Basel and Strasbourg. The Anabaptists thrived initially in urban centers like Strasbourg, a "free city" noted for tolerance. Calvin's attempt to establish a theocracy in Geneva was a note-worthy success, though it took a thirty year struggle. Humanism, lay piety, skepticism, a spirit of independence, and a rising artisan class typified the cities of the Reformation. In such an atmosphere, Protestant individualism and self-

Early Christianity spread because the movement penetrated the cities.

governance—values more conducive to urban centers—became preferable to the universal umpire of medieval Catholicism.

Despite Queen Elizabeth's settlement in England in 1559, which ostensibly legislated Protestantism and forbade Catholicism, for many the "settlement" did not go far enough. Puritans, Anabaptists, and separatists wanted more radical reforms, but the church-state system exuded little tolerance for a diversity of opinion. As a result, many Puritans migrated in the sixteenth century to America.

The most notable Puritan experiment was probably Winthrop's Boston. Governor Winthrop sought to reproduce the Old Testament theocracy and Calvin's "heavenly city" in Boston. It was to be a "city set on a hill," a "model of Christian charity." Winthrop established the town on Puritan ideals, emphasizing the Puritan virtues of hard work, personal holiness, and compassion. While kinsmen in Salem were less than tolerant of the country's first women's liberation movement, Boston maintained for some time a reputation of cohesiveness and compassion for the poor and needy.

Unfortunately, earthly utopias don't last forever. Boston was a port city and numerous newer immigrants first set foot on American soil there. According to colonial historian Carl Bridenbaugh, the city also attracted drifters, merchants, sailors, and adventurers. The homogeneity and uniformity of the town yielded to pluralism, rapid growth, transiency, with all manner of vice and evil. Many of the immigrants who first came to the U.S. came to our cities. The English and the Irish came to Boston. The Dutch settled in New Amsterdam, the Quakers in Phila-

Governor Winthrop sought to reproduce the Old Testament theocracy and Calvin's "heavenly city" in Boston.

delphia, and Catholics in Baltimore. The colonial towns played a disproportionate role in the commerce and revolutionary potential of colonial America. Witness, for example, the effects of the Boston Tea Party.

**The Fourth Stage:
The Industrial City**

The American frontier lured settlers westward and "instant cities" popped up in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Louisville, Chicago, Denver, and San Francisco. According to Richard Wade in The Urban Frontier, cities played a disproportionate role in the West as well. After the greatest land grab in world history, later immigrants were forced into cities and the industrial metropolis came into being. The steamboat and the railroad helped the process along, but the U.S. was becoming more and more an urban nation.

If the first Great Awakening impacted the cities of the Eastern seaboard, the second Great Awakening seemed more suited to the frontier. Finney's revivals hit the towns of upstate New York and the Midwest, kindling the "burned over district," called such due to the "fires of revival." Revival also hit the rural areas of Kentucky and Ohio. However, evangelical religion had not suddenly become a rural phenomenon. Tract societies, charitable orphanages and asylums, and various evangelically-backed reform movements dotted the urban landscape. The benevolent empire struggled against the perceived woes of immigration, industrialization, urbanization, and Catholicization.

The old immigrants, white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, felt overwhelmed by the coming of the new immigrants. From 1862-1900, 68 percent of immigrants came from Northern and Western Europe, 22 percent from Southern and Eastern Europe. After 1900 the situation was reversed. Of immigrants who came, 58 percent were from Southern and Eastern Europe, and only 22 percent came from Northern and Western Europe. Since the frontier was already claimed, the new immigrants were forced to settle in the cities, providing cheap labor for the emergence of urban-industrial America. The new immigrants shocked the old stock Anglo-Saxon "Nativists." They (the new immigrants) were poor, uneducated, unskilled, spoke strange

Slavic languages and were also Roman Catholic or Jewish.

For industrial capitalists, the new immigrants were good news. They were cheap labor, could work low-skill jobs and were easy to manipulate since many spoke little English and all were relatively powerless. Impoverished and illiterate, the first generation settled near the factories in houses abandoned by white Protestants who, becoming more affluent, fled "Rum, Rome, and Rebellion" to the periphery of the city. Cities like Chicago became predominantly Catholic and Protestants found themselves in a position of declining influence, especially in Northern cities.

While many Protestants stuck it out, inventing new religious expressions in the city like settlement houses, reform or renewal societies, the YMCA, rescue missions, or "institutional churches," many other Protestants relocated to suburban communities more conducive to their class, ethnicity, and lifestyle. Gibson Winter in the 1960s called this the "Suburban Captivity of the Churches." Sociologist Harlan Paul Douglas in his 1926 study, *1000 City Churches*, argued that the Protestant church was a rural institution. Given the historical perspective here, I believe Douglas's point of view to be overstated. However, many Protestant churches certainly existed as the persistence of rural revival cultures amid the religious and ethnic pluralism of the city.

The fourth urban stage discussed here is about the rise of the industrial city. Unlike preindustrial cities of the past, the industrial city represented a unique challenge to the church. The industrial city destroyed the ideal of the homogeneous "walking city" of colonial America. The workplace was separated from the home; children and women were forced to work for economic reasons, and the sense of community was broken down. *Gemeinschaft* (community) was replaced by *Gesellschaft* (society) to quote sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies. The rigorous specialization and mechanization of work contributed to squalid conditions. City air could no longer make one free and the smokestack city contributed to pollution, disease, exploitation, dependency, and poverty. Work became no longer a "trade," but merely a "job," dictated by the amount of wages allowed by the employer.

Labor leaders were not convinced that the church fully understood its problems. In the view of Samuel Gompers, founder of the AF of L, the church seemed to be represented by the rich and the church seemed aligned with the employers. The gospel of wealth and the Protestant ethic seemed to blame the poor for being poor. Wealth and status seemed to be the reward for faithfulness and labor felt alienated from the church. In the industrial city, the church became, if anything, a refuge, an escape from city woes. The city was expanding too quickly and city services were developed too slowly. The new immigrants and the existence of cities themselves were blamed for the existence of poverty and vice.

Stage Five: Industrial Decline

The final stage of urbanization is characterized by the decline of the industrial city. Cities in the developed world have now become "post-industrial," as robots and computers have replaced workers in the city. Chicago, for example, has lost 600,000 jobs in the past two decades. Some jobs have moved to the suburbs, the Sunbelt, or overseas because labor is cheaper and the resources of other countries are readily available and exploitable. Other jobs have simply been eliminated, replaced by a shift in the economy from an industrial economy to a hi-tech, retail and service economy.

earth with the gospel in Western garb. Such a perspective is no longer appropriate for missionary preparation.

First of all, the world has become a "global city." A few examples: Mexico City is now the largest city in the world with 17 million people. By the year 2000, it will be a city of over 31 million people. The combination of agricultural technology, declining mortality rate and rising birth rates have contributed to this urban explosion. Sao Paulo, Brazil is presently a city of 14 million people, twice the size of New York City, and will go to 25.7 million by the year 2000. South America is now the most urbanized continent in the Two-Thirds World, with over sixty percent of its people living in cities.

From 1945 to 1980, farms have decreased in population from 24 million to a little over three million people. The suburbanization process has spread beyond the imaginary line called the "city limits." Metropolitan Chicago has grown from over five million a few years ago to over seven million today. Seventy-five percent of Americans now live in cities of 50,000 people or more. Further, with immigrants now coming from Latin America and Mexico, from Korea and Southeast Asia, from the Middle East and from Africa, cities are today even more heterogenous. If the industrial cities were "Protestant, Catholic and Jew," the postindustrial city has become also Buddhist, Hindu, Hispanic, and Arab. How will the church handle this growing pluralization?

The Global City

The post industrial world has also affected the nature of the third or developing world, called more **appropriately the Two-Thirds** World. Under neocolonialism, Western missionaries were trained to go to the rural sections of the

This urbanization process is not limited to Latin America. Cairo is a city of 12 million people. Three million people (the size of Chicago) now live in Cairo's cemeteries alone. Lagos, Nigeria was a town the size of Rockford, Illinois just twenty years ago, with about 300,000 people. When the Pope visited Lagos a few years ago, the city reported a population of over four million people, larger than Los Angeles, California. Jakarta, Indonesia went from the size of Dallas to the size of New York (seven million people) in a little over two decades. Japan has today three cities of over seven million people. According to Dr. Samuel Wilson of World Vision's Missions Advance Research Center (MARC), **there were 273 cities in the world** with more than one million people in 1985! This figure alone will double in twenty-five years. In 1970, there

Church Expansion and Africa's Cities

Jonathan Hildebrandt

When Westerners think of Africa over the past two thousand years, they often picture a rural continent with no urban centers before the nineteenth century. If this conception were correct, it would mean that urban evangelism or church growth in cities did not begin until relatively recently.

History tells another story, though. It is a story of North African cities during the time of Christ which were known throughout the Roman Empire for their culture and learning; Saharan municipalities that controlled the gold, ivory and salt trade more than a millennium ago; and coastal cities in the east and south that had highly developed trade links with India and China before the time of Vasco da Gama.

Africa does have a long and significant urban history, but what is more interesting is the prominent role of cities in the spread of Christianity in Africa up to 1800. There is a strong link between cities and the spread of the gospel in Africa. Almost two thousand years ago, Christian missionaries went first to the cities, establishing a strong, viable church. From there Christianity spread to the rural areas. But then something strange happened from the mid-nineteenth to latter half of the twentieth centuries: missionaries changed this strategy. In the nineteenth century they no longer concentrated on the urban centers but went directly to the rural areas, where the vast majority of the population then was. Nineteenth-century mission societies as a whole did not

were only four cities in the world with ten million people. Today, there are seventeen such cities.

Our historical sketch has tried to show that churches have always been involved in urban mission. If we look at the New Testament, we see that Jesus went to the cities, towns, and villages of Palestine, visiting Jerusalem, a city that he wept over several times. The Apostle Paul adopted an urban missionary strategy of proclamation and presence (a year and one half in Corinth, three years residence in Ephesus) in the cities of the Greco-Roman world. Paul travelled to Antioch, then to Ephesus, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and finally Rome. Similarly, the Reformation succeeded because it captured the cities. About a century ago, D. L. Moody said of Chicago: "If we fail to reach the cities...They will become a cesspool that will infect the entire nation."

I believe evangelicals have a gospel, a good news, that is redemptive, about peacemaking, about reconciliation, about restoration. In Jeremiah, the prophet exhorted the exiles while in Babylon, that city noted for evil, corruption, cruelty, and idolatry. Jeremiah spoke against the false prophets who advised rebellion and flight from the city.

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper (Jeremiah 29:4-7)

Seek the welfare of the cities, pray to the Lord for it, live with the people of the city. These were Jeremiah's words for the urban exiles 2500 years ago. Today, Jeremiah's words are even more important, lest Christianity become an obscure sect.

Bibliography

Bridenbaugh, Carl. *Cities in the Wilderness: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776*. New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 1948.

Frenchak, David J., and Clinton E. Stockwell, compilers. *Signs of the Kingdom in the Secular City*. Chicago: Covenant Press, 1984.

Malherbe, Abraham. *Social Aspects of Early Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983.

Meeks, Wayne A. *The First Urban Christians*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982.

Moeller, Bernd. *Imperial Cities and the Reformation*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972.

Ozment, Stephen E. *The Reformation in the Cities*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.

Palen, J. John. *The Urban World*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1981.

Rutman, Darrett. *Winthrop's Boston: Portrait of a Puritan Town*. University of North Carolina, 1965.

Theissen, Gerd. *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.

_____. *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.

Wade, Richard. *The Urban Frontier*. Cambridge: harvard University Press, 1959.

Wilson, Sam. "The Field is the World and the World is Increasingly Urban," *Signs of the Kingdom in the Secular City*. Chicago: Covenant Press, 1984.

□