"BOOTING THE DEVIL OUT THE BACK DOOR:

THE CHURCH AS A CHANGE AGENT IN INNER-CITY RECOVERY"

BY

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A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
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A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University

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of

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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"aux ouvriers qui travaillent pour le Seigneur"

Matthieu 25:40

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ABSTRACT

Many explanations, such as structural adjustment or aberrant behavioral patterns, declare the causalities of urban decay. Consequently, various agents of change, ranging from policy-makers to faith communities, have attempted inner-city revitalization. This thesis makes two assertions. The first is that basic social and economic forces limit urban recovery efforts. Given that assumption, the second is that the Church, or individual churches thereof, is essential to the revitalization process. The research analyzes the historic and contemporary efforts of the Church towards the betterment of society. The study is not intended to disregard the influence of non-Christian organizations; rather, it highlights the work of the Western world's dominant faith community. The experiences of the author, administrative officials, and clergy (among others) provide insight on the impact of church work. The investigation also discusses the viability of any recovery effort and the conclusion argues the Church's growing relevance to urban renewal processes.

I

SPIRITUIALITY, THE URBAN MILIEU, AND REVITALIATION

CHAPTER I

SPIRITUALITY, THE URBAN MILIEU, AND REVITALIZATION

"Rooted in the destruction of faith and hope . . . their future is transformed into a spectacle of decay . . . in the end, this profoundly spiritual nature of the current crisis gives it its unique historical character" (Eugene Rivers, 1992:3)

1.1   Introduction: Spirituality and Urban Decline

In recent years, the study of non-profit organizations as change agents in urban renewal has increased. Urban "renewalists" realize that recovery must be an inclusive process that involves governments, financial institutions, and voluntary organizations for successful revitalization to occur. The Center for Urban Policy (a US based research organization) posits that churches, among other non-governmental organizations, are an integral part of the urban milieu and to a growing extent determine a neighborhood's vitality. As such, they are necessary for the revitalization process (Bertsch, 1984:52). As multi-faceted voluntary organizations, churches have been and remain important to inner-city communities.[1] Examination of churches' impact is meant to provide perspective on their roles and capacities and how those capacities affect urban change. Among other things, they function as part spiritual institution, part non-governmental organization, and part community center. Because churches' interaction among governments, civic groups,

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[1] Although the term "the Church" is normally used to signify the Catholic Church, it will be used in a generic sense throughout the paper. In an ecumenical sense, the "Catholic Church" refers to the whole body of Christians; see *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 7th ed., J.B. Sykes, ed. (Oxford: Oxford, 1982), p. 146.

and urban residents is historical and unique, this type of analysis is beneficial for future urban policy research and others who seek to revitalize the urban environment.

The research involves comparative analyses among several North American cities in the area of core-city or urban recovery, with particular emphases on Albany, Georgia and Winnipeg, Manitoba. These cities were chosen because of their inner-city challenges, the work of church groups in response to these, and the availability of research material. The study will also examine, in a more limited way, additional US cities regarding the roles of churches. Two assertions are advanced. First, despite government attempts to address "urban problems", there are more extensive rudimentary forces that both contribute to decay and limit the success of government recovery efforts (the discussion identifies these forces as they relate to city planning, housing, and neighborhood revitalization). Secondly, because of these forces churches are important, and often necessary change agents, along with other organizations, in the remedy of urban decay. The impact of spiritual institutions (or a sense thereof) on policy has sometimes been overlooked. The next section explains why this is the case.

Policy analysis, defined as the "disciplined application of intellect to public problems", aims to improve public policies and programs (Pal, 1992: 16). There are occasions in the policy formulation process when analysts fail to recognize factors less susceptible to empirical verification that constitute cause-effect relationships. An example involves the Ojibwa Indians of Grassy Narrows, Ontario. The Ojibwa were an agrarian people, without sewage systems or electricity, whose physical location excluded them from government services such as health-care and educational facilities. Their social structure necessitated an emphasis on extended families, communal responsibility, and

thrift. In 1963, the Department of Indian Affairs relocated the band to make government services more amenable to them. After the move, however, the Ojibwa's social structure shattered. Assuming the role of "surrogate parent", the government replaced the Indians' former recourse to manual dexterity. Alcoholism due to unemployment, gang rapes, and child neglect became common. The death of spirituality, purpose, and community lay at the root of the problem. This was unforeseen by the policy-makers because issues relative to spirituality and culture are not usually central to policy analysis (Pal, 1992: 24, 25).[2] Thus, the study of human systems or organizations is necessary.

Human systems are analyzed to understand the values that inform peoples' behavior. These systems involve categories of meanings and symbols that make sense of the world and assign value to different endeavors and interests (Shein, 1985: 432). Historically, the Church (as a human organization) has assigned value to activities designed to improve the human condition. Much Christian theology supposes that the church has a responsibility to society equal to if not greater than secular agents. This belief system emphasizes horizontal relationships (addressing community needs) as well as a vertical relationship with God. Despite this basic presupposition, there are various interpretations within Christendom that define those responsibilities.

Chapter One was designed to introduce the concept of spirituality as it relates to urban decline, provide basic definitions of what is meant by recovery, and elaborate suburban sprawl as a causality of urban decay. Chapter Two examines social factors such as class/ethnic discrimination in housing, economic theories on poverty, socio-cultural

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[2] According to George A. Lane, spirituality is "a particular style or approach to union with God". George A. Lane, (*Christian Spirituality: An Historical Sketch* (Chicago: Loyola, 1984), p.2

conditions that perpetuate such (particularly in the US), and illustrates examples of public decisions that contribute to the process of decline. The perspectives and the work of churches in the inner-cities are discussed in Chapter Three, which develops the agency of churches historically and contemporarily and gives a theological framework for understanding why some churches act on urban issues and others do not. Chapter Three also details urban revitalization efforts in Albany, Georgia, institutional intra-church impediments to church work via seminaries, and comments on St. Louis, Missouri's core-city issues relative to church work. The last section of Chapter Three details some of the Church's failures regarding inner-city recovery.

Chapter Four analyzes governmental responses to urban decline, the advantages of urban areas, recovery strategies, and the author's 1997 Co-Operative Educational experience. Chapter Four also gives a brief chronology of selected US presidents' appeal to, or recourse from, urban issues and expounds on the work of church groups and associations in response to urban decay. Urban renewal also entails human development; therefore, "human recovery" as an urban renewal strategy is discussed with respect to Baltimore, Maryland. This chapter also mentions the viewpoints of several Albanian residents concerning church initiatives. Chapter Five suggests recommendations for change that lead to "informed menus" for recovery, explains briefly the possibility of churches as advocacy planners, and gives advice on policy direction from a policy analyst's standpoint. Chapter Five also speaks to the issue of "bonding" as it relates to recovery; advocates the capabilities of churches (especially given the current North American political landscape); compares the involvement of Canadian and US churches;

revisits the paper's main assertions, and comments on what churches should avoid in the future regarding urban recovery.

Pursuant to the research, several interviews were done with clergy, non-clerical administrators, and elected officials to gain their perspectives of the Church's impact. Most of the existing academic literature on urban revitalization does not comment concerning the roles of churches relative to inner-city recovery. Because of this, much of the evidence is advocative and drawn from the Christian press, rather than analytical literature. Also, within Christianity there is significant opposition to revitalization efforts. The research identifies these in hopes of providing some critical analysis from within the Church. The two interviews conducted with elected officials in Albany, GA were included to supplement the critical viewpoint. The author found that even among non-clerical people, namely in Albany, the church was emphasized as a significant change agent. This might be because Albany is a fairly religious community and has a sociological appreciation for churches. Nonetheless, the paper raises "critical questions" throughout the study to maintain a more balanced perspective.

One might ask why the analysis only documents the work of Christian institutions. The efforts of non-Christian religious organizations are not included because the thesis is not intended to be a comparative examination of the impact of religious institutions on urban revitalization; further, time constraints necessitated a limited framework. Moreover, it does not suggest that other faith communities are irrelevant to this question.[3] Nonetheless, beyond churches' efforts, governments (as change agents) have sought to

remedy urban decline through processes known as recovery. The next section, thus, begins with several definitions of recovery taken from the US perspective. This is followed by an examination of several theories that explain decay and the discussion of a recent US precedent. The American experience is used as a basis for understanding urban issues both in the US and Canada. Though there are differences between the two countries respecting church-state relations and demographics, the thesis focuses on the abundance of shared urban experiences that have general application.

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[3] Christian apologist C. S. Lewis wrote that the legal codes of the ancient Babylonians, Egyptians, Chinese, Hindus, Jews, and Romans all declared a commitment to social justice. See the appendix of his book, *Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), pp. 95-118.

1.2: DEFINING RECOVERY

"Seek the peace and the prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile . . . because if it prospers, you too will prosper" (Jer. 29:7)

Over the years, urban recovery described a number of efforts such as reducing the crime and violence rate, program-development for waste disposal and recycling, and the encouragement of economic development. Other initiatives established police foot patrols and community based policing, promoted greater tolerance between ethnic and racial groups, and prevented the demolition of historic buildings (Charette, 1996: xv). From a US perspective, the Los Angeles Watts riots of 1965 exposed on a national level the incredible urban decay within America's borders. This response to poverty and social ills raised questions about the causalities of all of America's inner-cities. Federal urban policies and programs were either created or remodeled to address this growing concern. The US federal government has worked to effect change through a myriad of programs (Urban Development Action Grant, Model Cities, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Head Start, Section 8, Job Corps, and Federal Housing Administration subsidies). Though some of these programs have been more successful than others (they address different aspects of poverty), the elimination of poverty has not occurred (Wagner, Joder, and Mumphrey, 1995: ix, x).

In 1991, the US federal government commissioned a New Orleans research team, the National Center for the Revitalization of Central Cities (NCRCC), to study revitalization programs in major US cities. The research intended to provide policy recommendations to the federal government and local communities. The team's main

difficulty concerned the choice of measurement tools (in any revitalization effort a number of circumstances and externalities define renewal). The group chose to report on program and policy descriptions in some cities and assess revitalization efforts in others. Other reports analyzed things such as a city's socio-economic context, grant-related community economic development, policy implications, regional growth management, human investment programs, city planning, downtown redevelopment, and neighborhood economic empowerment (Wagner, Joder, and Mumphrey, 1995: ix-xi). A later chapter discusses the NCRCC's findings. It is important to realize that renewal strategies existed prior to the riots.

Urban renewal is actually a concept/strategy that appeared in the United States in 1945. The US National Housing Act of 1949 launched urban renewal as a project that could potentially salvage America's urban cities. There were numerous unanticipated challenges; not the least of these pertained to the role that neighborhood groups were to play as part of the revitalization process. After WW II, America was faced with a tremendous housing problem. There was a basic shortage of satisfactory housing in urban areas. Private contractors were of little assistance because the cost of development necessitated charging higher rents than urban dwellers could afford, which made public assistance necessary. The government had several choices. One alternative employed during the Depression was to construct and administrate its own low-rent housing projects. The housing crisis was so great, however, that subsidization of housing rents only affected part of the problem. It was considered unfeasible for the government to build houses for everyone; therefore, the government sought to employ private developers

to build new moderate-rental housing and to remove slums. Pursuant to the US government's plan, three remedies were devised regarding the government-developer relationship: (1) a reduction in the taxes paid by the developer; (2) the provision of low-interest mortgages that would lower building costs; or (3) a reduction of the land price developers paid for the housing sites (Davies, 1966: 1, 6,7).

The 1949 US National Housing Act sanctioned low-interest mortgaging. Title I permitted municipalities to condemn "slum" land, purchase these parcels, and resell the reduced-price land to private contractors in order to build projects on those sites. The federal government paid two-thirds of the difference between the municipality purchase price and the price paid by developers. Local governments paid the cost of the remaining third. The term urban renewal originally applied only to this Title I program (Davies, 1966: 7,8).

Recovery is necessary to a large extent because of the dominant development patterns of the last half-century. Cities were developed in the past fifty years with an emphasis on suburban growth at the expense of urban areas (Filion, Bunting, and Curtis, 1996: 22). It is imperative to the discussion to analyze the migration patterns that contribute to urban decline as well as explore the "psychology" of suburban sprawl. The research now shifts to identify another aspect of the need for recovery: land-use planning.

1.3: SUBURBAN FLIGHT

"Home, home on the range, where the deer and the antelope play
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word and the skies are not cloudy all day"
(Brewster Higley/Daniel Kelley, Kansas State Song)

Urban planner Hok-Lin Leung (1989: 1,2) makes several recommendations regarding land use. First, land should be used for the maximum benefit of communities as a whole. Second, planners should avoid unnecessary exploitation of environments. Third, fair strategies should be used to make the distribution of land-use equitable; and last, planners should treat development both in the inner and outer city with the same sense of responsibility. The conventional wisdom on land use is that a developer plans based on an understanding of what is acceptable and tends not to stray from that approach regardless of renewal initiatives (Chamberlain, 1972: 44). A related response has been that of advocacy planning. According to this model, advocacy planners along with concerned neighborhood activists should envision alternative land-use plans to those of local officials/developers. This response to conventional planning, though, is criticized because advocacy planners often lack ample resource support and in practice tend to mirror the interests of existing planners (Pike, 1994: 1,2). These interests have perpetuated suburban sprawl, i.e., migration away from the city.

Regarding suburban sprawl, Canada's physical landscape has changed in favor of out-migration. Mid-20th Century economic growth, widespread use of the automobile, and television images that glorified suburban life encouraged relocation outside of Canada's cities. As the population increased so did the desire for more space. In 1921, most Canadians were agrarian. Almost 80 percent live in urban areas today with more

than half of Canadians living in suburbs. Suburbs around every Canadian city have replaced farmland and forest, moving electoral power from rural regions. The suburban dream characterized post WW II growth. As a result, suburbs are where most Canadians purchase their first home and rear children. Some urban planners and municipal officials, however, question the economic, social, and ecological sustainability of suburban life (Chidley, 1997: 16,17).

Much of the need for renewal stems from the way that space in the city is conceptualized and developed. Planners must re-think the concepts that determine cities' structures because contemporary approaches to land-use are products of Middle Age ideologies about city versus rural life. With today's technological advances planners are better able to design and manage land-use in ways that do not require migration to suburbs (Drucker, 1974:25, 48). The question remains, what stimulates out-migration from inner-cities?

Two causal factors affect migration--perceptions of city life and globalization. Concerning perceptions of the city, one body of thought deduces that people move to suburbs because central-cities are thought to be over-crowded and crime-ridden. Another body of literature asserts that larger economic forces, or globalization, affect migratory patterns. Related to migratory behavior is a trend called "new urbanism" that seeks to migrate the *city*, or the sense of community thereof, to the suburbs. The paper examines these three ideas.

An antagonism that arises in urban research on land development involves differing perceptions of the quality of urban life. The subcultural theory of urbanism supports the idea that city life is inconsistent with traditional community life because of the

troubles associated with the city. As a result, people resort to suburban residential living and commute to the city for work and/or professional obligations. Some posit that urban life is more or less deviant from mainstream culture and values, supportive of crime cultures, encourages fragmentation, and contributes to social dysfunction. Frequent contact with large numbers of unfamiliar people leads to superficial contact or a sense of aloofness. This sense of anonymity works against social bonding, weakens social control, and ultimately manifests in aberrant behavior (Tittle and Stafford, 1992: 726;Toennies 1957; Simmel 1971; Wirth 1964; Redfield 1969). Further to the subcultural theory, as cities attract immigrants and/or other migrants, a number of subcultures (ethnic, ideological) develop that does not occur as rapidly in less populated areas. This heterogeneity breeds conflicts not readily seen in more homogenous populations. Urbanism, then, is unconventional because it produces subcultures (Fischer, 1995: 544-546). Other theorists contend that urban theories do not adequately prove that urbanism is antithetical to suburban life (Tittle and Stafford, 1992: 725,726).

The compositionalist proposition maintains that the subcultural theory does not sufficiently explain why certain groups of people, e.g., ethnic groups and some eccentric professional groups, congregate as they do. City life is different from life in other places only because people who live in the city differ.[4] Their deviation from traditional norms is mostly incidental. Also, some reports suggest that suburbs and central cities are more similar than dissimilar (Fisher, 1995: 544). The globalization theory posits that aberrant behavior does not cause migration to the suburbs; rather, urban areas are the result of larger economic forces.

Urbanism is restlessness and the politics of movement. It is a system or way of political organization fueled by capitalism.[5] Urban problems are the manifestations of global economic pressures that simply play out in urban areas (King, 1990). The need for renewal is not a migration problem; it is the result of the globalization of an urban way of life. Urbanism is an expanding process such that suburban sprawl merely represents the economic and technological transition from rural society to one more advanced and self-dependent (Magnusson, 1997).[6] Another effort that may hinder the urban recovery process is "new urbanism". This idea surmises that some suburban dwellers desire to remain in the suburbs and migrate certain aspects of the city to them.

The sense of safety and space offered by the suburbs stimulated outer-city migration. A sense of isolation now causes many suburban dwellers to consider what was lost in migration, namely the city's sense of community. New urbanism as a planning project recommends moving houses closer to the road and closer together to encourage conversation, mixing housing types and income levels, and building shopping centers and workplaces closer to residences. From an economic and social standpoint, increased development away from downtown makes public transit less likely, necessitates longer distance travels to work, and almost complete dependence on the automobile. Subdivision plans are designed with the automobile in mind and this will be difficult to change (Chidley, 1997: 17, 18). Widespread "new" urbanism may simply be an overrated conjecture. If not, it

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[4] The argument can also be made that factors such as population density and the availability of services, e.g., hospitals and chain stores, play a role in residential decisions.

[5] This citation was taken from a public lecture on global cities. The author understands Dr. Magnusson to define urbanism in this context as continuous movement (more so beyond core areas) by the relatively elite, who shift political power and other resources as they move.

[6] This discussion does not discount the premise that gentrification occurs because of the advantages of city dwelling.

it could spell horrible things to an already decaying core. Next, more extensive detail will be given to the extent of urban decay, with particular emphasis on Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Understanding the Impact of Flight

A recent study shows that the city of Winnipeg is in decline. Population growth continues to be stagnant with an increase of less than one-percent annually. Most recently, new housing within the city amounted to half that of metropolitan construction. The "visible inner-city" is demonstrative of even more rapid deterioration. Much new infrastructure is consistently "underutilized" and older structures within the city continue to erode. The growing number of pot holes in Winnipeg's downtown is a persistent reminder of its core's rapid deterioration. Though Winnipeg's business community and government at all three levels have attempted recovery, the older industrialized and urbanized regions such as Portage Avenue and Selkirk Street continue to perish, e.g., abandoned retail buildings are evident in both places. Housing has decayed at an alarming rate and there are a growing number of boarded-up residences. Gangs continue to mark territorial boundaries in Winnipeg's core, much of which has been redlined. Because of insurance company redlining, many homeowners have difficulties acquiring home insurance, or are forced to pay above-premium prices. One research team concludes that the disparity between Winnipeg's metropolitan region and its inner-city is the result of growth policies based on the theorem of rapid growth. The study contends that North America's "obsession" with expansion limits its capacity to conceptualize city development otherwise. Therefore, rapid growth simultaneously produces abundance for some and poverty conditions for others (Leo, Brown, and Dick, 1997: 1-3).

Many North Americans embrace the idea that cities are repulsive and defer to small-town or rural life. Part of the problem is uncontrolled metropolitan expansion and a general dislike for cities. People who can afford to move to the suburbs do so, which concentrates problems in one area. Even at the level of scholarship, particularly in the United States, researchers tend to downplay this tendency as it relates to urban decline. Given this preference for rural as opposed to downtown life, cities have become "urban bagels". They are round and rich on the periphery with holes in the central cities. People also tend to approach recovery with a sense of defeatism when they enumerate all of the city's problems. Because there is no single path to deterioration, cities erode for different reasons. For example, the neo-conservative Fraser Institute insists that rent controls are the major factor that constitutes decay and not development patterns, alcoholism, crime, or drug abuse. According to this view, a mandate for rent control would decrease the incentive for many landlords to retain property in the inner-city (Leo, 1997).

At one time, an all too common practice involved unethical conduct on the part of urban landowners themselves. A California neighborhood provides an example. According to R. Balmer, many people who own property in decaying areas of cities cannot get optimum price for their land/homes if they chose to sell. In remedy, a home is divided into several tiny rented apartments. Although rent is routinely collected, the burden on the home leads to rapid, often unaddressed, decay. In some cases, the building is then heavily insured, mysteriously set ablaze, and the homeowner collects the insurance. The neglected structure becomes another "fatality" in the urban environment (Balmer, 1979: 13)[7]. This type of neglect also affects relationships between occupational classes.

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[7] It should be noted that not all city homeowners or landlords are negligent.

The middle class, who could be effective in the inner-city, are physically absent because of the separation among classes due to out-migration. Segregation creates indifference and antagonistic relationships between businesses and neighborhoods or landlords and tenants. In this light, developers are not without blame (Leo, 1997). A number of developers present detailed plans to city leaders argued to improve the overall city, although many of these land-use strategies concern suburban development. City councils readily embrace these plans because of the potential tax revenue.[8] Suburban residents in-turn demand public services such as fire stations and police services which accrue more costs to accommodate these places at the expense of urban areas; central-city infrastructure declines; and improvements are postponed. These elements accelerate flight and the concentration of social problems. Criminal types can then exploit the poor who have fewer resources to defend themselves. The occupancy of the Hells Angels in Winnipeg is an example. Although the Angels protect people from gangs, drug use and prostitution accompany their presence. Often one has two choices: to become a victim or an accomplice (Leo, 1997). There are other internal problems that affect a city's poor.

The incident of fires increases in that many homeless people use abandoned shelters to keep warm. Other problems have to do with residents' lack of incentive to maintain neighborhoods, the condition of deserted parks, and the growing incidence of graffiti on public works. On a related note, taxi drivers charge incredible amounts to travel into certain of these areas where there are open drug deals, violence, and a shortage of law enforcement. Another problem is that developers are often not required to

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[8] Although some advance that the taxes suburban residents pay outweigh servicing costs, it can be shown that low-density development incurs greater marginal costs than high-density development.

complete construction or perform environmental safety tests. Because some urban dwellers have little understanding of their legal or financial options in response to decay, cities continue to rot at the core. Urban decay in Detroit, Michigan is a prime illustration.

Detroit is a model of rapid urban development. It was an industrial center whose economy collapsed when the factories closed in the 1980's. Today, urban parks, some churches, department stores, and other public facilities in Detroit's inner-cities remain closed. What is more dramatic is the business class exit from the city at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Even though the level of class integration is higher in Canada than in the United States, the issue of flight still epitomizes a non-caring attitude towards the city. One recommendation relative to recovery has been to charge higher levees for suburban development, thereby rewarding developers who build in urban areas. Regardless, a major hindrance to revitalization remains the lack of coordinated political action or will (Leo, 1997). Beyond the causalities of flight, communities in the city continue to suffer from basic challenges such as political disillusionment and housing discrimination. An irony seems to lie in the fact that cities were once regarded as the prime locales for socio-economic success. Chapter Two elaborates these issues.

II

SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO DECLINE

CHAPTER II

SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO DECLINE

"I am at a loss to understand why well-known and generally recognized poverty-breeding conditions, which are both unjust and unnecessary, are tolerated for an instant among a human, not to say a professedly Christian people"
(David Hunter in Devine and Wright, 1993: xv)

2.1: Discrimination Past and Present

The cities of America were the supposed breeding ground for economic and social advancement for immigrants and the poor. The advantages for the poor are diminishing, as is agreement on what equal opportunity means. The dialogue and concern for the restoration of opportunities for urban advancement are weakening. In the 1970s and 80s the election of minority leaders was expected to effect macro-change. This change did not occur. Even the platforms and some coalitions responsible for minority electoral representation collapsed. Although minority communities are rising in central cities, in the 1980s white mayors replaced minority mayors in four of America's five largest cities. Fiscal constraints, fragmented political coalitions, and a political approach that discounts race in constituency-building, explain the ineffectual tenures of minority leaders and the failure of recovery efforts (Urban Institute, 1994: 1,2).

In the 1950s/60s Protest Era, the poor and ethnic minorities became more politically active. Citizen participation was also facilitated by the 1960's War on Poverty and Great Society programs in the US (a Canadian example involved the Company of Young Canadians). Community development projects were made responsible to citizen advisory committees as well as police and fire departments. Influence, however, is also

linked to resource support. Affluent groups blocked significant changes; the ability of the poor to exercise power actually decreased as participation expanded. This is readily apparent after the 1960s in the requirement changes for participation in federal grants. Changes in grant-giving policy during the 1980s buttressed this tendency. Grant phraseology changed such that a promise to address the needs of as many people as possible was cut to a simple guarantee that people would have access to adequate information about service programs and the opportunity to apply for assistance (Urban Institute, 1994: 3).

Participation in national programs occurred at the expense of local needs. Block grants increased the likelihood of competition to the disadvantage of the poor. Infrastructure projects said to benefit the entire community hardly affected the poorest communities. The economic gains expected did not match those of past groups that held power. Minority contracts and representation in key administrative capacities increased at the expense of service in the poorest areas. Overall, downtown construction took precedence over neighborhood revitalization and the need to improve housing went unnoticed (Urban Institute, 1994: 2).

Fiscal restraints hindered the redistribution of resources to poor areas. Mayors (regardless of ethnicity) rely upon the support of business communities. Also, they must appeal to the middle and upper classes whose departure from the city would be cost-prohibitive. As a result, minority coalitions saw little reason to push agendas unlikely to become policy. Though the urban fiscal crisis peaked in the late 1970s, many large American cities are worse off fiscally in the 1990s. The economic liberalism of the Reagan and Bush years "hid" the ever-present structural realities. Although state and federal

resources aided the most economically challenged, flexible resources were and continue to be minimal (Urban Institute, 1994: 2,3).

A second body of thought concerning fragmented political coalitions advances that first-generation minority coalitions were inherently problematic. Important class, economic, and political distinctions underlay the initial solidarity of the coalitions. Currently, for example, the interests of the black business and middle class are more individualistic and economic than centered on helping poor blacks. Some "pragmatists" claim that governance is best suited for those who can manage economies regardless of their ethnicity. These things complicate ethnic conformity on almost every issue, particularly those issues that concern the poor. The politics of income and class interests replaced a push for minority leadership, especially given that black candidates run more frequently against other blacks, which weakens the minority vote when non-blacks contest the same election. In sum, fiscal restraints, the kind of voter participation witnessed today, and the brevity of minority leadership frustrate government capacities to realize massive change for the poor (Urban Institute, 1994: 2). One of these changes involves discrimination in housing. Though discrimination based on ethnicity is not limited to inner-city residents, it portrays the kind of insensitivity that some urban dwellers know well.

The US Fair Housing Act of 1968 failed to eliminate discriminatory practices. A 1992 study of discrimination in housing, a first of its kind since 1979, revealed a uniform pattern of discrimination in suburbs and central cities across metropolitan regions of the United States. The report was intended to do four things: (1) document steering, which occurs when minorities are guided away from majority neighborhoods; (2) provide a

contemporary report on housing discrimination to blacks; (3) conduct a comparative analysis on discrimination against Hispanics; and (4) give fair housing advocates more accurate tools to gauge discrimination patterns. When the findings of this report were matched with a comparable study done in 1979, they demonstrated that little change had taken place towards the reduction of discrimination. Racial discrimination continues to be a problem in the US for blacks and Hispanics who attempt to acquire housing in urban areas and otherwise. When pitted against comparable white renters or buyers, minorities routinely receive inadequate or no service at all from real estate or rental agents. Almost 60% of blacks and Hispanics (56%) are treated "less favorably" than whites of similar backgrounds who seek to acquire homes. With regard to renters, over half (53%) of blacks and 46% of Hispanics are treated with contempt (Urban Institute, 1992: 5,6). The 1988 Fair Housing Amendments, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the US Department of Justice have attempted to facilitate the equality process by strengthening equality enforcement techniques. Researchers also affirm that audits must be used more extensively to reveal housing discrimination if change is to occur (Urban Institute, 1992: 4-6).

According to David Sheppard, many poorer residents in large cities experience "powerlessness" in that they are unable to effect even basic things about their lives. This sense of powerlessness is also evident in the black community in London where blacks complain of discrimination in housing, jobs, and education. It should be noted that the same kind of sentiment is heard from poor whites (1985: 32,33). Housing discrimination speaks to only one societal problem. Another social concern involves the poor who receive government assistance. The perceptions of the former director of the Urban

League, a US organization, provide additional perspective. His comments focus mainly on the problems associated with welfare.

In 1969, Whitney Young asserted that the welfare system was arranged to encourage dependency and the dehumanization of welfare recipients. Those on welfare are treated as criminals in that their need for assistance defies the sacred values of North American thrift and self-reliance. In reality, only a fourth of America's poor received assistance. This was in large part due to restrictive conditions designed to keep people off welfare such as frequent police-state investigations of recipients and the condescension of social workers who routinely investigated people's homes looking for evidence of fraud. Little effort was made to facilitate complete self-sufficiency. Further, some states required a 100 percent tax on the earnings of welfare homes. A 1967 amendment to welfare laws affected this to some degree; still, there was little incentive to work full-time or even part-time. Welfare mothers who otherwise would work could not because of the lack of available day-care facilities. Yet, the general public continued to believe that the majority of welfare recipients, i.e., the physically challenged, the elderly, and children were disingenuous. News and television reports that periodically expose the few cases of welfare fraud buffeted this kind of thinking. Part of the problem is the attitude, what can one individual do? If the thousands of individuals who make macro-decisions for the private sector brought resources, skills, and jobs to the problem areas, questions of poverty and maldistribution would diminish.

The Chinese rendering of the word crisis sums up North American indifference towards the poor. Composed of two characters, one denotes danger and the other represents opportunity. A caricature illustrates: A perplexed young man is seen saying,

"We're a sick society, we're a sick society". A young, impoverished girl approaches, "Why don't you do something about it?" The young man leaves proclaiming, "We're not all that bad, we're not all that bad" (Young, 1969: 4,35, 38,205). Two and a half decades later this sentiment still speaks to the overall problem of poverty in the United States.

Nearly 35 million Americans or 13.5% of the population live in poverty. This percentage is remarkably close to what it was in the late 1960s. Although President Johnson declared a war on poverty, some have argued that the war was unwinnable or misguided. Ronald Reagan surmised that the war on poverty had been fought and poverty was the victor. Economists Joel Devine and James Write argue that much of the contemporary writing about poverty is inaccurate, mean-spirited, and inane, although there is some truth resident in public sentiment about the poverty problem (1993: 30). America's chief anti-poverty program (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) has traditionally been the nation's object of scorn. This is interesting considering that welfare payments comprise less than one percent of the federal budget (Urban Institute, 1994:11). Some assert that the welfare system in particular, and government assistance in general, encourages dependence upon the government. Little attention is given to "corporate welfare", i.e., government sponsored direct grants, low-rate loans, and other subsidies that are extended to large corporations (Pease, 1996).[9]

Most people on welfare in the US receive assistance for approximately twenty-two months, after which time many find jobs (Chideya, 1995: 36,37). Categorically, most of the people on welfare are children and people over the age of 65. The lack of affordable day care still keeps many women at home who would otherwise be employed;

in essence, they are "forced" to rely on the Medicaid benefits of welfare for themselves and their children.

At one time the US federal government emphasized children's welfare, reduction of poverty, and the elimination of false perceptions of welfare recipients, as part of its plan for recovery. In the late 1970s and 1980s, public opinion shifted towards the belief that people should seek work in exchange for benefits. "Workfare" was advanced in hopes of dismantling welfare as a long-term recourse. Eventually, some consensus was reached that welfare should only be a transitional program (Urban Institute, 1994:11). This arrangement was realized in 1997.

Although economists maintain that the US economy is doing well (Fletcher, 1997), recent amendments to welfare law cut billions of dollars out of the federal government's welfare program. This will have a tremendous detrimental effect upon the poor. In particular, food stamp usage was cut; therefore, the number of people needing assistance obtaining food increased. There has been a 16 % increase in requests for emergency food and a 19% increase in the rejection rate. One independent study notes that in almost half of the cities surveyed, private support and charity organizations maintain that they lack the resources to help on a grand scale. Forty-four percent of these supporting organizations cite welfare cuts as the major problem. The majority of Americans believe that blame is more correctly applied to unemployment and low-waged jobs (Albany Herald 1998, 1[A]). The following section expands on the causalities of poverty and urban decline.

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[9] One argument in favor of large businesses is that they create jobs and thus facilitate the flow of money back into economies.

Economic development is not simply a matter of laying bricks and mortar. A myriad of factors determine "real" progression when moving through different stages of livelihood. The achievement culture of the West supposes a meritocratic ideal, which does not validate the experience of the chronic poor or those who lack a basic infrastructure important to success. Most people live outside inner cities and most of those living in the inner city are not poor by usual definition. However, annual income surveys demonstrate that a fair percentage of all deprived households are in inner-cities (Sackrey, 1973: 7,8). The problem remains: how does one determine the appropriate response, e.g., individual or collective, private vs. governmental, given that various factors perpetuate decay?

According to economist Charles Sackrey, there are a number of explanations for urban poverty that range from criticism of the poor as lazy gluttons who deserve their plight, to denunciation of the North American capitalist system, which contributes to the success of the elite at the expense of the masses. One theory held by many North Americans purports that poor people are poor because they do not make the necessary daily efforts to change or upgrade their position in society. This view identifies individual income as solely the product of dexterity. It discounts level of education, age, ethnicity, region, and historical characteristics that affect one's flow of opportunity and income. This interpretation is also used to explain white poverty in Appalachia, whose inhabitants "refuse" to transfer their coal-mining skills to other jobs.

A related position made popular by political scientist Edward Banfield is that urban poverty is parcel of the "logic of metropolitan development". The poor migrate to central-cities but do not experience significant changes in their quality of life, although

they are abreast of more opportunities than in their previous locales. They perpetuate lower-class behavior patterns, namely, not making preparations for the future, which are incompatible with urban labor markets. The poor then pass on those characteristics to their offspring. Simply put, economist Oscar Lewis says that eventually a poverty culture develops that is a "way of life, remarkably stable and persistent, passed on from generation to generation along family lines" (Lewis, 1961: xxiv). Both theories declare that the poor will abandon their condition only if or when their lower-class behavior changes (Sackrey, 1973: 25, 26). According to this argument, behavioral problems account for much of what is wrong with the city

Other researchers posit that social scientists have wrongly identified the matrix of the urban enigma. The deserving poor theory pays much attention to lower-class habits yet does not explain adequately explain how those habits developed (Sackrey, 1973: 26). A more comprehensive analysis of poverty includes the impact of demographic and industrial decline on concentrated poverty. More recent literature takes a macro-perspective. Urban problems cannot be attributed entirely to social behavior, unemployment, and inadequate housing. Inner-cities emerge from greater underlying forces in a nation's economic and societal structure. An inner-city's problems are caused partially by external forces that blend with local issues to create unique urban problems in each city (Hall, 1981: 132). The condition of local and national economies, cuts to federal aid, and government legislation limit the capacities of cities in general. The combination of these elements contributes to decline and hinders any recovery process (Wagner, Joder, and Mumphrey, 1995: 205, 206). To provide statistical analysis, attention is next given to the characteristics of the poor in advanced countries.

In 1968, the number of the poor living in metropolitan areas in the US was 12.9 million. Sixty-seven percent of these were white and the remaining 30 percent were non-white. Most of the non-white were black. On an "absolute" scale, more whites suffered from urban poverty. Relatively speaking, urban poverty was more of a problem for blacks, who made up 16.8 percent of the total urban population (in 1970 blacks comprised 30 percent of the urban poor). In central-cites, nonwhite people comprised 43 percent of the poor population. Forty-two percent of the urban poor were children under the age of eighteen. Approximately 46 percent of these were non-white. Eighteen percent of the total urban poverty group was over sixty years of age. Twenty-four percent of the total urban poor population was headed by regularly employed males.[10] In Sackrey's perspective, when surveying households as opposed to individuals, 18 percent of households were headed by people over retirement age, 15 percent by people too ill to be gainfully employed, and 25 percent by people whose annual income was below the poverty income level.[11] About 60 percent of the urban poor cannot make an adequate income because of the potential wage-earner's relationship to the labor market, that is, they are headed by people who are "two old or too sick, or who are at extremely low-paying jobs" (Sackrey, 1973: 7,8). The remaining percentage of the urban poor were women who could not fully enter the work force because of scare job opportunities, men who lacked employment, and those who are otherwise unemployable. Sackrey's summation is that urban poverty is not the offense of the urban poor.

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[10] Men still head fifteen percent of single-parent households (1990 US Bureau of the Census).
[11] In 1994, a family of three living on $1,000 (US) monthly was considered to be in poverty. Also, some people over the age of sixty-five continue to work full-time jobs.

There are also econometric theories of poverty. Econometrician Lester Thurow explains the economics of racial discrimination. He commences his analysis with the economic theory of marginal product. This theory explains that the flow of income to an individual is determined by his (use of his is to avoid repetition) productivity in the labor market. The inference is that an individual's qualifications and education determines largely his income. Thurow's claim is that an individual's income is not affected by productivity alone. Thurow cedes that social factors can affect the flow of income. Some are these are: (1) number of people living on farms; (2) number of families headed by a black person; (3) number of high-wage industries in the state; (4) number of families headed by a full-time worker; (5) number of heads-of households with less than eight years of education. After statistical analysis, he observed that people with lower levels of education make much less than people with more education. An area's economy is also important as a determinant of income flow to the poor. In Thurow's viewpoint, poor people are more often geographically located closer to less productive, low-wage industries. Sackrey says that the work of econometricians is to give "precision" to their statistics by advancing possibilities. As an example, a 1 percent increase in the number of poor family heads educated past the eighth grade would lead to a .43 percent decrease in the number of poor people. However, the econometric model takes for granted features of the labor market and social institutions without positing causalities of poverty (1973: 28-30).

Radical theories of poverty explain that poverty cannot be eradicated in advanced capitalist countries. Although many of the theories that explain poverty associate it with individual characteristics such as age, sex, education, and ethnicity, some suggest that

social systems based on certain economic and social principles actually support poverty cultures, i.e., the capitalist social system perpetuates poverty (Sackrey, 1973: 30,31). Inner-cities, in particular, constitute a major problem for public policy makers because they have an extremely high number of poor people. A Social Research Council in London inferred that the isolation and concentration of poverty makes the problem cumulative. It is cumulative in that deprivation and poverty are passed on generationally through inadequate care-giving and substandard education in the crucial growth period (Hall, 1981: 52). Consequently, in the mid-1960s, the US Community Action Programs, the Educational Priority Areas and the Urban Programme in Great Britain supported compensatory spending in destitute areas. Though numerous anti-poverty strategies have been devised, a complete resolution to the poverty problem remains elusive.

Defining poverty has been part of the enigma. Nineteenth-century economists Roundtree and Booth originally established the idea of the "poverty-line". The poverty line is an "absolute minimum of existence, below which a household's income should not be allowed to fall". In advanced capitalist countries, however, poverty is related more so to social mores than to absolutes (Hall, 1981: 53,54). Absolute poverty has been described as the failure to secure sustenance, e.g., ample food, clothes, and shelter, on a day to day basis (Hastedt, 1995: 310). P. Townsend contended that relative (as opposed to absolute) poverty represents the lack of resources vital to participate in the economic and social activities deemed appropriate by a given society. Other observers go beyond definitions of poverty to suggest that some cities or areas put people at a greater risk to experience poverty, though not all of the people in these areas will be deprived. It may be more a matter of "statistical probability" rather than "determinate certainty" (Hall, 1981:

54,59). Related to the poverty question are systemic trends or forces that heavily influence the urban context. The next sections discuss those trends, the pervasiveness of the poverty problem, and provide a case study from a US black urban perspective. This group's experience was chosen principally because it is one of the most discussed examples in urban literature.

In general, four trends or activities cause urban decay in the United States (North America). The first trend is that growth diffuses downward in the urban hierarchy, i.e., small metropolitan areas experience growth whilst large urban areas stagnate or decline. The second observation is that growth diffuses "onward" within urban areas, i.e., core-cities continue to erode rapidly while suburban areas expand. Third, since the late 1970s growth is diffusing outward in a process known as "de-urbanization". The last trend is that growth is diffused regionally, i.e., away from older areas that relied heavily on industry. The "newly" industrialized regions are characterized by high-technology industries and knowledge-based services (Hall, 1981: 64,65). These trends continue to play out in North American inner-cities. Having focused on the economic theories and trends that contribute to poverty conditions, the paper turns to investigate one of the most vital players in the urban problematic--humans.

The infrastructure important to economic advancement was limited for blacks thirty years ago. Systemic poverty, particularly in the southern United States, was rooted in the culture and tradition of the region. Oppression via primary societal institutions, coupled with the economic self-interest of the majority community, helped to perpetuate black poverty. Societal structures and value systems were manipulated in such a way as to justify keeping minorities in poverty. Poverty encompasses every part of the being of the

disadvantaged and can disturb the "complete psychology of a whole community" (Perkins, 1976: 87). Social problems such as out-of-wedlock births and single parenthood for black Americans continued in the 1970s and reached an incredible 43 percent by 1980.[12] In 1989, 12.8 percent of the US population lived in poverty. In that same year 30 percent of black Americans were poor, 26.2 percent of Latinos were poor as were 10.1 percent of whites. Class stratification among minorities also contributes to decline. Class distinctions, particularly in the US black community, however, have either been downplayed or described as non-existent.[13]

From 1968 to 1987 the high school graduation rate for blacks doubled and the college graduation rate progressed from 4 to 11 percent (Perkins, 1995: 50,53). Although there has been progress in black American communities in the 1990s, Hispanic and Asian communities have experienced an increase in the same types of social dilemmas (Wilson, 1990: 21). Reflecting upon the fourth trend that causes urban decay (the increase of high-tech, knowledge-based industries), one's status and income will increasingly be based on higher education and skill attainment. The "new" social division of labor will be practically closed to those who lack these qualifications (Bell, 1976: 409).

In 1969, A.G. Wilson advanced that despite America's adherence to an open-class system, a "caste system" was emerging with two social ranks--the affluent suburban dwellers and the deprived residents of its inner-cities (1969: 102). In 1992, US social critic Eugene Rivers postulated that this precedent is about to be set, i.e., "a generation of

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[12] In general, the rate of poverty has changed consistent with changes in the American family from two-parents to a single working parent. Note J. Devine and J. Wright's, The Greatest of Evils: Urban Poverty and the American Underclass (New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 1993), p. xvi.

economically obsolete Americans [unprepared] for gainful employment even as productive slaves" (Rivers, 1992: 3). Access to the white-collar working class is problematic for most urban youth, many of which have not developed technologically advanced skills. Moreover, the urban milieu lacks an abundance of positive role models, is socially isolated, and conducive to "social death". Rivers (1992:3) contends that this death is foremost spiritual in terms of the loss of faith and hope in many urban communities [14] Chronic social deprivation, long-term unemployment, substandard housing and health care, and extremely limited political empowerment also "preserve" the critical mass of underclass conditions in inner-city areas.[15]

Unwise personal choices can lead to poverty as well as systematic injustice; thus, society and individual choices play roles in the poverty dynamic. Even so, class and ethnicity affect one's lifetime opportunities (Perkins, 1995: 58). This is most devastating to the underclass that is literally alienated from most of the human and material resources vital to improvement.[16] Without significant intervention, the future looks quite bleak for many residents of North American inner-cities. To detail some of the basic processes that cause urban decay, the study now examines several US cities described as some of America's most corrupt cities. This discourse on corruption is meant to accent the point

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[13] According to some economists and theorists, one-third of Black Americans are middle and upper class, one-third fall into the working class/working poor category, and the remaining third are considered members of the underclass.

[14] See also Dr. Cornel West' s sentiments in Race Matters (New York: Vintage, 1994), Ch. 1

[15] Between 1970 and 1980 the population of America's five largest cities decreased by 9 percent and the poverty rate rose 22 percent. The population of poverty areas increased by 69 percent in high-poverty areas and 161 percent in extreme-poverty areas. A high-poverty area exists where 30 percent of a neighborhood's population is in poverty; an extreme poverty area is one in which the poverty population is 40 percent or higher.

[16] Towards recovery, one revitalization coalition in California subsidizes the traveling costs of low-wage workers to commute from their urban residences. Check the Bank of America's report on the internet,

that urban decline is not an accident; it can be the result of "calculated" decisions—political or otherwise.

2.2.1:UNETHICAL CITIES?

Chester, Pennsylvania is an industrial city that has become the repository for toxic waste from Pennsylvania and the surrounding states. Chester, which is located south of Philadelphia against the Delaware River, was once a vibrant place after W.W.II. In 1988, the Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection approved five waste-processing plans in one neighborhood. This was argued as an attempt to create jobs in the area. At present, the city itself is little more than a waste site. Chester is 65 percent black, but only has eight percent of Delaware County's population. Yet, companies have been given clearance to deposit twice as much waste in this town than any other part of the county, which is 91 percent white. Several waste factories are located less than 100 feet from residential areas. Chester's mortality rate is 40 percent higher than the rest of Delaware County and also claims Pennsylvania's highest mortality rate. In 1996, residents sued the state of Pennsylvania under title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act when they were informed that another waste processing plant was planned for Chester. Citizens maintain that local governments are insensitive to their concerns relative to those of large industries. The mayor's words, "you don't have a right to challenge me [sic] on this issue" is reflective of a common governmental response that has left many Chester residents with a sense of total abandonment (Offman, 1998: 94). Consistent with similar cases, this type of

"Beyond Sprawl: New Patterns of Growth to Fit the New California". Website:
http://www.bankamerica.com/community/

decision-making is not devoid of racist undertones.[17] The city of Clovis, California portrays another poignant example of urban neglect.

Clovis is a suburban city in the San Joaquin Valley. In the past ten years, unlike Chester, PA, its population has doubled. This has been due, in large part, to suburban development. One such developer, William Tatham, planned to build 152 houses on forty acres of farmland, but was denied permission by the city council. One of the council members proposed a bribe: if Mr. Tatham would give him $10,000, the councilman would sanction his project. The FBI intervened, which resulted in the conviction of nine elected officials and developers. Though this is an extreme case, it is obvious that the demand for suburban dwelling has created an "underbelly" of corruption on the part of some developers and elected officials (Offman, 1998: 94, 95). Governments have also misused their rights and thwarted urban recovery. One such incident in Las Vegas, Nevada involves "eminent domain".

Eminent domain is the government's right to seize property such as parks and roads for public use or repair. Some report that eminent domain has been abused in favor of developers and other business people. Many residents have amassed small fortunes by selling their land to developers who are eager to expand suburban development. City councils in Las Vegas, Nevada have used eminent domain privileges on many occasions since the casino industry came to the city. The disparity of privilege in the city is profound. Las Vegas officials claim that they have used the city's land right in an effort to revitalize communities. In reality, money taken for redevelopment goes to private

comm_env_urban1.html.

[17] Black communities in Halifax, Nova Scotia and Albany, GA, among other examples, are also fighting "waste-dumping" in their neighborhoods.

businesses that ultimately perpetuate economic disparity. Such is the case in Kansas City, Missouri, which posits another model of urban renewal plans gone astray. In 1995, councilman Michael Hernandez confessed that he had accepted bribes to ensure that certain real estate was rezoned for commercial development (Offman, 1998: 97). This section portrayed the covert practices of decision-makers that combine to discourage any renewal effort. Despite the systemic, long-term social, and political problems that urban residents face, churches have retained a vital role in the city. Chapter Three examines the work of churches in inner-cities.

III

THE THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF URBAN MINISTRY

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"Social justice is a motherhood issue [like] honesty and integrity . . . Defining this concept,
however, and discerning when and how it arose--and through whom--are another story"
(Chamberlain, 1997:31)

3.1: The Church of the City

Having been a frontier land, many Americans express an overt aversion for the

metropolis. Thomas Jefferson and F. Lloyd Wright were among those who proclaimed a

basic disdain for cities in lieu of greener pastures.[18] Henry Ford concluded, "we shall solve

the city problem by leaving the city" (as cited in Larsen, 1973: 13). In the early 1900s, the

Bunham plan for Chicago typified the "city beautiful" period which illustrated an antithesis

to this sentiment. The plan was an attempt to make the inner-city a thriving center of

admiration and bustle. The construction of ornate public buildings, parks, and boulevards

was intended to augment this process. Unfortunately, the social needs of urban residents

received little attention. They were also limited in their ability to mount a credible

"counter-attack" due to the persisting elements of the urban problematic. D. Larsen

establishes briefly his conjecture about this formidable dilemma.

In 1973, Larsen argued that the urban problematic centers on three things. First,

the lack of sufficient education for political participation hinders the poor. Second, on the

societal level, individuality versus concern for the community is an impediment to change.

Third, society must improve upon the idea that the city should be a disconnected unit of

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[18] A most helpful source is Edward Boykin's, *The Wisdom of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Doubleday,
Doran & Company, 1941), pp. 107-112.

diverse (often-antagonistic) groups and interests. Inner-cities decay for various reasons such that no single strategy is suitable for every recovery effort. Larsen holds that policy-makers and researchers in the United States (and North America in general) are quick to number inner-city problems and at times describe solutions. Actual recovery, however, has often lacked the same enthusiasm (Larsen, 1973: 13,14). He also notes that though some US urban strategists advocated a national coordinated urban policy (which did not exist in the 1970s) beyond the establishment of cost-effective urban centers, few agreed as to how urban life could be improved.[19]

According to Larsen, policy-makers do not lack the power to revitalize the urban environment. They lack the conceptual framework within which "to [decide] in unambiguous terms what it is we want" (1973: 14). In light of society's lack of will, some in the Church claimed the responsibility to identify cities' needs and adjusted themselves accordingly. Various churches in the 1960s believing that they, along with other organizations, could effect mass change developed "model city" programs. Some of these were direct-grant programs such as Christ for Crisis and Black Manifesto. These programs made powerful impact statements and symbolized a demand for justice. Sadly, to a large extent their impact in the 1960s stopped at the level of symbolism in view of the tremendous task to recover a society's will. In the late 1970s, however, certain American churches regained their zeal and began to address urban issues in places such as the Bronx, Oakland, Philadelphia, Miami, Memphis, and Denver. There continues to be interaction among Latino, black, and white church groups in the areas of day care, drug rehabilitation centers, community service efforts, self-help programs, advocates for better schools,

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[19] Compare the works of Jane Jacobs, The Economy of Cities (New York: Random, 1969) and Jeanne

housing, and access to health care. It was evident that a number of church groups demonstrated the theological and social imperative to maintain a strong presence in the city (Larsen, 1973: 14, 15). The next section comments more extensively on the issue of "church presence" and its effects.

Much of the academic research on inner-city recovery has little to say about systematic church impact, although it is widely accepted that churches play a valuable role. George Gallup asserts that most Americans believe in a higher power. More specifically, 80 percent of black Americans believe churches and spirituality to be vital to the urban environment. There is ample public support and potential for government work with churches relative to community-recovery (Wallis, 1997: 19).[20]

Community recovery should also be concerned with human recovery, especially of urban youth. Many of society's young delinquents come from very adverse family and neighborhood situations. One argument attributes delinquency to chronic unemployment and poverty while another perspective claims that child neglect and the rise of single-parent families are to blame. If society does not respond to the needs of youth in a more holistic way, then society itself will suffer. The combination of little external support, impoverished neighborhoods, and racism supported by a blame culture almost invites an extreme response from society's disadvantaged (Dilulio in Wallis, 1997: 19). In an interview with social critic and contemporary theologian Jim Wallis, J. Dilulio, professor

Lowe, Cities in a Race with Time (New York: Random, 1967).
[20] For purposes of clarity, fewer than 25% of Canadians attend church and/or synagogue on a weekly basis (see Reginald Bibby, *Fragmented Gods: the Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Irwin, 1987). The statistics are slightly higher in the United States. These statistics, however, do not quantify the number of North Americans (including the non-religious) who support religious social services or activities.

of Politics and Public Affairs at Princeton University, reveals his observations about faith communities' impact on community improvement.

One of Dilulio's studies assessed the impact of the presence of liquor stores in high crime neighborhoods. The report concluded that an increase in liquor stores in a community increased the likelihood of crime and violence when compared to neighborhoods with few or no liquor stores. Professor Dilulio's research question was if the presence of liquor stores contributes to aberrant behavior, does a high concentration of churches have positive effects? According to a report on black male youth unemployment rates in inner-city neighborhoods, children who were "churched" in these same neighborhoods were more likely to avoid delinquency, be employed, and avoid drugs. He forwards that "churches do a great deal of good for considerably less resource investment than we pay via other institutional means" (Wallis, 1997:16,18). Dilulio did not come to this analysis in an attempt to show the relevance of faith. In analyzing institutional impact on policy, he discovered the impact of church presence on social policy. His research was centered on the explosion in youth crime in the early 1990s in which the number of juvenile arrests almost doubled. The research objective intended to ascertain which catalysts were doing positive things and demonstrated that often the only people willing to go into the dangerous areas of inner-cities were religious people (Wallis 1997:18).

As previously mentioned, flight and its consequences as a response to fear is one of the city's major problems. According to Keith Phillips, many churches have "run not walked" away from inner-cities. Car theft, vandalism, and a general fear of being in the city at night have caused many people to flee. Some of the flight is justified to an extent; that is, there are some valid reasons to support relocation out of "unsafe" areas. This is

clearly depicted by a statistic produced by a US law enforcement team. According to the Van Nuys (California) sheriff's department, a black male born in 1976 was more likely to be murdered than an American soldier in World War II.[21] Also, a black male adult living in an impoverished area was ten times more likely to be murdered than his suburban counterpart.

Phillips makes normative observations regarding the presence of churches in inner-cities. In his view, churches must remember their biblical mandate to establish an effective presence in a community. He uses the salt analogy to emphasize his point. Churches as "salt" can be a preservative in a corrupt society and have a restraining influence on a community. The physical presence of a people committed to good works is vital. A church can affect the inner-city *if* it exemplifies an open concern for the same.[22] This kind of interaction can bring a sense of community and security into an otherwise desperate, hurting, and lonely community. Salt is also a purifier and must be scattered to be effective. Phillips advocates that suburban churches must exit the confines of "safe" places if they are to bring a sense of safety to the urban environment. The "salt" must be "sprinkled" into inner-city neighborhoods in order to be useful. A renewalist in Chicago would not live in Cincinnati and commute. As such, an urban "missionary" needs to live in the inner-city. The tendency to emphasize foreign missions is hypocritical when the "home" missions front is so neglected. The inner-cities of America comprise a population larger than all save one country in South America and almost every country in Africa. The

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[21] The author is aware of an incident involving a Persian Gulf veteran who was killed upon his return to Pasadena, California in a drive-by shooting.

[22] Phillips also notes that many Christians have often failed in their recovery efforts because of a condescending approach.

issue is not whether the church should have a social or spiritual impact on the inner-city. The two are inseparable (Phillips, 1977: 12,13,15). It is also advanced that a church's presence can act as a deterrent to criminal behavior.

Dilulio claims that the largest untold reason for the decline of crime in New York City is church work in the form of youth outreach ministries (some of which are twenty-four hour relief programs). Churches that emphasize social responsibility are critical because they address spiritual and material aspects of inner-city problems. Some church leaders in Boston, metropolitan New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, Miami, and Washington DC use a Ten Point Leadership Foundation as a youth recovery strategy. Youths receive literacy training, summer job opportunities, and positive peer influence in an environment that emphasizes "unconditional love" (Wallis, 1997: 18, 22).

This strategy is crucial because two risk factors affect urban youth: illiteracy and unemployment. If these pressing needs go unresolved the majority of US urban children in 2006 will be illiterate and without job prospects--a generation unable to compete in a knowledge-based economy. Some theorists explain that urban delinquency is the result of government intervention; thus, governmental retraction is necessary. Many adherents of this theory also argue that the root of the problems is cultural. The different experiences and problems in the inner-city warrant a much more complex interpretation.[23] Dilulio explains that is it easier for those who do not reside in the city to identify social pathologies that contribute to urban problems than to address their own challenges. By

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[23] One must be careful to avoid reductionism, i.e., explaining complicated behavior as the function of a single cause.

trusting the solutions closest to the problems, which in many inner-cities entail a spiritual approach, ideological questions of causality become obsolete (Wallis, 1997:18,20).

Within certain political camps the dialogue has shifted from explaining causalities such as structural and familial problems. The demarcation is between those who are "problem-focused" and those who are not. This dialogue focuses on the immediate nature of a person's problems and envisions solutions. Dilulio comments "there are people from the Left, Right and Center who are open to a dialogue about the capacity of faith communities to solve social and economic problems" (Wallis, 1997: 20). Because the 1996 welfare cuts largely withdrew the federal government from urban America, private, philanthropic, corporate, and church-related responses are now much more critical. Dilulio makes several suggestions.

To be effectual, churches or faith communities must learn the language and politics of policy-making procedures. Their performance must meet the requirements of the secular public policy system. Churches involved in recovery efforts must not merely rationalize their policies with scripture. They must design, present, and highlight workable programs that they have utilized. Churches should be willing to submit programs that can be tested to prove that their plans are equally effective (if not superior) alternatives to programs sponsored by governments. This is not a coercive attempt to convert people. Rather, it provides an alternative between faith-based and secular programs. Religious institutions must be open to scrutiny and the "rules of the game", while secular policy-makers need to be open to critical yet "sympathetic" analyses of church proposals. Dilulio argues that a holistic approach to recovering children involves the efforts of spiritual institutions. Also, urban ministry should not be limited to black churches in distressed

neighborhoods. Because of the legacy of racism, many white Christians fail to rally the motivation to address crises in black communities. White churches, in particular, must be willing to contribute more than moral and financial support. More importantly, there needs to be indigenous leadership from within the black community. He concludes that work with inner-city churches can be an extremely rewarding experience--the kind of "selfish return [one] gets if [one] is willing to engage in this way" (Wallis, 1997: 22).[24] Having discussed the need for church engagement in "secular" affairs, it is appropriate to mention the basic changes that took place in the urban environment that necessitate such a response.

Urban strategist John Perkins maintains that a viable Black middle-class emerged following the political and social changes brought about by the Civil Rights Movement. Programs such as affirmative action were designed to facilitate economic and social advancement. The development of an underclass, however, accompanied this process. The "permanent underclass" was the result of persistent racism, middle-class black economic empowerment at the expense of poor blacks, and the failure of programs created to eliminate poverty. The freedom to live anywhere that one could afford encouraged middle-class black migration from central-city areas leaving the many poor who could not relocate in the central-city. Besides these factors, the economy of many urban neighborhoods centers on welfare payments and drug cultures, the compounded effects of which have been tremendous (Perkins, 1995:9, 10).

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[24] I searched for an academic reference concerning Dr. Dilulio's research on religion and urban studies. My only finding, at present, is that he is the director of the Partnership for Research on Religion and At-Risk Youth in New Jersey and a regular contributor to the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and The Weekly Standard.

Central to the success of the Civil Rights Movement were the efforts of white liberal and black church clergy. The call for this kind of leadership is heralded again. The same commitment is required if the residents of inner-cities themselves are to be recovered. InterVarsity is an inner-city ministry that stresses a vital presence in urban areas through volunteer work on numerous initiatives. Many of the university students who volunteer move into the areas that they served upon graduation. This relates to the idea that cities need more "neighbors" who will spend their dollars in the communities where they live. Dan Pryor heads an urban program that specializes in providing resource support to distressed communities and maintains facilities for after-school tutoring. World Vision, another urban-based ministry, has also undertaken efforts to remedy the multiple effects of urban poverty. It is beneficial to note that there have been internal impediments within denominations that hinder revitalization efforts. As an example, the National Association for Evangelicals had trouble breaking racial barriers within its organization. This led to the creation of the National Black Evangelical Association. Along with a Hispanic Commission, these groups endeavor to identify class/ethnic biases and suggest remedies for such to their congregations (Perkins, 1995: 10-12). In this way, problematic attitudes about urban areas held by church-goers themselves can be amended.

Perkins (1995: 21,22) promotes the three R's, i.e, reconciliation, redistribution, and relocation, for Christian community development via para-church ministries with a city's poor. The recipe, in his view, must include the needs of the people in the community; a holistic response to those needs; be based on biblical principles, be time-proven; mobilize indigenous leadership; encourage relocation; necessitate horizontal and vertical reconciliation; and empower the poor through redistribution, i.e., sharing talents,

resources, etc. Simply employing people's time or facilitating job acquisition is inadequate. The promotion of "workfare" in this way is misguided. People should be developed and motivated to a point that their abilities can be utilized in "satisfying" work that in some way helps their communities.

This prescription is based on a passage from the book of Isaiah: "They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations". "They" are the inhabitants of those ruined and devastated places who have received the "good news". Perkins posits that the mission of the Messiah or his followers is not complete until they have empowered the inhabitants of the ruined cities and devastated places, rebuilt and restored their communities (1995: 30, 31).

Urban Areas and Churches

Urban churches are called the city church, the urban church or the inner-city church. The term central-city church is appropriate in the US because this is the term used by the US Census bureau to define the inner-city. In 1970, the Bureau defined any area with a population over eighteen hundred people as urban. Three-fourths of North Americans live in urban communities. This "community" is divided among the core or central-city, the suburbs, and the exurbs. The latter are the most recently urbanized areas on the periphery of the metropolis. Inner-cities can also exist in small towns, which have a heavily populated core, a broader suburban circle, and an emerging exurb region (Speer, 1979: 8).

Urban missiologist (someone who studies Christian mission strategies) James Speer contends that the majority of North American churches have participated in urban

sprawl leaving the core behind. The cultural pattern of the upwardly mobile in America is to migrate from the city. This has become part of the value system and to maintain a presence in the community goes against conventional wisdom. Speer criticizes the idea that Christianity, particularly in its Protestant form, is anti-urban.[25] His hypothesis is that the church has welcomed urbanization as a process, although the anti-urban bias is more applicable to classism and racism rather than urbanism itself. The pattern of decline among core-city churches is mostly observable in transitional neighborhoods. These are neighborhoods that undergo a change from a relatively low-to no crime area to an area divided by rival gangs, which makes for a less than ideal living arrangement. There often is little choice against gang membership, particularly with secondary school youth. The central-city church faces a triple problematic relative to its existence. Churches can close down (which many have), move to suburban areas, or remain in the core with a few people (Speer, 1979: 8,9). Speer illustrates this problem by citing the Second Evangelical Church in Brooklyn, New York as an example.

Brooklyn's Second Evangelical Free Church had a strong presence on the US East Coast until the 1930s. The 1950s and 1960s saw a tremendous decline in church membership as people moved from Brooklyn to New Jersey and Long Island. After some analysis, church leaders realized that the church would either fade away, move away, or be forced to change. A subsequent church split divided the congregation in half. Only an appeal to the headquarters and the support of the church's suburban members kept the doors open (Speer, 1979: 7,8). Despite this church's problems, other churches in the

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[25] For a more descriptive analysis of urban aversion within Protestantism consult Ch. 5 in Lyle Dorsett's biography of Billy Sunday, *Billy Sunday and the Redemption of Urban America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

denomination excelled. Brooklyn's sister church, the Salem Evangelical Free Church in Chicago, was once one of the denomination's largest churches. It operated a number of ministries including Lydia's Children's Home for runaways, the Evangelical Alliance Mission, Trinity Divinity School, and Trinity College. Salem Evangelical also conducted a primary-grade school that provided a religiously oriented education as a "necessary alternative" to gang-ridden public schools in Chicago (Balmer, 1979:12). With respect to "Christian alternative activity", this type of response to society is rampant in Christian theology.

It has been a challenge to engage many Canadian churches in urban recovery. Resident in some theologies about inner-cities is the idea that cities are basically corrupt and should be avoided. Millennial views have also influenced church involvement in the city. Some believe that the return of Christ is preceded by corruption and that immorality or amorality in society is simply a sign of the times. Speer declares that the absence of the church has hastened the decline of the city because, at some level, migration from the core was an exit from commitment to people in general. The church can also be physically present and functionally absent in any section of town. Speer comments from his own experience that suburban churches must mobilize older-people to cultivate relationships with urban communities. He says this is important because one of the greatest needs in central-city churches is middle-age people who can provide stability and leadership within a church. Further, a church interested in recovery must have a presence physically, vocally, and spiritually within a community, i.e., its witness must be felt (Speer, 1979: 9).[26]

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[26] The term "witness" is used among some in the Christian community to signify one's commitment to an ideal, cause, etc.

With regard to the role of churches as spiritual and social agents of change, Fr. John Kunkel offers insight from a clerical viewpoint.

John Kunkel, retired pastor of Winnipeg's Trinity Lutheran Church, explains that the dynamic of spirituality and endurance are central to the renewal process. Accordingly, churches should recall their history. The church genesis is evident in almost all social ministries and the dynamic of caring that comes from the Church is vital. Church outreaches such as prison ministries, Florence Nightingale's hospital work, schools, and homes for the aged were church initiated. The Church has an objective beyond personal glory, e.g., the Sisters of Charity in Winnipeg conduct daily prayers for reality check, strength, and motivation to accomplish their work. This type of appeal to the supernatural in relation to recovery is unique to spiritual institutions.

Recovery has not been a priority in Fr. Kunkel's experience as such. He does, however, offer several suggestions. Kunkel recommends asking core communities through surveys and meetings how they can be best served. Secondly, it is beneficial not to bring a program to a community that is disinterested. A church should be sensitive to what is going on in a community as well as how much it is willing to handle economically and socially. Another suggestion is to observe one's congregation to find people willing to facilitate revitalization projects. Dialoguing with targeted neighborhoods, advertising, and networking are also strategies that churches use to mobilize support. According to Robert Lupton (1989: 88,89), architects, CPAs, and doctors crowd the aisles of many suburban churches, not to mention the real estate agents, developers, and insurance brokers, and academicians who sit on trustee boards. These are the people who can

envision programs to feed the poor, create new economic for depressed communities, build better homes, and provide better services to destitute areas. Kunkel's position is that above all, churches need to maintain a physical presence in a community. In times past, people who attended church walked to their places of worship; today, most people commute to church. This is problematic because it constitutes a change in priorities, i.e., in suburban communities problems of gangs, prostitution, or safety do not manifest as overtly as they do in urban areas. Many people are hard pressed to be sensitive to urban social problems. Furthermore, many of the suburban dwellers who commute to inner-city churches do so only out of a sense of tradition (Kunkel, 1997).

One of the limitations of churches has to do with differing theologies or denominationalism. Because each denomination has its own mission statement, churches retain a restrictive capacity. Language barriers are also evident in that churches are fragmented along linguistic lines. Nationalism and institutional racism can restrict the appeal and accessibility of churches. Further, some religious associations have misused their privileges, e.g., government and church schools for Aboriginal people and other abuses of power, over the years. Because humans are involved there will always be challenges. Nonetheless, there are many in the Church whose work is above reproach.

Despite denominational problems, churches have worked together at times to solve community needs. Several Lutheran and two United churches in Winnipeg established a refugee relief for Vietnamese people in the early 1990s. Presbyterian, United, Baptist, Lutheran, and Anglican churches sponsor summer "adventures" for urban children. The Vineyard and the Place of Peace are other religious centers that utilize concerts, plays, and other multi-cultural extravaganzas to mobilize core-communities.

Rossworth Place was a church started by Sr. Geraldine Magnanova. It is now a place where people can drop-in, no questions asked, a summer retreat for children who cannot go to camps, and a shelter for street people. There is also increasing interaction between churches and provinces to provide social services. Both government renewalists and churches are expert at enumerating urban problems. They should seek viable ways in which one can complement the other. A particular example is in the area of housing. Each summer in Winnipeg, the federal and provincial governments fund new housing programs such as senior complexes and employ several young people from various church groups to refurbish houses to code-specifications.[27] This is one example of collaboration between the Church and the state relative to revitalization. Kunkel makes several normative remarks regarding the opportunities and limitations of church organizations (Kunkel, 1997).

The Church must never contend that it has a concise answer for recovery. Churches must also be sensitive to the leadership potential within central-city communities. Material recovery is part of church work, but churches must be careful to emphasize their spiritual objectives. In his view, quietness, space, and focusing for a spiritual experience are churches' major contributions to recovery (Kunkel, 1997). Concerning churches' spiritual contributions, the following sections detail the history, theologies, and interests that inform church work and explain why some churches are indifferent to urban areas.

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[27] Church-administered housing for senior citizens such as Villa Cabrini in Winnipeg is partially funded by the Canadian government.

3.2: FROM FAITH TO FAITH: A HISTORY OF CHURCH WORK

One criticism of the traditional Church voiced in the early 1960s was that every effort to improve its activities only tended to isolate the Church farther from the metropolis (Winter, 1963: 57). Ray Bakke, urban pastor and missiologist, advances that the priority of Christian efforts in the city must be reanalyzed because many express the opinion that agrarian life is somehow closer to godliness than urban living. Seeking the peace of the city should be the foremost interest. Moreover, the Church has neglected the poor, imposed European culture, utilized a double standard concerning mission work, i.e., home vs. foreign missions, failed to train leaders for effective ministry, and used questionable conversion tactics.[28] Far too often the majority of Christian communities, in light of the needs abroad, ignores the inner-cities. Ignoring the different cultures that have emigrated to inner-cities has limited the Church's effectiveness (de Groot, 1989a: 19).

Churches occupy a vital role in the inner-cities of North America. From a religious perspective, people must not simply be humanitarian in their responses to human suffering; they must meet the needs of the soul (Quayle, 1997). This message is one that proclaims a unique transcendent experience with God. Mother Teresa often emphasized that she was not a social worker but a missionary for her faith. Though food distribution, homeless shelters, clothes drives, and other services are vital, the message of the Church must not be lost. That message seeks to accommodate needs beyond the obvious, needs that if remedied can have an outward effect. If churches are to be change agents, they must go beyond the programs offered by state/provincial and federal governments,

because other agencies are better suited to do some of these things. These agencies have more resources and the elected responsibility (reference to governments) to do so. What they do not offer is the kind of hope that churches declare. Some call it false hope. Others see it quite differently. The prison of the inner-city is quasi-interpreted. It represents a reality check that reminds people of the inherent problem of human avarice and what it does to the entire human community.

According to William Pinson, the New Testament mentions very little about the extent of Christian participation in public affairs. For early Christians under Roman rule, direct political involvement other than revolution was virtually nonexistent (under democratic conditions, it is argued, this should not mean separation of the church from the state).[29] Early churches preached a dedication to family life and work. They took care of the orphans, widows, and the sick. The early Church did not have a profound effect upon social structures or the course of policy because it comprised a very small portion of the population of people, most of which hailed from the lower classes. The theology of many early Christians anticipated the immediate return of Christ; therefore, they were indifferent about affecting a world doomed for destruction. As Christians grew in number and those of higher social standing joined their ranks, the Church wielded more influence on society. When Christians realized that the Raptur had to be a future event, they applied their

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[28] The imposition of European culture was part of the conversion process used historically by Western missionaries, and to some extent, occurs today.

[29] Some treat Matthew 22:21 (NIV): "Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's" as a pronouncement against interaction between the Church and the state. Others suggest that this text is merely a narrative description of Jesus' response to a critic and should not be interpreted in a normative sense regarding a separation of church and state.

energies to the recovery of a corrupt world.[30] In time, the Church, or individuals thereof, influenced entertainment, economics, sexual practices, politics, and class/ethnic conflicts (Pinson, 1973: 32,33).

Numerous Christian writers and spokespeople began to speak on issues such as war, slavery, infanticide, delinquency, materialism, and church-state relations. They focused their attention on what the Christian response should be to these problems. It was eventually argued that all people and institutions should abide by biblical principles. Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century. The Church then played an extraordinary role in society. However, a "corrupt" society greatly influenced the Church. The Church became more worldly as the world became more "churchy". Nevertheless, the Church performed many of the tasks that had once been the state's responsibility. In some areas, welfare, the courts, education, and the government came under the agency of the Church. Though corruption and other types of unethical conduct were rampant within the Church, society expected the Church to perform more than a religious role (Pinson, 1973: 34).

After the Protestant Reformation led by Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox the Church spoke more to the spirituality that was lost in the Middle Ages. Concern was balanced between the proclamation of a true religious experience and realizing meaningful involvement in society. They advocated that people rethink the motivations that underlie social practices such as crime and punishment, economic activity, and civil disobedience (Pinson, 1973: 35). Still, as late as the 18th Century, elected officials,

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[30] The Rapture is the Christian futuristic belief that Jesus will return to meet his followers in the air (I Thessalonians 4: 16,17; Acts 1:10,11).

lawyers and society in general demonstrated little concern for the needs or civil rights of widows, prisoners, and the orphaned, who were simply not a part of social conscience. Conditions in Great Britain, at that time, provide an excellent example.

The British masses in the 18th and 19th Centuries lived in poverty, as corruption was widespread in government and society. The Wesleyan Revival brought about a much-needed change in social conscience. After a dramatic religious experience, Wesley denounced slavery and alcoholism, advocated prison reform, initiated medical missions, and started literacy programs for the poor. John Howard's massive efforts to correct a decrepit prison system became the progenitor of modern prison reform. The factory-working children of Gloucester who roamed the streets on Sunday were Robert Raikes' project. He started the Sunday school movement to teach street youth religious principles and the three R's (different from Perkin's R's, pg. 44). William Wilberforce was one of the most vocal abolitionists whose influence on Parliament resulted in the abolition of slavery in Britain in 1833. Tom Barnardo's religious experience inspired him to found what became the world's largest private orphanage. George Williams began the YMCA in response to young men of the cities' need for housing, civic involvement, and physical exercise. Henri Dunant's burden for wounded soldiers led to the creation of the Red Cross and an 1864 Geneva Convention. The Sentimental Years following 1830 were characterized by a time when almost every need in society had a committed organization effecting change on its behalf, though not all of these were church related (Bright, 1981: 9).

Pinson maintains that in the past three hundred years, all major Christian spokespeople have concerned themselves with the social gospel. In particular, lay-people

or non-clergies have played a tremendous role. While president at Yale, Timothy Dwight was a women's rights advocate and fought against racial discrimination in New England. At the time of the Civil War, Pastor Henry Ward Beecher defended the Abolitionist cause in England. Charles Spurgeon dealt with similar issues in London as well as unfair labor conditions and the problem of poverty. Nineteenth Century evangelist Charles Finney actively supported the underground railroad and Billy Sunday proclaimed the evils of alcoholism and denounced the oppression of the poor. A lay-member Presbyterian, Woodrow Wilson strove to correlate his faith to politics. Colonial America owes part of its revolutionary spirit to the stirring of ministers and people of faith. The fight for economic and labor justice has also been battled by religious communities. Last, the spiritual dynamic of black and white pastors and Jewish rabbis cannot be divorced from the genesis and stride of the US Civil Rights Movement.

On a smaller scale, church groups from various theological persuasions have organized virtual crusades against gambling, pornography, obscenity, drug abuse, inadequate housing, political corruption, pollution, hunger, war, and industrial relations. Throughout history, although many church leaders' views may not be perceived today as politically correct, their ambition was to preach and relate the truth as known to them. Thus, a church that does not respond to the needs of its community, it is argued, fails to follow the examples of many extraordinary Christian leaders (Pinson, 1973: 35,36).

Why Churches?

Some in the Christian community have been described as "social Darwinists", i.e., the poor are deservedly so and the rich likewise. A critical attitude toward the poor is often apparent from those who benefit most from their economic system. It can be the

case that those who are paid to administrate social programs, even clergy, benefit more than the people for whom the programs were intended. Denies Hollinger alleges that the church-society relationship is the primary focus of social ethics. It is the "issue that determines the stance on socio-political issues and the manner in which these are implemented" (Hollinger, 1979: 4).

One body of thought regarding the theology of the Church's movement in recovery is that it lacks a proper theological basis. Further, certain problems require mobilized political action. What should the political block resemble given that church people represent a plurality of perspectives? Is the block to be composed of individual activists or church groups? How can churches be change agents with absolute ideals in a current political structure that encourages relative thinking? What is the exact responsibility between church and society? (Hollinger, 1979: 4). Hollinger makes use of theologian H. Richard Niebuhr's taxonomy of typologies that demonstrate how the Church has related historically to its society.[31]

Some theologians believe that churches should not participate in any capacity to reform society. The church's role is to provide spiritual recovery and leave urban decay to secular agencies. Another position is that the church should affect society indirectly. The best way to reform social problems is to reform one's soul. Then individuals, not church institutions as such, can engage in social action. Another thesis is that the only way to reform individuals is to change social structures. A more inclusive approach combines elements of the "social gospel" and the pure "hot gospel" approach (Pinson, 1973: 76,77).

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[31] For a complete discussion of H. Richard Neibuhr's church-state classification see *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951).

The Christ *Against* Culture perspective is that allegiance to Christ supersedes any civil or cultural responsibility. The proposition is that the world represents an environment that is anti-biblical and diametrically opposed to Christian ideals. The Tertian movement, Tolstoy, monasticism, and to an extent the Mennonites, Quakers, and Hutterites are examples of this kind of removed response from society. They reject political affiliation and social engagement while employing a physical and psychological distance from non-Christians.[32] The Christ *and* Culture in Paradox approach is similar to the Christ *Against* culture approach. However, unlike those who remove themselves from society, the dualist does not believe that s/he can escape culture. Any hostility between the Christian and society is accepted. The conflict is more so between humanity and God/sin and grace as opposed to Christ and culture. This dual kingdom concept advances that love, mercy and grace govern the divine kingdom while cruelty and revenge rule the secular kingdom. The Christian response is to accept the antagonism and be a servant of both kingdoms. In the Middle Ages, when the Church governed society, the conflict between Christ and culture was minimal. The Christ *of* Culture approach does not recognize hostility between the church and society/culture. The ideals of Christ's teachings are seen as the goals for which society should aim. The Enlightenment thinkers, Gnostics, Abelard, Schleimacher, and Ritschl fall in to this category. Christ is more or less an example among other religious activists and historical figures (Hollinger, 1979:5)

The Christ *Above* Culture position is that culture is both spiritual and secular, although this approach stresses that the human community should aspire more so towards Christ's precepts. This is the synthetic medieval perspective of St. Thomas Aquinas. This

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[32] Though these groups to a great extent are "separatist", some of them have participated at times in

perspective espouses two laws: natural law, which is something observable and livable in a non-spiritual sense, and divine law, which is observable through Christ and the bible and transcends natural law. The Christ the *Transformer* of Culture perspective is similar to the Christ *and* Culture approach in that it views the world as sin-ridden. It goes beyond acceptance, though, to transformation, which is a belief that institutions, value structures, and individuals in society can be changed. Augustine, and to a greater extent Calvin, emphasized that the state is responsible to God to punish evil and promote social responsibility. The interaction between the church and state is great so that a practical theocracy exists. Some advocate an amalgam of all five positions. This is difficult because some positions, e.g., the Christ *Against* Culture and the Christ *of* Culture views, are diametrically opposed to one another (Hollinger, 1979: 5).

The Christ *of* Culture and Christ *Above* Culture perspectives have been criticized because of their inconsistencies with traditional interpretations of scripture. The dualist approach has been the position most embraced by Evangelicals in the twentieth century. Christ as *Transformer* is also advocated among this group who maintain, for example, that America must return to its fundamental roots. This has been labeled the "church type" as opposed to the groups that promote removal from society. Some theologians argue against this approach. They reason that Church attempts to rule the world eventually lead to the excessive use of unbiblical strategies and change processes towards that end. Church historian D. Hollinger advocates the Christ *Against* Culture approach. From this perspective, a person should examine his culture and extract from it anti-biblical elements. This requires a thorough evaluation of cultures (political, social, etc.) and its supporting

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social causes, e.g., the Quakers' involvement in the 1960s Peace Movement.

values. Hollinger does not advocate apoliticalism or removal from society; rather, a social ethic with one's foremost allegiance to Christ in the midst of corruption. By exemplifying this model of conduct and proclaiming Godly precepts in light of social decay the church is "salt and light". Christians must be careful to understand the theology of social concern. The Church's foremost duty is to demonstrate the social ethic of its faith and not impose it by attempting to govern the world by any means possible (Hollinger, 1979:5, 6). The next section goes beyond theologies to identify the work of urban churches in Canada, with particular emphasis on Vancouver, British Columbia.

The Complex Task of Reform

Because inner cities are diverse places, urban ministry must address concentrated problems such as drug abuse, crime, and systemic poverty. The nature of inner-city ministry is often viewed from within the church as homeless shelters, food banks, and drug rehabilitation programs. Neither is recovery limited to "poor" areas. The city is where the business community operates, home to the wealthier residents of high-rise complexes as well as those who participate in the gentrification process (Dorsch, 1989: 7).

Sentiments such as "you don't understand life in the inner-city" or "you believe becoming a Christian is the answer to everything" are common when churches attempt to remedy decline. This is especially true when church members do not live in the inner-city. The need for presence in a community is not recognized by many in the church community who opt for a radio presence. Speer expresses the viewpoint that if one is unwilling to live in the city, the reality of his commitment is questionable.[33] There are considerable benefits

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[33] Speer's comments about commitment derive from a theological perspective that advocates physical presence; this perspective varies among denominations.

and experiences that make the city very attractive. The sense of community, diversity, mutual responsibility, and proximity of public resources are among them (1989: 8). These will be discussed in a later chapter.

Christians must stress reform at every level and not simply physical recovery. Successful churches are those which will identify how they can best serve their communities, whether it is to the homeless or young urban professionals. Para-church organizations and churches across Canada have begun to minister again to the city. However, many urban workers had to update their concept of urban ministry. "Faith Today" editor Audrey Dorsch relates her initial concept of urban ministry. She reasoned that urban ministry was merely soup kitchens, hostels, drug rehab centers, and rescue missions. This perception changed when she encountered a panhandler whom she had never noticed. Bakke argues that a city dweller's survival mechanism is to not notice anyone around him. The ability to perceive someone's need is understated. Therefore, seeing beyond physical needs is much more difficult. The needs of the affluent that frequent the city also go unrecognized. They are the harborfront condominium communities, the upwardly mobile who "live" in high-rise towers, various ethnic cultures, and the gentrified city residents. In a broader sense, they too need recovery. This is not to discount the more obviously needy. It simply means that recovery necessitates touching every vein in the human community. This type of inclusive social engagement is evident in Vancouver, British Columbia (Dorsch, 1989: 7).

In Vancouver, issues of "Asianization", the tourist industry, social service reform, Vancouver's role as a business center, the growing number of street people, the role of the

media, and how to handle leisure time are central.[34] Study of a thriving church in urban Vancouver reveals some interesting facts about urban ministry in this area. John Zimmerman, professor at Carey Hall, supposes that no more than twenty churches in Vancouver are thriving (de Groot, 1989b: 22). One observer contends that "Christianity is the only religion that talks about sewers and salvation in the same sentence" (de Groot, 1989a: 23).[35] The work of Ray Bakke in Vancouver sheds light on the issue of practical ministry. Bakke encourages his 150-member congregation to broaden its understanding of ministry. They develop ideas around which various ministries can be developed. Targeted audiences include the unemployed, alcoholics, and the elderly. Their roster also includes chief executives, the "body beautiful" fitness types, professional and technical workers of the business community, police officers, janitors, waitresses, and the many others who daily frequent inner-cities (de Groot, 1989b: 22).

Ascertaining the needs present in a community and what a church is willing to do, Bakke asserts, should be the first part of a church's social strategy. Congregants in this Vancouver church form a theological framework or rationale for a particular target group, develop a strategy on how best to assist them, and discuss the barriers to their proposals. Churches interested in revitalization should become expert in the perceived problems of an area and move beyond relief to reform, i.e., the goal is to have a plan. One could offer English classes for immigrants or build cappuccino/water bars to stimulate interaction. As

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[34] This term is not meant to be offensive; it is a quote from the source and refers to the changing cultural and business expression that accompanies the Asiatic presence in Vancouver.

[35] The concept of sin and subsequently salvation (at least incarnational salvation) is most specific to Christianity, and to lesser extents Judaism and Islam. Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism, as other examples, articulate different perspectives on the human condition.

pubs and health centers become the center of social interaction, churches could invest in this commercial venture to provide an atmosphere for interaction without the presence of alcohol (de Groot, 1989b: 23).

Over 300 biblical passages emphasize social justice for the poor and needy. Biblical personalities provide other examples. Joseph implemented a plan that fed the Middle East and Nehemiah encouraged ten percent of the Jewish population to rebuild and populate Jerusalem.[36] Outreach is not simply a component of evangelism. It is evidence that the "evangelist" has been reformed. Further, the biblical narrative commences with a God whose "hands are in the mud and ends with God cleaning up" (de Groot, 1989a: 23). Churches must become expert in everything in order to offer alternative policy agendas.

Another of Bakke's strategies, which demonstrates the starting capacity of churches as change agents, has been to counsel people on the way to make hospital visits. In this way, a person can get help for his problem and then transfer that sense of compassion to someone else. In Amsterdam, church workers baby-sit prostitutes' children in lieu of providing an alternative income. They were able to develop a rapport with pimps and prostitutes that enabled them to act as intercessors in legal situations when necessary. In response to one bar owner's complaint about drunks' affects on customers, church workers were assigned to the bars to serve as compassionate listeners. Some churches even assist in the rent payment of their members who live in upscale apartments so that they can establish a presence in those areas (de Groot, 1989a: 22).

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[36] Refers to the biblical accounts of Joseph (Genesis 41) and the rebuilding of Jerusalem in 431 B.C. (Nehemiah 1-6).

Dialogue with other pastors and church leaders is necessary to find out what they are doing to avoid unnecessary repetition and how to maximize effectiveness. According to Bakke, church leaders need to be able to "customize the church, not franchise it" (as cited in de Groot, 1989a: 20). Pursuant to this process, one must know the clientele. Annually, Bakke chooses one of the many ethnic groups in his community and studies its language, culture, and history in order to understand better a people's contemporary problems. This kind of analysis also shatters the perceptions of homogeneity within ethic communities (the homogenous church growth strategy theorizes that churches grow faster when its constituency is ethnically and economically similar). Based on this strategy, racial segregation is actually encouraged in order to stimulate church growth. Consequently, success in ministry must be reinterpreted to facilitate social justice. One's theology, and not necessarily its membership rosters, should be large scale (de Groot, 1989a: 20).

Ministry has broadened to address whatever needs are present at any economic/social level (Dorsch, 1989: 7). An American example illustrates. In Chicago, city police offers carry the business card of a Lutheran minister when answering calls on domestic violence. This minister noticed that 80 percent of police work in a local precinct involved violence in the home. He offered his services as a counselor and eventually planted a church from the families he had counseled (de Groot, 1989a: 20). While these ideas are useful, a deeper analysis of the opportunities and challenges to inner-city church work is necessary to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Church.

Diversity in Action

Churches address different issues depending upon theology. This can actually contribute to collective action among churches. Churches in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia do

several things: meet with city officials, operate a central food bank known as FOOD (Feeding Others of Dartmouth), find roommates for ex-psychiatric patients, and pay FOOD volunteers' part-time salaries. Their physical presence and prayers at city council meetings encouraged the city to employ more inspectors to address the issue of slum landlords. Churches have traditionally advocated ethical conduct relative to policy-making. City Center Ministry in Halifax attempts to influence business people to incorporate ethics into their business practices. Halifax has seen tremendous economic development along with an increase in ethical questions that accompany material success. Through practical topical seminars, Christian consultants instruct Christian (and non-Christian) business people on how to live what they believe. Cities increasingly rely on the church for support on social issues (Homer, 1989: 24). While government (specifically in the US) at some levels is still sensitive to the separation of church and state, it has begun to sponsor and/or administrate "mentoring" programs.

Providing meals, clothes, and shelter for the homeless are not new to churches. The traditional approach for churches involved in recovery was to pay rent and utilities. At some point, these churches reasoned that this type of assistance did little long-term for the recipient. Towards that end, churches attempted to affect the whole person relative to attitudes and lifestyle. A "new" approach is to act, among other things, as liaisons or mentors to facilitate employment, provide day care, and teach financial management. Para-church ministries are instrumental in programs that assist long-term welfare dependents adjust to life off welfare. Churches in Mississippi, Texas, Michigan, Maryland, and Virginia have begun this kind of developmental assistance.

One such program is Faith and Families in Mississippi. Since the program's inception in 1994, Rev. Ronald Moore, the group's founder, has seen many success stories. Four-hundred-eighty-five families have been paired since 1994. Tammy Spencer of Austin, Texas and Sandra Padron of Holland, Michigan are prime examples. They were substance abusers and/or gang members on welfare without adequate housing or jobs. Each was matched with a team of volunteers from local churches that provided support and encouragement. Having been on welfare for over twenty years, Spencer devised a budget, moved to a safer location, and applied for housing assistance. Mentor A. Holland boasts of securing employment for every welfare recipient with whom he has been in contact (Albany Herald 1997, 3[A]).

Canada also operates a mentoring program based on this US model. Family to Family Ties, initiated by the Catholic Family Services, is the only one of its kind in Canada. Based in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, FTFT seeks to eradicate false perceptions of people who live in poverty. The program pairs volunteers with families (FTFT defines

family as any association that claims to be a family) who meet monthly to establish, foremost, a connection with poor families that are isolated from mainstream activities/economic opportunities. Issues such as conflict management, ethnocentrism, and communication skills are discussed so that both parties are informed relative to building reciprocal relationships. Family to Family Ties received its primary funding from two religious organizations, an institute dedicated to research on the family, and a district health community wellness grant program (Haynes, 1998: 1,2). The next section details more of the positive things that churches do. This section portrays the perspectives of three individuals. The first is that of Dr. E. Cordy, law professor and executive director of a resource center, in Albany. The second perspective is that of Albany inner-city pastor Rev. L. Heard; and, the third viewpoint comes from Rev. Glandion Carney of Wheaton, Illinois.

3.3: REVITALIZATION IN ALBANY, GA

A particular community in which churches have played a significant impact is the black community. According to Dr. E. Cordy, during the 1990s recovery in Georgia was stagnate at the city, county, and state levels. Racism has also played a detrimental role in revitalization efforts in Albany, Georgia's core-city. Albany's racial problem, or the denial thereof, has been its major problem. For example, the city just passed a fair housing ordinance in November of 1997. Discrimination has been prevalent in churches, recreational facilities, e.g., country clubs, and particularly in the area of adequate housing. An act of nature, however, provided some remedy to the housing problem.

Albany's 1994 flood, in which the city lost one-third of its housing, allowed people with substandard housing to upgrade their living condition. Before the flood,

virtual shanties and "slumlording" was apparent throughout sections of the city. Currently, all new construction as well as rehab housing must meet stringent building codes. Beyond housing issues, several things must be done to recover Albany's core-city. The city must address racial tensions, improve schools, concentrate on downtown revitalization, and encourage a competitive job market. The latter is changing due to increased commercial development downtown. Businesses must be more sensitive to minority issues relative to economic empowerment. This includes access to capital and a "relaxing" of underwriting standards including "sweat" as equity, i.e., time and effort spent developing small businesses. This is important because profit margins for some black businesses in Albany are better than those of the majority community.[37] Cordy also declares that minority leadership in positions of power in Albany is vital. Some of these leaders have an abundance of experiential knowledge and an appreciation of the entire city's problems (Cordy, 1997). He made further comments relative to churches' impact on the urban environment.

Churches have played a very important role historically in black communities. Cordy notes that it is probably the most stable institution in the black community. Many black churches have responded to spiritual and secular issues such as family and community counseling, substance and spousal abuse, after-school nutritional programs, and community development programs. In Cordy's estimation, the church is the last institution for which many blacks have respect. Police officers in Albany have found that gangs and illegal activity can be averted through church intervention at a grass-roots level.

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[37] Dr. Cordy makes reference here to the relative success of recreational services such as beauty salons and some restaurants in Albany's black community.

Several rival factions have signed truces as a result of church engagement.[38] Churches should work closer with the government if for nothing more than to gain access to available money for the provision of social programs. Some of the services that churches provide are crime prevention seminars, school-related programs for youth and the non-traditional student, information on teenage pregnancy, information on job acquisition, and recreational activities. Churches in Albany face few impediments with regard to recovery and are quite important to the revitalization process; yet, full recovery must be understood as a collective process (Cordy, 1997).

Rev. L. Heard, pastor of Albany's Greater Second Mount Olive Baptist church, which is located in a predominately black and impoverished area, made similar comments relative to the black church and urban recovery. Churches are involved in recovery, but not at the level of sophistication. His congregation has several programs in progress such as buying property surrounding the church and confronting gangs. Part of the problem lies in knowing what to do outside of traditional services, e.g., youth ministry, religious instruction, and retreats. Mount Olive has renovated a center for after school programs, facilitates recreational activities, tutoring, and conducts clothes give-always and food drives. Heard's congregation also sponsors people at drug rehabilitation centers, purchased a strip plaza, and plans to build a day-care center and a sports complex. Much of their work is a solo initiative, although Mount Olive collaborates with HUD and the city of Albany on some projects. Pastor Heard says that inner-city blacks face different

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[38] The reader must trust my memory regarding this reference. The author is familiar with the role of churches in the truce signed between two of Los Angeles' most feared gangs, i.e., the "Crypts" and the "Bloods", in the early 1990s. An article exists in "Christianity Today" (1997) that details the work of one urban pastor's work as a truce initiator among Puerto Rican rival gangs in South Central Los Angeles.

problems than they did thirty years ago. Although Jim Crow laws were outlawed, the commitment towards change has been relaxed. Blacks seemed more aggressive in the 1960s when churches acted as a mighty political force. In the 1990s, churches are concerned with economic empowerment and in some cases survival (Heard 1998).

Pastor Heard does not declare that there need be more politicians with a Christian perspective. His contention is that the moral majority or Christian control movement is pharisaic.[39] Much of it is intentional or convenient ignorance when it comes to racial matters. One cannot impose righteousness. In his view, a modernized Christian concept is more beneficial. He speculates that a church's potential contribution to recovery is related to its membership size. Most often, the larger a church is the more money it will have for social services. Nevertheless, the role of the church in the black community revolves around the abilities to get in touch with the community and to influence it on all levels, although promoting spirituality should be its main interest.

He holds to the premise that the US government no longer desires to be the "welfare watchdog" of its people. The US government took upon itself the responsibility to care for the elderly and needy. With the current cuts to government assistance, e.g. welfare, responsibility will certainly resort, at least in part, to individual communities. Cost-effectiveness is advocated today because, it is often argued, so much can be done with less. Many projects have been divided into "mini-projects" such that decision-making has reverted to localities. In a sense, small churches must now compete with larger

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[39] Pharisees were religious leaders in the Israelite community who were experts on Jewish religious practice. They failed, however, in their willingness to "relax" ritual for practicality. Consequently, their name has become synonymous with the espousal of "truths" without the accompanying commitment to realize reform.

churches for the distribution of government monies.[40] Having the right information at the right time is important. Unfortunately, many urban dwellers have very little understanding of how the policy-making system operates. Churches must educate their members so that at least none of their congregates fall into poverty situations that could have been avoided. Only then, Rev. Heard postulates, can substantial outreach outside of the Church begin (Heard, 1998). Pursuant to the church's role as a "community-sustainer", analysis is next given to the perspective of Rev. Glandion Carney, whose urban work promotes church involvement in social programs.

According to Carney, whose work is specifically with black inner-city churches, the Gospel message is indispensable to effect change in the black community. The black man's experience in America, it is advanced, has been one of degradation and ridicule. It is important to address the psyche of blacks through a message of empowerment and spiritual renewal. A message of this sort promotes self-respect and a sense of dignity. Carney relates that the urban church produced outstanding political and spiritual leaders in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. This role diminished after the Civil Rights Movement. Concurrently, there was a rise in youth gang involvement, drug selling, and other activities, compounded by the fact that church attendance among urban youngsters declines at the age of 14.[41] In his view, the urban church must regain its former glory and

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[40] The author assisted in the community development efforts of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Albany, GA. This church received government grants to provide transitional housing and other programs (1st time home-buying seminars and Ombudsman services) to residents of East Albany.

[41] Though other factors certainly contributed to the increase in urban youth criminal activity, this paper advances that the loss of spirituality is among them.

provide the kind of leadership worthy of emulation, especially for the sake of urban youth (Carney, 1982: 4).

There is a need to train volunteer church workers to be able to work with young people. Carney believes it would be a tragedy to simply plant religiously oriented programs into urban communities. In Carney's experience, he has observed a lack of money, interest, and commitment in the long-run among church people to support such; nonetheless, the problems that youngsters face are complex and the lack of people trained to minister psychologically and theologically to their needs is discouraging. Another of the urban church's problems concerns a basic antagonism between suburban and urban churches. Suburban theology and practice has often been anti-poor and often anti-non-white, unlike that of urban churches. It has been purported that the urban church is more important to its members than the suburban church is to its constituency. Carney advances that this is true because where inhumanity and violence are most obvious, the church brings a discernible cognizance of divine grace. He asserts that the suburban church has had access to enormous resources and that the congregations of those churches should use their resources ((human, financial, political) to affect the institutions that contribute to urban decline. Conversely, the urban church can help the suburban church to alleviate its fear of the city and encourage a greater commitment to the urban environment. Though theologies differ, churches have much more in common than not (Carney, 1982: 5).

The urban church can be viewed as a "fort of protection" against the ravages of the social problems that play out so prominently in the inner-city. It is a place where moral values are taught and church attendees can gain a sense of hope. It has been the

meeting place where people could rally, discuss issues, and protest. The urban church, Carney maintains, is heterogeneous. Denominational churches such as Baptists, the Church of God in Christ, and African Methodist Episcopal churches are widespread. There are also a number of traditional, predominantly white churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterians, and the Nazarenes that maintain a presence in the urban community.[42] The storefront [Pentecostal] churches (four or five on the same block) play the most pivotal role in that they serve as "outposts" for the elderly who watch out for children passers-by. This type of offensive engagement is illustrated in the example of Stronghold Baptist Church.

The Stronghold Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is located in one of the city's most dangerous sections where drug dealers, pimps, and prostitutes maintained a strong terf. This Church moved in with a long-term, comprehensive plan to revitalize the area and has realized great success.[43] Despite the positive aspects of urban churches, they are limited relative to human capacity. Though many urban pastors do not have a bible college background or a seminary degree, some are biblical "scholars" in their own right. Unfortunately, many of them experience "burn-out" due to the demands on their time coupled with stagnant congregations. Many urban pastors work full-time in other professions, such as police officers and janitors, and their work is done without monetary remuneration (Carney, 1982: 4). With regard to "burn-out", the following section

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[42] The Catholic Church has been one of the mainstays in urban neighborhoods, particularly among Latino peoples. Presently, the Pentecostal Church claims the fastest growing membership among Evangelicals in the world. Peruse Eldin Villafane's book for an exciting study on urban ministry from an Hispanic vantage point: *Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1995).

[43] Stronghold Baptist relocated to one of Philadelphia's most volatile districts where prostitution and drug selling were overt. Following this church's vocal and physical opposition to these elements, this particular area has been "cleared".

discusses the insights of two Albanian residents on recovery. The first interview highlights the consequences of agent-enervation.

Russel Young conducts a leadership program for young black males in Albany, Georgia. He finds it inexcusable in a city with a $74 million budget, over 200 churches and 100 health and non-profit organizations, that so many people live in poverty. Illiteracy, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, and single female heads-of-households are rampant. People must "deal" from the bottom-up to realize change. According to Young, inner-city residents do not address city officials about the problems in their communities and neither do their representatives. The officials themselves do not ask residents the "right" questions on how to remedy their (disadvantaged) situation. Both the suburban dwellers and the core community share the blame. Young holds that there is little consistency between renewal messages and practice. Many federal grants arrive in the city that never reach the targeted group. The drug and inadequate housing problems continue to be issues in Albany. There are few committees or boards, Young says, that seriously engage issues and push for change. Young posits that religious leaders are the only people left who can rally for change and seriously challenge the phenomenon of decay (Young, 1998).

Another interview was done with an articulate homeless Albany resident, Frank Lumpkin, to ascertain his viewpoint. Frank Lumpkin argues that one can travel throughout Albany and recognize that the inner-city community as a whole needs unity. The out of sight/out of mind mentality has limited those who could effect change. Churches talk about spirituality, but in practice the manifestation of concern is not always evident. Run-down housing, classism, and racism are major problems. People are

barraged with questions when they approach church leaders with their needs. Many times churches turn people away to the welfare office or the Salvation Army.[44] The churches are ineffective in that much of what they advocate does not materialize. The religious experience is good, but it is not enough. Lumpkin cedes that the upwardly mobile attitude has incapacitated many in the black community and that full recovery cannot occur until there is quantitative organization. The issue is not always how many people a church reaches; rather, it is the substance of its work. Some of Albany's soup kitchens are inadequate and the Salvation Army forces people out at 7 a.m. The functionality of many of these programs, Lumpkin voices, needs to be reassessed, particularly when run by those who claim to be Christians. Lumpkin maintains that once the condition of the soul is right the rest will follow. Further, until people realize the adverse condition of the soul as the root of the inner-city problem, there will always be substance abuse, crime, etc. In his estimation, there are more suburban churches doing things in the inner-city than urban churches and far too few churches doing anything relative to the inner-city. One of the keys to recovery on a citizen's part is to be vocal when one does get the opportunity to speak with a city official. Residents of the inner-city must ensure that their concerns are heard or there will be no recovery (Lumpkin, 1998).

He concludes that people, religious and non-religious alike, fail to realize their espoused goals towards revitalization. Development plans and empowerment initiatives are attractive on paper; still, so few leaders from the majority or minority communities demonstrate their commitment to recovery in Albany. Until that happens recovery is just

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[44] The Salvation Army is a social service agency and a church. For example, the Salvation Army in Winnipeg operates seven churches throughout the city.

another concept among many with no "real teeth" (Lumpkin, 1998). Accordingly, the Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy outlines a number of things wrong with cities that thwart any renewal effort.

3.4: JUSTICE FOR THE CITY

"True peace is not the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice"
(Martin Luther King, Jr.)

The US Urban Policy Panel of the Churches' Center for Theology and Policy espouses that the high cost of maintaining the suburbs, e.g., electricity generating plants and oil refineries, accounts for the high electric bills that city dwellers pay and other taxes paid to develop suburban infrastructure. City residents also subsidize exurb development through their pension and bank deposits. Politicians who lobby for tax incentives for developers encourage new construction at the expense of recovery. Urban dwellers also fund research for military equipment that could be used for simple maintenance in the city. While city dollars have supported service industries that created jobs for professionals, residents themselves often lack adequate service. They are expected to work for low wages that restrict their ability to move from the city and often are the subject of ethnic discrimination. Robbed of the material to eke out a sustainable living, city residents are expected to meet needs they cannot handle. Foremost, cities need justice (Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy, 1984: 26).

The responsibility should not be solely on the shoulders of religious institutions. Recovery and more specifically support for the disadvantaged are a communal responsibility. The government should be responsive to all people. Religious centers must also be careful not to move resources (financial, physical) from areas of dire need to areas that are self-supporting. The Center suggests going beyond the dual approach, "give me a fish and you feed me for a day; teach me to fish and you feed me for a lifetime". Figuratively speaking, people must endeavor to secure the survival and renewal of the

fisheries. The "streams" are polluted through plant closings, redlining, substandard municipal service, over-priced health care, and racism. The future viability of the city is in question. It will exist, yet in what form? An appropriate response must go beyond financial contributions and must include government action as well as private interest/policy initiative (Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy, 1984: 26, 27).

National urban policy must address the economic, social, and cultural realities of central-city areas. In the US, urban policy has been quite flexible. Policy makers must understand the geographic and economic changes that have taken place in communities and develop along those lines, not simply along ideological or theoretical assumptions. A strong economy coupled with a consistent, down-to-earth policy is necessary. Many core areas lack governmental integration at an institutional level. The governments of inner-cities are often so large that policies get lost in bureaucratic structures. Government at the suburban level can be severely fragmented and unchangeable boundaries prevent cities from benefiting from community and economic development on the periphery. City councils might consider neighborhood governance. Smaller, more personalized units could be established that could exist within larger government structures. This balances local concerns with broader concerns (conversely, widening city councils can be effective in certain contexts).[45] There needs to be a clear understanding of each level of government's responsibility to the inner-city (Churches' Center for the Theology and Public Policy, 1984: 27).

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[45] There are exceptional cases such as in Winnipeg where the city council was reduced from 29 to 15 members, thereby increasing the size of each ward.

Community economic development, infrastructure, health issues, housing, and public safety all have appropriate connections at every level of government. The majority of the economic benefits should go where they are most necessary. Leaving the distribution of resources to the market place has proven inept. Government intervention was vital because the market place did an insufficient job of redistribution. New approaches toward infrastructure deserve analysis. Energy and water waste can be prevented with the proper technology; and, recycling can be used to reduce pollution. Development of urban agriculture can address questions of hunger and congestion can be remedied through alternative transport systems. Older cities need innovation as well as the maintenance of existing structures. Research and innovation must be a part of consistent urban policy. The "back-up economy" is important in light of the stronger national economy, i.e., the production of services and goods exclusively for local consumption. This can offset the limitations of cities and act as protection against national financial constraints and transnational corporations (Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy, 1984: 27). Churches are also limited because religious training institutions or seminaries have not recognized the importance or need for an urban impact.

The Problems with Seminaries

According to one examiner, seminaries are failing for several reasons: (1) experiments in urban mission have been ineffective; (2) clergy are not trained to be sensitive to those who differ in class, culture or ethnicity; (3) there are few models of churches or church leaders who have accomplished urban ministry; (4) seminaries lack the skill to prepare people for urban ministry; (5) the likelihood of resource support is not

significant; (6) and seminarians believe historical contributions to city neighborhoods are sufficient (Amerson, 1984: 33).

Very few seminarians address questions about the creation of disparities and the tremendous segregation among classes that occur even in the world's most advanced cities. The integrity of the Church, it is asserted, is at stake if it cannot adequately speak to the urban mission field. Perhaps the biblical account of creation is partly responsible for the belief that peaceful life is farm-like life. The city is viewed by many as less than desirable as a place to live and even less so as a place to engage serious development. Some city areas are obviously the results of prudent planning. Other areas are the result of indifference and greed on the part of developers and policy-makers. An "unconscious fatalism" is often apparent in people's responses relative to any kind of recovery in the inner-city. There are few communication channels with urban ministries and/or pastors. Seminaries have not generally focused on urban advancement. Many seminary leaders do not recognize the theology of urban mission and prefer to maintain present systems. The urban parish is not encouraged or recommended partly because funding would have to come from non-urban congregations. Even some administrators and teaching staff are indifferent to urban decline. The "Protestant deformation" reveals an anti-urban sentiment.[46] Even seminaries located in central-cities speak negatively of city-missions in light of suburban needs. Very few are acquainted with urban living at all. The church is thought of as a suburban institution (Amerson, 1984: 34).

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[46] The Protestant "Deformation" is a term used to describe the emphasis on "soul-winning" among Evangelical Christians in the last several decades as opposed to the advocation of social justice. Review David O. Moberg's *The Great Universal: Evangelism versus Social Concern* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972). Gilbert Winter analyzed this phenomenon in the early 1960s in his book *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches* (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

Because theological training is consistent with that suburban concept, it is not surprising that urban missiology receives little attention. Further, the realities of maldistribution can be overwhelming when one attempts urban recovery. An emphasis on "guilt-free" individualism often overshadows examination of the forces that cause inner-city turmoil. This challenges people at their core. Much of the education at seminaries, whether from a conservative, liberal, or evangelical perspective "remains heavily personalistic and fails to grapple with a theology of institutions and systematic evil" (Amerson, 1984:34). Counseling services and chaplaincies that advocate individuality at the expense of communal responsibilities receive much more credibility and support than those that question social structures. Those programs that do emphasize structural relationships and demand change lack an experiential component or the personnel to administrate the task (these programs are designed to inform not necessarily to encourage participation). The inability or unwillingness to understand institutional impact on urban life by religious communities, ultimately, restricts their capacity to advocate changes (Amerson, 1984: 34).

Although evangelicals preach and proclaim outreach, many are simply afraid to go into inner-cities. When one actually lives in the community that s/he affects, informed strategies develop. One can bypass a great deal of bureaucracy and develop incredible relationships pursuant to recovery. In essence, one becomes familiar with how things are done "on the street" in order to make the kinds of qualitative changes vital to recovery (Lehotsky as cited in Dueck, 1993: 34). This kind of engagement is evident at New Life Ministries in Winnipeg. Sponsoring interns to places like New Life, however, is not the

type of work that many denominations are willing to support. This section of Chapter Three ends with a "New Life" success story followed by a bit of practical wisdom.

The level of a congregation's commitment to change is important. One Maryland Avenue church in Winnipeg demonstrated its commitment in spite of the lack of sponsorship from its parent organization, the North American Baptists. The church was considered too small to qualify for funding. Canada Manpower and Employment, however, gave New Life Ministries a $100,00 grant in response to its efforts in the community. Educators, elected officials, Child and Family Services, and the police department were among those who supported the grant. Missiologist Dr. J. Bounce argued that inner-city home missions (as opposed to foreign missions) would never be well supported by suburban churches because they do not appear to foster a dramatic effect (as cited in Dueck, 1993: 32). Once people are confronted with the horrors of some core areas and what needs to be done, they simply lose interest. The reality of how massive a project recovery is challenges one's commitments. Harry Lehotsky of New Life Ministries has received death threats from landlords who were unsympathetic to his work. Notwithstanding, Lehotsky and others successfully kept a massage parlor out of their neighborhood as well as seven pawnshops and party halls. Consequently, the school board transformed a mudhole in the community into a mini-sports field. Most importantly, perhaps, the city established a registry of over 1,000 rental units with stringent landlords and tenant stipulations (Dueck, 1993: 32,33).

According to Lehotsky, police departments, government, and churches must work together. Many times, external agencies and case workers simply do not possess the motivation or dedication to continue with recovery efforts. He agrees with others who

claim that churches, among interest groups, have the highest rate of keeping children out of gangs. Church agents must be careful, however, not to attempt to remedy all of the city's ills. One must filter information to decide which battles to contend. Having fought many applications for businesses that "thrive on pain", he is assured that the church as an institution is not without energy. What it lacks is an informed vision. His theology is that people are fallen relative to God, but not without hope. The strength of the human spirit is strong despite any obstacle. Overall, he postulates that unified neighborhoods are probably the most powerful actors in recovery efforts. Lehotsky's motto "perfect love casts out fear, but perfect fear casts out love" (1982: 9,13) speaks profoundly to those willing to accept the challenge of this horizontal mandate. Section Four ends with practical wisdom offered by two St. Louis residents. The first interview was conducted with urban cleric Rev. Jeremiah Grimes, who heads Open Door Outreach Ministries. The second interview was done with psychologist and urban revitalization proponent J.A. Grimes.

Open Door's response to urban decay, at present, exists as a twenty-year plan. The Ministry intends to operate a drug rehabilitation center, a homeless shelter, an educational complex for pre-Kindergarten to grade 12, a radio and television ministry, a dispatch to native workers in the developing world, and an accredited ministry training center. The pastoral team is currently involved in adult basic education through job and literacy training and GED acquisition. These activities are performed independent of government. Open Door Outreach Ministries also conducts a mentoring program, without the benefit of government support, to children between the ages of 10 and 18. The ministry's staff provides counseling on familial, social, financial, and ethnic issues to its

"at-risk" youngsters in hopes of facilitating their livelihood in a "difficult" city (Grimes, 1998). To better understand St. Louis' experience with urban renewal and why it is a difficult area, a bit of historical context is fitting.

Thirty years ago St. Louis city had over 500,000 residents, but now has a population of only 350,000 people. The metropolitan area and surrounding counties has a population of approximately three million. It is one of three cities in the United States that is not located within a county. Because of this, the city is limited to the taxes drawn from within its boundaries. The founding fathers of St. Louis, who did not envision the interstate highway system, automobiles, or the consequences of suburban sprawl, legislated the city's boundaries, which have been consistently upheld (Grimes, 1998). Hence, in the past several decades the core of St. Louis has continued to decline.

Urban problems in St. Louis are multi-faceted (as elsewhere). St. Louis suffers from the politics of racism and classism. "White flight" in the 1960s sent a signal to the churches, and society at large, that a physical exit from the central-city was necessary. People do not understand flight as an exacerbation of decline as opposed to a response to decline; thereupon, there is little concern for the social needs of the core-community. Grimes surmises that churches in particular should pursue reinvestment into urban communities. In the eastern United States there are medical missions and bank/credit union initiatives underway by church groups. He relates the success story of a ministry in Mississippi whose congregation was 98 percent welfare dependent. The pastor of the church invested in a cattle ranch and employed members of his congregation as employees. All monies gained were reinvested into the church's locale and eventually the church purchased land to operate a small grocery store and beef "industry". Grimes says that

there needs to be a combination of church and state efforts. The early Jerusalem church utilized a system of economics that literally sustained its members. This commitment was the genesis of the term "deacon" or trustee. He comments that much Christian theology promotes individual initiative to improve one's economic status because of the value placed on work and thrift. When asked about churches' shortcomings regarding recovery, he notes that very few areas exist that have been completely restored. The plight of inner-cities is not entirely the result of church flight. Grimes maintains, though, that the fear of the city did not occur in isolation. The media has had an incredible affect on the portrayals of inner city criminal activity. He also suggests that urban churches consider participation in planned communities to deter the criminal element in inner-cities (Grimes, 1997).

Grimes relates that a church can give values and principles to individuals unlike any other group. The kinds of things that churches contribute are not always obvious, yet, they are real. Churches can provide the type of encouragement necessary to stimulate metropolitan concern for their central-city communities (Grimes, 1998). In this way, the Church's task is to demonstrate possibilities through fellowship, proclamation, ministry, and practical application. If the church-haven is to be inclusive, however, this type of engagement must involve accepting people as they are without condescension (Pinson, 1973:12).

J.A. Grimes agrees that the church should be an exit for the world. St. Louis's central city experienced a tremendous exodus in the 1960s that left pockets of poverty in the core. Grimes states that there is a great need for inspired leadership (both secular and spiritual) in central-cities. The church is a multiplex that ministers to all kinds of addictions such as gambling alcohol, over-eating, and mental health disorders. Churches,

however, should not fall prey to the idea that they can do everything. There are economic and political responsibilities that transcend churches that should be left to other agencies. Churches instrumental in recovery must never forget their central spiritual message. Reconciliation and rejuvenation cannot be lost as churches endeavor to have an impact on the society around them. The gymnasiums, tutoring programs, day-care centers, and homeless shelters are only part of the Church's calling. The cardinal component of the outreach call must be to express and encourage spiritual transformation. According to Grimes, without this emphasis all other work done by churches in the inner-city is in vain (Grimes, 1997). The last section of this chapter details more of the work done by churches in the context of social outreach.

3.5: THE CHURCH'S ENIGMA

"God, grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change . . . patience for things that take time . . . and tolerance for those with different struggles" (The "Serenity Prayer", attributed to Friedrich Oetinger, 1700s)

When Bill Bright began the Agape ministry in 1973, his goal was to reach as many people as possible with the message of Christ and to meet social needs. His intention was to see Christian professionals such as doctors, teachers, and trades people minister to society's disinherited. Since the ministry's inception, professionals have received religious training so that they can meet spiritual and material needs. One of its medical teams opened a clinic in a small village in the Philippines where many of the village's residents stole for a living; accordingly, it was known as "barrio of thieves". When the team finished its work after six months, much of the village expressed a profoundly religious experience. The crime rate dropped 80 percent and the barrio's name was changed to "Easter village" to acknowledge that a spiritual encounter had taken place.[47] Another example involves a couple's work with convicted criminals. Larry and Beverly Benton's prison ministry, which comprises a staff of thirty people, is spiritual in nature; yet, their approach encompasses the educational and emotional needs of inmates. The Benton's prison efforts actually developed as a result of a tragedy. Beverly Benton was followed from a shopping mall to her home by a former prisoner whose intention was to kill her to "force society to put me to death, and thus, in my own weird way, prove to the world and myself that society hated me" (Bright, 1981: 9, 10). Although Ms. Benton

[47] The Latin phrase, "After [but] not because of" might be applied to the decrease in this village's crime rate. Bright posits spiritual renewal as the cause. It must be noted that the thesis is not a dialogue on the effects of religious conversion per se.

suffered a terrible beating, she and her husband decided to make counseling convicted criminals their life's work.

Another outgrowth of the Agape movement is the Chicago-based ministry of Crawford Loritt. Loritt's goal is to mobilize black Christians in an effort to recover distressed ethnic communities across America. This program is also designed to meet spiritual, emotional, and educational needs. Bright indicates that the presentation of the gospel is his primary task, but stresses that there is more that Christians are commanded to do relative to a social agenda (Bright, 1981: 9,10).

The case of Atlantic City, New Jersey is an excellent illustration of what can happen when both the Church and the state fail to impact inner-cities. According to William Alnor, lotteries disproportionately affect the poor, many of whom he postulates spend what little they have standing in long lines for a chance to register a lucky number. Some studies report that people gamble mostly in hopes that they will never have to work. Unfortunately, many people who come to Atlantic City to win millions loose everything, some of whom end up in the Atlantic City Rescue Mission. Others not quite as externally unfortunate develop an addictive gambling habit that requires serious psychological treatment. Some of them are patients in one of the US's four compulsive gambling centers. These centers opened after the first casino appeared in 1977 and all of them are located within several hundred miles of Atlantic City. At one time, Atlantic City prided itself as one of North America's top family vacation centers. The many abandoned houses and homeless people that decorate Atlantic City smear that ideal (Alnor, 1988: 17,18).

Alnor asserts that the fault for Atlantic City's core-decay lies with the government, churches, and the casino industry. The US government allowed casinos into the area (at great social cost) based partly on promises by the casino industry that it would revitalize the areas in which it operated. When New Jersey voters rejected a referendum that would have legalized gambling in the entire state, the casinos united under the Committee to Rebuild Atlantic City campaign. The money raised from the industry was to be used to revitalize the city's ghettos, thwart crime, and assist the downtrodden. The new venture appealed to some minority groups and the elderly who saw promise in the casino's proposals. In reality, poor members of minority groups and elderly people were forced out of the central-city because of rising housing costs. The city cited "loopholes" in their contracts with casinos to explain why revitalization did not occur. Organized crime increased in Atlantic City, e.g., three of the city's most recent mayors were jailed on charges of bribery, (the last of whom, Alnor says, sold his office to the Mafia) and the murder and violent crime rates rose in direct proportion to the casino industry's growth (1988: 19).

The Church failed, from Alnor's perspective, to expose the inherent tragedy of compulsive behavior. Christian groups united to protest statewide gambling in 1974. However, when casinos were approved in 1978 many church groups fell silent. Actually, a number of church-goers in Atlantic City (and elsewhere) are regular gamblers themselves who were "blinded" by the striking buildings, thriving entertainment industry, and the glamour of life in a metropolitan city. Some churches even send their congregations to Atlantic City to raise funds or simply for social activity. Ironically, as the casino industry has risen so has the decline in churches. This has necessitated para-church organizations

like the Atlantic City Rescue Mission. Alnor contends that the Rescue Mission has helped countless people both spiritually and materially with "no strings attached". Various denominations (Baptists, Pentecostals) in the Eastern United States have banded together to provide human and financial resource support to the Mission. Bill Southrey, the Mission's Chaplain, believes that Christians foremost should take charge against gambling because of the societal and individual devastation it causes (Alnor, 1988: 19, 24-26). Pursuant to para-church organizations, another example of recovery activity involves the work of Atlanta renewalist Robert Lupton.

Robert Lupton is the head of a para-church organization called Family Consultation Service in Atlanta, GA. He moved his family from suburban Atlanta to urban Atlanta in response to the needs of the city's poor. Specifically, he deals with cases of domestic violence. The Atlanta Police Department appealed to the FCS (Lupton's ministry) and other urban churches to provide family counseling. Lupton (1989:34) finds that despite his efforts, a number of the families to which he is assigned maintain that they do not need counseling, and who cite the abundance of available welfare agency counselors. Welfare counselors are still seen by some government-dependent families as interrogators who degrade them--part of the painful process one endures to receive government assistance. Families frequently advance that their greatest need is employment, which was central to most of their fights. Lupton also comments on the impact that suburban churches can achieve.

Churches today, in his estimation, are materially more successful than ever before. Although much of that prosperity could go towards revitalization, many church attendees choose to invest in inflation-proof real-estate and certificates of deposit. Churches have

often built magnificent edifices without taking notice of the destitute just around the corner. Lupton also declares that the Church is the sole establishment "which, without irresponsibility, can expend all of its resources on great and lavish outbursts of compassion" (Lupton, 1989: 91). Despite the churches' economic advantages, there is considerable opposition to urban revitalization due to how cities are viewed.

Many pastors view the diversity of the city as a problem even though the homogeneous growth strategy is more difficult in today's diverse society.[48] The challenge to eliminate "sameness" in pursuit of "oneness" continues to be formidable. Consequently, Lupton's denomination has closed the doors of one church per year in Atlanta for the past fifteen years. The challenge of existence in a heterogeneous context has "forced" many faith communities to the suburbs. However, some churches across North America and the world are again realizing the cost and joy of sharing "everything" with those in need. Lupton generalizes that these emerging leaders are characteristically young, radical, and biblically sound, although there is not a tremendous emphasis on seminary training. As an example, since 1984 over six hundred churches have been established in the ghettos of London. Young leaders who are not usually associated with a specific denomination administrate these churches. These church groups have opened themselves to significant danger and trial by sharing their material resources, apartments, and lives with the disadvantaged. Despite their lack of support (both financially and morally) by the traditional religious establishment, they continue to grow and influence the inner-cities of London (Lupton, 1989: 117). Another model is again taken from the perspective of Harry

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[48] The homogeneous growth strategy is implicitly racist/classist and its appeal to segregation may reflect the discriminatory culture out of which it was created.

Lehotsky; however, this example reflects his experience in one of Chicago's distressed housing developments.

Lehotsky worked as an intern pastor at Holy Family Lutheran Church in Cabrini-Green, which is a housing project in Chicago. Described as "hell on earth", Cabrini-Green is located on Chicago's Near North side and houses over 15,000 people. Most of the residents are minors who live in households headed by single-parents with an annual average income of $4,000 (US). Unemployment, gang violence, and police corruption are some of this area's problems. On Sundays, the church conducted a breakfast program, Sunday school, and morning worship. During the week the Church operated a Headstart program, Homestart (an After school Program), youth groups, sports programs, legal aid, choirs and weekly visitations. Others in the Church were involved in Lutheran Congregations for Career Development, a detox program, community organizations, and conferences on inner-city ministries. In 1978, Holy Family Lutheran Church and four other churches formed a Housing Association (Chicago-Orleans Housing Association) and built a 307-unit housing complex. Lehotsky believes that inner-cities' larger problem centers on a society that tolerates the existence of places like Cabrini-Green. The religious, political, social and financial organizations that are indifferent to these areas are not without implication (Lehotsky, 1982: 9).

Fear is another major impediment that prevents any attempt at recovery. Some people are literally afraid to go into the inner-city. Lehotsky claims that he has been divinely protected in confrontations with gang members as well as from occasional bullets. It is also true that many inner-city residents fear being arrested or otherwise hassled should they chose to enter certain wealthy suburbs. It seems important for some in the privileged

classes to keep an out of sight/out of mind attitude, Lehotsky advances, towards the disadvantaged. Even the "conservative" gospel preached by some evangelicals is responsible for the plight of the inner-city. Many of these people are not concerned with the entire biblical mandate, which involves helping those in need. Much of the Christian conservatism is negligent of a biblical basis (Lehotsky, 1982: 13). Lehotsky does offer advice to church proponents of urban revitalization.

A church must not attempt recovery out of a self-centered "save the world" complex. Neither should it fall prey to hopelessness when confronted with the magnitude of the inner-cities' spiritual, economic, and social dilemmas. Churches have a responsibility to be informed on the causalities of poverty and racism and assist in the remedy of these problems. In conclusion, he says that one must be grounded in a vision of hope and real recovery for people. Towards this end, reconciliation on every level (individual and communal) is important (Lehotsky, 1982: 13). Concerning "total" recovery, in the early 1970s William Ellis, a New York attorney and lawyer for the US Lutheran Church, made several observations that are insightful today. Chapter Four elaborates on his findings.

IV

THE REALITY OF COMMITMENT TO REFORM

CHAPTER IV

THE REALITY OF COMMITMENT TO REFORM

"Them that's got shall have, them that's not shall lose, so the bible says and it still is true,
Mama may have, Papa may have, but God bless the child that's got his own"
(Billie Holiday, 1956)

4.1   Government Disenchantment

The changes necessary to remedy the social and economic conditions that caused

the riots of the mid-to late 1960s did not take place.   In 1967, President Johnson

appointed the Commission on Civil Disorders to study the uproar that occurred in the

previous two years. The Commission's task was to observe and make recommendations

concerning: (1) the origins of major civil disorders in American cities; (2) the creation of

strategies to prevent or control disorders; (3) and the proper role of authorities at the

local, state, and federal levels. The report was completed in March 1968. It stated that

white society has never completely understood its creation of, and continued contribution

to, America's ghettos. The report also stated that persistent discrimination in housing,

employment, and education thwart black economic success; white-flight is largely

responsible for the dilapidation of cities' public facilities and services; and finally,

bitterness and resentment fostered by blacks against society and whites, in particular, are

the result of segregation and poverty. The Commission outlined three things that could be

done.   The United States could either maintain its policies towards integration, the

unemployed, and the otherwise oppressed.   A second option would be to pursue an

enrichment policy, which would aim to improve the quality of urban life. A third option

would be to encourage blacks to move out of inner-cities to achieve integration. The Commission recommended the third choice (Ellis, 1973:22). Ellis also expands on the roles that US presidents played in the socio-economic dynamics of recovery. He cites the records of five US presidents with regard to urban recovery. This discussion begins with the record of President Eisenhower.[49]

President Eisenhower insisted that the decisions of the US federal courts be upheld relative to desegregation. Eisenhower, however, did very little to encourage the systematic elimination of segregation and discrimination. The Kennedy administration posited that the national government should be responsible for the elimination of exploitation, segregation, and discrimination. Ellis concludes that the Johnson administration was responsible for depicting a graphic portrayal of the plight of the dispossessed, passing civil rights legislation, and mobilizing the forces of the Departments of Justice, Education, and Welfare to rally against segregationists. The Nixon administration faced a different challenge. In order to win the full support of the Republicans, which included many in the South, Nixon sought to distance the national administration from identification with the fight for equal rights. President Nixon emphasized the maintenance of law and order through police enforcement. Nixon's administration gave little attention to corruption within the police system and the courts and failed to even remotely address the causalities of the violence it was determined to quell. During Nixon's tenure, the political coalition of minority groups increased. This resulted in the election and appointment of a number of blacks to city and state positions.

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[49] The late US Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall made telling comments about various US presidents' responses to America's racial problems. See the September 21, 1987 issue of Newsweek

These few strides shifted attention away from the national government's indifference towards participation in the struggle for justice (Ellis, 1973: 22,23). The last president Ellis observed was President Ford, whose administration, in his estimation, demonstrated very limited response to the Commission's recommendations regarding employment, housing, and welfare.

The Commission recommended that the federal government participate in joint ventures with cities and states to prevent duplication or fragmentation and create two million jobs over a three-year period (divided equally between the public and private sectors). The Commission also recommended that private employers train the hard-core unemployed at government expense and that the federal government give tax incentives for rural and urban development. This would give the rural poor an alternative to inner-city migration. The last suggestion was to remove artificial barriers to employment and advancement such as arrest records or lack of a high-school diploma in certain cases. During the early 1970's the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was tremendously ineffective and welfare recipients were publicly denounced as lazy. The will to do anything massive for the dispossessed or disinherited was lost. The Cold War, the Vietnam War, the anti-war campaign, the Civil Rights Movement, and space projects exhausted much of the nation's spiritual and psychological will to pursue major recovery at a national level.

Ellis argued that no major change for the oppressed was likely in the near future. Only an unparalleled national assault on poverty and violence could bring the United States close to its historically espoused ideals, e.g., liberty and justice for all. The

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Magazine, p. 33. His comments were similar to those of Ellis regarding Presidents Eisenhower and

technologically advanced and diverse economy of the United States along with its tremendous Federal Reserve System could render the resource support necessary to impact recovery efforts. Further, generation of the will to be taxed to the extent necessary to meet the whole community's needs is cardinal (Ellis, 1973: 23-25). Given the current political climate in North America, most specifically the United States, significant changes in political will affecting urban recovery seem unlikely.

Although the efforts of government and the private sector alike have not realized full recovery, R. Sifles (1973: 32) postulates that churches err if recovery is approached from the perspective that all inner-city problems can be solved in a single sweep. When the problems of the city are specified one can experience an overwhelming sense of guilt, despair, and/or confusion. Also, when honest efforts do not bring about the kind of change expected, many churches have resigned their efforts.

Twenty-five years ago, E. Schlachtenhaufen's (1973: 30, 31) conjecture was that churches can play a decisive role in building a new area-community based on a system of mutual dependence. A church can network through various organizations on a community basis, which would extend to the metropolitan level. In a normative sense, ministers can encourage their congregations to understand the term "community" in a broader sense. Accordingly, neighborhood relief groups can be formed to map out boundaries among groups for social action. The Church can be the catalyst whereby the "secular gospel" of materialism is balanced by servitude. Given that electoral power has shifted to suburban areas, inner-city residents need the support of their extended community more than ever

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Johnson.

before. With respect to the normative roles of churches, Dale Bertsch's analyses of non-profit organizations provide more insight into renewal initiatives.

Non-profit organizations play different roles relative to urban revitalization. There are several things to consider when focusing on their impact. Many of them are not charities and should not be expected to behave accordingly. They must be responsive to their charters and then to urban revitalization if it does not limit their first primary objective. Second, their decision-making structures are usually less complex than public processes. Third, non-profit organizations are more bound to their physical location than businesses, which can relocate at almost any time. Conceivably, the four major parties central to a revitalization project's success are non-profit organizations, city governments, private developers, and residents. The former two usually must take the leadership for a program while the latter use their resources and other skills to realize a project. Non-profit organizations are not redevelopers. However, the nature of their bureaucratic structures and their capacity to decide how excess capital and other resources are used give them an advantage over city government relative to revitalization efforts (Bertsch, 1984: 53, 61). Joel Lieske also highlights the impact of churches as change agents.

Many church programs, conferences, council decisions, resolutions, and public announcements posit a concern for the revitalization of the urban environment. For many years churches have sponsored efforts such as homes for the elderly, medical clinics, drug rehabilitation centers, and welfare services. Despite these and other demonstrations of concern the question remains, why haven't churches made more of a systematic impact? One argument is that churches are foremost spiritual institutions and address long-term, post-death issues. Another explanation speaks to the economic capacity of churches.

Many churches find that rising operation costs coupled with the loss of membership, hence revenue, limits their effectiveness. A third explanation speaks to the failure of government programs such as the War on Poverty and Model Cities. If these did not realize their goals with government support, how could the smaller initiatives of church groups affect change? (Lieske, 1984: 71, 72).

Rather than attempt a more direct role, many churches in the US have established lobbies that support the legislation presented by other socially conscious groups. They transfer their social agency to the state, which acts as a surrogate. Between 1960 and 1980 five American administrations devised plans and procedures to eliminate poverty, welfare dependency, illiteracy, unemployment, crime, familial deterioration, crime, and urban decay. Currently, most of these dilemmas are at all time high. Two church organizations may provide a microcosm of successful recovery. These groups are the Church of the Saviour and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

The Church of the Saviour is a small congregation of less than 200 people in Washington, DC. that was founded by Gordon Cosby in 1947. Its chief operation is Jubilee Housing, which is a "self-help" housing project located in the impoverished Adams-Morgan neighborhood located less than two miles from the White House. The Adams-Morgan complex is a multi-ethnic region whose business district was spared the devastation of the 1968 riots. Most of the buildings date back to the early 1900s when it was an affluent area that often housed diplomats. By the 1950s, the neighborhood had become a reserved, middle-class area whose average income was close to the city's median. By 1970, 40 percent of the residents' income was below the city's median. In the mid-1970s due to a 1972 rent control ordinance, gentrification, population changes, and

real estate speculation, Adam-Morgan had become a desirable commodity again. In 1980, low-rent one-bedroom housing was rehabilitated and sold as condominiums for upwards of $95,000 (US). As a by-product of gentrification, Adam-Morgan's poor faced being displaced. In remedy, the Church of the Saviour sought to aid the neighborhood's poor (Lieske, 1984: 72-74).

The Church of the Saviour has initiated twelve distinct urban ministries and boasts the nation's first church-operated coffeehouse (the Potter's House, circa 1960). The group's goal was to facilitate racial healing and provide solutions for the many homeless people in the district. In the early 1970s one of the church members obtained a real estate license and focused her attention on two deteriorated buildings (the Ritz and Mozart) behind the Potter's House. The Church borrowed $10,000, purchased the buildings, and engaged the services of a "visionary" developer. Shortly thereafter, the District of Columbia informed the Church that the buildings had 947 housing violations that needed 50,000 hours of work to repair. Residents were enlisted to serve as technicians, floor managers, and committee members until the cooperative housing development was completed in 1977. Between 1978 and 1981, the Church purchased several complexes that now comprise 213 units of low-income housing in six dispersed building locations. The Jubilee administrative team also engineered social service support facilities. These include a health center operating on a relaxed fee basis servicing over 20,000 patients annually; a pre-school program; a cooperative that employs residents in manual service jobs; a home for Christians living with mentally challenged adults; a committee which gives away $3,000 monthly in emergency funds; an employment

counseling service; and a pre-natal service center for pregnant women and mothers with toddlers three years old and under (Lieske, 1984: 74-77).

The second religious organization effecting change in a city is the Mormon Church. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, or the Mormons, is an international body of over five-million people. The headquarters is in Salt Lake City, Utah. One of this church's major goals has been to revitalize the downtown area around Temple Square in Salt Lake City. At one time, Temple Square faced decline. It is now a vibrant metropolitan cultural center. The pioneering and construction of Salt Lake City is almost exclusively the work of the Mormons who envisioned building a virtual paradise on earth. For the most part, the city is a cosmopolitan archetype of well-manicured residential and business districts. However, out-migration in the late 1960s, extensive use of the automobile, and increased prosperity took vital resources away from downtown. By the mid 1970's, the downtown area was in desperate need of revitalization. Because Mormons regard the city as a sacred place, Salt Lake City has a "unique resource for the city's long-term survival—a guardian class that cares" (Lieske, 1984: 80-82).

In an effort to promote proper land-use around Temple Square, the Church is often willing to accept lower than average returns on investments. In addition, the church built the Crossroads Plaza Shopping Mall and is responsible for many other smaller projects. For two decades the church has supported economic development and job creation for its educated members.[50] A moralistic fiber and supportive Mormon personnel have maintained the city in light of what suburban sprawl and other detriments have done

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[50] Relative to its emphasis on education, the "Mormon region", which includes all of Utah and parts of Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, and Nevada, boasts the highest number of college graduates per capita in the United States.

to other cities (Lieske, 1984: 83-85). Although these are exemplary examples of church efforts, Bill Gothard expounds that the reason governments must affect recovery at all is because the Church has failed to realize its Commission.

According to Gothard, clinics and expensive public hospitals replaced the Church's "free" labor of care. Government welfare replaced the Church's commission to charity. Gothard notes that after every major revival that has swept North America, the Church has renewed its commitment to society's disadvantaged. Like Fr. Kunkel, he concurs that many hospitals, rehabilitation and social centers, and orphanages had a Christian genesis. After the 1857 Awakening, the attention of the Christian community turned to women and children's rights, poverty, liquor traffic, slum housing, and racial hatred. Thousands of ministries and conventions were birthed to deal with these issues.[51] In England various denominations linked arms to protest the exploitation of children and the poor in the labor force (as cited in Pratney, 1983: 292-294).

The most poignant example of these efforts was the creation of the Salvation Army. William and Catherine Booth attempted and realized, "almost every type of outreach and care for the poor and downtrodden imaginable" (Pratney, 1983: 295). William Booth even devised a social reconstruction plan for the revitalization of the nation of England. Catherine Booth used an alias and the power of the printed page to reach thousands of people across Europe with a message of temperance and community service. Their son Bramwell Booth and his wife Florence managed the "Refuge", which was a

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[51] Consult Winkie Pratney's book, *Revival* (Lindale: Whitaker, 1983) for a discussion of religious activism and the end of the Civil War. For more extensive reading on the social impact of revivals review George A. Rawlyk's, *Wrapped Up in God: A Study of Several Canadian Revivals and Revivalists* (Burlington, ON: Welch, 1988).

haven for runaways, street people, and prostitutes. Florence Booth's exposure of the widespread criminal prostitution ring in England was a bombshell that highlighted the tremendous human rights abuses in the nation and the continent of Europe as a whole. The Booths, along with two other concerned citizens, tracked, confirmed, and exposed the slave trafficking of hundreds of young girls. The Criminal Law Amendment Bill became law just a month after 343,00 signed the Salvation Army's petition that ended one of England's most horrific practices (Pratney, 1983: 295,296, 298, 299). Another poignant example of the potential of churches as change agents involves an international Association known as Christian Community Development (CCD).

Christian Community Development is a human investment strategy based on the idea that human recovery is central to any recovery effort. It aims to provide a sense of security and positive reinforcement to deprived households in the urban environment. CCD is an outgrowth of the ministry of John Perkins, which began in Mendenhall, Mississippi in 1960. Mendenhall was a rural town that battled problems of systematic racism and poverty. Perkins and his wife, Thelma Perkins, began to encourage youngsters in their church to attend college and return with the skills necessary to attempt recovery in Mendenhall. Several of their parishioners returned to start a health center, a school, businesses, and a legal practice. They also started a pastor development project designed to facilitate economic development and job creation via black church leadership. This program has led to economic development projects and job opportunities throughout Mississippi. Voice of Calvary (VOC) is one such ministry based in the inner-city of Jackson, Mississippi. This Ministry includes a place of worship, a home ownership/family development program, a health center, and a thrift store. The Christian Community

Development Association even began an International Study Center in the late 1980s for the benefit of those abroad interested in community development. CCD is most recognized for its "incarnational" approach, i.e., people are encouraged to move into inner-cities. FCS Ministries was developed in response to Robert Lupton's desire to "recover" young, black males.[52] Lupton's work is to "re-neighbor" the decaying Summerhill community of Atlanta. Urban worker Ted Travis' work in Denver, Colorado's Five Pointe Communities implores a similar revitalization strategy (Perkins, 1995: 23,24).

The Christian Community Development Association, in concert with other faith communities and public agencies, is quite active. One of this organization's goals is to address the unemployment rate in inner-cities. For example, in 1989, the male unemployment rate in West Jackson, Mississippi was 58 percent. Part of CCD's strategy is to facilitate job accessibility and create jobs. CCD is different from other social service agencies in that it stresses indigenous leadership. Its objective is not to encourage a sort of gentrified relief effort, but rather to enhance the leadership potential of incumbent residents. In this way, distributing or re-distributing vital resources within urban environments is key. There are at least two perspectives on redistribution. The "Robin Hood" approach is to take from the rich, who have benefited from biased systems, and redistribute those goods to the poor. The opposite approach suggests that giving money to the poor is not the most viable solution. Proponents of this approach claim that the welfare system created a dependence that has been difficult, if not impossible to break.

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[52] Black male studies form part of the curricula at some academic institutions, particularly historically black college and universities in the United States. Albany State University (Albany, GA) maintains a Center for the Study of the Black Male.

CCD organizations surmise that what needs to be distributed is not money, but a work ethic and moral values. Redistribution can thus be defined as "providing opportunities to the poor to obtain the skills and economic resources to be able to work their way out of poverty, whatever the cause for their situation" (Perkins, 1995: 25, 33).

According to the late Dr. Tom Skinner, if the money generated in the American black community was regarded as a gross national product, the black community would represent one of the richest countries, financially, in the world. Given that many blacks live in inner-cities, CCD's goal is to encourage the turnover of money within black urban communities and to help incumbent residents create local businesses that employ inner-city residents (Perkins, 1995: 42).[53] One such enterprise is Thriftco, Inc. located in Jackson, Mississippi.

Thriftco was initiated by Voice of Calvary Ministries. Manufacturing and retail stores in the city give away extra clothing and other items to workers at Thriftco, which sells them at reduced prices. The business began as a non-profit co-op that was heavily in debt after five years of inconsistent management. Fourteen years after its inception, Thriftco is now a thriving business with thirty-six employees and sales of $350,000 annually. Bethel New Life in Chicago, another CCD, sought to remedy the inadequate housing problem of its urban community. The ministry reasoned that though affordable housing was an impressive goal, one needed to be gainfully employed to afford any housing. The ministry began a home care service for the elderly that currently employs over four-hundred people. An example of turnover is as follows: a neighborhood resident shops at one of his community's stores. Then, the community store pays one of the

indigenous residents who works at the store. That employee purchases items at the Home Resource Center, which is also located in the same neighborhood. A Center worker then goes to the neighborhood grocery store to buy groceries, etc. This is how financial resources would "turn over" in these neighborhood development projects. Other success stores involve church work in partnerships with the business community (Perkins, 1995: 140, 141).

One CCD worker opened an ice cream store, a travel agency, and a housing program for homeless men in Harlem, New York upon completion of his studies at Harvard. Some churches have even been able to engage business owners to support church work. Chicago's Lawndale Community Church receives a portion of the funds from a neighborhood pizza parlor that employs incumbent residents. Bethel New Life, Inc. encourages industries to relocate plants to its urban neighborhood. However, they request three things of business leaders: first source hiring; full disclosure and environmental safety tests; and a good neighbor policy, i.e., supporting community day-care and "adopt-a-school" ventures. Eastside Community Investments in Indianapolis, Indiana is another CCD that developed an industrial site, attracted new industries, and thus stimulated economic growth in that region. New Community Corporation in Newark, New Jersey, built a shopping center that includes a major grocery store chain. Coastal Enterprises, Inc. in rural Maine, another CDC, assists secular business owners in organizing revitalization plans, accessing below market interest rate loans, and finalizing marketing strategies in its community. Other examples include Deliverance Evangelistic Church, which operates Hope Plaza in North Philadelphia; the Baptist Minister's Union in

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[53] Some economists cite that the US dollar turns over only once in the US black community. The turn-

Kansas City, Missouri, which organized Baptist churches in its community to develop a strip mall, Linwood Shopping Center; and the Women's Self-Employment Project, another service organization that fosters an entrepreneurial capacity among low-income women of Chicago (Perkins, 1995: 140, 142, 145-147, 153-156).

In 1989, another organization committed to inner-city change was formed in Omaha, Nebraska. Men Against Destruction, Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder (MAD DADS) was organized by urban men in response to youth crime and urban distress. These men act as street patrols in some of the most dangerous areas to runaways, gang members, and drug dealers. With no more than "walkie talkies, a conversation, and a prayer", they have been successful in thwarting gang efforts, and in some cases, clearing gang turfs. Maintaining 45 chapters in 13 states, they are involved in community beautification, gun buy-backs, rehabilitation for released criminals, and chaperoning block parties. Local government support in Florida led to thirty chapters in that state alone. In 1990, former President Bush recognized MAD DADS as one of the nation's "Thousand Points of Light". Although black men founded the organization, local chapters of MAD DADS reflect the ethnic makeup of their communities (Meers, 1996: 16, 17).

A Canadian example exemplifies the work of churches in response to the ice storm in Eastern Canada in January 1998. Anglicans, Baptist Convention, Fellowship Baptists, the United Church of Canada, Pentecostals, Evangelical Lutherans and other church groups raised more than $8 million for relief in Eastern Canada earlier this year. The Canadian Lutheran World Relief, the Christian Reform World Relief, and the

over rate is said to be at least twice that in other communities.

Mennonite Disaster Service sent hundreds of generators, thousands of blankets, and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to assist in this region's immediate physical recovery. Local churches also provided havens for those without heat (Fledderus, 1998: 39, 41).

At times, though, the Church has actually contributed to social problems. The slave trade was once regarded as a Christian service to the many inhabitants of Africa who needed to be civilized. However, Gilbert H. Barnes's study of the genesis of the anti-slavery movement details considerable evidence of faith communities' impacts relative to the abolition of the slave trade. The 1857 Revival stimulated such controversy over the slavery issue that it had an affect on Abraham Lincoln's election as president and ultimately led to the Civil War. Barnes' recovery of lost papers and letters document that the faith of a few determined, religious people stood against an entire nation in order to uphold "higher, spiritual laws" (in Pratney, 1983: 300). Having discussed the impact of religious organizations, most recently on the slave trade, the research moves to present a synopsis of the author's summer cooperative education experience in Albany, which once had more slaves per capita than most cities in the state. This discussion balances the research with an analysis of the complexities involved in confronting urban decay.

4.2: PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM A Co-Op EXPERIENCE

In 1997, the author's co-op experience was done at a resource center in the southern United States, which functioned through many collaboratives, namely churches. This experience highlighted fragmentation (class/ethnic) regarding revitalization policy and provided valuable insight into what really happens when recovery is attempted. It also

portrayed the significance of churches as often the only institutions willing to address certain consequences of decline.

The East Albany Family Resource Center is located on Albany, Georgia's East Side. Albany is a city of approximately 98,000, most of which live on the North, West or South side of town. East Albany has an abundance of car garages, dilapidated buildings, slum housing, landfills, and low-grade grocery and department stores. Two institutions stand out in East Albany, Albany State University, a historically black university and the James H. Gray Civic Center. In an effort towards community economic development, Albany State University (then Albany State College) was given a five-year grant by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to establish a resource center for East Albany's disadvantaged. The East Albany Family Resource Center opened in 1997 and has introduced a number of programs to the East Side. Because of the limited availability of office space, the Center has operated out of several rooms in Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church. The Center operates programs such as legal referral for East Albany residents, first-time home buying classes, a GED program for adults, job readiness training, and career/personal counseling services. The Center also pays utility and medical expenses for first-time clients, provides bus vouchers for those who need transportation across town, and serves as a food bank for area residents. The finances necessary to operate these services come from a number of collaboratives, half of which are churches and/or para-church organizations. It is through this Center that the author gained primary knowledge of the complexities involved in urban revitalization. Most of my experience highlighted the tremendous internal hindrances that limit change agents.

Having witnessed attempts at urban development, it is beneficial to identify the impediments to change that occur within relief agencies that hinder the revitalization process. These include apathy, rumor control, internal constraints, personnel job security, limited resources, the problem of continuity, and lack of political will. Concerning internal constraints, frequently I was met with a sense of indifference on the part of the staff, all save one of whom were East Albany residents. A number of things posit the causalities of apathy; my speculation is that in this case the staff was physically and metaphorically out of touch with the needs of the people they served. Job security was another problem. Because the Resource Center was funded by a grant, most of the staff members realized that their term of employment might be temporal. Rumors abounded that the Center could be closed at any time, coupled with an approaching expiration date on the use of Pleasant Hill's facilities. Limited resources were another dilemma. Some of the church's partners such as Second Mount Olive Outreach Center had a policy of distributing items such as money or food to its congregates first. Often, the Center had to turn people away because it could not respond to some of the immediate needs of its clientele. The problem of continuity and lack of coordinated political action were other observable impediments. Pursuant to the practice of recovery, there are ideological factors that can limit or advance the work of non-profit organizations. Section 4.3 details some of the advantages of inner-cities and measures taken to enhance the potential of inner-city residents.

4.3: ADVANTAGES OF THE INNER-CITY AND STRATEGIES FOR RECOVERY

"To let nature take its course is an established policy. To seek what is best for all
concerned and to provide for it is surely a much more acceptable goal"
(Daniel Moynihan in Larsen, 1973: 14)

From an economic standpoint, the issue of recovery will be addressed by an

emphasis on the advantages of the inner-city. Though inner-cities are often viewed as less

than ideal, they in fact exhibit enormous potential. Regarding business efforts toward

inner-city recovery, the cumulative impact of small businesses, infrastructure, health-care

facilities, office buildings, and the public transport system may provide sufficient incentive

for investment. Further, many North Americans continue to "rethink" the supposed

advantages of suburban living with an eye towards gentrification (Porter and Sweet,

1984).

Rolf Goetze points out that recovery involves a number of small things such as

raking leaves, cleaning windows, trash disposal as well as restructuring entire

neighborhoods. Expertise, capital, human capacity, and other resources must be brought

to bear if recovery is to be realized. The absence of any of these limits future remedy.

Maintenance of present systems, in reality, prevents recovery. Business investment and

property owning must be revamped in order to restore "homeostasis". Urban

revitalization efforts are weak if they merely address the externals of decay. The

cosmetics of recovery are often the central focus in revitalization efforts, when the most

pressing problems are those of low-income households and insufficient demand. Previous

assistance programs did not emphasize this type of primary action; hence, many

revitalization programs simply stopped after community development block-grants were cut. Goetze emphasizes that communities were dependent on public funds because government discounted the contributions of local communities/neighborhoods. Independence was not encouraged and local potential lay dormant. It cannot be overstated that " know-how," resources, and the motivation central to revitalization are lacking. A different theme highlights the affects of gentrification on urban revitalization (Goetze, 1984: 43).

In the early 1980s, the rate of suburban development diminished. Goetze posits that lifestyles are changing such that city life is increasingly seen as "chic". Increased demand for urban areas can act as a stimulant to revitalization. However, incumbent residents must be grafted into the "new city" process. On an absolute level housing today is expensive. North Americans are embracing more of a European concept of space and community, i.e., close proximity and increased accentuation on infra-structure durability (Goetze, 1984: 43,44). Yet, gentrification does not occur without tremendous social cost.

One of the criticisms of urban renewal and revitalization programs is that they do not profit the middle and low-income people who lived in decaying areas before recovery began. Too often these people were pushed to other low-income areas or become homeless. Improving a neighborhood and retaining people from various income levels has been difficult. Bertsch contends, though, that poor people today have advocates that they did not have in previous years. They have the capacity through legal recourse and independent organizations to hinder or completely halt a revitalization program that does adversely affects them. However, if systems maintenance requires that incumbent

residents be displaced, non-profit organizations and developers are limited in what they do.

Although many city governments are unable to attempt mass relocation, they can bring about some concession through collaboration with non-profit organizations. Bertsch stresses that non-profit institutions such as universities, hospitals, research foundations are not charities. Their mandates (in this case) are to teach, provide health care, and perform research. In some cases, non-profit organizations are faced with "crises" in which it is advantageous to work with government revitalization efforts (Bertsch, 1984: 61,62).[54] Governments, especially at local levels, should seek in turn to work with these types of agents in view of their urban crises. Human development is also part of some recovery attempts. Fundamentally, human development is designed to make people more meaningful contributors to society. It also centers on the acquisition of skills relative to labor markets. This encompasses the promotion of education and job training. The goal of these programs is to encourage self-reliance as opposed to chronic government dependence. Granted that economic independence is more difficult for some, human investment through public resources is important. This type of investment is also important because central-city residents often encounter sets of problems that frustrate economic self-sufficiency and restrict access to resources (Wagner, Joder, and Mumphrey, 1995: 38,39).

A case study of human investment as a renewal technique was observed in Baltimore, Maryland by the NCRCC. As a center for medical and biological research,

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[54] Several programs were employed among city governments and these types of non-profit organizations. Washington University Medical Center in St. Louis, Yale University's projects in the New Haven community, and Battelle Memorial Institute's Renaissance projects in Columbus, Ohio provide examples.

businesses and civic leaders in Baltimore decided to focus on educational opportunities for urban blacks in the life sciences. They advocate increased funding for public school education and search for new institutional means to achieve their goals through joint-efforts with individual black churches and the American Association for the Advancement of Science to enhance Baltimore's Black Church Project. Specifically, the Project supports science training through church-based education programs. It develops agendas for practical science, mathematics, and computer programs; trains churches and neighborhood-based organizations to cultivate existing science programs; and assists churches in networking in order to stimulate local patronage for science-based training and activities. A few churches in southeast Baltimore have begun to "pilot" the Black Church Project without government support. In 1991, the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) formed a constituency with prominent black ministers, business representatives, and government officials to analyze the "institutionalization" of the Black Church Project and to study various ways to incite black youth to study the life sciences. With partial support from Baltimore's Office of Employment Development, the Community College of Baltimore established a Life Sciences Center. The Center's major intention has been to prepare city residents for technical employment (Wagner, Joder, and Mumphrey, 1995: 41-43).

According to M. Orr, as Baltimore (like other cities) continues towards an industrial-city path, human investment initiatives are foremost on its local agenda. BUILD, a community-based establishment whose roots are in black churches, was instrumental in shifting Baltimore's urban policy in the direction of human investment strategies (as cited in Wagner, Joder, and Mumphrey, 1995: 43). Successful

redevelopment in Baltimore attests that public-private collaboration is workable, particularly with black churches in the US. On a more somber note, the city of Baltimore is resource-limited in what it can attempt relative to any revitalization effort. Many cities choose to privatize in response to a great need to reduce spending and possibly improve services (Wagner, Joder, and Mumphrey, 1995: 44, 45). Exactly how the privatization of services will affect programs such as the Black Church Project is unclear. In light of the previous discussion, what then could the Church's role be?

To understand the potential for the Church to act as an inner-city change agent, the thesis cites comments from three Albany, GA residents that portray their conclusions about the nature of inner-cites and recovery. According to Jackie Allen, public relations specialist and director of the East Albany Family Resource Center, churches encourage personal and social responsibility; however, the impact of a church depends on its size.[55] In her view, the larger the church the greater the pool from which to draw resources. Allen also theorizes that the US federal government has begun to give churches and or non-profit organizations money to provide urban solutions. Consequently, churches have been successful in certain areas of recovery such as housing and counseling services. In her view, the US government is relinquishing much of its capacity to voluntary organizations relative to revitalization because some policy-makers perceive it to be more cost-effective and/or they do not want this responsibility. Towards this pursuit, projects

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[55] The average church in North America has an active membership of only seventy-five people. Further, less than ten percent of North Americans churches have over two hundred members. The comments of Allen and Heard (and, later in the discussion, J. Cribb) on this point may only reflect their experience in Albany. For example, the Church of the Saviour's membership roster is close to the average American church's size and is still effective in urban recovery. A church's effectiveness, ideologically, has more to do with a congregation's commitment to reform as opposed to its size.

increasingly are handed to states or local governments to make urban recovery decisions. Allen also remarks that churches in Albany have done little beyond meeting basic necessities. Many of the larger churches in Albany simply pay people's bills such as utilities and rent and sponsor homeless shelters (Allen, 1997).

Allen makes other comments about the structural issues that plague inner-cities. According to Ms. Allen, America is actually a classist country that uses race as a discriminatory factor. Persistent poverty and the indifference to this issue are largely the result of conservative ideologies in American society. Concerning equity, integration means sharing the bounty. The underlying cause will not allow for macro-level change. With regard to the impact of churches, Allen advances that one key is to gain access to information at the appropriate time. This is compounded by the reality that many church activists, at least in Albany, do not know the policy-making process well. She says that many within the church do not question the causalities of poverty conditions. Another impediment specific to black congregations in Albany is that it has been difficult for the black community to mobilize and develop a corporate vision. Despite these factors, Allen does declare a positive outlook for the future of the urban environment. She calls it a cycle. Cities undergo a period of decay (the storming period) followed by the norming period, which is characterized by economic growth and urban development. Thus, she concludes that there is hope for inner-cities in general, and Albany specifically (Allen, 1997).

Former Albany city commissioner and mayoral candidate Juanita Cribb makes other observations. Cribb reasons that welfare actually kept people out of the job market in the 1960s and 1970s, creating a formidable class struggle. Her premise is that before

welfare programs began, black communities relied on their churches. A strong sense of community acted as a safety net. In her perspective, the church is responsible for the soul and body of the community. She concurs with Rev. Heard and J. Allen that in Albany the smaller a church institution, the less likely it is to accomplish recovery. In remedy to Albany's urban decline, she advocates certain aspects of gentrification. Foremost, Albany's inner-city needs the human and material resources that stimulate economies (Cribb, 1998).

Albany City Commissioner Howard makes similar comments about recovery efforts. According to Howard, the role of black churches centers on the abilities to access the community and to intervene at all social and economic levels. The church has a "total" impact on individuals, he argues, because many of their problems are spiritual in nature. It is also important for churches to understand the broader political and social actors that affect recovery. The ability to work with government agents in a way that encourages resource support is vital. Churches interested in revitalizing decaying urban environments must understand the implications of political involvement and be abreast of the appropriate channels through which to network. Concerning the underlying causes of poverty, Howard maintains that the black community in Albany and elsewhere in the United State must recognize the shortcomings of the moral majority agenda. In Howard's viewpoint, much of their agenda is discriminatory in nature. More specifically, the elimination of programs designed to offset the effects of past racist policies could prove to undo the progress of the Civil Right movement. It is important that human investment strategies be implored by black churches, particularly in the area of education (Howard, 1998). Howard holds the opinion that urban churches are central to the recovery process. To be

more effective, they must become more expert in policy-making procedures to realize mass change.

Having reviewed a variety of arguments regarding the "change-agent" role of churches in the North American city, attention must turn to how this role might be accomplished. Section 5.1 presents a number of recommendations concerning policy analysis, land-use planning, and the nature of the "inner-city". Section 5.2 summarizes the research.

V

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

"The greatest need in America is to strengthen its voluntary and private aspects [relative to] political processes [because] our domestic public problems cannot be solved without a greatly expanded voluntary and private organizational attack upon them" (Former secretary of HUD, George Rommey, in Larsen, 1973: 15)

5.1: Planning an Informed Menu

David Bartlett concludes that the technology responsible for creating inner-cities is also responsible for making them "unlivable". He says many people believe that what is possible is normative regardless of the consequences. Cities sprout around factories that pollute waterways and the air (1980: 9). Central-city regions are often regarded as akin to waste sites, i.e., vivid examples of everything negative about society. Suburban sprawl has only encouraged this perception. In 1970, the US National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders declared that the United States was headed toward two separate and unequal nations, partly as a consequence of a mass exodus from central cities. Jobs, capital, political power, and other resources vital to sustain life in the city accompanied this exodus. The politics and social mores of the 1970s enlivened "benign neglect". Because of these, the conventional wisdom on urban revitalization is that inner-cities are unrecoverable. The social decline of the city resembles a disease that is no longer confinable within urban areas and threatens to engulf society at large (Porteous, 1980: 11). According to the Urban Institute, the face of poverty in urban neighborhoods has changed. The number of whites who reside in these areas increased by twenty-nine percent, while the number of blacks affected decreased by twenty percent. This means that what stimulated poverty-concentration in majority black neighborhoods in urban areas may

signal the same in smaller suburban, and predominately white communities. Researchers have downplayed this possibility, missing an attempt to tap into what may prove to be an important investigation (Urban Institute, 1993: 11). Despite the "bad news", the thesis emphasized the work of the Church as part of the renewal process. It is yet the case that larger theoretical frameworks, in general, affect change agents. Discussion is next given to two theoretical camps that explain policy analysis relative to any change agent.

The "applied" social scientist aids the "pure" social scientist by exposing problems beyond the realm of theory. The applied scientist, however, must be open to the ideologies and theories that inform the variables "pure" researchers presume to be workable immediately. The applied social scientist has an added benefit. S/he can experience the system that s/he helps to reform through "systemic linkage". This occurs when a change agent becomes part of the environment or system that s/he seeks to rectify (Montgomery and Siffin, 1966: 47). Improvement efforts, however, do not occur in isolation. One must understand the larger societal cultures in which churches and other change agents exist.

Economic viability is the potential of a community, via fruitful and reciprocal relationships, to maintain itself (Lupton, 1993: 36). Thus, the process of "bonding" is important to understand urban environments. One needs to become a part of the urban context in order to have full agency as a recovery agent (Ortiz, 1992:3). An essential component in any recovery effort is introspection and action. In this way, change agents along with community residents can envision responses to what they perceive needs to be done. This process begins as an intuitive exercise and graduates into broader evaluation of religious, social, and governmental systems that affect the urban context. A virtual

"spiral" develops that encourages a pedagogy of observation, consideration, and responsive action (Linthicum, 1991:61).

The complexity of social cultures and their impact on individuals is difficult to qualify. It is even more challenging to understand how larger systems impact inversely these cultures, e.g., poverty or dependency cultures. This highlights the limitations of any change catalyst's ability to bring about macro-level reform (Shein, 1996: 440). It has been argued that the urban environment is a result of economic processes based on competition. The system works such that there can be no redistribution without someone "losing".[56] The goal, then, is to structure urban markets to maximize the potential of the entire urban community, either through allocative or re-distributional decisions (Wilson, 1969: 8,9).

Given the accomplishments of some church groups, any change agent involved in urban recovery should consider the work of CCD programs. There are numerous CCD projects in place that have a profound grass-roots impact on urban neighborhoods. Granted that there have been failures of CCD programs as well as successes, their strides are worth serious contemplation. The efforts of the Mormons in Salt Lake City and those of the Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C. are also prime examples of the positive agency of church groups alongside government. The author recommends that governments, when applicable, seek joint efforts with churches as a means of promoting urban revitalization. This type of church-state alliance will not be the "cure-all" collaboration for urban recovery. It is one of the most capable partnerships for

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[56] In theory, however, if the "pie" increases some can maintain their position while others increase their income.

community improvement available. Another method of realizing community-improvement is through participation in planning (land-use or otherwise) decisions.

One type of planning is adaptive planning, which is based on the idea that people possess such a limited understanding of urban systems that it is hopeless to track the impacts of single decisions on the entire urban system. In this light, any change agent could have some influence on urban crises. In that churches' efforts tend to reflect the societies in which they exist, their work is consistent with the adaptive planning sentiment, i.e., "do what seems best at the time". Another type of planning is called normative planning, which is based on the idea that policy-makers and planners have sufficient knowledge of urban systems to make macro-level decisions. Those within the Church who embrace a normative ideal for society at large, such as the Christ *of* Culture and the Christ *Above* Culture camps, stand ready to suggest to policy-makers what should be done. The amalgamation model, which blends the normative and adaptive approaches, implies that there is a general consensus among people concerning what needs to be done in a community, though people sometimes lack the analytical training needed to envision macro-level planning policy (Wilson, 1969: 35). If anything, Church work in urban areas can be linked to the amalgamated approach. Various church programs and activities are based, fundamentally, on the premise that these will in some way effect change. Still, being able to articulate policy alternatives in the "language" of public policy discourse for some churches, conceivably, is problematic (this is most specific to less-affluent churches).

Democratizing planning was posited as a US recovery strategy in the late 1960s. Greater insight into the function of urban systems helps planners project how such systems can be recovered. This insight eventually becomes public knowledge, appears more

frequently in political discourse, and results in demands for greater citizen participation. Some argue that increased public participation is a hindrance to a plan's implementation. This usually occurs when citizens are not as informed as they should be or when development plans are unclear; consequently, some people resist inclusive planning on those grounds. Others declare, however, that simple solutions to recovery are fundamentally problematic because they address diverse and deep dilemmas (Wilson, 1969: 34).

The Church could be influential in the role of advocacy planner. The idea of advocacy planning emerged in the mid-1960s. The idea was that interested groups could work with land planners to develop a more comprehensive concept of the public's best interests. An argument against advocacy planning was that the clientele advocacy planners represented were not necessarily representative of disadvantaged groups. Because one of the goals of client groups is to broaden its base, the interests of the middle-class and others that may not have been compatible with low-income interests can over-ride the latter (Pike, 1994: 1,2). Beyond planning, policy analyst L. Pal delineates ten suggestions for policy analysis that are important to the overall recovery process.

The first is to "dive deep". Problems must be approached with a sense of historicity. Analysts should know all of the relevant issues and assumptions surrounding their assignments. The second suggestion is to know the legislative and judicial facts that surround one's issue. The third tip is to "count the stakes" involved. Public policy functions such that some will benefit to the disadvantage of others. Fourth, analysts must be broad-minded relative to their efforts if creative, "bold and fresh" ideas are to surface. Focusing on a larger context can redefine problems and thus solutions in imaginative

ways. The fifth suggestion is to be cautious of experts. Many experts develop institutional biases as the result of working in specific fields and may not be open to novel approaches.[57] The sixth recommendation is not to discount common sense in a pejorative way as too simple to be worthy of consideration. The seventh suggestion is to maintain a preference for "small solutions". An incremental approach can be a viable solution to address certain issues. Pal's eighth tip is to target segments of problems that government affects best and the ninth suggestion is to structure choice into policy. Government often reduces choices to achieve broad goals for a diverse community. Analysts should remember that a plurality of perspectives complements policy analysis. The final recommendation is to maintain a balance when contemplating solutions (Pal, 1992: 277-280).

All of these tips can be used to analyze churches, particularly the first two suggestions. One would expect certain legal conflicts in the US church-state relationship. However, in Canada where religious leaders have at times served government in an advisory, or elected capacity, the problem is not as great. The fourth suggestion to be broad-minded is the open door that churches need in the policy-making process. In this way, creative solutions to revitalization are abetted. The fifth and sixth solutions speak to the idea that churches should not be overlooked as change catalysts and agents. Their historical and contemporary impact assumes a familiarity with social work that is important to any change agent. Pal's seventh suggestion is unique to churches. Often, it is the closest visible institution to the poor and can "speak" with considerable authority. Targeting specific problems and structuring choice into policy will allow specialization in

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[57] The recent poisoning of a lake in California by government officials is an example of "expert-itis".

areas where this works best. The balanced perspective realizes that churches cannot conceivably influence every urban issue. Therefore, policy makers could prescribe policy areas for churches accordingly.

5.2: SUMMATION

"One can dogmatically prescribe Jesus as the cure for the inner-city's ills [but] unless the church is willing to be the purifying and healing agent . . . its proclamations are like a tinkling cymbal" (Keith Phillips, 1977: 14)

The Social Gospel Movement began in the 1890s and reached a zenith during WWI. Social Gospel proponents viewed social problems as a consequence of defects in society's institutions. One observer claims that after creating and maintaining a myriad of social organizations, the Church experienced practical exhaustion, particularly after the Great Depression. In Canada, during the 1950s and 1960s, the government assumed the role of caregiver through unemployment insurance, universal health care, social programs, and pensions for the elderly. The current political climate, however, is one which governments (in North America) are beginning to relinquish social responsibilities back to churches and other organizations (White, 1997: 25).

The churches of North America have a definite role to play in inner-city revitalization. Conversely, the greater forces that make recovery efforts necessary are not likely to disappear in the near future. The nation-state has been described as one of many social movements; that is, the mobility of urban life and work-related industrial processes may lead to state erosion (Magnusson, 1997). What happened to Detroit, the South Bronx, and to some extent Winnipeg, could occur throughout North America. Cities today "specialize" relative to industry and employment opportunities. Beyond speculation about the fate of the nation-state, the permanent underclass faces a considerable challenge.

This paper asserted two arguments. First, despite government attempts to address "urban problems", there are more extensive rudimentary social and institutional problems that limit their success. These contribute to decay and limit the success of any

change agent's recovery efforts. Prominent theorists at the turn of this century promoted a conservative, non-sympathetic attitude towards North America's poor. This attitude remains intact as the Twenty-first Century approaches. The urban context is beset by basic perceptions about city life that continue to limit even well intentioned attempts at recovery. Housing discrimination, city planning, philosophical differences about the causalities of poverty, and open neglect of central-city areas restrict any change agent's capacity to improve urban conditions. What is worse is that change agents are not exempt from the notion that cities are unrecoverable. Although maldistribution lies at the root of the urban enigma, one should not expect that the earth's wealthy would soon abandon their fortunes in a mass redistribution campaign. The author stresses that institutions do exist that claim to bear, in part, such a responsibility, one of them being segments of the Church universal.

Following the first assumption, because of these forces churches are important, and often necessary change agents, along with other organizations, in the remedy of urban decay. Church communities play a telling role relative to society's attitudes and responses to urban decay. In some cases, such as in Albany or Baltimore, where there is an appreciation for church involvement in the push for renewal, churches appear to play a necessary role. In other communities, such as in Winnipeg, though individual churches are active in inner-city work, they act more so as complements to government activity. Much of what churches do goes unnoticed (hence the thesis); yet, churches are necessary, from the policy-making standpoint, relative to the type of contributions they make. The Church, indeed, addresses less obvious needs that governments cannot or do not address. The thesis has shown that churches are important to urban renewal through their activities,

both historically and contemporarily. Their unique contribution has to do with human recovery via spiritual renewal.

In some communities, such as the Ojibwa and the black community in the United States, the spiritual tradition cannot be divorced from renewal/community restoration efforts. This is not to say, in any way, that spirituality is unimportant to other communities; also, the research does not infer that spirituality is only important to the disadvantaged. It can be the case that some policy-makers may be religious in a personal sense, but do not apply that temperament to secular policy analysis. What makes churches necessary, to some communities, is their blend of spiritual nurture and social outreach. Churches imply that the solutions to urban problems involve the remedy of the "soul". If the solutions to urban dilemmas is less susceptible to empirical observation and more so involve an intuitive understanding, the Church is expert at that type of inquiry. Though not everyone embraces an appeal to spirituality as an urban renewal strategy, a fair number of people within the human community steadfastly advocate this alternative.

It is probably the case, particularly in "religious" areas of North America, that churches are assumed to participate in renewal via human investment. Because church buildings are often used for non-religious purposes, e.g., meetings, community center activities, their literal presence fills a niche. Beyond that, churches perform a symbolic service. They manifest through services such as homeless shelters, soup kitchens, and rehabilitation centers. The Salvation Army in Canada, which receives $53 million of its $73 million budget from provincial governments (Salvation Army, 1997:33) is just one example of the influence that the Church has on the urban environment. Though it is

argued that these are "Band-Aid" responses to recovery, one wonders what would exist in their absence.

The author recommends that a panoramic view of both agents (churches and governments) is necessary to uphold the assertions of the paper. Development or redevelopment is understood differently dependent upon context. The capacities of churches vary because inner-city recovery encompasses many things. Conceivably, some aspects of recovery are best realized through governments and other social service agencies. There is a plurality of opinion among pastors about church impact. Some view churches are very effective as change agents. Others perceive churches to play a moderate or lesser role because they exist in demoralized environments. Gary Walsh's, president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, posits that churches are most effective as an "agent of grace". He deducts that injustice is a systemic and structural problem and governments are not absolved from their duties to cultivate a civil and impartial society (Dinsdale, 1998: 37).

Many city leaders have not given much thought to churches as change agents. Some simply do not understand the complexity of church work beyond conversion tactics. Churches have failed on some points because of unethical conduct within its ranks. It is also conceivable that its message of hope and transformation is redeeming even if the messengers are less than perfect. The histories of Canada and the United States differ on the perceived roles of religious organizations. In Canada, religious groups were expected to at least comment on policy, even if they were not instrumental in the administration of policy. In the United States, these groups play a different role because the separation of

church and state disallows certain kinds of activities. In both cases, churches have their greatest impact on the poor.

Although many North Americans express an affinity to the ideal of rural pastures, rural poverty is a continuing phenomenon. Also, "renewalists" must not overlook the fact that the urban ghettos of the United States (and to lesser extent Canada) sprouted in two of the most affluent societies in the world. From a religious standpoint, ninety percent of the world's church related mission work originates from North America. If North American churches fail to impact their cities, they cannot "preach anywhere else with integrity" (Shepherd, 1974: 18).[58] Those churches that are active in recovery efforts must not simply focus on a theology of urban transformation. They must also recognize the underlying assumptions that determine how adverse inner-city conditions are created, in a physical and metaphorical sense. Although theologies differ within the Church about its responsibility to the urban world, it has a history of social activity sufficient to haunt its disinterested members. Those individual churches that accept the challenge of recovery also have an obligation not to participate consciously in the causalities of what they seek to repair.

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[58] Ironically, much of what is regarded as "foreign mission work" from the North American context can also be viewed as urban and/or rural recovery from a sociological perspective. I advance this idea based on my research as a missiologist.

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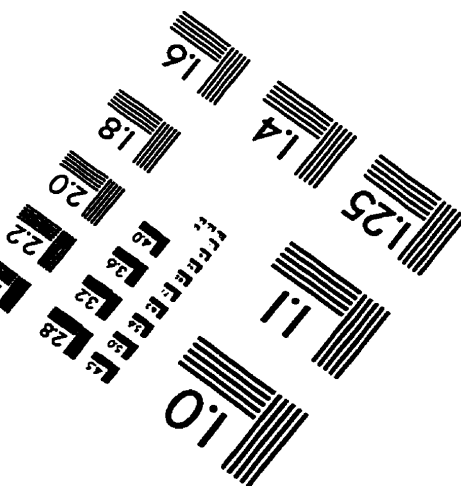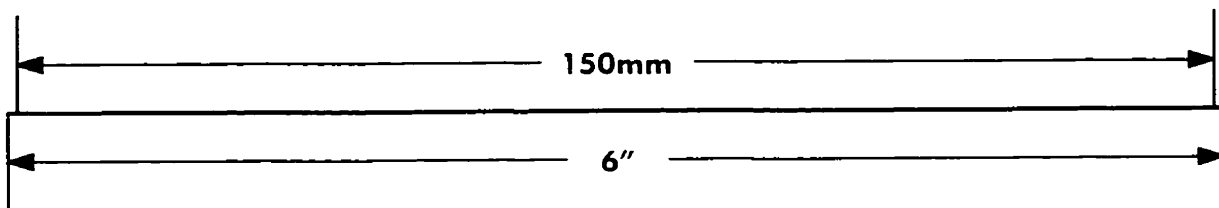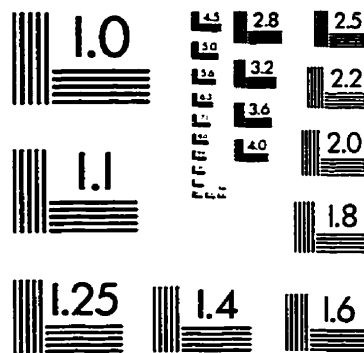Lupton, Robert D. (1989). Theirs is the Kingdom: Celebrating the Gospel in Urban America. San Francisco: Harper.
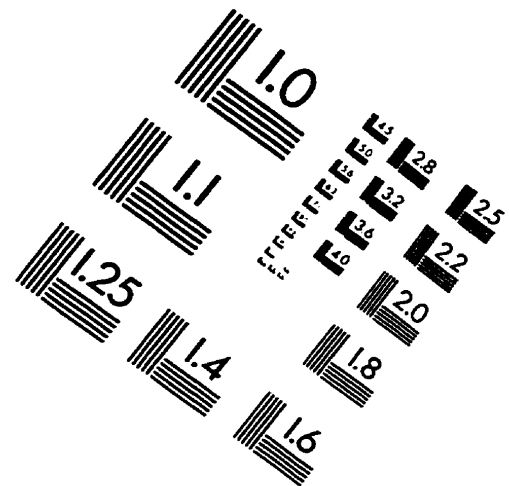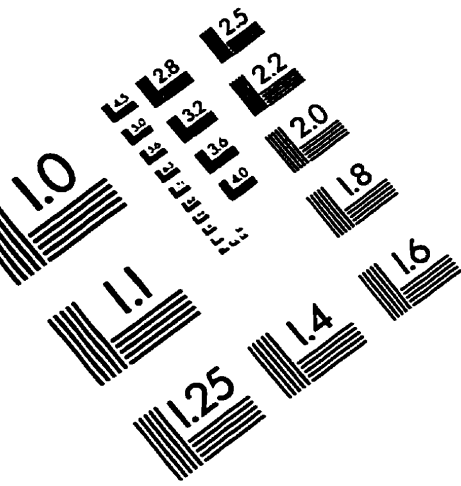
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IMAGE EVALUATION
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