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CHURCH PLANTING IN NEW YORK CITY: A CASE FOR
A GLOBAL CITIES CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY

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APPROVAL SHEET

CHURCH PLANTING IN NEW YORK CITY: A CASE FOR
A GLOBAL CITIES CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY

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To my wonderful wife, Carmen.

It is because of her love and support that this thesis was made possible.

It is also because of her love for the great cities that

I have been propelled in my desire to understand them more.

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PREFACE

Though my name appears as the author of this thesis, there is no way that it could have been completed without the support of my professors, colleagues, and family. Dr. Chuck Lawless, my supervising professor, has been a diligent and faithful friend throughout this process. He has challenged my assumptions at every turn and has graciously provided keen insight and direction. Professors J. D. Payne, Timothy Beougher, and Adam Greenway have also been valuable in this process.

My colleagues in the Billy Graham School have also proven to be a constant source of encouragement. Many hours of class time and personal time have been spent discussing the ideas found in this paper. I am sure there were times when my friends were tired of hearing about the “strategic nature of New York City,” but nonetheless they endured in their friendship and helpful critique.

My brothers who are diligently serving in New York City as church planters have been a constant source of inspiration. They are the true heroes, on the front lines daily seeking to bring Jesus to a lost. Tim Keller, though we have only met briefly, has been a constant model and encourager through his writings and sermons.

The people of the Southern Baptist Convention, whom I have the privilege to serve at the North American Mission Board, are passionate about the Great Commission. It is a joy to serve a convention of churches that cares so deeply about the people of the world. I pray that this thesis will serve the SBC well as we engage the twenty-first century urban world.

There is no way this project would have been completed without the support of my family. My parents have been a constant source of encouragement. My wife, Carmen, has made it possible to complete this project. She has encouraged me when I

wanted to give up. She has challenged the thinking contained on these pages and lastly she was my partner as many of these ideas were played out in the real life laboratory of New York City. Our children have graciously endured many hours away from their daddy as he was working this project.

Finally, I thank God for the endurance, ability, and resources to complete this project. As will be evidenced in these pages, I serve a God who loves people and therefore loves the global cities. It is my prayer that the vision that God had for the cities in Jeremiah 33:9 would be a reality in our generation: “Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it; and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.”

Aaron Bradley Coe

Atlanta, Georgia

May 2012

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the last twenty years, a movement has transpired in Manhattan. Birthed neither by the entertainment industry nor by the result of a Wall Street announcement, this amazing movement entails the growth of the evangelical church in center-city Manhattan. In a day and age when the much of the Western church is experiencing a decline in attendance,¹ the church in Manhattan is on the move, advancing not retreating. What has been the cause of this? Is it the fact that Billy Graham visited twice for citywide crusades?² Is it due to ministries, like the American Bible Society and Campus Crusade for Christ establishing offices in New York City?

The reality is that the growth of evangelical Christianity in Manhattan can be directly attributed to a concentrated church planting effort.³ According to the staff at Redeemer Presbyterian Church's church planting center, the evangelical population of Manhattan has grown from less than one percent in 1990 to more than three percent by 2009.⁴ Redeemer also reports that over 40 percent of churches in center-city Manhattan

¹Ed Stetzer, "FACT 2008 Congregational Research" [on-line]; accessed 7 July 2010; available from <http://www.edstetzer.com/2009/09/fact-2008.html>; Internet.

²Billy Graham has hosted two crusades in New York City since 1990. In 1991, he hosted a crusade in Central Park, and then in 2005 he hosted the final crusade of his career in Flushing Meadows Park. Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, "Ministry Info" [on-line]; accessed 15 July 2010; available from <http://www.billygraham.org/crusadecities.asp>; Internet.

³Values Research Institute, "Report on the Church Population In Central City Manhattan," *Movement Day*, September 2009 [on-line]; accessed 19 July 2010; available from <http://www.movementday.com/496157.ihtml>; Internet.

⁴Ibid.

have been planted since 2001.⁵ A concentrated church planting effort has been one of the major contributing factors for the expansion of God’s kingdom in New York City.

Thesis

In the last decade, America’s largest Protestant denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, has entered into a decline:

If the 50-year trend continues, projected membership of SBC churches would be 8.7 million in 2050, down from 16.2 million last year. Using U.S. Census projected population figures, SBC membership could fall from a peak of 6 percent of the American population in the late 1980s to 2 percent in 2050.⁶

These trends, however, are not just endemic only of the Southern Baptist Convention; according to a FACT study conducted in 2008, mainline church attendance has fallen considerably as well.⁷

Between 2005 and 2008 fewer congregations report that they are spiritually vital and alive, that they have seen worship attendance growth of 2 percent or more, or that they have a clear mission and purpose. Just 19 percent say their current financial health is excellent, down from 31 percent in 2000 (note the FACT2008 survey predates the market collapse that began late in 2008). The down tick in vitality holds across faith families.⁸

Based on what has occurred in Manhattan, I propose that one way to reverse this trend in the SBC and other denominations is to plant new churches in key cities. In this project I show that an effective and strategic evangelism strategy is church planting within the context of the global city.⁹

⁵Ibid.

⁶Rob Phillips, “Southern Baptists Face Further Decline without Renewed Evangelism Emphasis” [on-line]; accessed 7 July 2010; available from <http://www.edstetzer.com/2009/06/new-sbc-data.html#more>; Internet.

⁷Ed Stetzer, “FACT 2008 Congregational Research” [on-line]; accessed 7 July 2010; available from <http://www.edstetzer.com/2009/09/fact-2008.html>; Internet.

⁸Ibid.

⁹According to *Foreign Policy Magazine* a global city is determined by “how much sway a city has over what happens beyond its own borders—its influence on and integration with global markets, culture, and innovation.” “2010 Global Cities Index” *Foreign Policy Magazine* [on-line]; accessed 24 August 2010; available from

Church planting must reemerge as the primary evangelistic strategy among existing churches, mission boards, and agencies. C. Peter Wagner famously wrote, “The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.”¹⁰ More recently, Timothy Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City wrote, “A vigorous and continuous approach to church planting is the only way to guarantee an increase in the number of believers, and is one of the best ways to renew the whole body of Christ.”¹¹ Keller concludes, “nothing else—not crusades, outreach programs, parachurch ministries, growing mega-churches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes—will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting.”¹² Keller, whom I will explore extensively in this thesis, certainly has credibility in making this statement considering his role in what has transpired in NYC over the last two decades.

Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird add to the conversation in their book, *Viral*

Churches:

Multiplicative church planting is evangelism. This isn’t the latest trend, theory, or program. Church planting is the dominant method of evangelism in the book of Acts, and the key to spreading the Gospel to every people group or population segment, large or small, in every corner of the planet.¹³

Stetzer and Bird report on a *Christianity Today* article:

An intriguing article in *Christianity Today* talked about the most effective kinds of evangelism in recent decades. The report started with the peak era for evangelistic crusades (such as Billy Graham, tent revivals, and so on) and worked forward to

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/11/the_global_cities_index_2010; Internet.

¹⁰C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest: A Comprehensive Guide* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1990), 7.

¹¹Timothy Keller, “Why Plant Churches?” [on-line]; accessed 29 March 2010; available from <http://www.redeemer2.com/resources/papers/why%20plant%20%2011%20Leaders.pdf>; Internet, 1.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 20.

recent years. Fifty years ago, if church members wanted to do a better job of sharing the Gospel with their neighbors, they invited an evangelist to come to town. ‘If we get people to come,’ the thinking was, ‘the preacher will get them saved.’ As fewer and fewer churches used such approaches, people found new angles, such as bus ministry or the personal sharing of Gospel tracts. The landing point for current times? ‘Today church planting is the default mode for evangelism,’ *Christianity Today* concludes. Most denominations, when asked what they are doing to grow, ‘will refer you to their church planting office,’ it explains.¹⁴

Many commentators point to why church planting serves as the most effective form of evangelism. Drew Goodmanson, a church planter and network leader, offers a rather frank insight as to why church planting is effective in evangelizing people:

Fat cats don’t hunt. When church plants begin, there are a smaller number of people, and they often have a much greater external focus. Larger churches often see a great necessity for taking care of the people that are already showing up. Therefore, a larger church tends to spend more time on internal programs. Certainly larger churches may end up having more people visit each week, but these numbers are quite low proportionately to the effectiveness of church plants.¹⁵

Stetzer and Bird’s assessment of baptism rates among Southern Baptist church plants backs up Goodmanson’s claim:

Today the clear emphasis of most church planting is on evangelism, which the fruit confirms. The Southern Baptist Convention is not only the nation’s largest Protestant denomination, but also the denomination that plants more churches annually than any other group. Among *established* Southern Baptist churches, for example, there are 3.4 baptisms per one hundred resident members, but their *new* churches average 11.7. That’s more than three times more! Other denominations offer similar numbers. It’s not hard to conclude that the launching of more new churches will lead more people to Christ.¹⁶

In 2000, Tim Keller launched the Redeemer Church Planting Center (later renamed Redeemer City to City) in New York City. Keller rooted his vision for the church planting center in his firm belief that the primary way God will build his kingdom is

¹⁴Ibid., 23-24. Also see Tim Stafford, “Go Plant Churches of All Peoples: Crusades and Personal Witnessing Are No Longer the Cutting Edge of Evangelism,” *Christianity Today* 51 (September 2007): 9.

¹⁵Drew Goodmanson, “Are Church Plants the Most Effective Form of Evangelism?” [on-line]; accessed on 15 July 2010; available from <http://www.goodmanson.com/church/are-church-plants-the-most-effective-form-of-evangelism/>; Internet.

¹⁶Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 24-25. Emphasis in original.

through new churches. Keller's deep conviction about church planting comes from his desire to be true to God's Word and methodologies. He establishes, "We plant churches because we want to be true to the biblical mandate."¹⁷ He then points to several examples of this mandate. First he says, "Jesus' essential call was to plant churches."¹⁸ He further contends, "The Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20) is a call not just to 'make disciples' but to baptize. In Acts and elsewhere, it is clear that baptism means incorporation into a worshiping community with accountability and boundaries (cf. Acts 2:41–47)."¹⁹

Keller believes that "the only way to be truly sure you are increasing the number of Christians in a town is to increase the number of churches. Many decisions are not really conversions but are only the beginning of a journey of seeking God."²⁰ Therefore, he surmises it impossible to know if a person is truly converted to Christ unless he or she is assimilated into the body of the church:

New churches are by far the best way to reach 1) new generations, 2) new residents, and 3) new people groups. Studies show that newer churches attract new groups about 6-10 times better and faster than older churches do. It is because when a church is new, younger and newer people can get into its leadership faster. It is because when a church is new, it has no tradition and can experiment. It is because when a church is new, its main goal each week is not to satisfy the desires of the long-time members (there are none!) but to reach new people. As a result new churches are enormously better at reaching new people in a city.²¹

Additionally, the need exists to be strategic with where new churches are planted. Specifically, the need is to go where the greatest number of people can be found

¹⁷Keller, "Why Plant Churches?"

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid. Though I believe that Keller makes a compelling case for his argument, his assertion that the "only" way to be sure that the number of believers is increasing in a town is through new churches is a bit over reaching. I would suggest he use "best" instead of "only."

²¹Timothy Keller, "Advancing the Gospel into the 21st Century" [on-line]; accessed 7 April 2010; available from http://www.redeemer2.com/themovement/issues/2003/dec/advancingthegospel_1.html; Internet, sec. 1.

and where the greatest potential for influence exists: global cities. In many cases global cities have some of the lowest percentages of the evangelical population. In the United States there are nine cities that make *Foreign Policy Magazines* Global Cities Index.²² Of those, only two cities have an evangelical population of more than 10 percent. Both of those cities, Atlanta and Houston, are located in the south and southwestern part of the US. Table 1 displays a list of Global Cities, their rank on the *Foreign Policy* list, and the number of evangelicals as a percentage of the population.²³

Table 1. Global city ranking and evangelical population percentage

City	Rank	Evangelical Percentage
New York City	1	3.0%
Chicago	6	5.0%
Los Angeles	7	6.2%
San Francisco	12	3.4%
Washington DC	13	7.9%
Boston	19	2.5%
Miami	33	7.0%
Houston	38	10+%
Atlanta	40	10+%

In addition to these statistics, shifts in the world population have highlighted the need for a renewed focus on urban church planting. For the first time in history, more

²²“2010 Global Cities Index.”

²³Rank numbers obtained from the “2010 Global Cities Index.” Evangelical percentage for New York City obtained from Tony Carnes, “The Making of a Postsecular City: The Manhattan Evangelicals Part One” [on-line]; accessed 15 November 2011; available from <http://www.nycreligion.info/?p=1165>; Internet. Evangelical percentage for Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington DC, Boston, Miami, Houston, Atlanta obtained from J. D. Payne, “From 35,000 to 15,000 Feet: Evangelical Statistics in the U.S. and Canada: A State/Province, Metro, and County Glimpse” [on-line]; accessed 22 November 2011; available from <http://www.northamericanmissions.org/?q=node/525>; Internet.

people live in cities than in the rural areas of the world.²⁴ According to Johnny Grimond of *The Economist*,

Within ten years [by 2017] the world will have nearly 500 cities of more than 1m[illion] people. Most of the newcomers will be absorbed in a metropolis of up to 5m [illion] people. But some will live in a mega-city, defined as home to 10m[illion] or more inhabitants.²⁵

Seemingly, one indicator as to why evangelicals have experienced a lack of growth in church membership, attendance, and baptisms is the fact that they are simply not geographically present alongside the majority of people.²⁶ The fact that the world is predominantly urban, yet evangelicals find the majority of their US adherence in states that lack key urban areas could serve as an indicator as to why they are declining.²⁷ Frankly, the missiology of a US evangelical seems to be more at home in less urban areas of the country.

This thesis seeks to show that global cities have to become centrifugal to missions strategies. Specifically, a place like New York City must be given top priority when it comes to missions planning. There are three basic reasons why this is the case. First, it is biblical. A quick survey of the New Testament reveals that early Christianity

²⁴Don Hinrichsen, "The World Comes to Town" [on-line]; accessed 4 May 2009; available from <http://www.peopleandplanet.net/doc.php%3Fid=1054§ion=5.html>; Internet.

²⁵John Grimond, "The World Goes to Town," *The Economist*, 3 May 2007 [on-line]; accessed 4 May 2009; available from <http://www.economist.com/node/9070726>; Internet.

²⁶According to the 2008 Annual Church Profile of the Southern Baptist Convention, there are currently 12 states that have one Southern Baptist church for every 4,000 people in the state. All of these 12 states are located in the south and mid-western parts of the US, and only three have populations greater than 7 million (North Carolina, Georgia and Texas). For Southern Baptists to have one church for every 4,000 people in California (pop. 37 million), they would need to start 6,969 churches; in New York (pop. 20 million), they would need 4,557; in Florida (pop. 19 million), they would need 1,729; and in Pennsylvania (pop. 13 million), they would need 2,788.

²⁷The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, "Percentage of U.S. Adults who are Affiliated with the Evangelical Protestant Tradition" [on-line]; accessed 22 November 2011; available from <http://religions.pewforum.org/maps>; Internet.

was largely an urban movement (Acts 13-28). Rodney Stark addresses this issue in his book *Cities of God*:

All ambitious missionary movements are, or soon become urban. If the goal is to 'make disciples of all nations,' missionaries need to go where there are many potential converts, which is precisely what Paul did. His missionary journeys took him to major cities such as Antioch, Corinth, and Athens, with only occasional visits to smaller communities such as Iconium and Laodicea. No mention is made of him preaching in the countryside.²⁸

Second, Christians need to reach the global cities for the cities; sake. The cities are full of people, many who do not know Christ. There is a Christian responsibility to take the gospel to these people. There are tremendous needs and opportunities in the cities. Again, if a Christian were to take a look at the global cities in the US, the majority of them are 7 percent or less evangelical (see Table 1).

Third, a concentrated effort of church planting in the global cities is necessary for the sake of the world. Cities hold a vast amount of influence over the rest of the world; what flows out the cities will have an impact on the outer regions. D. L. Moody understood this when he said, "Water runs downhill, and the highest hills in America are the great cities. If we can stir them we shall stir the whole country."²⁹ People all over the world are taking their cues from the major cities. The world mimics the major cities. If the church is not in the city, the rest of the country will suffer.

With great urgency, global city church planting should be considered as a priority for evangelistic missions strategies. Global city church planting will prove to be a great use of time, financial resources and missionaries. To illustrate that possibility, a study of the church planting movement in New York City is the building block for this thesis.

²⁸Rodney Stark, *Cities of God: The Real Story of how Christianity became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), 19.

²⁹William Revell Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1900), 263.

Background

With my longstanding interest in church planting, my intrigue toward global cities church planting was heightened by my experiences in New York City. From 2003 until 2011, I witnessed an evangelistic church planting strategy implementation personally. Upon my arrival in New York, my primary ministry was with the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. As a part of the New Hope New York Strategic Focus Cities team, our primary task was to implement evangelism strategies in metro New York City over a three-year period.³⁰ The strategies involved mass evangelism, collegiate evangelism, church strengthening, prayer, volunteer mobilization, community restoration, and church planting.

The next phase of my ministry in New York City began in 2006 as a church planter, during which time I was directly involved in the task of getting a new church off the ground. These vantage points allowed me to observe the strengths and weaknesses of different evangelism strategies in an urban context.

The Strategic Focus Cities approach to evangelism in the city had five strengths. (1) It heightened the Southern Baptists Convention's sensitivity to existing needs in NYC. (2) It mobilized a broad range of churches and church members from across the SBC for ministry in New York City. (3) It touched many individual lives in some way through the differing approaches to evangelism. (4) It mobilized church planters to plant in NYC. (5) It generated millions of dollars of partnership capital for ministry in NYC.

There were also some weaknesses to this approach, however. For example, the program was given an unreasonably short time frame for strategic impact (three years).

³⁰Strategic Focus Cities was an initiative of the North American Mission Board, the Southern Baptist Convention's domestic mission agency that developed and implemented mission strategies in several North American cities from 1999 until 2008. New Hope New York was the emphasis that was developed for New York City that began in 2002 and concluded in 2006. The team for New Hope New York included team leaders that gave direction to evangelism, church planting, prayer, collegiate, and church strengthening strategies.

Next, it had a lack of focus—many good strategies, but no primary focus. Then, existing New York City churches viewed this strategic emphasis as a way to extend the ministries of their church and were disappointed when resources were allocated in other areas. Finally, millions of dollars were spent on programs that had little potential for sustainability. With very few exceptions, the only strategies that were sustainable beyond the Strategic Focus period were the church plants.

In 2010, I also interacted with International Mission Board missionaries in London and Paris. I spent eight days with missionaries in two global cities and was fascinated by the stories about their experiences and passion for the people to whom they are ministering. They shared about their evangelistic encounters as well as personal evangelism strategies. Yet, I was shocked to learn that there had been no church planted in the time that they had resided in their respective countries (one for over eight years). My observation in this case is that goal of church planting stopped short with relationship building and gospel proclamation.

Given this collection of experiences, the question becomes should missions strategies have church planting as the end result? Also, given the strategic nature of global cities, could a case be made for focusing a major portion of the mission strategy and resources in these places? More directly, should the Southern Baptist Convention develop a church planting strategy that focuses on cities like New York City? Over the course of this thesis, I plan to explore the following in a deeper way: (1) factors for determining if a city is “global;” (2) the “common culture” that New York City shares with other global cities;³¹ (3) historical precedents of global city church planting; (4)

³¹Global Cities share a common culture. What makes a global city “global” is the reality that a person could go from one of these cities to another and get along just fine. It is not that these cities share everything in common, but they do share enough in common and this gives them a level of distinction. When *Foreign Policy Magazine* rated their top global cities of 2010 they looked for cities that were “integrated with global markets, culture, and innovation.” In other words, they looked for cities in the world that shared a unique culture and influence. “The Global Cities Index 2010.”

possible positive ramifications of a global city church planting movement on the culture at large; (5) unique challenges of global city church planting; (6) current effectiveness of Southern Baptist church planting efforts in New York City; and (7) New York City as a model for what a successful global cities church planting strategy might look like in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Research Methodology

My analysis began with a look at primary sources that have been written related to this topic. I drew heavily from the work of Timothy Keller, the founding Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City; Rodney Stark, Professor at Baylor University and a leading expert on the first-century church as an urban movement; Mac Pier, the Founder of Concerts of Prayer Greater New York; Tony Carnes, researcher with the Values Research Institute; and Redeemer City to City, which houses a vast array of writing focused on planting churches in global cities on its website.

Second, I surveyed a host of different sources to prove the influence that New York City has on the world's culture. I looked specifically at the impact the media and entertainment industries headquartered in this city have on the rest of the world.

Last, I worked with personnel at the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist Convention of New York, and the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association to discover their primary missions strategy in New York City from 1957 to present, the sustainability of non-church planting missions strategies, and the effectiveness of church planting in their strategy to reach New York City.

Conclusion

Global Cities represent the changing landscape of the culture of the world. They are a dominant force that shapes the way people think and behave. Their influence extends far beyond their geographical boundaries, which gives them a tremendous amount of power.

Overall, evangelicals represent a small percentage of the population of the global cities. Therefore, the influence of evangelicals in these cities and by default the rest of the world is small. This thesis proposes that a way evangelicals can reverse this trend is to become more aggressive in planting churches in global cities. Focused church planting will increase the evangelical population of these cities, subsequently increasing their influence on the world.

CHAPTER 2

NEW YORK CITY AS A GLOBAL CITY

What determines whether a city is “global”? Are these cities determined by population? Are geographical boundaries responsible for their global distinction? Or, is there some other marker that sets a global city apart from the rest? Also, what is it about New York City that makes it a global city?

Over the course of this chapter, global cities are defined and then investigated. The discussion looks at some of the key distinctives that give a city its global moniker, followed by an examination of the facts that make New York City the leader among the world’s global cities.

Global Cities Defined

The survey of descriptions of a “global city” that follows reveals that scholars focus on varied aspects when defining this concept. To summarize, though, global cities are those cities in the world that influence the way the rest of the world thinks and behaves. Global cities set the pace in business, education, art, media, politics, and religion. In short, what happens in global cities will eventually happen in much of the rest to the world.

Foreign Policy Magazine released a list of the top 65 global cities in 2010; New York, London, Tokyo, Paris, and Hong Kong compose the top five.¹ What characteristics determine this global distinction? According to the *Foreign Policy* report,

¹It is important to note that the population of a city is not the sole factor in determining whether a city is “global” or not, however, it is a consideration. The *Foreign Policy Magazine* rankings began with cities that had over 1 million in the population. “2010 Global Cities Index” *Foreign Policy Magazine* [on-line]; accessed 24 August 2010; available from http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/11/the_global_cities_index_2010; Internet.

the global label is determined by “how much sway a city has over what happens beyond its own borders—its influence on and integration with global markets, culture, and innovation.”² The article proceeds to reveal how the researchers arrived at their rankings:

To create this year’s rankings, we analyzed 65 cities with more than 1 million people across every region of the globe, using definitive sources to tally everything from a city's business activity, human capital, and information exchange to its cultural experience and political engagement. Data ranged from how many Fortune Global 500 company headquarters were in a city to the size of its capital markets and the flow of goods through its airports and ports, as well as factors such as the number of embassies, think tanks, political organizations, and museums. Taken together, a city’s performance on this slate of indicators tells us how worldly—or provincial—it really is.³

Ray Bakke, a writer on urban ministry, echoes this understanding of global cities, though he uses the term “world class” city rather than global city: “By world class city, I mean a city that has a population of one million or more persons and has international significance and influence.”⁴

To put it simply, global cities are influential cities. Janet Abu-Lughod describes the presumed nature of this influence in an article entitled, “Global City Formation in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles: A Historical Perspective”:

Contemporary scholars, trying to define the ‘global city,’ imply that it is a relatively new phenomenon that has been generated *de novo* in the present period by the development of an all-encompassing world system- variously termed late capitalism, post industrialism, the information age, and so on. Among the hallmarks of this new global city are presumed to be an expansion of the market via the internationalization of commerce, a revolution in the technologies of transport and communications, the extensive transnational movement of capital and labor, a paradoxical decentralization of production to the peripheral regions accompanied by centralization in the core of control over economic activities, and hence the increased importance of business services, particularly evident in the growth of the so called FIRE economic sector- finance, insurance and real estate.⁵

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ray Bakke and Jon Sharpe, *Street Signs: An New Direction in Urban Ministry* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope, 2006), 84.

⁵Janet Abu-Lughod, “Global City Formation in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles: A Historical Perspective,” in *The Global Cities Reader*, ed. Neil Brenner and Roger Keil (New York: Routledge), 43.

Global city expert Saskia Sassen offers a similar description:

Beyond their long history as centers for international trade and banking, these cities now function in four new ways: first, as highly concentrated command points in the organization of the world economy; second as key locations for finance and for special service firms, which have replaced manufacturing as the leading economic sectors; third, as sites of production, including the production of innovations, in these leading industries; and fourth, as markets for the products and innovations produced. These changes in the functioning of cities have had a massive impact upon both international economic activity and urban form; cities concentrate control over vast resources, while finance and specialized industries have restructured the urban social and economic order. Thus a new type of city has appeared. It is the global city.⁶

Global cities concentrate power in a relatively small geographic space, yet their impact spans the world. Global cities are integrated with other cities around the world and therefore hold sway over what happens in those cities and by default their outlying areas. The activities that take place inside of a global city impact not only its local economy and culture; they impact the way much of the rest of the world thinks and acts.

Global Cities Share a Common Culture

On the surface it may sound absurd to say that global cities have a common culture. It would be absurd, in fact, if defining “common culture” meant that global cities shared an identical culture. If common culture is defined by recognizing characteristics common among global cities, however, then the idea immediately becomes less absurd. The reality is that global cities are connected. They form a unique web, and the connecting fibers of this web are the culture these cities share in common.

If people and ideas are moving between these global capitals, then it should be understood that common characteristics would arise. Tim Keller says this about the common culture of the cities as he describes ministry in such a city:

The cultures of urban centers in different hemispheres are surprisingly similar. They share many daily connections, and their residents travel back and forth between them. Thus, ministry leaders from other cities in the world find the culture of New York

⁶Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton: Princeton Press, 2001), 3-4.

City to be similar to their own global city, and the ministry of Redeemer Presbyterian Church to be a model for church planting projects in the global cities of their country.⁷

English: The Language of Business

It is estimated that the residents of New York City speak 800 different languages.⁸ Of those, one language—English—rises to the top as the language that moves New York City.⁹ English is the predominant language that the majority of people of the city speak. This should be no surprise since the native tongue of the host country of New York is English. What may be surprising is that the predominant language of New York City is also quickly becoming prominent among the student and business classes of other global cities. For example, many universities in the world's largest cities are moving toward an English curriculum:

In Madrid, business students can take their admissions test for the elite Instituto de Empresa in English and enroll in core courses for a master's degree in business administration in the same language. At the Lille School of Management in France, English stopped being considered a foreign language in 1999, and now half of the post-graduate programs are taught in English to accommodate a rising number of international students. Over the last three years, the number of master's programs offered in English in schools with another host language has more than doubled to 3,300 programs in 1,700 universities, according to Dave Wilson, chief executive of the Graduate Management Admission Council, an international organization of leading business schools.¹⁰

⁷Tim Keller, "Our New Global Culture: Ministry in Urban Centers" [on-line]; accessed 29 February 2012; available from http://redeemercitytocity.com/resources/library.jsp?Library_item_param=469; Internet.

⁸Sam Roberts, "Listening to (and Saving) the World's Languages," *The New York Times*, 29 April 2010 [on-line]; accessed 10 January 2011; available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/29/nyregion/29lost.html?pagewanted=all>; Internet.

⁹It is indicated that 59.6 percent of the people who live in NYC speak English at home. Though 40.4 percent indicate they speak "a language other than English," it could still be supposed that some of these respondents speak English as a primary language or prevalent secondary language. US Census, "New York County, New York—Languages Spoken At Home" [on-line]; accessed 29 February 2012; available from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_1YR_S1601&prodType=table; Internet.

¹⁰Doreen Carvajal, "In Many Business Schools, the Bottom Line is in English," *The New York Times*, 10 April 2007 [on-line]; accessed 10 January 2011; available from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/10/world/europe/10iht-engbiz.2.5212499.html?_r=2&pagewanted=2; Internet.

One dean of a French MBA program says that knowing English gives students a global opportunity that will allow them to go anywhere in the world:

‘We are shifting to English. Why?’ said Laurent Bibard, the dean of MBA programs at Essec, a French business school in a suburb of Paris that is a fertile breeding ground for chief executives. ‘It’s the language for international teaching. English allows students to be able to come from any place in the world and for our students—the French ones—to go everywhere.’¹¹

For this reason, educating the next generation in many countries means that part of their training will center on learning the English language. *Foreign Policy Magazine* recently asked “Why the English Explosion?” as they were trying to uncover the reasons behind the English language’s rapid ascent around the world. Their conclusion was simple:

It’s all about upward mobility. In China, America’s putative superpower replacement, learning English is considered a gateway to middle-class security; 300 million people speak it there, and another 350 million people speak it in India. According to a recent report by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, between 96 and 100 percent of people in China, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, and Vietnam believe children should learn English. Their goal is reflected in the more than 90 percent of Japanese elementary schools that offer English programs. Children in China start learning the language in third grade and more than 50,000 English-training centers there offer further instruction. Chris Gibson, the British Council’s director for South India, aims to have every South Indian speaking it by 2010, at which point he believes that English will be a codified world language (Penguin Books’ operations in India, meanwhile, are salivating at what they see as the world’s fastest-growing English-language market).¹²

Though the native tongue of any global city will surely remain prominent, an English-only speaker would not need to look far to find someone with whom to communicate. A quick stroll around any global city will lead to restaurants that have English versions of their menu or street signs bearing English overlays. Depending on the city, one may even be able to find a movie theater in English. For example, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (number 61 on the *Foreign Policy Magazine* list of global cities) has a movie theater that plays movies in English. Consider also this fact about the global

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ali Wyne, “The Language of the Empire,” *Foreign Policy Magazine* [on-line]; accessed 9 December 2010; available from http://experts.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/06/08/domination_by_language; Internet.

significance of the English language: all major news publications originating from any given global city offer an English language version. *Foreign Policy Magazine* reports,

Every globally influential newspaper is either written in English or has an English-language version. The same is nearly true for science, where more than 90 percent of the world's major journals are printed in English. With all this at stake, it's no surprise that the global market for English-as-a-second-language training products and services is worth \$50 billion (that's more than Lithuania's 2008 GDP).¹³

The idea of a common “global city” language is not new. A look at the first-century world reveals this, where the Greek language proved to be catalytic in the growth of Christianity. Michael Green points to the importance of Greece and the Greek language in the spread of first-century Christianity:

Greece, too, made signal contributions to the spread of Christianity. Perhaps the most important was the Greek language itself. This was now so widely disseminated through the Mediterranean basin that it acted as an almost universal common tongue. . . . The advantages for the Christian mission of having a common language can hardly be overestimated. It did away with the necessity for missionary language schools. Missionaries using it would incur none of the odium that English-speaking missionaries might find in some of the underdeveloped countries; for Greek, the language of a captive people, could not be associated with imperialism. Moreover, it was a sensitive, adaptable language, ideally suited for the propagation of a theological message, because for centuries it had been used to express the reflections of the world's greatest thinkers, and thus had a ready-made philosophical and theological vocabulary. The lack of this specialist vocabulary in Latin led to difficulties some 250 years later, when Latin replaced Greek as the common language of the Western Empire.¹⁴

Just as the Greek language was the language commonly used in the first century, English is the language that is the most widely known and spoken in the world. In particular, English is the common language of the global city.

Connected Infrastructure

As far back as the Roman Empire, one of the factors that gave the major city its influence was its infrastructure.¹⁵ Meeks writes,

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Michael Green, *Evangelism and the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 33.

¹⁵Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City and*

Roman power made possible flourishing travel in two very practical ways: the Roman military presence undertook to keep brigandage on land and piracy on the sea at a minimum, and the imperial government took responsibility for the road system throughout its regions.¹⁶

Harvie Conn quotes Flanagan on the importance of the city's infrastructure: "The big story of the city is bigger than itself." He is implying that because of a city's infrastructure the city is able to reach beyond its geographic boundaries.¹⁷ Through a city's infrastructure, particularly its transportation and communication infrastructures, a global city extends far beyond itself and connects with others.

The reach of a city is much bigger than its geographical boundaries. This is true because of the city's connected infrastructure. Conn says, "Integral to the city as a center of power is its capacity for centralization and integration, for connecting. Power carries both a centripetal and centrifugal force, drawing regions and systems into its orbit."¹⁸ For example, Atlanta, Georgia (number 40 on the global cities index) has one of the busiest airports in the United States. A person could fly from Atlanta to just about anywhere in the world. In fact, Atlanta's airport has direct flights to every continent in the world, with the exception of Australia and Antarctica.¹⁹

Today, mobility still is a key distinctive of the global city. In some ways, the mobility infrastructures of a global city are the same as ancient cities (roads, government stability, etc.), but in many ways they are very different. The technology boom of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has connected cities in ways that were not

the People of God (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity), 206.

¹⁶Wayne Meeks, *First Urban Christians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 17.

¹⁷Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 205.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹The New Georgia Encyclopedia, "Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport" [on-line]; accessed 19 December 2011; available from <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-768>; Internet.

imaginable in the first centuries. Most notably, the internet has allowed for business to operate seamlessly. Thomas Friedman, in his book *The World Is Flat*, identifies the internet as one of the “flatteners” that has shaped the new world.²⁰ The internet allows for the idea base that exists in key cities to move effortlessly between those cities.

Prevailing Ethos among Global City Residents

Not only are there characteristics that are predominant among global cities as a whole, but there are also characteristics that are constants among many global city residents. Though it is wrong to assume all people show these patterns, there are some traits that are prevalent among those who live in and traverse between the global cities.

Work-centered. First and foremost, those who reside in the urban core place a high priority on their work.²¹ They tend to work long hours, allowing their lives to revolve around the job. In the city, a person’s job is not merely how he or she occupies the day making money and providing for family; it defines his or her identity. Many flock to the cities looking to “make it” in their industry of choice. In fact, cities attract some of the most prominent and passionate professional talent in the world. Keller says, “People who work in city centers are usually highly educated, highly skilled overachievers. People

²⁰Thomas Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century* (New York: Piquador, 2005), 51.

²¹In his book *The Global Soul: Jet Lag, Shopping Malls and the Search for Home*, Pico Iyer describes the life of a typical resident of the “The Global Marketplace.” He talks about his friend Richard who works all over the world and does not really have a “home” anywhere. He details Richard’s transient lifestyle by describing in detail the fact that Richard had “twelve telephone cards” so that he could communicate in different countries via mobile phone. He also indicated that Richard nearly flew around the world every week. Interestingly, Iyer described his friend Richard as the most “human” person he knows, indicating that he is a prototypical resident of the global city marketplace. Pico Iyer, *The Global Soul: Jet Lag, Shopping Malls, and the Search for Home*, Kindle ed. (New York: Vintage, 2001), 1271-1794.

who work in city centers tend to inhabit their careers and give them more prominence than family or other competing social structures.”²²

Sexually active. Residents of cities tend to be highly sexually active, maintaining a more progressive view of sexuality. Many find the city to be a place where they can achieve anonymity and freedom to be whoever they want to be. Again, Keller addresses this issue:

People living in urban centers are not only very sexually active but also very insistent that their sexuality is nobody else’s business but their own. Even strong Christians will be tempted to be sexually active in various ways that can undermine or destroy their spiritual effectiveness.²³

The New York Times reported on the sexual habits of New York City residents in a 2008 article called “Unsafe Sex Remains Common among New Yorkers.”²⁴ The article quotes a survey conducted by the New York City department of health, a survey that found that New Yorkers “were sexually active in the past year (72%), with one in nine reporting multiple (two or more) sex partners during that time.”²⁵ The report also found that “Young adults (18 to 24) are four times as likely as older adults (45 and older) to report having multiple sex partners (25% vs. 6%).”²⁶ The results of the survey go on to show “New Yorkers reporting same-sex partners are nearly three times as likely as those

²²Timothy Keller, “A New Kind of Urban Christian” [on-line]; accessed 22 March 2010; available from http://redeemercitytocity.com/library.jsp?Library_item_param=46; Internet.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Sewell Chan, “Unsafe Sex Remains Common Among New Yorkers,” *The New York Times*, 24 June 2008 [on-line]; accessed 28 December 2011; available from <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/06/24/high-rates-of-unsafe-sex-in-new-york-city/>; Internet.

²⁵New York City Community Health Survey, “Are New Yorker’s Having Safe Sex?” *NY Vital Signs* 7, no. 3 (May 2008); accessed 28 December 2011; available from <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/survey/survey-2008safe-sex.pdf>; Internet.

²⁶Ibid.

with opposite sex partners to have multiple sex partners (33% vs. 13%).”²⁷ The report summarizes the sexual activities of New Yorkers:

Approximately 60,000 new STI [Sexually Transmitted Infections] cases, including 3,745 new HIV diagnoses, were reported in New York City in 2006. Untreated STIs have serious consequences, including increased risk of HIV infection among those with other STIs, infertility, poor birth outcomes, some cancers and death. Also, more than half of pregnancies are unplanned (not desired at that time). Unplanned pregnancies are associated with adverse outcomes for both women and infants.²⁸

Transient. Those who populate the city lead transient lives. The city possesses a strong allure that leads to a steady stream of people moving in. At the same time, others are constantly moving out. *Forbes Magazine*, using an interactive map that illustrates the migratory patterns of people in the United States, shows that the level of transitory activity increases dramatically based on how densely populated the city or county is (see Appendix).²⁹

Keller says, “Modern capitalism uproots people from their geography in the quest for work and money. The predominating modern worldview disdains the past and tends to make people feel historically rootless.”³⁰ In his book *The Global Soul*, Pico Iyer describes this lack of roots that exists among global city residents:

If I were to write a fairy tale about the Global Soul, progressing through the revolving doors empires, I might tell of a young boy who goes to Cathedral School in Bombay, where he is trained by the British even though they had formally left his native India just as he was coming to life. Already he is an exile many times over—a Muslim, who, post-Partition, ought to be in Pakistan—and does not fit any of the central categories (of Hindu, Christian Sikh) in the city where he was born.³¹

This fictional character that Iyer describes, like urbanites who reflect the “global soul,” is

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Jon Bruner, “Where Americans Are Moving,” *Forbes.com*, 4 June 2010 [on-line]; accessed 22 April 2011; available from <http://www.forbes.com/2010/06/04/migration-moving-wealthy-interactive-counties-map.html>; Internet.

³⁰Keller, “A New Kind of Urban Christian.”

³¹Iyer, *The Global Soul*, 557.

“belonging nowhere, he is beholden to nowhere and settled in no faith.”³²

One major element leading to the transient nature of the city is cost. The average one-bedroom apartment in New York City costs a tenant approximately \$2,800 per month.³³ For those who have a family and need a larger space, the cost escalates from there. Many people move because life outside the city proves to be more cost effective.

Another factor that lends to the transient nature of the city is education. New York City has a high percentage of residents who hold a higher education degree.³⁴ According to sociologist Richard Florida, this education makes them more likely to be on the move:

The odds of moving also increase with one’s level of education. According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Young Adults, 45 percent of people with advanced degrees end up leaving their home state, compared with over 37 percent of people with bachelor’s degree and just 19 percent of those with a high school degree.³⁵

Ed Stetzer talks specifically about the transient nature of New Yorkers in an article written about the urban church:

In NYC, the average 20-something spends no more than three years in the city before moving on. Creatives often don’t ‘make it,’ but even if they do, their careers often will take them elsewhere. Young corporates, if they make it, usually will move on in order to develop their careers; if they don’t, they simply move out. New immigrants often ‘land’ in a major city where they can find jobs, housing, government services, people of their own culture and language, education, etc. often moving on to other places after they get established. Students, both under graduates and post

³²Ibid., 571.

³³The Real Estate Group New York, “Manhattan Rental Market Report” [on-line]; accessed 22 April 2011; available from http://www.tregny.com/manhattan_rental_market_report; Internet.

³⁴US Census, “Zip Code Tabulation Area 10024” [on-line]; accessed on 22 April 2011; available from http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=10024&_cityT own=10024&_state=&_zip=10024&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show_2003_tab=&redirect=Y; Internet.

³⁵Richard Florida, *Who’s Your City: How the Creative Economy Is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life* (New York: Basic, 2008), 226. See also Bureau of Labor Statistics, “National Longitudinal Survey” [on-line]; accessed on 23 December 2011; available from <http://www.bls.gov/nls/nlsy97.htm>; Internet.

graduates come and go. Most church planters ‘lose’ 30% of their congregation each year due to normal transience.³⁶

Skeptical. Last, those who call the urban center home tend toward skepticism, are less trusting of systems and institutions, and are less prone to accept face value. They will ask more questions, as they are highly educated. For instance, 73.9 percent of the residents on New York City’s Upper West Side have a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to nationwide statistics showing that 24.4 percent of the population has the same degree.³⁷ Keller writes,

City-center people tend to be suspicious of authority and institutions, especially religious ones. Overly slick, polished, or glossy presentations are suspect. Sentimentality, earnestness, and “niceness” seem phony and manipulative. There is disdain for the obvious in art and communication.³⁸

Global Cities Influence the World

Global cities have a significant impact on the rest of the world. For instance, New York City is the media capital of the world.³⁹ New York City produces media that supplies the rest of the world with their entertainment. According to Stefan Kratke, “Global media cities are functioning as ‘lifestyle producers,’ which includes the production of lifestyle images.”⁴⁰ Kratke goes on to say that “prominent among the alpha world cities are New York, London, Paris and Los Angeles, which are ranked as ‘genuine’ global cities in virtually every analysis of the global urban system.”⁴¹

³⁶Ed Stetzer, “Inside the City Limits: Distinctives of Urban Church Planting” [on-line]; accessed on 23 December 2011; available from www.edstetzer.com/Inside%20the%20City%20Limits.doc; Internet.

³⁷US Census, “Zip Code Tabulation Area 10024.”

³⁸Keller, “A New Kind of Urban Christian.”

³⁹NYC.gov, “About New York City” [on-line]; accessed 15 November 2011; available from <http://www.nyc.gov/html/lmec/html/about/nycapital.shtml>; Internet.

⁴⁰Stefan Kratke, *Global Media Cities: Major Modes of Globalizing Culture and Media Industries*, eds. Neil Brenner and Roger Keil (New York: Routledge, 2005), 329.

⁴¹Ibid.

One of the media companies that has had a significant impact on the rest of the world is MTV. MTV has its headquarters in the heart of New York City and pumps media content all over the world to an estimated 1.4 billion people.⁴² What impact could this be having on the rest of the world? *The Global Media Journal*, in a recent study found that the impact is monumental:

Children around the world are growing up in a globalized environment influenced by many factors such as technology, pop culture, and the world wide web. One significant force on the development of their identity is the internationalization of television programming. Since the deregulation of the audiovisual sector in many parts of the world during the 1980s, television systems have moved further away from a public service agenda and closer toward national level privatization. In addition, the expansion of satellites has given way to the growth of transnational networks available to young audiences in an international context. As Western based television genres saturate the global marketplace, children's exposure to programs that originate in the United States will undoubtedly impact how they understand themselves and their environment. In fact, Banergee (2002) describes the reach of American television noting, 'in every country in the world, American television programmes and films adorn screens. Whether it be in the remote villages in India or in the kampongs of Malaysia, American and Western cultural icons and content make their overbearing presence felt' (p. 517). Globally, children interact with the symbols they see on television and incorporate these experiences into their daily reality. New generations of children are developing a third identity—a fusion of local and global—an identity that transcends traditional ethnic/cultural boundaries.⁴³

Viacom, the parent company of MTV and an assortment of other networks, is one of the most aggressive companies in taking advantage of this new global media culture.⁴⁴ *The Global Media Journal* study finds that children around the world are

⁴²Microsoft, "Case Study: MTV Networks Int. (MTV)" [on-line]; accessed 29 February 2012; available from http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&safe=strict&sky=mrdr&q=+Microsoft%2C+%E2%80%9CCase+Study%3A+MTV+Networks+Int.+%28MTV&oq=+Microsoft%2C+%E2%80%9CCase+Study%3A+MTV+Networks+Int.+%28MTV&aq=f&aqi=&aql=&gs_sm=3&gs_upl=372414336310152563170157113101011614021579513.18.6.3.113110&mvs=0; Internet.

⁴³Kristin C. Moran and Leeva C. Chung, "Global or Local Identity? A Theoretical Analysis of the Role of Viacom on Identity Formation among Children in an International Context" *Global Media Journal* [on-line]; accessed 15 November 2011; available from <http://lass.calumet.purdue.edu/cca/gmj/sp08/gmj-sp08-moran-chung.htm>; Internet.

⁴⁴Ibid.

influenced not only by local culture, but they are also heavily influenced by their media intake. So, it is likely that MTV and its global sister stations significantly impact the way children think and behave:

While culture plays the larger role in shaping our view of ourselves, it is through multiple channels that we acquire and develop our own values, ethics, norms, and ways of behaving in our everyday lives. For example, from our family, values and norms are passed on from one generation to the next. Parents teach their children the difference between right and wrong, and acceptable and unacceptable ways of behaving through the language they use and through their actions. During the early years, children internalize what to value and devalue, what to appreciate and reject, and what goals are important in their culture through the influence of their family system. As previously mentioned, children are continuously influenced by the pervasive messages from popular culture and contemporary media. It is through the pervasive cultural value patterns—as filtered through the family and media systems—that the meanings and values of identity are differentiated and defined.⁴⁵

What impact does this influence have? The culture-shaping role that governments have traditionally played in lives of their people will be increasingly neutralized and lose significance. Because of the free flow of ideas that technology has afforded, those who create the ideas will shape the culture. Concurrently, cities, because of the density of ideas created in their confines, will have the influential upper hand in the world. Simply put—cities create more ideas. This presents tremendous ramifications for the future of how culture is created and preserved. Value systems are no longer shaped locally; rather they are molded globally by the ideas that flow out of the global cities.

Keller resonates with this idea:

The mobility of capital means national governments are now virtually powerless to control the flow of money in and out of their own economies, thus greatly decreasing their influence in general. Cities are the seats of international economic, social, and technological networks. Likewise, the technology and communication revolution means that national governments are increasingly powerless to control what their citizens watch or learn. As a result, the cultural values of world-class cities are being transmitted around the globe to all people groups, no matter how remote. The largest cities in each country—global cities—are becoming more alike and connected to one another than they are to the rest of their own countries. For example, New York and Los Angeles have become far more influential in forming the culture of teenagers in rural Indiana or rural Mexico than the national or local governments.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Keller, “Our New Global Culture.”

Cities hold a vast amount of power, and global cities have even more so. Based on the example given, as it relates to MTV, there is a greater likelihood of observing Indian teenagers wearing a Justin Bieber t-shirt (American pop star) than a t-shirt of a local Indian musical artist while walking the streets of Mumbai. That is tremendous power.

New York City as a Global City

Though officially New York City is not the capital of any place, the reality is that it is the capital of everything.⁴⁷ As seen already, *Foreign Policy* magazine has ranked the city as the number one global city.⁴⁸ Mac Pier, in his book about New York as a global city, says,

The astonishing fact of our time is that the majority of the world's six billion people now live and work in sizable cities. Moreover, we live at the time of the greatest migration in human history. The southern hemisphere is moving north, East is coming West, and everyone is coming to New York! I remember well the day several years ago when, sitting in Manhattan, I read a New York Times report that 133 nations had been found living together in one Queens zip code.⁴⁹

Imagine a city that has had some impact on the majority of the people who live in the world, and that city would likely be New York. New York City is the launching pad for many facets that influence the culture of the world. New York is a catalyst for much of what the rest of the world consumes. Pier goes on to say,

A 1999 PBS documentary on New York City described it as the most influential city in human history. Saskia Sassen of Princeton asks her readers to imagine a gigantic three-legged stool, a colossus of New York, London, and Tokyo, which controls

⁴⁷I realize that New York City is officially not the capital of anything and therefore this statement is an exaggeration. As the research shows, however, New York is in fact a leader in many different industries. Also, as a former New Yorker, I know that we pride ourselves in being number one. We all, in many ways, resonate with John Updike, "The true New Yorker secretly believes that people living anywhere else have to be, in some sense, kidding." John Updike, "John Updike Quotes" [on-line]; accessed 29 February 2012; available from http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/6878.John_Updike; Internet.

⁴⁸"The Global Cities Index," 124.

⁴⁹Mac Pier, *Spiritual Leadership in the Global City* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope, 2008) 29.

huge and growing proportions of the world's resources. Of the three, Sassen states that New York is the leading global city on the planet.

Like Tokyo and London, New York is a financial capital; like Toronto it is an international capital; like Washington D.C., it is a power capital; like Paris is a cultural capital; and like Los Angeles it is a media capital. Yet no other city in human history has been all of these things simultaneously. Five of the six most powerful media outlets in the world are in Midtown Manhattan- NBC, CBS, ABC, *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*.⁵⁰

The following sections of this chapter describe a few reasons why New York City can be called the capital of the world.

New York City as the Global Center of Media

As already pointed out, New York City has the most significant media concentration in the world. The reach of the media firms that call NYC home is far. In fact, it can be argued, there are few places on the planet that are not touched in some way by New York City media. New York's dominance over the global media stage is evidenced by the fact that 7 of the largest media conglomerates, 6 national broadcast networks and 10 local stations, 6 prime-time series, 78 cable networks, including HBO and Showtime, 2 of the top 5 US cable distributors, 4 major studios, 6 international wire services, more than 200 foreign-language newspapers, more than 100 foreign media bureaus, and 6 of the 350 consumer magazines in the top 10 all have New York City as their home.⁵¹

Though there is no official designation for "media capital of the world," New York City certainly could make that argument. The amount of culture shaping that is produced in a relatively small geographical space is significant. If other global cities bare even the remotest resemblance to NYC's media dominance, then it would be easy to argue that the culture of the world is shaped almost exclusively by those cities.

⁵⁰Ibid., 32.

⁵¹NYC.gov, "About New York City."

New York City as an Education Capital

Though there are likely cities in the world that have great higher educational systems, New York's should not be overlooked. Within the metro area of the city are 191 colleges and universities that comprise a student population of almost one million.⁵²

There are Ivy League schools within the boundaries of metro NYC (Yale, Columbia, and Princeton).

Though the quality of higher education in metro NYC is among the world's best, the true test of its global significance rests with the influential people whom it has produced. Consider this small list of influential leaders as an example of the significant reach of metro NYC's higher education system: Dietrich Bonhoeffer-German Theologian/Political Activist, Union Seminary, 1930;⁵³ Ying-jeou Ma-President the Republic of China (Taiwan), NYU, 1976;⁵⁴ Romulus Neagu-Ambassador, Former Member of Parliament-Romania, NYU;⁵⁵ Barack Obama-44th President of the United States, Columbia University, 1983;⁵⁶ George W. Bush-43rd President of the United States, Yale University, 1968;⁵⁷ Bill Clinton-42nd President of the United States, Yale Law School, 1973;⁵⁸ Hillary Clinton-Secretary of State, USA, Yale Law School, 1973;⁵⁹ Mary Kate

⁵²“Collegiate Ministry: Reaching a New Generation,” *Chronycled Magazine*, (New York: New Hope New York, 2006), 42.

⁵³Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, “Dietrich Bonhoeffer 1906-1945” [on-line]; accessed 9 February 2012; available from <http://www.utsnyc.edu/page.aspx?pid=298>; Internet.

⁵⁴Office of the President: Republic of China, “Biography-President Ma Ying-jeou” [on-line]; accessed 9 February 2012; available from <http://english.president.gov.tw/Default.aspx?tabid=454>; Internet.

⁵⁵Romania On-Line, “Romulus Neagu” [on-line]; accessed 9 February 2012; available from <http://romania-on-line.net/whoswho/NeaguRomulus.htm>; Internet.

⁵⁶Biography.com, “Barack Obama” [on-line]; accessed 15 November 2011; available from <http://www.biography.com/articles/Barack-Obama-12782369?part=1>; Internet.

⁵⁷Biography.com, “George W. Bush” [on-line]; accessed 15 November 2011; available from <http://www.biography.com/articles/George-W.-Bush-9232768>; Internet.

and Ashley Olson-Actors, NYU, 2004;⁶⁰ Whoopi Goldberg-Actor and TV Personality, Ph.D, NYU.⁶¹

The “who’s who” list of people educated in New York City is quite extensive. They have gone on to shape the way the rest of the world thinks and acts. The argument is not that famous people have not come from other smaller cities; rather, it is the fact that such a high number of people have come from one place that makes New York’s educational system a dynamic force in the shaping of the world’s culture.

New York City as a Finance Capital

Urban theorist Jane Jacobs says that “cities are unique in their abilities to shape and reshape the economies of other settlements, including those far removed from them geographically.”⁶² New York City is one of the cities that plays a primary role in shaping the global economy.⁶³ According to Sassen,

Through finance more than other international flows, a global network of cities has emerged, with New York, London and Tokyo and today also Frankfurt and Paris the leading cities fulfilling coordinating roles and functioning as international marketplaces for the buying and selling of capital and expertise.⁶⁴

Several facts point to New York City being among the top financial cities in

⁵⁸Biography.com, “Bill Clinton” [on-line]; accessed on 15 November 2011; available from <http://www.biography.com/articles/Bill-Clinton-9251236?part=1>; Internet.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Geraldine Baum, “At NYU, but in a Class of their Own,” *Los Angeles Times*, 13 October 2003 [on-line]; accessed 21 December 2011; available from <http://articles.latimes.com/2004/sep/13/entertainment/et-baum13>; Internet.

⁶¹Biography.com, “Whoopi Goldberg” [on-line]; accessed 21 December 2011; available from <http://www.biography.com/people/whoopi-goldberg-9314384>; Internet.

⁶²Jane Jacobs, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations* (New York: Random House, 1984), 32.

⁶³Sassen, *The Global City*, 330.

⁶⁴Ibid., 333.

the world. First, New York is number one on the list of income among the top 12 banking centers in the world with 14 leading firms.⁶⁵ Second, New York is number two in the world in terms of financial assets its financial firms hold. Third, New York is number 2 in terms of its income-asset ratio.⁶⁶ Fourth, New York City has 80 percent of the world's top 25 security firms.⁶⁷ Fifth, New York City is also listed as number two on the list of cumulated assets for insurers.⁶⁸

Conclusion

Global Cities are those that have proven to have a reach that goes well beyond their determined geographical boundaries. Global cities are influential cities that impact the way the rest of the world operates. These cities tend to hold sway on the way that business, education, media, and politics (among other areas) operate in the world.

At the top of the global cities list is New York City. No other place on the planet has the density of influence of New York. As has been shown, NYC emerges as the epitome of what it means to be a global city.

⁶⁵Ibid., 180.

⁶⁶Ibid., 180-81.

⁶⁷Ibid., 184.

⁶⁸Ibid., 186.

CHAPTER 3
HISTORY OF CHURCH PLANTING IN NYC:
WORLD WAR I TO PRESENT

An understanding of the history of church planting in New York City over several decades is key to grasping the overall significance that the evangelical church has had on the culture of the city. In this chapter, I take a look at the climate of the city from the early 1900s until today. I look most intently at the degraded condition of New York City in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s and the factors that led to its rebirth as a vibrant city.

**The Spiritual Climate of New York City and
Factors that Brought about Change**

E. B. White, the famed New York City writer, described the volatile and fragile nature of the city during the period of the world wars in his essay, *Here is New York*. He recognized something different about the city and even, somewhat eerily, predicted the coming destruction of September 11, 2001:

The city, for the first time in its long history, is destructible. A single flight of planes no bigger than a wedge of geese can quickly end this island fantasy, burn the towers, crumble the bridges, turn the underground passages into lethal chambers, cremate the millions. The intimation of immortality is part of New York now, in the sound of jets overhead, in the black headlines of the latest edition.¹

The period after World War I marked a decline in the spiritual and moral vitality of New York City. According to Tony Carnes, the later part of the 19th century saw a period of “evangelical effervescence” in the city.² But something began to shift

¹E. B. White, *Here is New York* (New York: The Little Bookroom, 1999), 54.

²Tony Carnes, “Part 2: The Making of a Postsecular City: 20th Century Decline of Evangelicals in NYC,” 3 December 2010 [on-line]; accessed 15 November 15, 2011; available from <http://www.nycreligion.info/?p=1263>; Internet.

around the time of the world wars. Carnes writes that the period after WWI was illustrated by “low immigration, Protestant moves to the suburbs and, perhaps, low number of conversions.”³ Many began to refer to the city as “Sodom and Gomorrah.”⁴ In the 1930s the *New York Times* “changed its editorial loyalty from moral/religious reform to secular scientific political management.”⁵ The *New York Times* reported, “White protestants . . . have by and large withered into insignificance as a religious and political force.”⁶

To illustrate the moral and spiritual decay in New York City further, Carnes writes, “by 1977 the New York City Planning Commission reported 245 pornography institutions in the city, 93 of the them in Times Square. In 1965 there had been nine in the whole city. The multi-story Show World was the biggest sex arcade in the nation.”⁷ He further explains,

An ex-McDonalds manager-cum-orgy entrepreneur name Larry Levinson opened Plato’s Retreat, a life-guard supervised orgy center. The IRTearoom opened as a simulated subway bathroom with screeching subway train sounds to accompany the unprotected oral sex. Studio 54 opened with shirtless busboys in white satin gym shorts, busty women hanging upside down on trapezes, balconies for fornication, and a big statue of the Man on the Moon shoveling a coke spoon up his nose. Jay McInerney captured the drug soaked, hallucinatory life in his hit novel *Bright Lights, Big City* (published in 1984). It is the story of one person moving to the cadencies of ‘the white marching powder’ to meet men and women he cares nothing for. Happiness, he said, has abandoned us like a passing era. Exhaustion seemed to be the city’s destiny.⁸

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Kenneth A. Briggs, “Decline in Major Faiths’ Influence In City Reflects Last 10 Years of Urban Change” [on-line]; accessed 24 April 2012; available from <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F4061EF8355B1A7493CAA81783D85F418785F9>; Internet.

⁷Carnes, “Part 2: The Making of a Postsecular City.”

⁸Tony Carnes, “Part 3: The Making of a Postsecular City: The Manhattan Evangelicals and NYC around 1975,” 6 December 2010 [on-line]; accessed 9 February 2012; available from <http://www.nycreligion.info/?p=1265>; Internet.

The *New York Times* backs up Carnes' claim over the growth of the sex industry in New York City in an article published in 1994. They reported that from 1984 to 1994 sex businesses increased by 35 percent.⁹ They also reinforce Carnes' claim that in 1964 there were just 9 sex businesses on record and by 1976 that had grown to 151.¹⁰

It is this period of time that New York earned its reputation as a "Secular City."¹¹ In his book *The Secular City*, Harvey Cox writes,

The rise of urban civilization and the collapse of traditional religion are the two main hallmarks of our era . . . the gods of traditional religion live on as private fetishes or the patrons of congenial groups, but they play no significant role in the public life of the secular metropolis . . . this is the age of the secular city.¹²

As a result of the downward spiral of the culture of New York City, change was needed. As I will point out, both secular and religious leaders agreed that things needed to change. There were differing opinions, however, on how and why the change came about. Representing the two sides on the sources change in NYC were books written by Rudy Giuliani and Mac Pier. Giuliani attributes the change in NYC's moral landscape to shifts he made in political policies. Pier, the president of Concerts of Prayer of Greater New York, suggests that the real change in New York stemmed from a change in the spiritual and religious landscape, largely the result of a prayer and church planting movement in the city. Over the next few pages is a look at these two accounts, giving primary focus to the change wrought by prayer and church planting.

Rudy Giuliani was the mayor of New York City from 1994 until 2001.

Following his term in office, he wrote a book called *Leadership* that highlighted many of

⁹Steven Myers, "Giuliani Proposes Toughening Laws on X-Rated Shops," *The New York Times*, 11 September 1994 [on-line]; accessed 9 January 2012; available from <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/09/11/nyregion/giuliani-proposes-toughening-laws-on-x-rated-shops.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>; Internet.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Carnes, "Part 2: The Making of a Postsecular City."

¹²Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), 1-13.

his accomplishments while in office. Of the accomplishments made by his administration, the one that stands out most is the tremendous revitalization under his watch. His book, *Leadership*, boasts several key principles that Giuliani says attributed to the turnaround of the city, beginning with the fact that he relentlessly sought to “start with small success.”¹³ The mayor knew that the problems he would face in office were huge. He realized that he would need to get some early wins in order to instill confidence that he was capable of turning the city around.

One of the small successes was Giuliani’s setting his sights on the “squeegee man.”¹⁴ These men would stand on the side of the road near bridges and tunnels, and approached waiting vehicles in an effort to clean their windshields. The instigators of this unsolicited service, often done with a dirty rag and dirty water, would then approach the driver and ask for varying degrees of payment. Often if the driver did not pay, he would have his car spat upon or kicked.¹⁵

The mayor realized that this was not the type of image that he wanted as people entered and exited the city. Giuliani felt that taking care of this small problem would give him momentum on other larger problems. He was right; in under a month of the ban on “squeegee men,” the problem had been virtually eradicated.¹⁶ This gave a significant amount of confidence to the residents and visitors of the city.¹⁷ Giuliani reflected on this small victory and the impact it had on the city:

If someone had told me, at a time when we were celebrating making so much headway against 180 squeegee men, that we would end up reducing crime by some 5,000 felonies per week, I would have strongly doubted it. I would have thought

¹³Rudolph W. Giuliani, *Leadership* (New York: Hyperion, 2002), 40.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 44.

2,000, maybe even 3,000; but that's the power of starting small with success—by combining several small victories we could achieve a larger result.¹⁸

Other small victories that Giuliani states gave him tremendous momentum in his administration were steps like tax cutting and taking graffiti off the subways.¹⁹ There is no doubt that Giuliani's administration saw many turnarounds for the city of New York; however, his reforms alone were not the real impetus for the change in the city's ethos.

Chronicling the same era as Mayor Giuliani's book, Mac Pier wrote *The Power of a City at Prayer*. The conclusions that Pier arrived at, however, point to a different reason for the city's turnaround. Pier illustrated in his book that it was a spiritual resurgence, not a political one that turned the city in the right direction. Pier wrote, "The church and society needed reformation."²⁰ Pier went on to add,

In 1994 the number of murders in New York City was 1,582. In most other large cities in America, also, crime was rampant. The disparity between the rich and the poor was wide and growing wider. The median income for a family in midtown Manhattan was approximately \$300,000, while just two miles north in Harlem, the median income was a paltry \$10,000. We believed that God wanted to transform the seven cultural pillars of our society: education, government, medicine, business, community, media, and religion.²¹

In 1995, Pier and others formed the Lord's Watch, a group of church and business leaders who gathered to pray for the city. They modeled their prayer time after the prayer movement that swept the Moravians under the leadership of Nicholas Count von Zinzendorf, in 1727.²² The desire of the Lord's Watch was to see a movement of

¹⁸Ibid., 42.

¹⁹Ibid., 47.

²⁰Mac Pier, *Power of a City at Prayer: What Happens when Churches Unite for Renewal* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity), 76.

²¹Ibid.

²²Pier writes, "In 1727 Nicholas Count von Zinzendorf was leading a group of Christian refugee on his estate in Moravia, Germany. Zinzendorf welcomed these refugees who had fled from religious persecution. He disciplined them and imparted a vision for revival and missions. . . . They began with 24 people who faithfully spent one hour in intercession every day. During the years that followed, more than 300 missionaries were raised up from that community. In fact, it was in a prayer group in London, led by a Moravian missionary, that John and Charles Wesley made their commitments to Jesus

spiritual transformation sweep across the city. They longed to see their broken city transformed. Within just a few years, they witnessed some tremendous results. Pier recounts some of the tangible results they saw God do because of unified prayer:

(1) Unity in the body of Christ: Woman's Prayer Summit (3000 women [praying] two years consecutively); Promise Keepers (35,000 men at Shea Stadium); National Day of Prayer (up to 6,000 gathered in churches across the metro area). (2) The restraint of evil: violent crime decreased by 70 percent between 1995 and 2000; protection of tens of thousands of people on 9/11. (3) Coalition building: emergence of cooperative networks in the aftermath of 9/11, unifying to serve the body of Christ—Network NYC Coalition; Northeast Clergy Group. (4) Collaborative community development: rebuilding \$200 million in housing in Harlem area; thousands of homes built in the Bronx and Brooklyn through the Nehemiah project; development of the Leadership Academy and other charter schools. (5) International events: Good Friday peace accord in Northern Ireland; 900 church planters raised up in Bihar, North India.²³

Pier goes on to tell many other stories of how God transformed New York City in the 1990s. He paints a picture that there was something big happening in NYC that God was behind. He discusses a number of ministries and churches that were established during this time period.²⁴ The reality is that New York City did see a dramatic change in the 1990s. Pier would argue that it was prayer rather than politics that was the driving force behind the transformation:

New York City is not the same city in 2002 as it was in 1995. As prayers have gone up, God has answered. Hope is the fruit of our praying, Isaiah fills us with tremendous hope as we see glimpses of what a transformed city can look like. What fills the horizon of your praying? What is your church praying for? Cities are changed through prayer. We are witnesses to what God can do. Indeed, if God can work in New York City, he can surely work in your city.²⁵

Christ.” Ibid., 77-78.

²³Ibid., 79.

²⁴One of the stories that Pier tells is that of Richard Galloway. Galloway, a successful businessman, became burdened to reach the city's poor after he read the promise of Isaiah 58. Richard and his wife Dixie started New York City Relief with a \$5 donation. Pier says, “Since 1989 this ministry to the poor of New York City has reached literally thousands of people, providing soup, prayer, referral to drug treatment and shelters, and a myriad of other resources. But Richard is quick to point out that their product is not soup but hope.” Ibid., 82.

²⁵Ibid., 86.

The Spiritual Climate of New York City Measurably Changes Beginning in 1978

According to Tony Carnes of the Values Research Institute, “In 1978 the number of evangelical church plants jumped to three times greater than the average number planted per year for the previous decades.”²⁶ Since 1978, new churches have been planted in New York at a yearly rate of 1.7 percent, resulting in an average of 90 new churches and ministries planted in New York annually.²⁷ From the year 2000 forward, the number of new churches planted in New York on a yearly basis averaged 110, which translated into a 2.25 percent planting rate on average.²⁸ If the trend continues until 2020, 2,415 churches and ministries would be planted in the city.²⁹

In 2007, the Values Research Institute partnered with other organizations to attain a quantifiable picture of what has taken place in the city since 1978.³⁰ Physically conducting a study sampling 800 churches and ministries in the city, what they found was staggering. Since 1978, the number of evangelical churches has grown by 50 percent.³¹ The Values Research Institute also determined the growth of the evangelical church population of Manhattan (New York’s central borough) to be almost 60 percent with 39

²⁶Tony Carnes, “Part 6: The Making of the Postsecular City. The Manhattan Evangelicals’ comeback in 1978” 13 December 2010 [on-line]; accessed 11 February 2012; <http://www.nycreligion.info/?p=1288>; Internet. In an interview, Carnes states that the definition for “Evangelical” used in this study was determined by three primary factors 1) self-definition of church as evangelical; 2) social attribution of church as evangelical (there are a number of lists of denominations that attempt this classification); 3) a widely used definition based on beliefs and practices: inspiration and truth of the Bible; salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ; [proclamation] of [the] gospel. Tony Carnes, Editor of Journey Through New York Religions, interview by author, 25 April 2012.

²⁷Ibid. Possible causes for this growth is addressed later in this chapter.

²⁸Tony Carnes, “Evangelical Church Growth: A Journey through New York Religions,” 22 May 2010 [on-line]; accessed 15 November 2011; available from <http://www.nycreligion.info/?p=51>; Internet.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Carnes, “Part 6: The Making of a Postsecular City.”

percent of that occurring after the year 2000.³² Figure 1 illustrates the new church growth that has taken place in central Manhattan.³³



Figure 1. Manhattan center city evangelical churches

³²Tony Carnes, “The Making of a Postsecular City: The Manhattan Evangelicals Part 1,” 1 December 2010 [on-line]; accessed 8 February 2012; available from <http://www.nycreligion.info/?p=1165>; Internet.

³³Ibid.

One deficiency of the 2007 study, though, was that it was conducted only in English.³⁴ Potentially, a large number of people were unable to take the survey due to language barriers. Taking into consideration the fact that there are over 800 languages spoken in New York City, it would not be a stretch to be even more optimistic about evangelical growth numbers since 1978.³⁵

Key Events that Catalyzed the Spiritual Change in New York City

Several key events occurred from the late 1970s through 2001 that seem to have served as catalytic forces behind the evangelical rise in New York. First, a comprehensive prayer movement called Concerts of Prayer began to rally like-minded churches to seek the welfare of the city. The second key event was the emergence of four influential pastors; Tim Keller, Jim Cymbala, David Wilkerson, and A. R. Bernard have built incredible ministries bearing a profound impact on the social, cultural, and spiritual landscape of the city.

The third key event was the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Not only did these events serve as transition point for the world, but they also served as a force that ushered in a spiritual tidal wave on the city. Over the course of the next few pages will be a further look at each of these key events.

Key Event 1: Concerts of Prayer

In 1980, David Bryant gathered a group of pastors together in Madison, Wisconsin to pray. Their intent was to emulate the concerts of prayer modeled by Jonathan Edwards and others in the 1700s.³⁶ Inspired by Bryant, Mac Pier and his team from

³⁴Carnes, “Evangelical Church Growth.”

³⁵Sam Roberts, “The Lost Languages of New York,” *New York Times* [on-line]; accessed 9 January 2012; available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/29/nyregion/29lost.html>; Internet.

³⁶Pier, *Power of a City at Prayer*, 20.

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship formed Concerts of Prayer Greater New York in 1994.³⁷

The first concert of prayer was held prior to the official launch of the organization in 1988 at the First Baptist Church of Flushing.³⁸ The hope was that sixteen churches and a total of 200 people would join in on the first prayer gathering. The end result was unexpected: 75 churches and 500 people attended the first gathering uniting in prayer for the city of New York.³⁹

From that point on the prayer movement in NYC grew. In 1990, on the National Day of Prayer, over 7,000 people gathered to pray in unified prayer.⁴⁰ Pastors began holding annual weekend retreats to seek the Lord together. They prayed that God would heal their city and bring them closer together. At one of the retreats, two pastors reconciled their relationship with one another. As leaders in two of the largest churches in the city, they committed to work together in a more fruitful and positive way.⁴¹

Racial violence had also been a big problem in New York City. According to Pier, from 1987 until 1997 there seemed to be a highly publicized story every year highlighting racial crimes.

Time Magazine declared New York City the murder capital of America in its September 1990 issue. By 1992, the murder rate in New York City had peaked at 2,200. Urban violence reached a crescendo in 1992, which was also the year police in Los Angeles were caught on videotape beating Rodney King.⁴²

³⁷Ibid., 21.

³⁸Ibid., 32.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., 36.

⁴²Ibid., 33. On September 17, 1990, *Time Magazine* reported “Last year 1,905 people were murdered in New York, more than twice as many as in Los Angeles. In the first five months of this year, 888 homicides were committed, setting a pace that will result in a new record if it goes unchecked.” This made NYC the leader in murders committed in an America city by a long shot. “The Decline of New York” *Time Magazine*, 17 September 1990 [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://www.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,971142-2,00.html>; Internet.

New York City, though, was saturated in prayer. The Lord's Watch (previously mentioned) had its organic start following the onset of the Rodney King trial.⁴³ When it came time for the verdict in the King trial, New Yorkers were braced for the worst. Most anticipated that there would be an outbreak of violent crime unleashed on the city:

There was not a single outbreak of racial violence. Politicians and newscasters attempted to explain the uncanny calm that enveloped New York City. Why did violence break out in Los Angeles but not in New York City? Ultimately it is a mystery. But there is no better explanation to the restraint of violence in our city than the prevailing hand of God.⁴⁴

Key Event 2: Influential Forerunners of Church Planting

Since 1978, there has been a wave of church planting in New York City. Though it is impossible to highlight all of the people who played a role in this church planting movement, it is possible to highlight four of the most significant players. A. R. Bernard, David Wilkerson, Jim Cymbala, and Tim Keller and are the most influential pastors in the city. Though only two of these men (Keller and Cymbala) played a direct role in planting new churches after they planted their own, each of these men played a role in the spiritual rebirth of the city that laid a foundation for all of the new churches.

A. R. Bernard. In 1978, A. R. Bernard began the Christian Cultural Center (CCC) in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.⁴⁵ From the humble beginnings of a storefront, the CCC has grown into a 30,000-member church.⁴⁶ Bernard is seen as a leader among evangelicals in New York City, a fact illustrated by his being tapped to be the chairman

⁴³Ibid., 34.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Christian Cultural Center, "History" [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from http://cccinfo.org/pages/page.asp?page_id=175055; Internet.

⁴⁶Ibid.

of the 2005 Billy Graham Crusade in New York City.⁴⁷ The influence of Bernard is far reaching, as the following list of achievements shows:

Recognized as a New Influential—25 Leaders Reshaping New York (Crain’s New York Business, September 2008); Most Influential NY Clergyman (NY Daily News, February 2008); Most Influential African American New Yorker (NY Post, February 2008); New York’s Most Influential (NY Magazine, 2006); Bernard was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by Consulate General of Israel in NY in conjunction with the Jewish Community Relations Council and Jewish National Fund. He has been personally cited in the Congressional Records.⁴⁸

Though no evidence exists that Bernard has been active in church planting across the city beyond his own church, there is no mistaking his vast influence. He is one of the few evangelical leaders to build credible bridges with the political and wider Christian community of New York City.⁴⁹

David Wilkerson. David Wilkerson was no stranger to New York City when he sensed that God was calling him to plant the Times Square Church. From 1959 until 1971 (years prior to his planting the church), Wilkerson spent his time ministering to the homeless and gang members in New York City.⁵⁰ One gang member that he ministered to, and subsequently led to the Lord, was Nicky Cruz. Wilkerson would later recount the Cruz story in his bestselling book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*. This book has been distributed to more than 15 million people.⁵¹

⁴⁷Peter K. Johnson, “Billy Graham to Host What Might Be His Last Mass Evangelism Crusade” *Charisma Magazine* [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/component/content/article/268-people-and-events/10989-billy-graham-to-host-what-may-be-his-last-mass-evangelism-crusade->; Internet.

⁴⁸Christian Cultural Center, “History.”

⁴⁹The Council of Churches of the City of New York, “Welcome” [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://www.ccnny.net/>; Internet.

⁵⁰World Challenge, “David Wilkerson” [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from http://www.worldchallenge.org/about_david_wilkerson/dw_fullbio/; Internet.

⁵¹World Challenge “The Cross and the Switchblade” [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://www.worldchallenge.org/en/>

In 1971, Wilkerson founded World Challenge in Texas. The purpose of this ministry was to “perpetuate the message of Christ through public teachings.”⁵² Though Wilkerson lived outside of New York City for most of the 1970s and early 1980s, his ministry was not over in the city. His reemergence into ministry in New York is recounted:

In 1986, while walking down 42nd Street in New York City at midnight, Reverend Wilkerson’s heart broke yet again for God to raise up a ministry in Times Square. He cried out to God to do something, and at one o’clock that morning he sensed the Lord speaking to his heart, ‘You do something. You start a church. You know the city and you love it.’ At that moment, Times Square Church was birthed in Reverend Wilkerson’s heart. The church opened its doors in October 1987, first in rented auditoriums in Times Square and eventually in the historic Mark Hellinger Theater, which the ministry purchased in 1989. Today, Times Square Church, with a missions-focused congregation, is a virtual microcosm of New York City. Nearly 8,000 people representing over 100 nationalities worship together under one roof.⁵³

Wilkerson’s ministry is far reaching and has dramatically impacted New York City. Like Bernard, while there is no real evidence of a church planting vision in his ministry, the impact of his life is unmistakable. It is notable that Times Square served as the epicenter for the decay of NYC (previously noted), and it was also Times Square that held the focal point for Giuliani’s reforms. Though there is no quantifiable evidence that the ministry of Wilkerson and the changes in Times Square had anything to do with each other, one could easily infer that his spiritual influence played a role in the revitalization of that area of town. When one takes into account the active role Wilkerson played early in his ministry in community revitalization, one would have to imagine that he was responsible, to some degree, for the turnaround of Times Square. Wilkerson first moved to New York to make a difference in the lives of young gang members, eventually establishing a one-year discipleship program for them.⁵⁴ In 2007, Wilkerson and the

about_david_wilkerson/cross_and_the_switchblade; Internet. See also David Wilkerson, John and Elizabeth Sherill, *The Cross and the Switchblade* (New York: Jove, 1962).

⁵²World Challenge, “David Wilkerson.”

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Teen Challenge USA, “The History of Teen Challenge” [on-line]; accessed 5 February 2012; available from <http://teenchallengeusa.com/program/history.php>; Internet.

Times Square Church sued, and won, in court to have a billboard containing nude photography from being shown in Times Square.⁵⁵ Upon Wilkerson's death in a car crash in 2011, *The New York Times* summed up Wilkerson's impact on New York City by quoting an article they ran on him in 1972.⁵⁶ The writer said, "His method was an absolute model of simplicity, directness and total non-sophistication—he just went out on the streets and mixed with the kids and reasoned with them face-to-face, often quoting the Bible—and it worked."⁵⁷

Jim Cymbala. In 1971, Jim and Carol Cymbala became the pastors of The Brooklyn Tabernacle in Brooklyn, New York.⁵⁸ They inherited a congregation of about thirty people who were meeting in an aging building in one of the roughest sections of the city.⁵⁹ Cymbala describes the building where the church met in those early days:

The Brooklyn Tabernacle—this woeful church that my father-in-law had coaxed me into pastoring—consisted of a shabby two-story building in the middle of a downtown block on Atlantic Avenue. The sanctuary could hold fewer than two hundred people—not that we required anywhere near that capacity. The ceiling was low, the walls needed paint, the windows were dingy, and the bare wood floor hadn't been

⁵⁵Anemona Hartocollis, "In Billboard for Bidet, Church Sees Times Square Seedy Past," *The New York Times*, 10 July, 2007 [on-line]; accessed 5 February 2012; available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/10/nyregion/10church.html?scp=7&sq=David%20Wilkerson%20Times%20Square&st=cse>; Internet.

⁵⁶Paul Vitello, "Former Times Square Pastor Dies in Texas Crash," *The New York Times* 28 April 2011 [on-line]; accessed 5 February 2012; available from <http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/04/28/former-times-sq-pastor-dies-in-texas-crash/?scp=1&sq=David%20Wilkerson%20Times%20Square&st=cse>; Internet.

⁵⁷McCandlish Phillips, "Soldiers for God Battle Against Drugs; Drugs Fought in Brooklyn," *The New York Times*, 31 December 1972 [on-line]; accessed 5 February 2012; available from <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=FB0917FC3E5A137A93C3AA1789D95F468785F9>; Internet.

⁵⁸Jim Cymbala and Dean Merrill, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens when God's Spirit Invades the Hearts of His People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 12-13.

⁵⁹Brooklyn Tabernacle, "Pastor Jim Cymbala" [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://www.brooklyntabernacle.org/Church/Pastor-Jim-Cymbala/>; Internet.

sealed in years. But, there was not money for such improvements, let alone a luxury such as air-conditioning.⁶⁰

Over time, Cymbala realized the challenge and the opportunity of the ministry that had been given to him. He knew that his church could have an impact on the city and world, but it would not happen unless God moved in a dramatic way. Cymbala instituted a Tuesday night prayer meeting that focused on prayer for the city and renewal of people. This prayer meeting “became a central feature in the life of our church and has remained so to this day.”⁶¹

From the early days Cymbala had a vision for what God could do beyond the walls of his church. He knew that the only way to accomplish this vision to impact a city was through church planting. Cymbala recounts his vision for church planting:

Realizing the limited impact that any one church can have in a large metropolis like New York, we began to plant churches in other needy areas of the city. As we trained our own pastors and sent them out with small groups of workers from our own congregation, we started a replication of the work we had begun in downtown Brooklyn. Our church then began to reach out financially and in prayer to see other areas in New York City be impacted by God's love through the planting of Daughter Churches, of which there are now six in the New York Metro area, all to the glory of God.⁶²

Cymbala's ministry is now known all over the world due to his book *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, which has sold more than 500,000 copies worldwide.⁶³ It is unmistakable the influence this man has had on the spiritual landscape of New York City over the last four decades.⁶⁴

⁶⁰Cymbala and Merrill, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, 11.

⁶¹Brooklyn Tabernacle, “Pastor Jim Cymbala.”

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Zondervan, “Gold Awards” [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://www.zondervan.com/Cultures/en-US/Company/Awards/ECPA+Platinum+and+Gold+Awards.htm>; Internet.

⁶⁴Church Relevance, “Top Ten U.S. Churches to Learn from that Are Influencing Other Churches” [on-line]; accessed 9 January 2012; available from <http://churchrelevance.com/resources/top-churches-in-america/>; Internet.

Tim Keller. As it relates to church planting in NYC, there is no greater force than Tim Keller. *Christianity Today* says, “Fifty years from now, if evangelical Christians are widely known for their love of cities, their commitment to mercy and justice, and their love of their neighbors, Tim Keller will be remembered as a pioneer of the new urban Christians.”⁶⁵ In May 2006, Tim Keller was highlighted in *New York Magazine*:

The most successful Christian Evangelist in the city by recognizing what marketers have known for decades: that young professionals and artists are “disproportionately influential” in creating the country’s culture and that you have to meet this coveted demographic on its own terms.⁶⁶

Born in Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania, in 1950, Keller was later educated at Bucknell University, Gordon-Conwell Seminary, and Westminster Seminary where he received a Doctor of Ministry degree in 1981. Even with all his years of academic education, Keller “learned the most from his nine years as a pastor of West Hopewell Presbyterian Church in the small blue-collar town of Hopewell, Virginia. The congregation there loved him, suffered through his earliest days as a pastor, and taught an intellectual northerner to be clear.”⁶⁷ In 1989, Keller was appointed by the Presbyterian Church in America to lead their Mission in North America Committee tasked to study the needs of New York City. At roughly the same time, a group of fifteen people began to meet on the Upper East Side of Manhattan to “pray about planting a new church in the

⁶⁵Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God* (New York: Dutton, 2008), cover.

⁶⁶*New York Magazine*, “The Influentials” [on-line]; accessed 8 February 2012; available from <http://nymag.com/news/features/influentials/16921/>; Internet. When this article indicates that Keller understands that one must “meet this coveted demographic on its own terms,” it is referring to his missiology, not his theology. There is no evidence that convinces me that Keller has altered his theological beliefs in an effort to accommodate his New York audience. There is much evidence, however, that suggests that Keller has altered his communication methods in order to speak a language that his audience will understand.

⁶⁷John Hendryx, “Tim Keller Biographical Sketch [on-line]; accessed 29 April 2010; available from <http://monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/bio/timkeller.html>; Internet.

heart of Manhattan for professional New Yorkers.”⁶⁸ Keller, as a representative of the PCA, connected with this group and began to shepherd them through the process of beginning a new church.

At first, Keller sensed his obligation to identify for this group a man who would serve as their long-term senior pastor; however, another man never materialized, and before long, as Keller began to understand the needs of the city, he felt a call to move his family to New York. The history of Redeemer Presbyterian is written, “By the spring of 1989, this movement had taken on such urgency that an evening service was begun on April 9, 1989, at the Church of the Advent Hope, which was home to a Seventh-day Adventist congregation.”⁶⁹ Later that summer Keller, along with his wife Kathy and their three boys, moved to the city. By Christmas of 1989, the church had grown to 250 people and by its first anniversary had added three staff members.

When Keller agreed to plant Redeemer Presbyterian Church, many people told him and his wife, Kathy, that they were committing ministry suicide. The rationale was that no one could come into a place like New York City, filled with jaded, secular people, and find success preaching an orthodox Christian message; however, the opposite has proven true for Keller. In fact, his ministry has greatly flourished in the context of the city: “By early spring of 1993, Redeemer had outgrown the Adventist Church, [site of its original worship service] even though it was holding four services each Sunday in a building that seated nearly 400.”⁷⁰ After a mere four years of ministry in the city, the church was bursting at the seams.

Over the course of the next decade, Keller’s ministry would launch Hope for

⁶⁸Redeemer Presbyterian Church, “Redeemer History” [on-line]; accessed 23 March 2010; available from http://www.redeemer.com/about_us/vision_and_values/history.html; Internet.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid.

New York, “an outward-facing mercy ministry focused on addressing the practical needs of the city's population.”⁷¹ In 2000, Keller launched the Redeemer Church Planting Center, now Redeemer City to City, in order to plant churches in New York City and around the world. To date, Keller’s ministry has seen over “150 churches planted in over 50 global cities.”⁷² Of the 150 churches planted, 41 have been planted in New York City.⁷³

Key Event 3: September 11, 2001

The events of September 11, 2001, bore a profound impact on the way the world works. The impact of that day, in so many ways, is still being measured; however, a few signs identify that moment in history as a catalyst for church planting and spiritual renewal. In his book *Spiritual Leadership in the Global City*, Pier gives an interesting perspective on how the events of September 11, 2001 shaped New York City:

The events of 9/11 drew New York City into even sharper focus. In his book *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, Ralph Winter suggests that every 400 years there is a global shaping event that radically changes the trajectory of the church. Beginning with the Crucifixion (A.D. 33) followed by the invasion of the Barbarians and the burning of Rome (A.D. 410); the invasion of the Vikings and capturing Dublin (A.D. 834); the Crusades (A.D. 1095-1291); the missionary work of Hudson Taylor to Inland China (1853) and William Carey to the Indian Coast (1793), each 400-year epoch represents the geographic progression of the gospel.

On 9/11, under the azure blue sky, 19 terrorists forever changed the way we think about our city, our nation and the world. The extremist Muslim leadership that sent them on their mission understood something that few leaders, churches and denominations have understood—New York City represents a spiritual battleground on a global and cosmic scale. Could 9/11 be that 400-year turning point?⁷⁴

As has already been indicated, there was a noticeable acceleration of the planting

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Tim Keller, “Introducing Redeemer City to City” [on-line]; accessed 8 February 2012; available from http://redeemercitytocity.com/resources/library.jsp?Library_item_param=411; Internet.

⁷³Redeemer City to City, “Church Directory” [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://redeemercitytocity.com/inside-the-movement/churches.jsp#new-york-city/queens/skyline-city-church>; Internet.

⁷⁴Mac Pier, *Spiritual Leadership in the Global City* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope, 2008), 31.

of churches in New York City after 9/11. According to Carnes, “Almost 40 percent of the evangelical churches in Manhattan City Center were founded since 2000.”⁷⁵ The church planting emphasis has been so dramatic that in September and October of 2009 “one new evangelical church opened its doors for worship every Sunday.”⁷⁶

Key Churches and Networks

Several key churches and one key network also emerged since in recent years that have made a difference in the city. Of course, there are many churches with less public exposure, but the following institutions stand as pacesetters for most of the church planting activity in the city.

Since September 11, 2001, there has been no shortage of new church initiatives in New York City. The ministries that are discussed in the following sections are a microcosm of hundreds of new works that have been developed in the city.

Hillsong Church

Hillsong, the Sydney, Australia, based mega-church, opened a new campus in New York City in October 2010.⁷⁷ It would be reasonable to ask the question, “How can a church less than a year old be significant enough to be recognized in this thesis?” The answer to that question has two parts.

First, the NYC location has seen tremendous growth in its early days with five worship services in a venue that can seat between 300 and 1,000 people (depending on how it is configured).⁷⁸ The church’s founding pastor claims that over 1,500 people have

⁷⁵Tony Carnes, “Part 8: The Making of a Postsecular City: The West Side Story,” 20 December 2010 [on-line]; accessed 8 February 2012; available from <http://www.nycreligion.info/?p=1292>; Internet.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Hillsong New York City, “Official Launch” [on-line]; accessed 5 February 2012; available from <http://hillsongnyc.com/node?page=10>; Internet.

⁷⁸Hillsong Church, “Church Times and Locations” [on-line]; accessed 5

become new Christians in the first months of the church's existence.⁷⁹ The church has already moved to five weekend services to accommodate the crowds.⁸⁰

The second reason Hillsong is significant is because of their track record in other global cities. Though their history is short in NYC and in some ways is still under evaluation, their reputation in other global cities like New York is credible. A review of Hillsong locations around the world shows that 7 out of 10 are in top global cities.⁸¹ If the attendance in Sydney (20,000)⁸² and London (7,000)⁸³ is an indication of their success elsewhere, and if the growth of Hillsong New York continues, this congregation is one to watch.

Trinity Grace Church

In 2005, Australian Jon Tyson began what was known as Origins Church in New York City. Soon after, he changed the name of the church to the more traditional Trinity Grace Church.⁸⁴ Tyson was concerned that most city churches, by being

February 2012; available from <http://hillsongnyc.com/church-times-locations>; Internet. Live Nation "Venue Capacities" [on-line]; accessed 5 February 2012; available from <http://specialevents.livenation.com/venue/irving-plaza-new-york-ny>; Internet.

⁷⁹Carl Lentz, "Unfiltered: Some Good Questions with Some Decent Answers" [on-line]; accessed 8 February 2012; available from <http://hillsongnyc.com/textupdate/unfiltered-vol-1>; Internet.

⁸⁰Hillsong Church, "Church Times and Locations."

⁸¹"2010 Global Cities Index," *Foreign Policy Magazine* [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/node/373401>; Internet.

⁸²BCM Ferrel "The Church that Never Sleeps" [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://www.bmcferrell.com/clients/hillsong>; Internet.

⁸³BREATHecast, "Hillsong London Profile" [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://breathecast.christianpost.com/Christian.Music.Artist-Hillsong.London/Profile-831.htm>; Internet.

⁸⁴Will Mancini, "Why Origins Church Became Trinity Grace: Name Change Series Story #2," 29 October 2010 [on-line]; accessed 3 February 2012; available from <http://www.willmancini.com/2010/10/why-origins-church-became-trinity-grace-name-change-series-story-2.html>; Internet.

singularly focused on one neighborhood, were not addressing the vast problems that urbanization was presenting:

Most church planters have the conviction that Jesus calls us to more than the establishment of new religious institutions. His call is to ‘seek first the kingdom.’ Sadly, most city churches wind up being representative of a single neighborhood—or perhaps an industry—at best, leaving many of us wondering how to translate Jesus’ call to seek the kingdom into our church planting efforts.⁸⁵

For Tyson, the answer lay in a strategy that he named the City Parish.⁸⁶ The idea behind the City Parish is the decentralization of the structure of the church in an effort to reach the diversity of neighborhoods that compose the city. Tyson says, “The model envisions one urban church community consisting of several neighborhood churches that network together for the common good and renewal of the city.”⁸⁷ Four main components make up a city parish church:

Citywide gatherings. Every six weeks all neighborhood churches come together for one citywide gathering to tell the story of God’s grace to the city at large. These citywide gatherings feature stories of transformation, freedom, healing, and renewal from every corner of the city. From these gatherings, the harmony of passionate, reverent worship offered by so many different tongues rises over the city, and an integrated, holistic vision of urban renewal emerges. These citywide gatherings of a single city church also leverage influence, steward momentum, and display unity to the city.

Neighborhood churches. Each neighborhood church has its own elders and senior leadership team who provide spiritual direction and a specific missional vocation for the congregation. Each neighborhood community also has its own structures for pastoral care. On the other hand, the neighborhood churches share centralized resources such as student, workplace, family and artistic ministries, as well as a counseling center and citywide mercy projects, to name a few. These neighborhood churches hold weekend worship gatherings that highlight how the kingdom of God is being expressed all across the neighborhood. Each community has the freedom to contextualize its worship to the culture of its neighborhood; for example, communities meeting in areas with many families may focus on developing a thriving children’s ministry, while a gathering in a neighborhood full of artists may include interactive, creative elements in its worship.

Missional communities. The heart of each neighborhood congregation is a network

⁸⁵Trinity Grace Church, “City Parish” [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://trinitygracechurch.com/about/parish/>; Internet.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

of missional communities: mid-sized groups (25-40 people) that meet throughout the neighborhood and provide the ideal environment for building relationships while connecting to the heart and mission of the church. To join a missional community is to enter into the journey of Christian discipleship. The missional community is essential, as it keeps the church small enough for everyone to have a real identity and be involved in the work of ministry, each using her own gifts to build the church. Missional communities are organized around a shared mission to a neighborhood or industry. They cultivate partnerships with schools, organizations that provide social services, business leaders, activists, community organizers, and anyone else who loves his city and wants to make it a better place to live; they then leverage those partnerships to implement strategic projects aimed at redeeming and renewing that neighborhood.

Life groups. Several life groups, which consist of 3 to 12 people, comprise these missional communities. Life groups provide an opportunity to abide in God's love through the essential practices of Christianity: confessing sins to one another, reading and meditating on Scripture, praying for nonbelievers to be captured by the life of God. Life groups cultivate vulnerability through committed relationships, servanthood, and love, and very often meet over a meal in the home of a fellow member. These groups allow believers to walk together in the rhythms of Jesus' way through the practice of shared spiritual disciplines: prayer, the study of Scripture, fasting, relationships of accountability. The pursuit of vulnerability in these groups requires the practice of reconciliation, and communal life deepens as members learn to bear with one another in love.⁸⁸

Tyson's strategy has been an effective one. To date, Trinity Grace is the most successful (in terms of numerical growth) of the post 9/11 churches in New York City, with over 1100 weekend attenders.⁸⁹ Tyson's blend of decentralization, missional focus, and cultural understanding seems to be the right formula for young professionals of the city. In an article about Trinity Grace, John Leland of the *The New York Times* writes,

The church and its expansion to the East Village highlight a concerted groundswell of middle-class, professional evangelicals in Manhattan, an area many churches once shunned as an epicenter of sin. It is the place, many now believe, to reach the people who influence the world.⁹⁰

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Mark Reynolds, Assistant Pastor at Redeemer City to City, e-mail interview by author, 22 December 2011.

⁹⁰John Leland, "The Evangelical Squad," *The New York Times*, 24 April 2011 [on-line]; accessed 22 December 2011; available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/24/nyregion/evangelical-group-sees-nyc-as-incubator-to-plant-churches.html?pagewanted=all>; Internet.

Redeemer City to City

The heartbeat of Redeemer City to City comes from the vision and passion of its founder, Tim Keller. Keller, one of the most influential church planters of the last twenty years, says, “A vigorous and continuous approach to church planting is the only way to guarantee an increase in the number of believers, and is one of the best ways to renew the whole body of Christ.”⁹¹ Since planting Redeemer Church in New York City, Keller has come to realize that “nothing else—not crusades, outreach programs, parachurch ministries, growing mega-churches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes—will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting.”⁹²

In order to facilitate his vision, Keller launched the Redeemer Church Planting Center in 2000. The goal of the center is to provide resources “including funding, leadership training, and coaching, for churches throughout the Tri-State area, the West Coast, and in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Australia. Programs have included training, events, and one-on-one consultations.”⁹³ In 2009, the church-planting center officially changed its name to Redeemer City to City.

Keller rooted his vision for the church-planting center in his firm belief that the primary way God will build his kingdom is through new churches. The evidence points to the fact that Keller’s deep conviction about church planting comes from his desire to be true to God’s Word and methodologies. He confirms that “we plant churches because we want to be true to the biblical mandate”⁹⁴ and points to several examples of this mandate. First he says, “Jesus’ essential call was to plant churches.”⁹⁵ He further

⁹¹Timothy Keller, “Why Plant Churches?” [on-line]; accessed 29 March 2010; available from <http://www.redeemer2.com/resources/papers/why%20plant%202%2011%20TLeaders.pdf>; Internet, 1.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Keller, “Introducing Redeemer City to City.”

⁹⁴Keller, “Why Plant Churches? 1.”

⁹⁵Ibid.

contends, “The Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20) is a call not just to ‘make disciples’ but to baptize. In Acts and elsewhere, it is clear that baptism means incorporation into a worshiping community with accountability and boundaries (cf. Acts 2:41–47).”⁹⁶ As stated earlier, it is Keller's belief that “the only way to be truly sure you are increasing the number of Christians in a town is to increase the number of churches. Many decisions are not really conversions but are only the beginning of a journey of seeking God.”⁹⁷ That is to say, Keller believes it is impossible to know if a person is truly converted to Christ unless he or she is assimilated into the body of the church.

Keller thus summarizes his passion for church planting:

New churches are by far the best way to reach 1) new generations, 2) new residents, and 3) new people groups. Studies show that newer churches attract new groups about 6-10 times better and faster than older churches do. It is because when a church is new, younger and newer people can get in to its leadership faster. It is because when a church is new, it has no tradition and can experiment. It is because when a church is new its main goal each week is not to satisfy the desires of the long-time members (there are none!) but to reach new people. As a result, new churches are enormously better at reaching new people in a city.⁹⁸

Equal to his belief that planting churches is the best way to evangelize people is his passion for the importance of where those churches are planted. Keller strongly believes that churches ought to be planted in the great cities of the world. Pointing to his scriptural basis, he reiterates that “Paul’s whole strategy was to plant urban churches.”⁹⁹ Paul went to the “largest cities of a region,”¹⁰⁰ preached the gospel, then “plant[ed]

⁹⁶Ibid. Though Jesus did not give a specific command that his followers go and plant churches, it is implicit in his command to go and make disciples. The book of Acts shows that Christian disciples ultimately form churches (e.g., Acts 14).

⁹⁷Ibid., 2.

⁹⁸Timothy Keller, “Advancing the Gospel into the 21st Century” [on-line]; accessed 7 April 2010; available from http://www.redeemer2.com/themovement/issues/2003/dec/advancingthegospel_1.html; Internet.

⁹⁹Keller, “Why Plant Churches?” 1.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

churches in each city”¹⁰¹ as evidenced by the fact that he appointed “elders in every town (Titus 1:5).”¹⁰² Keller concludes concerning today’s cities “are filled with new generations, immigrants, and residents more than ever. Globalization means new mobile populations coming constantly into cities, and if there is not a lot of church planting they will be lost.”¹⁰³

The cities in the regions where Paul planted churches held great power over the outer areas.¹⁰⁴ If churches were birthed in the city, then certainly they would spread to the more rural areas. Keller mentions, “The way to most permanently influence a country was through its chief cities, and the way to most permanently influence a city was to plant churches in it.”¹⁰⁵ Once Paul took these steps, he considered the gospel to be sufficiently planted and moved on to other regions and cities. Influenced by the apostle Paul, Keller has a vision for city center church planting that has had a profound impact on New York City.

Conclusion

Over the course of the last six decades, the spiritual landscape of New York City has improved dramatically. From a low point in the 1970s to a significant church planting growth in the post 9/11 era, New York City is a place where the people of God are on the move. Influenced by an intentional prayer movement, catalytic church leaders, and prioritized church planting, believers in New York have demonstrated that the culture of a city can be dramatically improved over time.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Keller, “Advancing the Gospel into the 21st Century.”

¹⁰⁴Keller, “Why Plant Churches?” 2.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

CHAPTER 4
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCH PLANTING IN
NEW YORK CITY AND IMPLICATIONS
FOR THE FUTURE

New York City was perhaps the unlikeliest of places for the “Southern” Baptist Convention (SBC) to focus its church planting efforts, but focus it did. From the 1950s until today the SBC has made sure that missions efforts in NYC remain a part of its strategic plan. Over the course of the years, there have been several key events and leaders that have emerged to make the SBC work in NYC what it is today. This chapter shows the history of SBC missionary work in NYC. This chapter also displays some of the key personalities and initiatives that have shaped the work in NYC.

Past and Present Effectiveness

“Mayberry was a Southern Baptist kind of town. An urban Goliath that nicknamed its baseball team ‘the Yankees’ was not,” writes Keith Cogburn in his book on the history of Southern Baptist work in New York.¹ The first Southern Baptist church began in New York State in the mid-1950s.² By February 1957, heeding the call of Home Mission leader Solomon Dowis to “weep over the pagan” cities of America, a new

¹Keith L. Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts: The Baptist Convention of New York Story* (Franklin, TN: Providence House, 1996), 29.

²The State Convention of Baptists in Ohio were instrumental in getting the work of Southern Baptists off the ground in New York state. In 1955, they helped organize a church in Niagara Falls, NY. Baptists from Alabama played a strategic role in getting the mission started. “Southern Baptists Hold first N.Y. Services,” *Baptist Press* [on-line]; accessed 16 January 2012; available from http://www.sbhla.org/bp_archive/searchresults.asp?cx=010226843250739628576%3Ayfh52fquq7g&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF8&q=May+9%2C+1957+Services+NY&sa=Search; Internet.

mission began in New York City.³ Ray Roberts, a leader from the Ohio convention, spearheaded the effort to see an SBC church take root in the city.⁴

The core for this new church began forming in 1956 with a man named James Aaron. Aaron moved his family to NYC so that he could pursue graduate-level training at New York University. The Aarons were unsuccessful in finding a church in NYC that was “something like their home church” in Granite City, Illinois. Eventually Mrs. Aaron made it her mission to see if a Southern Baptist church could be planted in NYC.⁵

Over time, Mrs. Aaron began corresponding with Roberts to see if he would help foster their idea of having a church in the city. According to *Baptist Press*, “Roberts’ office served as a clearing house to secure names of other interested Baptists in the New York area.”⁶ In May 1957, a group of lay people began to meet for regular worship and Sunday School at the McBurney YMCA building on West 23rd street and by November had nearly 100 persons attending.⁷

In the early days, the work in New York City faced several challenges; primarily related to the fact that for Southern Baptists, New York City represented unchartered territory. One critic of the work in NYC quipped, “What next, an SBC church in Paris, London?”⁸ According to a history written on New England Baptists, “Others felt that if

³Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 30.

⁴“Southern Baptists Hold First N.Y. Services.”

⁵“Southern Baptists in America’s Largest City,” *Baptist Press* [on-line]; accessed 16 January 2012; available from http://www.sbhla.org/bp_archive/searchresults.asp?cx=010226843250739628576%3Ayfh52fquq7g&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF-8&q=Southern+Baptists+in+Americas+Largest+City&sa=Search; Internet.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷“New Pastor Hails Baptist Unit Here,” *New York Times*, 4 November 1957 [on-line]; accessed 16 January 2012; available from <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F20F15F63955137A93C6A9178AD95F438585F9&scp=1&sq=Southern+Baptist+Church+in+New+York+City+&st=p>; Internet. See also “Southern Baptists in America’s Largest City.”

⁸Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 34.

the Home Mission Board wanted to help evangelize the Northeast, it should send funds to the American Baptists to help with their evangelization and church planting effort.”⁹

Another issue in getting the new church started was related to the structure of the Home Mission Board in the 1950s. During this period of time it was customary to support a new pastor at \$50-150 per month for a new work.¹⁰ New York City was far too expensive a place to live and establish a work to survive on that type of support. There was also the issue of anemic church health in New York City. New York City was not in any sense a fertile place for new ministries to begin. According to the *New York Times*, the Southern Baptist church was the first church, of any denomination, to be organized in the city in over forty years.¹¹ Despite the challenges, the Manhattan Baptist Church was constituted in New York City on January 10, 1958.¹²

The Manhattan Baptist Church would serve as the catalytic agent: the mother and grandmother of dozens of churches in the metro New York area. In 1957, Billy Graham predicted that the Manhattan Baptist Church, under the leadership of its pastor Paul James, would see over 100 churches planted.¹³ In just over twenty years, the vision of Billy Graham became a reality. The work started in 1957 saw over 100 new churches

⁹Merwyn Borders, *The Circle Comes Full: New England Southern Baptists 1958-1998* (Franklin: TN, Providence House, 1998), 64.

¹⁰Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 30.

¹¹Art Toalston, “Paul James, Baptist Pioneers, Visionary in N.Y., dies at 93” *Baptist Press*, 17 August 2001 [on-line]; accessed 16 January 2012; available from <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=11532>; Internet.

¹²“Southern Baptists Organizing in City,” *New York Times*, 5 January 1958 [on-line]; accessed 12 January 2012; available from <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=FA0911FE3E5D1A7B93C7A9178AD85F4C8585F9&scp=2&sq=Southern+Baptist+Church+in+New+York+City+&st=p>; Internet. See also June Gilliland Andrews, *So Generations will Remember* (Syracuse, NY: Women’s Missionary Union Baptist Convention of New York, 1994), 45.

¹³Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 163.

planted in the region. By 1980, the Manhattan Baptist Church, riddled by a church split and because it had given so much of itself away to other churches, was dormant.¹⁴

Key Figures and Churches

No history of Southern Baptist work in New York City would be complete without mentioning a few of the key personalities that have helped facilitate the work in the city. In the following paragraphs are several of the names that hold a significant place in the NYC church planting history.

Paul James. For sixteen “happy” years, New York native Paul James served as the pastor of the thriving Baptist Tabernacle in Atlanta, Georgia.¹⁵ During James’ pastorate, the church averaged over 3,000 people in regular attendance.¹⁶ From 1952 to 1957 the Tabernacle led all Southern Baptist churches in the area in baptisms. The church also had one of the largest Sunday Schools in the area, a renowned missions program, and one of the “largest and most effective” choirs in the Southern Baptist Convention.¹⁷

During a meeting at the Glorietta Conference Center in New Mexico, James was approached by Courts Redford, then president of the Home Mission Board, to see if he would be interested in pioneering a new work in New York City.¹⁸ His response to the invitation largely hinged on what his wife would say. As James approached his wife about the idea of serving in NYC, her response was “Anywhere—anywhere in all the world, dear God, except New York City.”¹⁹ Over the course of time, however, she would

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Borders, *The Circle Comes Full*, 63.

¹⁶Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 36.

¹⁷“Southern Baptists are in New York,” *Home Missions Magazine* 18, no. 11 (1957): 22.

¹⁸Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 36.

¹⁹Ibid.

have her heart softened and realized that it was the “Master’s footsteps [that] led [them] Northward.”²⁰ By September 1957, the Home Mission Board voted that James would become the director of the mission work in New York City, as well as serve as pastor of the Manhattan Mission.²¹

The expectation of the Home Mission Board for James’ role in NYC was for him to not just pastor a church but to be a “pastor-missionary.”²² There was a clear sense that James was expected to help establish works all throughout the Northeast. When the Manhattan Baptist Church was founded, its deacons created a “veritable manifesto” that laid out the need and vision for church planting in the region. According to *Baptist Press*,

It wasn’t always easy to keep that vision before the local congregations [that MBC founded], who sometimes became wrapped up in building up their own membership and finances, James acknowledged. But he tried to impress on every congregation that they had once been a mission helped by another congregation, that they were now a church, and they needed to have the privilege of starting another church.²³

As stated previously, this vision for church planting resulted in over 100 new churches in just over twenty years.²⁴

It is without question that James was a pioneer for Southern Baptists in the area of urban church planting. It is evident from different articles printed during his time in the city that James spent a great deal of time educating those in the South why it was necessary to be in a place like New York. In one such article James laid out seven reasons why NYC should be important to Southern Baptists:²⁵

²⁰Ibid.

²¹“Southern Baptists are in New York,” 29.

²²Ibid.

²³Shari Schubert, “Pioneer Paul James, 90, Reflects on Early SBC Work in New York,” *Baptist Press* 6 May 1998[on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012; available from <http://www.sbc Baptistpress.net/BPnews.asp?ID=2025>; Internet.

²⁴Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 163.

²⁵Paul S. James, “Why are Southern Baptists in New York?” *Home Missions Magazine* 29, no. 5 (March 1958): 11.

BECAUSE though New York is not the world's biggest city, in New York more different races impinge on each other than in any other city in the world; and Southern Baptists have an extensive program of ministry to racial groups.

BECAUSE in New York the housing pattern for the next 50 years is now being fixed. The city is engaged in a redevelopment program in which within the next five years 35 church buildings will be torn down and land cleared for huge housing projects. As this program proceeds, land is offered in these housing areas to those denominations which can erect churches and are prepared to serve the tens of thousands of people in the housing units. During the past three years such offers have been declined because denominations were not ready to act on them. Already Southern Baptists have been warmly welcomed by those who hope we can do something about the situation.

BECAUSE a group of Southern Baptist people, of whom there are thousands in greater New York, began meeting each Sunday in the spring of 1957 for worship, fellowship and the promotion of Southern Baptist work. They sought affiliation with an established Southern Baptist church and with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and have now organized as a church.

BECAUSE Billy Graham, a Southern Baptist, was used of God to produce this "Manhattan Miracle" in evangelism and to write another chapter in the book of Acts. The situation now calls for enlistment; though less spectacular than evangelism, is just as vital.

BECAUSE Baptists have a historic witness to the fact that the church is a fellowship of New Testament believers and is not a sectional or national thing. This was the emphasis of John Smyth in Holland 350 years ago. So Southern Baptists move into this area or need not as invaders but as allies with all who are seeking to promote the cause of Jesus Christ, believing "There is no competition between the lighthouses."

BECAUSE no other Baptist group is promoting a program of church-sponsored missions in Greater New York and there are vast residential areas where Baptist churches of any kind are non-existent in the "world's largest concentration of urban development."

BECAUSE, in their program to evangelize America and establish 30,000 churches and missions between now and 1964, Southern Baptists, as America's fastest growing major denomination, believe they have an obligation to America's major city.²⁶

Additionally, James was a pioneer in the Southern Baptist Convention as it related to helping the convention of churches cross the color barrier. In the 1950s and 1960s, racial tensions were running at a fever pitch in the South. According to Cogburn, "As late as 1962, blacks were arrested for trespassing when they tried to enter an Albany, Georgia, Southern Baptist church."²⁷ So what was a Southern Baptist church to do in the

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 74.

very colorful New York City? One reporter even asked James, “What are you lily-white Southern Baptists going to do when people of color come around?”²⁸ James answered the reporter, “We’ll cross that bridge when we get to it.”²⁹

By the fall of 1958, it was time to address the racial situation at the Manhattan Baptist Church. Chris Oswampke was a Nigerian student who had been attending the Manhattan church for some time when he approached the pastor about “uniting with the congregation.”³⁰ What would the church do? James, being the ever-cautious leader, did not want to mess up the handling of this racial situation. On the one hand Southern Baptists were not known to be a racially integrated people. This was evidenced by the fact that Oswampke had been denied membership of an SBC church in Kentucky.³¹ On the other hand, James knew that New York City was much more diverse and racial harmony was needed in the churches there. He sought the advice of people in the church on how they would proceed. It seems the best advice came from an oil company executive from Mississippi named Sam Sorrell; he pointed out that what they were attempting to plant in NYC was a New Testament church and that the churches in the New Testament did not appear to observe any “racial distinctions.” He reminded the group, “This is New York, not the South . . . and you can’t draw circles here.” With that, the deacons accepted Sorrell’s argument and “warmly” accepted Oswampke for membership.³² Addressing the Southern Baptist Convention in May of 1961, James said that “a willingness to accept

²⁸Ibid., 73.

²⁹Ibid., 74.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

Negros into membership” was one of the distinctives that set the church apart from others in the SBC.³³

Oftentimes, churches in cities are forced to confront issues before their counterparts in the suburban and rural areas. For example, it was James and New York Baptists that planted the first Polish church to affiliate with the SBC.³⁴ The racial issue that Paul James and Manhattan Baptist Church confronted was one that they could not simply ignore. New York City was multi-racial and multi-cultural, and to ignore that fact would have proven to be a detriment to the growth of Southern Baptist work in the city. Addressing the SBC on the issue of race, James said, “I think that eventually, on the level of the local churches, we are going to see a widening of the fellowship.”³⁵

Paul James was a visionary leader who took great risks and denied his family personal comforts in order to see the work birthed in the city. James’ ministry not only pioneered the entirety of the new SBC churches in the Northeast, it also helped set a tone for the ethnic growth of the SBC over the coming years. It is unquantifiable to judge the direct impact that James had on establishing many of the multi-ethnic churches that now exist in the SBC, but it would not be much of a stretch to say that his leadership certainly paved the way.

Quinn Pugh. “No sin is so unbecoming of a people with a mission to the cities than that of a congregation in an urban setting which boasts itself of being ‘a country

³³John Wicklein, “City Area Viewed As a Mission Field,” *New York Times*, 28 May 1961 [on-line]; accessed 16 January 2012; available from <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F10B14F73E5D1B728DDDA10A94DD405B818AF1D3&scp=5&sq=Southern+Baptist+Church+in+New+York+City+&st=p>; Internet

³⁴Gainer E. Bryan, Jr., “Polish Dedication has a Touch of Nostalgia,” *Baptist Features* [on-line]; accessed 16 January 2012; available from http://www.sbhla.org/bp_archive/searchresults.asp?cx=010226843250739628576%3Ayfh52fquq7g&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF-8&q=Polish+Dedication&sa=Search; Internet.

³⁵Wicklein, “City Area Viewed As a Mission Field.”

church in the heart of the city.’ Such is no more than a ghetto of rurality in the maelstrom of swirling lost humanity,” said Quinn Pugh during his tenure as the Executive Director of the Baptist Convention of New York (BCNY).³⁶ Pugh came to the metro New York area in 1962 to pastor the Bergen Baptist Chapel in Bergen County, New Jersey.³⁷ After his stint in New Jersey, Pugh was a pastor in Maryland and then in 1979 was elected as the second director of the MNYBA, which he served until 1984. The sentiment he expressed in the quote listed above marked a missiological shift that Pugh brought to the New York area when he came to serve as the director of the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association (MNYBA) and then later the BCNY.³⁸

One of the hallmarks of Pugh’s ministry was his ability to bring New York Baptists of all stripes together. He said, “We are all ethnics working in partnership with one another.”³⁹ Pugh was put off by the standard description of churches as either Anglo or ethnic in the SBC.⁴⁰ In his mind, in order for Baptist work to expand in New York, it would have to include Baptists of all ethnicities.

His widespread vision would come to pass during his tenure in New York City. It was during his time as a pastor, Director of Missions, and State Executive Director that

³⁶Joe Westbury, “Pastors Urged: Link Social Ministry with Gospel to Evangelize Cities,” *Baptist Press*, 3 May 1988 [on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012; available from http://www.sbhla.org/bp_archive/searchresults.asp?cx=010226843250739628576%3Ayfh52fquq7g&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF-8&q=Pastors+Urged%3A+Link+Social+Minsitry+with+Gospel+to+Evangelize+Cities&sa=Search; Internet.

³⁷Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 85.

³⁸“New York’s Quinn Pugh Announces Retirement,” *Baptist Press*, 25 March 1996 [on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012; available from http://www.sbhla.org/bp_archive/searchresults.asp?cx=010226843250739628576%3Ayfh52fquq7g&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF-8&q=new+yorks+quinn+pugh+announces+retirement&sa=Search; Internet.

³⁹Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 169.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

the work in New York truly became multi-cultural.⁴¹ Pugh knew that there were many people besides transplanted Southerners that needed to be reached through the ministry of the Southern Baptist Convention. This was a definite mindset shift from the early days of Southern Baptist work in NYC. Though Paul James was credited with helping to break the color barrier in SBC life, he was also a strict champion for the establishment and the conservation of the “Baptist Program” in New York.⁴² James’ view for Southern Baptist work in New York City centered on providing a home away from home for Southerners who were relocated to the New York area.⁴³ Pugh had a different vision for New York, and his missiology reflected a passion for the people who were the most native to the city.

Pugh’s ability to bring people together was put to the test in the 1980s as the Southern Baptist Convention was going through its Conservative Resurgence. Though, according to Cogburn, there was “no direct damage to the fellowship” in New York, there were key challenges.⁴⁴ The biggest challenges resulted from the New York Baptists’ heavy dependence on funding from the Home Mission Board. Larry Lewis became the president of the Home Mission Board in 1987 and there was a shift toward church starting and direct evangelism.⁴⁵ This especially had an impact on the social ministry and campus

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Wicklein, “City Area Viewed As a Mission Field.” See also Paul S. James, “Why are Southern Baptist In New York?”

⁴³Paul James’s missiology for New York City could have been summed up as being “Southern Centric.” This is evidenced in many articles that he wrote during his tenure in New York, but was most prominently noted in his pamphlet entitled “I Saw New Life in New York. Paul S. James, “I Saw New Life in New York City” (New York: The Manhattan Baptist Church, n.d.).

⁴⁴Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 202.

⁴⁵Mark Wingfield, “HMB Directors Approve Staff Reorganization,” *Baptist Press*, 13 October 1988 [on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012; available from http://www.sbhla.org/bp_archive/searchresults.asp?cx=010226843250739628576%3Ayfh52fquq7g&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF-8&q=%28Larry+Lewis%29+%28Church+Planting+Direct+Evangelism%29&sa=Search; Internet

missionaries that served in New York. Heeding the call to bring Southern Baptists together in New York, Quinn Pugh said, “Now our energies must be directed towards the ever-growing burden of the unsaved, unreached persons around. Everywhere we sense that the Lord is mightily at work in the lives of people who are hungering for meaning and hope.”⁴⁶

Sam Simpson. In the mid-1960s, Southern Baptist work expanded into the Bronx.⁴⁷ Recruited by Paul James and David Morgan (a former missionary to Panama), Sam Simpson, a native of Jamaica, was enlisted to start a congregation in Manhattan. Similar to James, Simpson was appointed by the Home Mission Board as a “pastor-director” for the Bronx.⁴⁸ Plans for the new church plant quickly changed when an apartment was offered as a meeting place for worship services in the Bronx. This fledgling congregation eventually became known as the Bronx Baptist Church.⁴⁹ Relatively soon after the start of Bronx Baptist Church, Simpson found that there was a need for more space and they moved to a new, spacious sanctuary. Upon their move, the church kept their original building and started the Honeywell Chapel, thus setting a trajectory for future church planting work.⁵⁰

By 1972, Simpson had laid the groundwork for another church. In that year, the Wake Eden Baptist Church began in conjunction with Bronx Baptist Church and

⁴⁶Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 203.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Walker Knight, “They Have a Baptist Bishop in the Bronx,” *Baptist Press*, 7 April 1976 [on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012; available from http://www.sbhla.org/bp_archive/searchresults.asp?cx=010226843250739628576%3Ayfh52fquq7g&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF8&q=They+have+a+Baptist+Bishop+in+the+Bronx&sa=Search; Internet.

⁵⁰Cogburn, *Like the Book of Acts*, 109.

Greenwich Baptist Church.⁵¹ Simpson has had a long history of church planting in New York:

In addition to leading the Bronx and Wake Eden congregations, Rev. Simpson has been instrumental in starting Protestant Community Church in the North Bronx, the Honeywell Baptist Chapel, and New Hope Mission in Spring Valley, NY. Grace Baptist Chapel in the northern section of the Bronx is also an offshoot of Bronx Baptist Church.⁵²

Known as the “Bishop of the Bronx,” Simpson has a reputation that exceeds far beyond the churches he has founded. Simpson has been known to intercede between two rivaling gangs to stop their fighting. He also helped to found the Twin Parks Association to help combat the rapid deterioration of the buildings in his neighborhood. This association of community leaders purchased the rundown buildings from the city and insured that they would be renovated and then developed a plan for their upkeep. Under the association, the occupancy of the refurbished buildings went from 60 percent to 95 percent, thus helping to restore life and vitality back to the neighborhood.⁵³

In 1980, Simpson was given the Award of Excellence by Air Jamaica Airlines for his contributions in making the community a better place to live for Jamaican nationals.⁵⁴ At the banquet given in his honor, Jamaican Governor General Florizel Galsspole said, “Rev. Simpson has shown tremendous drive, energy, imagination, determination, vision, and he has shown care for the underprivileged.”⁵⁵ She went on to say, “He went to the United States of America as a humble Jamaican in 1959; today, he

⁵¹Ibid., 161.

⁵²Bronx Baptist Church, “Staff” [on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012; available from <http://www.bronxbaptist.org/staff.htm>; Internet.

⁵³Knight, “They Have a Baptist Bishop in the Bronx.”

⁵⁴“Home Missionary Simpson Honored for ‘Excellence,” *Baptist Press* (12 January 1981) [on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012; available from http://www.sbhla.org/bp_archivesearchresults.asp?cx=010226843250739628576%3Ayfh52fquq7g&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF-8&q=Home+Missionary+Simpson+Honored&sa=Search; Internet.

⁵⁵Ibid.

has built up a reputation that demands respect.”⁵⁶

In 1981, Simpson appeared on an NBC News television special entitled “Unto the Least of These.” In this special, Simpson joined other Baptist leaders in discussing how recent cuts in social programs by the Reagan Administration would impact the poor. During the course of the interview, Simpson agreed that the loss of funding for programs for the poor would have a “devastating impact on the poor.” He went on to say, “A lot of people are going to be dying if something is not done.”⁵⁷ This demonstrated Simpson’s compassion for the people in his neighborhood.

Simpson’s ministry continues to this day in New York City. Though age and illness have slowed him to some degree, he remains the Senior Pastor of both the Bronx Baptist Church and Wake Eden Church.⁵⁸

Nelson Searcy. The Journey Church was one of the first Southern Baptist churches planted in New York City following the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Nelson Searcy, previously on staff with the North Carolina Baptist Convention and Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church, came to New York to plant a church in the summer of 2001.⁵⁹ Simultaneous to seeking church planting opportunities, Searcy was tapped by the North American Mission Board to lead its New Hope New York efforts.⁶⁰ Over time, Searcy

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Greg Warner, “National Poverty Special Features Baptist Leaders,” *Baptist Press*, 16 July 1981 [on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012, available from http://www.sbhla.org/bp_archive/searchresults.asp?cx=010226843250739628576%3Ayfh52fquq7g&cof=FORID%3A9&ie=UTF-8&q=national+poverty+special+features&sa=Search; Internet.

⁵⁸Bronx Baptist Church, “Staff.”

⁵⁹Church Leader Insights, “About Nelson Searcy” [on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012; available from <http://www.churchleaderinsights.com/index.php/about/nelson-searcy>; Internet.

⁶⁰James Dotson, “New Hope New York: Praying for the Light of Christ to Shine on the Big Apple,” *SBC Life* (October 2003) [on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012; available from <http://www.sbclife.org/Articles/2003/10/Sla4.asp>; Internet.

gave up the NAMB job so that he could focus full-time on church planting efforts.⁶¹

The Journey Church held its first official service on Easter Sunday of 2002:⁶²

From there [Easter 2002], The Journey has steadily grown in numbers and ministries (just check out the number of people we have in Growth Groups and serving in our community). Over the years we have met in comedy clubs, church basements, off-Broadway theaters, public schools, hotel ballrooms and even in larger concert venues (like The Manhattan Center's Grand Ballroom).

Today, The Journey church meets in three locations throughout the city and has over 1,100 worshippers.⁶³ The Journey is significant to mention in this research for two reasons. First, their growth in the early days would make them one of the fastest growing churches in the United States.⁶⁴ Second, they are one of the largest Southern Baptist churches in the city. Though The Journey does not make any mention of their SBC affiliation on their website, they still represent, at least in part, the work of Southern Baptists in New York City post 9/11.⁶⁵

Searcy has played an active role in church planting throughout metro New York City. This role has manifested itself in three different ways. First, Searcy, as has already been stated, was the first director of NAMB's Strategic Focus City initiative in New York City. As chronicled in the next section of this research, this initiative resulted in thirty-seven new churches planted by the end of 2006. Second, The Journey Church has an active church multiplication strategy through the use of multi-site venues. This approach has resulted in congregations in the East Village of New York City, the Upper West Side, and the borough of Queens. In recent days, Searcy has begun an extension

⁶¹“Former Staff,” *Chronycled Magazine* (New York: New Hope New York, 2006), 45. See also The Journey Church, “About Us” [on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012; available from http://upperwest.journeymetro.com/pages/page.asp?page_id=115395; Internet.

⁶³The Journey Church, “About Us.”

⁶⁴Church Leader Insights, “About Nelson Searcy.”

⁶⁵The Journey Church, “About Us.”

campus in Boca Raton, Florida.⁶⁶ Third, Searcy has a company called Church Leader Insights that is dedicated to training church leaders, including church planters. According to his website, Searcy now has an impact on over 50,000 leaders per year.⁶⁷

Strategic Focus City Strategy

September 11, 2001 is a day that is seared in the minds of most people who were alive at that time. There is none for whom this is more true than those who lived through the horrific attacks: the residents of New York City. According to Greg Farrah, a church planter in NYC around the time of the attacks, the building manager of his office complex fought back tears at the sight of the huge hole in the ground at the World Trade Center sight.⁶⁸ His relatives, who have lived in NYC all of their lives, would not look out their window that faced the Trade Center's direction.⁶⁹ The people of NYC tended to be without hope in the days following the attacks.

Strategic Focus Cities, a Southern Baptist initiative in New York City, began to take shape in the early part of 2001.⁷⁰ The initiative was produced by the North American Mission Board and was called "New Hope New York." Nelson Searcy moved to the city to become the City Coordinator for New Hope New York. There were plans to form a Grand Strategy Team that would be responsible for developing a comprehensive,

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Church Leader Insights, "About Church Leader Insights" [on-line]; accessed 28 January 2012; available from <http://www.churchleaderinsights.com/index.php/about/cli>; Internet.

⁶⁸Greg Farrah, "Shaken but not Destroyed," *Chronycled Magazine* (New York: New Hope New York, 2006), 19.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰"New Hope New York: Five Strategic Focuses, One Unified Vision," *Chronycled Magazine* (New York: New Hope New York, 2006), 38. I served as a staff member for the New York City Strategic Focus City initiative from March 2003 until December of 2005. Though I strive to stick to the facts alone in my evaluation of this initiative, there is a natural bias that occurs from experience.

city-reaching strategy; however, the plans for this strategy were delayed while an immediate response to the 9/11 attacks could take place.⁷¹

In the subsequent months after September 11, 2001, however, the Grand Strategy Team (GST) for New Hope New York did take shape. The GST was comprised of leaders from local churches, the Metro New York Baptist Association, the Baptist Convention of New York, and other key agencies of the Southern Baptist Convention.⁷² After meeting for a period of months, the GST determined that the New Hope New York initiative would be a three-year initiative that would take on five different focuses: church planting, prayer, church strengthening, collegiate ministry, and pastor leadership development. In addition to the focus areas, the initiative would have two primary support teams: volunteer mobilization and communications.⁷³ Over the course of its existence (2002-2006), the New Hope New York strategy employed a staff of 34 people and enlisted another 55 interns.⁷⁴

What were the results of NAMB's multi-year, Strategic Focus City emphasis in New York? From 2002 until the end of 2006, Southern Baptist work in New York City resulted in: (1) 114 missionaries being deployed, (2) 37 new churches planted, (3) 364 church partners mobilized, (4) 24,774 volunteers mobilized, (5) 27,459 individuals equipped to share Christ and (6) 55 collegiate leaders trained in a one-year internship.⁷⁵

Though one could look at these results and call them admirable, a closer look must be taken. On one hand, if the goal of New Hope New York was to involve Southern

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid. There were representatives from the North American Mission Board and LifeWay Christian Resources on the GST team in addition to the New York based groups.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid., 44-51.

⁷⁵Ibid.

Baptists in partnership and evangelistic activities, it could be argued that the goal was accomplished in tremendous fashion. If the goal was long-term city transformation, it would be harder to prove that was accomplished.

An analysis of the results of the Strategic Focus Cities process shows that there was much good activity during the course of the initiative, but little that had a life beyond that term. For instance, the initiatives of volunteer mobilization and collegiate leader training were largely dependent on having a staff to fulfill those objectives. At one time, ten full-time staff members on the NHNY team ran those two initiatives.⁷⁶ Within a year of the end of the NHNY process, both of the initiatives had come to a close.

According to Steve Allen, from the Metro New York Church Planting Team, “It is hard to quantify the non-church planting ministries of New Hope New York.”⁷⁷ Allen goes on to say, “Many of the initiatives most assuredly added value, but it is hard to measure their worth because there is very little tangible sustained evidence of their impact.”⁷⁸ Shane Critser, former Associate Director of New Hope New York, agrees with Allen’s assessment: “Many of the ministries could have been sustained long-term, if they had been set up to do so. However, most of them were designed to last while they were receiving New Hope New York/ NAMB funding.”⁷⁹ He pointed to Paint the Town, a New Hope New York emphasis designed to paint schools in underprovided areas as a case in point.

According to Brian Audia, the Executive Director of New Hope New York in

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Steve Allen, Church Planting Team Leader for the North American Mission Board in New York, e-mail interview by author, 11 July 2011.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Shane Critser, Team Leader for Church Mobilization for the North American Mission Board. Interview by author, 11 July 2011.

its latter years, the Paint the Town ministry was an “enormous success.”⁸⁰ He goes on to show where Paint the Town, in 2006 alone: (1) received more than 1,200 Volunteers, (2) received more than 230 sports camp volunteers, (3) was involved in painting projects in 13 schools on 10 campuses (8 throughout NYC and 2 in NJ), impacting more than 6,250 students, (4) hosted 12 free sports camps for children and youth, (5) hosted 7 community block parties with more than 2,000 people attending, (6) had 117 people profess faith in Christ, (7) distributed 998 Bibles.⁸¹

Overall, the Paint the Town ministry saw nearly 300 people profess faith in Christ. It also saw over 4,000 people volunteer for its painting projects and 400 people volunteer for its sports camps.⁸² After 2006, there is not much evidence that Paint the Town existed. There certainly was not the infrastructure and leadership that had been present during the New Hope New York emphasis. Critser evaluates this ministry by saying, “Paint the Town could have survived past the Strategic Focus City emphasis, but it was not handed off to the right leadership, and therefore it died out.”⁸³

Both Allen and Critser agreed that the only tangible, long-term, ministries left by the Strategic Focus city emphasis are the churches that were planted.⁸⁴ During New Hope New York, 37 churches were planted from 2002-2006. The total worship attendance of those churches was 2,700 people as of September 20, 2006, near the end of the New Hope New York emphasis. From 2003 until 2006, those new churches reported 656 baptisms. That equals one baptism for every 4 people in attendance, or 24 baptisms per

⁸⁰“New Hope New York: Executive Team Reports,” North American Mission Board, comp. Brian Audia, 20 September 2006.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Critser, interview.

⁸⁴Critser, interview. Allen, interview.

100 attenders.⁸⁵ This ratio was well ahead of the average numbers for new church plants that Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird showcased in their book *Viral Churches*, mentioning that on average new churches baptize approximately 11 people per 100 attendees.⁸⁶ Of the 37 churches planted during NHNY, 28 of them were still in existence as of November 2011.⁸⁷

New Hope New York had an average annual budget of \$1,700,000 from 2002-2006.⁸⁸ The total amount of money spent on the project by the North American Mission Board was 8.6 million dollars.⁸⁹ This budget included money for staff, ministry overhead, and church planter assistance funds.

How then should the success (or failure) of New Hope New York be evaluated? The thesis is that church planting is the best use of missions dollars because church plants have the best chance for long-term survivability and typically have the highest number of baptisms per 100 members. This thesis also argues that church planting should happen in global cities because they have the most influence on the culture at large. The effectiveness of New Hope New York will thus be evaluated according to this thesis.

First, thirty-seven churches were planted during the New Hope New York process. Because those churches were the only ministries that existed after the emphasis, they will be designated “sustainable entities.” Therefore, by December of 2006 there were 37 “sustainable entities” left from the NHNY process.⁹⁰ Then, dividing the overall budget of New Hope New York of 8.6 million by the total number of sustainable entities shows the North American Mission Board spent \$232,432.00 per unit. On the other

⁸⁵“New Hope New York: Executive Team Reports.”

⁸⁶Ibid

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸“Strategic Focus Cities: Executive Summary,” North American Mission Board, comp. William E. Townes, Jr., n.d.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰“New Hope New York: Executive Team Reports”

hand, a liberal estimate of New Hope New York's church planting budget places it at 3.2 million dollars or \$84,486 per church/sustainable unit.⁹¹

What can be discerned from this is that New Hope New York budgeted \$84,486 per church/sustainable unit, but ended up spending \$232,432.00 per unit because of budget dollars that were allocated for ministries that had no long-term life span. Also, at \$84,486 per sustainable unit, the North American Mission Board spent far above the average for denominational church planter support. For instance, in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, church planters are typically awarded grants of \$15,000 to \$25,000.⁹² In New Hope New York, based on the number of dollars invested per sustainable unit, the North American Mission Board spent far more missions resources than were necessary.

Second, as has already been stated, the New Hope New York church plants had an average attendance of 2,700 people, with a total of 656 baptisms.⁹³ Again, this equals 24 people baptized for every 100 attenders, while Bird and Stetzer write that new churches average about 11 baptisms per 100 resident members.⁹⁴ One deficiency in this research is that there is no record of resident members in the New Hope New York

⁹¹I called this a liberal estimate because it was the best I could come up with based on the records that were kept on the part of New Hope New York and NAMB. Though each entity kept good records of how money was spent, some of the categories were difficult to discern. Therefore, I determined to err on the high end of my estimation of what the church-planting budget was for New Hope New York. See "Strategic Focus Cities: Executive Summary" and "New Hope New York: Executive Team Reports."

⁹²Ed Stetzer, Dave Travis, Warren Bird, and Glenn Smith, "Funding New Churches" [on-line]; accessed on 20 May 2011; available from http://leadnet.org/resources/download/funding_new_churches_state_of_church_planting_usa/; Internet. For Partnerships/LCMS World Mission National Mission gave \$605,000 toward "Ablaze! New Congregation Development Grants." They gave \$25,000 to 17 projects and \$15,000 to another 12 projects. Typically, it costs LCMS \$1,600 per week to train one church planter. Within the system, the calling entity provides the salary and benefits to new planters. Typically, a new church receives financial sponsorship for three years with the goal of the new church's self-sufficiency at the end of that period. However, most of the judicatories go three to five years. Ibid.

⁹³"New Hope New York: Executive Team Reports."

⁹⁴Bird and Stetzer, *Viral Churches*, 24-25.

church plants. Thus, the comparison ratios are evaluating worship attendance. Based on a cursory overview of the provided data, however, it would seem to indicate this number of baptisms should be seen as a strong sign of the health of the New Hope New York church plants. Therefore, this portion of the New Hope New York strategy should be viewed as a success.

Overall, New Hope New York could have had the same impact for less money if the focus had solely been on church planting. Though there were a number of people who professed faith in Christ through ministries like Paint the Town, their gospel impact was not sustainable. In a new church there is ongoing gospel witness in a community.

Conclusion

The Southern Baptist Convention has seemingly bought into the strategic nature of planting churches in places like New York City. Most recently NAMB announced an initiative called Send North America which focuses on planting churches in the top 29 cities in the United States and Canada.⁹⁵ Of those cities, New York is one of their early focuses.⁹⁶ According to Kevin Ezell, the President of the North American Mission Board, “Send New York City will focus its effort on evangelistic church planting. . . . We believe we can accomplish more [church planting] with less [infrastructure].”⁹⁷

It appears that Southern Baptists are well positioned to leverage the influential nature of a global city like New York for years to come. If the results of their focused approach mirror the focus of other seasons of church planting, the next few decades could be really good ones for the SBC in NYC.

⁹⁵North American Mission Board, “Send North America Cities” [on-line]; accessed 22 February 2012; available from <http://www.namb.net/cities/>; Internet.

⁹⁶North American Mission Board, “Send North America: New York City” [on-line]; accessed 22 February 2012; available from <http://www.namb.net/newyorkcity/>; Internet.

⁹⁷Kevin Ezell, President of the North American Mission Board, interview by author, 1 February 2012.

CHAPTER 5

CHURCH PLANTING AND GLOBAL CITIES: LESSONS LEARNED AND IDEAS TO CONSIDER

Introduction

The twenty-first century is proving to be the age of the city. Cities are growing in size and influence.¹ More people live in cities today than ever before, and experts predict that by 2050, 71 percent of the world's population will be urban.² According to Patrick Johnstone,

Urbanization is a global fact today that cannot be ignored. Throughout history, cities have set trends and been sources of innovation and cultural change. Yet two thousand years ago the Roman and Chinese empires were only 5% urban. In 1800, only 3% of humankind lived in cities. It is estimated that in 2100 the figure will be nearly 90%. It was probably 2007/08 that the world's population became predominantly urban.³

Cities are also emerging as centers of power, and global cities have an impact that reaches far beyond their geographic boundaries. As shown throughout this study, decisions made in these keys cities end up having an impact on the rest of the world.

The era of the global city presents the church and Christian missionaries with a great challenge, but in this author's opinion, an even greater opportunity. This point of this thesis is that "with great urgency, global city church planting should be the cornerstone of all evangelistic missions strategies." If a missions organization and/or church has limited resources and must determine how best to spend those resources, they should spend

¹Patrick Johnstone, *The Future of the Global Church* (Colorado Springs: Biblica, 2011), 6.

²Ibid., 7.

³Ibid., 6.

those resources on global city church planting first and foremost. To build that case, this thesis first had to show two results: that a focus on church planting will often show a tangible impact on a city, and that planting churches in global cities is more strategic than planting in locations of with less of a strategic reach.

The Impact of Focused Church Planting

This thesis set out to show that a focus on church planting in global cities should be the priority of all missions' strategies. There are two primary reasons that this should be considered. First, new churches baptize more people than existing churches.⁴ Second, global cities have an influence that exceeds their geographic borders, thus giving the activity generated in their boundaries an exponential effect on the rest of the world.⁵

Church planting makes an impact because new churches see higher rates of life change, as evidenced by higher baptism rates, than established churches.⁶ New churches baptize 8 more people per 100 resident members than established churches, thus suggesting increased evangelistic effectiveness.⁷ In New York City during the Southern Baptist New Hope New York emphasis, new churches baptized 24 people per 100 worship attenders, compared with 3 per 100 resident members in established churches.⁸ Though there is a difference between resident membership and worship attenders, the indication is still apparent: new churches baptize more people.

⁴Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 20.

⁵"2010 Global Cities Index," *Foreign Policy Magazine* [on-line]; accessed 24 August 2010; available from http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/11/the_global_cities_index_2010; Internet.

⁶Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 20.

⁷Ibid.

⁸New Hope New York: Executive Team Reports," North American Mission Board, comp. Brian Audia, 20 September 2006. See also Stetzer and Bird, *Viral Churches*, 20.

Lastly, the research for this paper showed that the increase in church planting activity in New York City paralleled a time period where petty crime, violent crime, and the pornography industry decreased in the city, therefore raising the overall quality of life.⁹ Though it can be argued that there are several factors that produced the transformation of New York City, it certainly can be reasoned that a dramatic increase of new churches in the city played a vital part in this turnaround.¹⁰

Global cities impact the way the rest of the world thinks and behaves. Global cities have an influence on culture that reaches far beyond their natural geographic boundaries. New York City, the focus of this thesis, ranks number 1 among the world's global cities.¹¹ Decisions made in New York, and all global cities, shape the culture of the world. One cited example of the influence of a global city is the media industry that originates out of New York City, the capital of the media world. The research showed, for example, the exponential impact that Viacom, based in New York City's Times Square, has on the rest of the world.¹²

This research showed that global cities are places of concentrated influence. The generation of idea capital in these cities is concentrated in a relatively small

⁹Mac Pier and Katie Sweeting, *The Power of a City at Prayer* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 76.

¹⁰From 1978 until 2007 there was a 50 percent increase in the number of new churches in center city Manhattan. According to the research of Tony Carnes of the Values Research Institute and Mac Pier of the New York Leadership Center, there are correlations between the increase in spiritual activities like prayer and church planting. For an overview of Carnes' research, see Tony Carnes, "A Journey through New York Religions; available from <http://www.nycreligion.info>; Internet. For more info on Pier's research on the transformation of New York City, see Pier and Sweeting, *Power of a City at Prayer*.

¹¹"2010 Global Cities Index."

¹²Kristin C. Moran and Leeva C. Chung, "Global or Local Identity? A Theoretical Analysis of the Role of Viacom on Identity Formation among Children in an International Context," *Global Media Journal* [on-line]; accessed 15 November 2011; available from <http://lass.calumet.purdue.edu/cca/gmj/sp08/gmj-sp08-moran-chung.htm>; Internet.

geographic space, yet its influence is far reaching. Consider these facts: there are 24,000 people per square kilometer who live in Manhattan, the central borough of New York City; the entire city is 830 kilometers squared with a population of over 8 million.¹³ According to the Urban Age Project from the London School of Economics, New York City is more densely populated than Shanghai, London, Mexico City, Johannesburg, and Berlin. New York also has the highest per capita GDP of the previously mentioned cities, at \$58,700 per person. So, in terms of people and money, New York City may well have more influence per square kilometer than any other place in the world.¹⁴

In missiological terms, the implication should be clear. Church planting in a global city will likely have an impact beyond the borders of the city where a new church is located. For example, migration patterns of cities show that the larger a city, the more people are moving in and out.¹⁵ It stands to reason that if a kingdom impact has been made in the city, that same level of impact could be transferred through migration to the places where its residents move.

It can also be inferred that to the degree that New York's residents are evangelical, it is at least to that degree that those residents have an opportunity to make an impact on the culture. To illustrate, if over 3 percent of the population are Christians, then the percentage of the workforce, student population, etc., who are Christians would have an influence on their environment. Though we cannot judge the level of Christian commitment of a population segment, one should assume that there is some degree of

¹³Ricky Burdett and Deyan Sudjic, eds., *The Endless City: The Urban Age Project by the London School of Economics and Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society* (New York and London: Phaidon, 2010), 76.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 246-47.

¹⁵In the United States, the larger a city, the higher the incidence of migration. See Appendix.

Christian ethic being carried into the culture. Tim Keller comments on the influence that a Christian who lives in a city has on the culture at large:

I am not talking about the ‘elite-elites’—the rich and famous—but about the ‘grassroots-elites.’ It is not so much the top executives that make MTV what it is, but the scores of young, hip creatives just out of college who take jobs at all levels of the organization. The people who live in cities in the greatest numbers tend to see their values expressed in the culture.

Once in cities, *Christians should be a dynamic counterculture*. It is not enough for Christians to simply live as individuals in the city. They must live as a particular kind of community. Jesus told his disciples that they were ‘a city on a hill’ that showed God’s glory to the world (Matt 5:14-16). Christians are called to be an alternate city within every earthly city, an alternate human culture within every human culture, to show how sex, money, and power can be used in nondestructive ways.¹⁶

Thus, if there is to be more of an impact on the world for Christ, an increase in the number of Christians in global cities in general and New York City in particular is needed. James Montgomery Boice, the long-time pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, indicated in his book *Two Cities, Two Loves*, that if Christians want to have an impact on this culture, they should be willing to live in cities at the same percentage as the nation’s population lives in cities. In essence, Boice is saying that if 51 percent of the world’s population lives in cities, 51 percent of Christians should live in cities if they want to have an impact on the culture.¹⁷

Concentrated influence virtually insures that ideas that are generated in a city’s geographic boundaries will have a life far beyond those borders. This is because of the global connectedness of the residents in these cities. Therefore, a new church or believer in New York City may have an impact on the world that far exceeds that of a church or believer in rural New York State. The possibility for cultural impact is increased when a church is planted in a global city.

¹⁶Tim Keller, “A New Kind of Urban Christian: As the City Goes, So Goes the Culture,” *Christianity Today* [on-line]; accessed 1 March 2012; available from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/may/1.36.html?start=2>; Internet. Emphasis original.

¹⁷James Montgomery Boice, *Two Cities, Two Loves: Christian Responsibility in a Crumbling Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 166-67.

An Unexpected Lesson Learned: Desperation Drives Movement

Over the course of this research, one surprising finding was discovered—desperation drives movement. By 1978, the general situation was so bad in New York City that pastors indicated that they had only one choice: turn to God in prayer.¹⁸ Through the Lord’s Watch, and later through Concerts of Prayer, pastors and churches joined together in prayer for their city in unprecedented ways. They had come to the end of their own ability to make a difference, so they banded together in prayer to seek God’s wisdom. The overall impact of this approach was growth in the evangelical church in the city.¹⁹

In the same way, but on a much larger scale, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 created a sense of desperation. The tragedy that struck the city was so far beyond comprehension that no one church or pastor could begin to respond appropriately. Again, there was no choice but for churches to join together and seek God for answers. This time the difference was that not only did New York City churches band together, but churches from all over the world united to seek to bring healing and restoration to the city.

Southern Baptists, as one example, mobilized over 24,000 volunteers in the wake of 9/11.²⁰ These volunteers came to the city to do everything from cleaning apartments to preparing meals and counseling victims.²¹ As mentioned in the previous chapter, Southern Baptists planted over thirty churches in the wake of 9/11. The result of this increased urgency was to see the number of churches in center-city Manhattan

¹⁸Mac Pier traces the cultural landscape of New York City in which he shows that the city had a relatively bleak outlook in the late 1970s. He then traces the formation of a prayer movement and parallels that movement with the renewal of NYC over the subsequent decades. See Pier and Sweeting, *Power of a City at Prayer*.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰New Hope New York: Five Strategic Focuses, One Unified Vision,” *Chronycled Magazine* (New York: New Hope New York, 2006), 38.

²¹Ibid.

increase by 40 percent in a six-year period.²²

On a personal note, it was the events of 9/11 that drove my wife and I to begin to pray for New York City in a new way. For the first time in my life, I saw NYC as a place where real people lived (the city had previously seemed like a tourist attraction to me), and those people had real needs—in particular a need for Jesus. Little did I know that just eighteen months later my wife and I would move to New York and spend the next eight and a half years there planting new churches.

It seems that through desperate circumstances, Christians partner together in ways that are not routine, and the net impact, as has been previously cited, can be a dramatic increase in the number of churches and an overall increase in the Christian population. What has been indicated through the research is that in times of desperation the church is able to focus in an effort to respond to the immediate needs that have been presented by desperate circumstances.

Areas for Further Study

As this project developed, it became apparent that there were several specific areas related to the global city that need to be studied further. Because the world has entered the urban age, there are many issues that the evangelical church must contend with as it engages the culture. Listed below are four specific areas that should be considered for further research and development.

Area 1: Urban Sustainability and the Christian Church

The first area that should be considered for further study is the connection between the sustainability of urban neighborhoods and Christian churches. In other

²²Tony Carnes, “The Making of a Post-Secular City: The Manhattan Evangelicals Part 1,” accessed 10 March 2012; available from <http://www.nycreligion.info/?p=1165>; Internet.

words, are Christian churches a necessary component for the sustainability of an urban neighborhood, or is there evidence suggesting that the church's presence does not matter? Could it be proven that Christian churches are vital in seeing a neighborhood reach its full potential? Much anecdotal evidence supports the conclusion that churches play a significant role in the life of a community, but further study is warranted.

One suggestion is that a researcher looks at characteristics that are magnified in the Christian faith and then tie those to the transformation of a community. For instance, in Christianity the concept of grace is a primary theme. At its core, having grace on other people would mean placing them above one's own self-interest. This would perhaps mean that people in a community where grace is commonly displayed would get along better with people who are not culturally like them. Jon Tyson, pastor of Trinity Grace Church in New York City, captured this idea: "The cultural elites and poor both matter in the global city. The church is the only thing that can reunite them as family."²³ The effect of the Christian ethic on the sustainability of an urban neighborhood needs to be analyzed to determine whether the findings strengthen the case of this thesis.

Area 2: Church Planters in the Global City Context

Another area that needs to be developed further is the profile of a "successful" global city church planter. As was identified in this thesis, there is a common culture in a global city. This culture requires a special type of church planter. There are, in fact, many dynamics that are prevalent in the global city that would require a church planter to be adaptable in his approach. Two of those dynamics are noted below.

First, a global city church planter should be culturally savvy. He should be able to relate to multiple aspects of the context where he finds himself. For instance,

²³Jon Tyson, "Update Concerning Residents of Cities," Twitter [on-line]; accessed 3 March 2012; available from <http://twitter.com/#!/JonTyson>; Internet.

global cities are places where a multitude of languages are spoken. As noted previously, in New York City alone over 800 languages are spoken.²⁴ A church planter must be able to adjust to this diversity and then be able to initiate a successful missiological strategy.

Second, a global city church planter must be willing to deal with the transient nature of the city. As was seen in this research, global city residents are constantly on the move. Church planters must have church systems that can assimilate people quickly and adjust when they move on.

In fact, church planter assessment processes that look at the capacity of a church planter in the context to which he is going should be developed. It is not enough to look at the character and competency of a man. A potential planter might have impeccable character and be a top-tier leader, but not understand how to translate his leadership ability into the global city context. The bottom line is that if a leader has demonstrated great ability in one location, it does not necessarily mean that the same leadership will translate to a global city context.

Area 3: Preparing Sending Churches for Engagement in the Global City

There is a great need to prepare churches to engage cities with the gospel. Regarding Southern Baptist churches, it should be no surprise that the majority of those churches are in the geographic Southeast and Southwest of the United States. The following graphic shows where the majority of Southern Baptist church members reside.

²⁴Sam Roberts, "Listening to (and Saving) the World's Languages," *New York Times*, 29 April 2010 [on-line]; accessed 10 January 2011; available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/29/nyregion/29lost.html?pagewanted=all>; Internet.

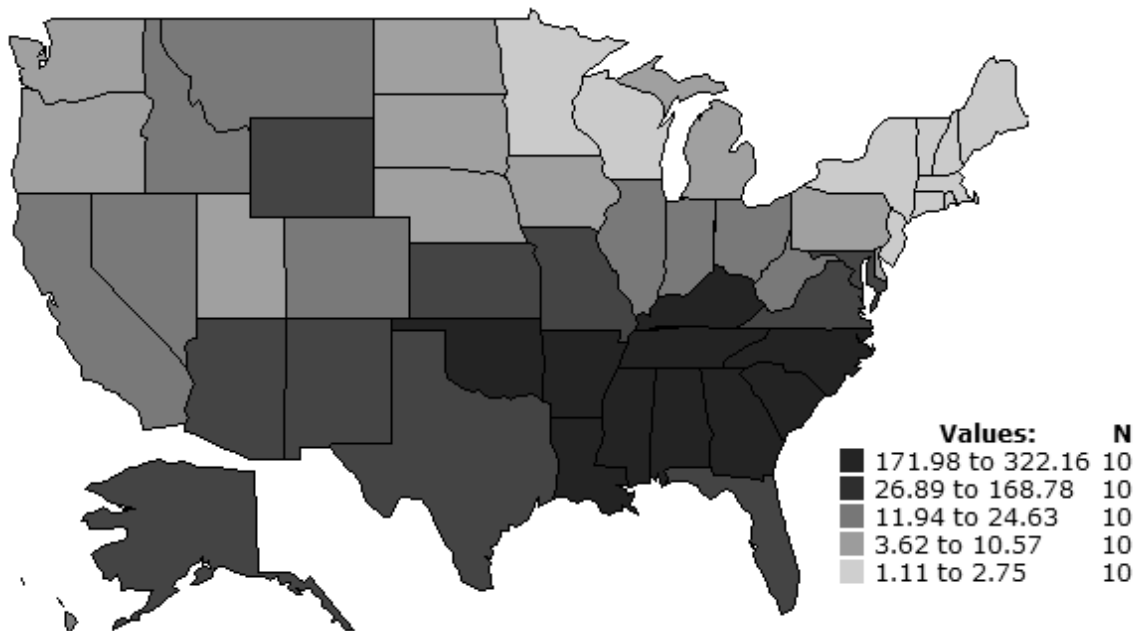


Figure 2. Southern Baptist Convention—Rates of Adherence Per 1000 Population

As churches seek to engage this new urban and global world, they must seek to understand a context that may not be natural to them. Because the predominance of global cities in the United States are not in the South, churches must learn how to be on mission in a context that is unlike their own.²⁵ For instance, in 2008 the majority of the Southern states in the US voted for John McCain (a Republican), and the majority of the people in the Northeast, where several US global cities exist, voted for Barack Obama (a Democrat).²⁶ This political divide is representative of the type of potential cultural divide that could challenge Southern Baptists as they enter into these urban cities. They will have to learn how to navigate through differing political beliefs with those who live in the cities. Further study should be considered on how to help churches make the leap.

²⁵“2010 Global Cities Index.”

²⁶“Election Results 2008,” *New York Times* [on-line]; accessed 3 March 2012; available from <http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/results/president/map.html>; Internet.

Additionally, the cost of reaching global cities is something to be considered as churches seek to engage them with the gospel. Global cities are expensive places to live and do ministry. The average apartment in Manhattan costs 1.3 million dollars to purchase.²⁷ If a person wanted to have a permanent parking space in Manhattan, he would have to pay \$225,000.00 for it.²⁸ Considering that the average home or condo price in Birmingham, Alabama is \$87,300.00, the cost of reaching global cities will prove to be a challenge for those who live in a part of the United States where housing prices are considerably cheaper.²⁹

Area 4: Characteristics of Successful Global City Church Plants

Further work needs to be completed on the survivability of global city church plants. In 2007, the Center for Missional Research of the North American Mission Board, conducted a survivability study of church planting.³⁰ The research found that “chances of survivability increase over 400 percent when the expectations of the church planter, for the progress of a church plant, match the reality of the church planting experience.”³¹ The Center for Missional Research also found that “the church planter who meets with a group of church planting peers at least monthly increases the odds of survivability by 135 percent.”³² Similar research needs to be conducted for global city churches.

²⁷Burdett and Subject, *The Endless City*, 76.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹City-data.com, “Birmingham, Alabama” [on-line]; accessed 6 February 2012; available from <http://www.city-data.com/city/Birmingham-Alabama.html>; Internet.

³⁰Church Planting Village, “Church Plant Survivability and Health” [on-line]; accessed 3 March 2012; available from <http://www.churchplantingvillage.net/churchplantingvillagepb.aspx?pageid=8589990261>; Internet.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

Some specific characteristics for a global city church planter need to be considered in this type of study. First, the leadership capacity of the church-planting leader must be considered. As was stated in the previous paragraph, the success of a church plant dramatically increases when there are clear expectations for what success looks like for that particular planter. Therefore, an understanding of the planter's ability to lead people must be thoroughly understood. Questions related to his track record in leading people and his previous ability to start something new must be vetted.

Also, a serious look at the context in which the planter is entering must be taken. The assumption is that a potential planter's past success in one particular context does not necessarily guarantee success in a global city context. For instance, if a potential church planter is moving to a completely new context (from the one he is most familiar with) to plant a church, he must assume that the church will be different than what he has previously known. He must also assume that the size of that church may be different. So, a serious look at the leadership capacity of a leader in the context he is going to be leading in must be considered.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to show that an effective and strategic evangelism strategy is global city church planting. It has been shown that church plants have more baptisms than established churches. It has also been shown that global cities have an influence that goes well beyond their borders. It then stands to reason that an impact made on the life of a person who lives in a global city can have an exponential impact.

As churches and mission agencies consider how they will prioritize their resources, consideration must be given to global city church planting. It is a great day for the expansion of the gospel, and it just might be that global cities will serve as a launching pad for that evangelistic movement.

APPENDIX

MIGRATION PATTERNS OF SELECTED US CITIES

In order to illustrate the transient nature of the largest cities in the United States, this appendix gives a sampling from an interactive feature on the *Forbes Magazine* w “Map: Where Americans Are Moving.” I chose four cities and the results of their migration are displayed as figures.¹ The figures show that the larger the city, the more people are on the move.

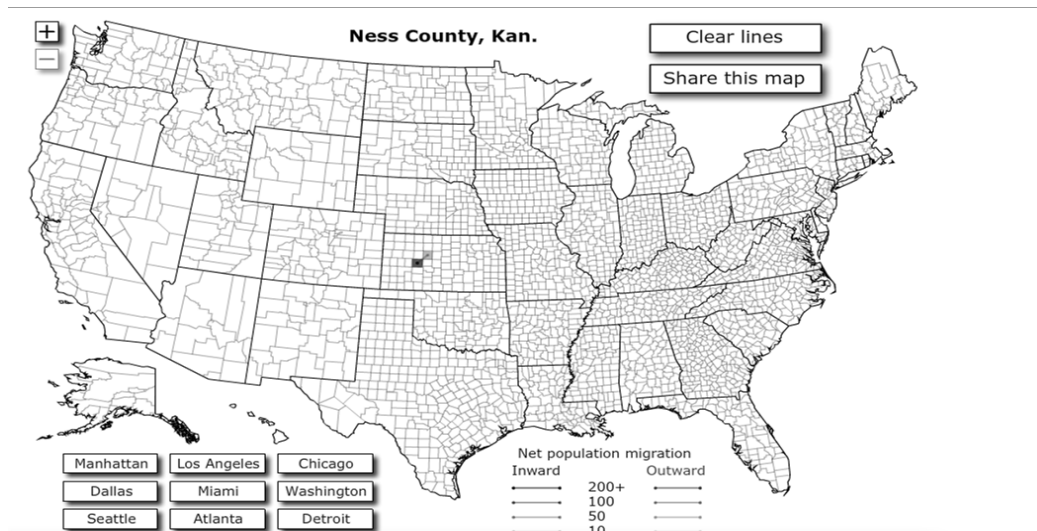


Figure A1. Where Americans are moving: Ness County, Kansas²

¹Jon Bruner, “Map: Where Americans Are Moving,” *Forbes.com*, 4 June 2006 [on-line]; accessed 22 April 2011; available from <http://www.forbes.com/2010/06/04/migration-moving-wealthy-interactive-counties-map.html>; Internet.

²Ness County, Kansas had a population of 3,107 as of 2010. US Census Bureau, “Ness County, KS” [on-line]; accessed 23 February 2012; available from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_DP_DPDP1&prodType=table; Internet.

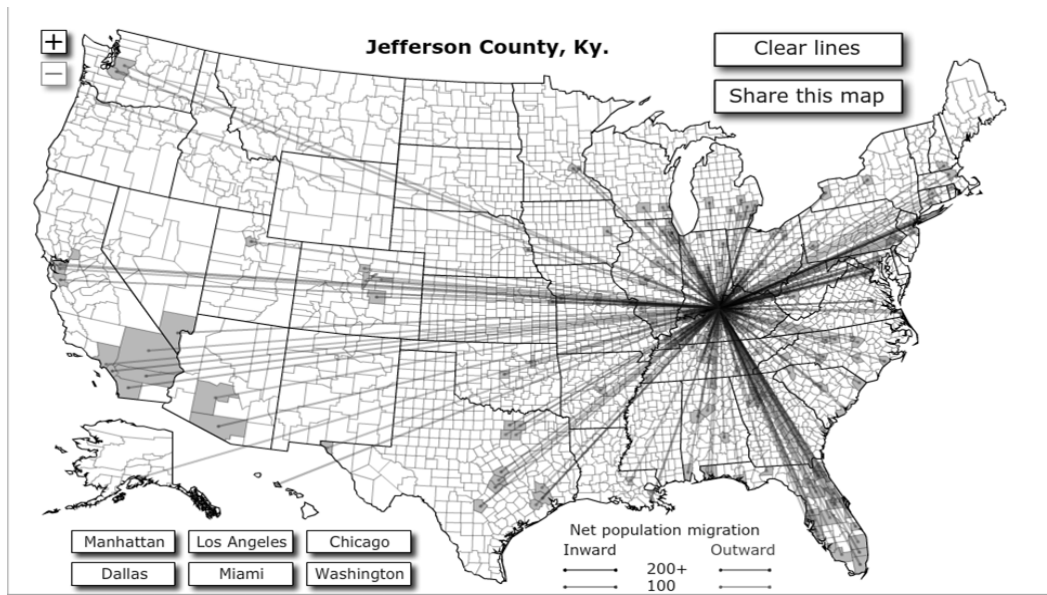


Figure A2. Where Americans are moving: Jefferson County, Kentucky³

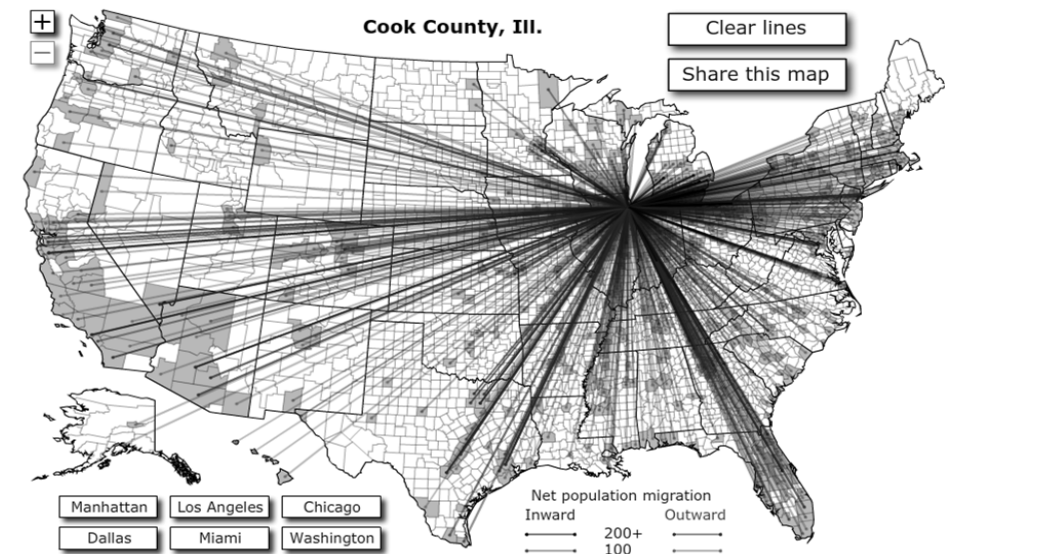


Figure A3. Where Americans are moving: Cook County, Illinois⁴

³Jefferson County, Kentucky (Louisville) had a population of 741,096 as of 2010. US Census Bureau, “Jefferson County, KY” [on-line]; accessed 23 February 2012; available from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_DP_DPDP1&prodType=table; Internet.

⁴Cook County, Illinois (Chicago) had a population of 5,194,675 as of 2010. US Census Bureau, “Cook County, IL” [on-line]; accessed 23 February 2012; available from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/>

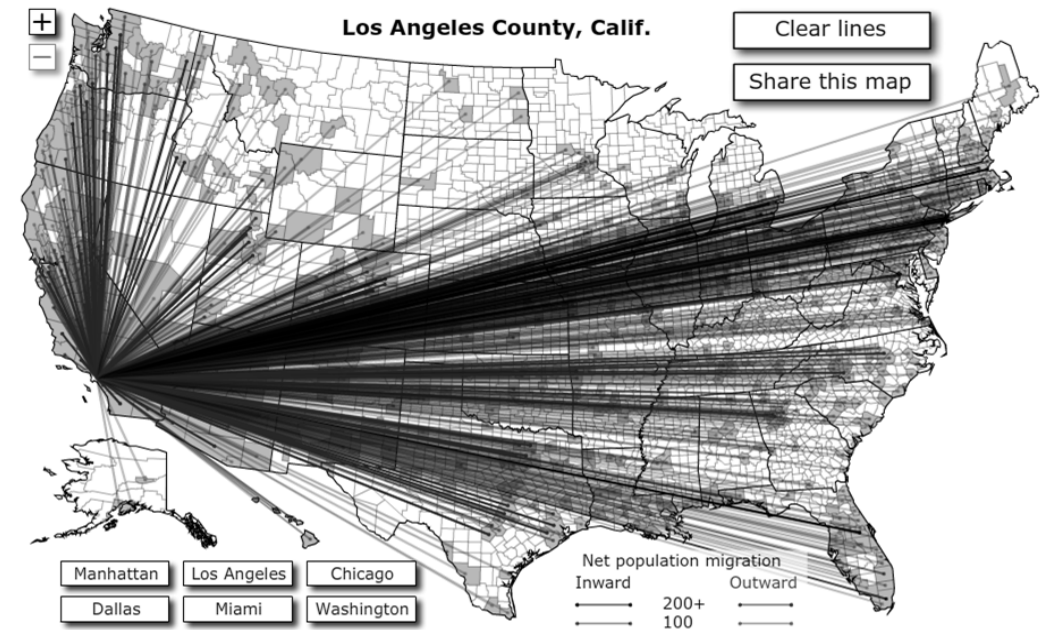


Figure A4. Where Americans are moving: Los Angeles County, California⁵

productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_DP_DPDP1&prodType=table; Internet.

⁵Los Angeles County, California had a population of 9,818,605 as of 2010. US Census Bureau, “Los Angeles County, CA” [on-line]; accessed 23 February 2012; available from http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_DP_DPDP1&prodType=table; Internet.

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ABSTRACT

CHURCH PLANTING IN NEW YORK CITY: A CASE FOR A GLOBAL CITIES CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY

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This thesis looks at the missiological implications of church planting in global cities. Chapter 1 introduces the main argument for this thesis: that an effective and strategic evangelism strategy is church planting within the context of the global city as evidenced by what has happened in New York City. The chapter begins with a look at the significant movement that has happened in Manhattan over a twenty year period (1990-2010) with the evangelical population of the city growing from less than 1 percent evangelical to now more than 3 percent. An introduction to the definition of global cities segues into a look at the imperative for church planting initiatives in these cities.

Chapter 2 offers a deeper study of the characteristics of a global city and the missiological significance of such cities. It explores world urbanization in light of the fact that over 50 percent of the world now lives in cities. The strategic nature of the cities are analyzed given the influence that global cities have on the culture of the rest of the world. Finally, New York City is shown as a global city and its significance on the missiological landscape is highlighted.

Chapter 3 provides a history of some of the major New York City church planting initiatives. Specifically, the chapter reviews the church planting history of Concerts of Prayer and the Church Multiplication Alliance, Timothy Keller and Redeemer Presbyterian Church, and Jim Cymbala and The Brooklyn Tabernacle. Lastly this chapter reveals methodologies used by other prominent ministries to reach the city context.

Chapter 4 looks at implications learned from New York City on how a global city church planting strategy could impact the Southern Baptist Convention. A look at the history of SBC church planting in New York City is viewed with special attention being paid to the effectiveness of these strategies.

Chapter 5 concludes this thesis with a look at the lessons learned during the research process. It also looks at three areas of further study that are needed.

This work contends that the priority of all missions strategies should be a focused approach on global city church planting. This has proved to be an effective use of people and financial resources that ultimately has an impact on the whole world.

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