

God's Mission for the City

by Tom Eggold

*From the Missional Bible Studies series
of the Center for U.S. Missions*

Getting Started

Where were you born?

What is the largest city in which you have lived?

What did you like and dislike about the city?

Focus

We live in a rapidly changing world. Here's a portrait of cities today:

- World urbanization. The population continues to shift from rural to urban areas.
 - In 1950 there was one city in the world with a population of 10 million. Today there are 25 cities with that population.
 - Each year in China, the number of people moving from rural to urban areas is equivalent to the population of Canada.
- Immigration. The world is coming to the United States.
 - The US has a higher Irish population than Ireland.
 - Miami's Jewish population is larger than that of Tel Aviv, the capital city of Israel.
 - Nigeria is the only African nation with a greater African population than the United States.
 - The US is the third-largest Spanish-speaking country in the world.
 - 123 nationalities now live in one New York zip code.
 - By 2050 there will be no single racial majority group in the United States.
- World Interdependence—Information, resource, and manufacturing is now world-wide.
 - Complex manufacturing tasks can be outsourced instantly anywhere.
 - 52 lawyers were recently released from a Minneapolis law firm. Work was outsourced to lawyers in India who had been trained in England and who work for \$27,000 a year.

OUR RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD HAS LEFT THE CHURCH "IN THE DUST!"

Digging Deeper

What does the Lord tell us about "urban ministry?"

Jeremiah 29:4-14

Matthew 28:18-20

Jonah 1:2-3; 3:1-5; 10; 4:11

Matthew 23:37-39

continued

Acts 13:1-3

Acts 17:22-34

Acts 11:19-30

Acts 2:5-13; 40-47

Reflection

The spiritual and physical welfare of the city is a primary concern of God, and must be a primary concern for the Christian. Many people are in the cities of our nation and world and they do not know their Creator and Redeemer.

The people of the city often experience a lack of justice. The poor and homeless are trapped with no hope for the future. Drug dealers and loan companies prey on many.

Many ethnic groups made up of legal and illegal immigrants have come to the city as a "jumping off point" in their migration to what they hope will be a better life for them and their families.

The city is part of every person's world because of the world-wide interdependence of our lives today. Looking at the spiritual, social, economic, and cultural issues and challenges of those who live in the city can be daunting.

Because so many people are moving into our cities, we have a real mission field in our urban areas--that's where the people are. We have an unprecedented opportunity to reach many peoples with the Gospel.

The *Ablaze!* goal of reaching 100 million people with the Gospel challenges the whole church to reach the fastest growing population in the US: the immigrant population of our cities.

Putting what we have learned into practice

When did you last talk with someone who lived in the city? What issues did he/she share with you?

In what ways can you respond to people in the city who do not know Jesus as Savior and Lord of their lives?

What specific needs do people in the urban centers close to you seem to have? How can your congregation respond to those needs?

What's your plan of attack for the sake of the Gospel? What immigrant group can your congregation adopt as part of its mission?

Where can your congregation plant a daughter church?

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