

EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY

VOLUME 12

Volume 12 • Number 2 • April 1988

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Review of
Theology** p. 99

So, to the question, 'Is there hope for redemption of the city?', the **P. 155** Scriptures reply, 'Indeed, God has a plan for the city and is working in history to realize this plan.' The city will be the fulfilment of paradise: the eschatological perspective of the Scriptures

ties the future of the city with the original, sinless part of Eden and its restoration in Christ. Even under the curse, man's cultural calling will be maintained. Adam's painful labour will subdue the resistant earth; Eve's travail will fill it.⁵⁸

God is Lord over the city, and thus he does not need to wait for the full consummation in the New Jerusalem for its implementation. In and through the Church, he is transforming the city into a more humane social order, a more just cultural centre and a Christ-honouring religious centre. The presence of God's people in the city is a witness to possible reconciliation (cf. [Ps. 87:4-6](#)).

Of course, the Church may fail, just as Jerusalems tend to become Babylons. The reality of fallenness in the city precludes any naive optimism about it. However, God cannot fail, and will not let his plan fail: 'The ultimate purpose for which the universe was created, embedded like a seed in the heart of the world, will be attained. The whole of history meets in Christ, its alpha and omega.'⁵⁹ Though Satan is still the 'ruler of this world' ([Jn. 12:31](#), cf. [Eph. 2:2f](#); [1 Jn. 5:19](#)), he has already been vanquished ([Jn. 16:11](#), cf. [14:30](#)); Christ has already triumphed over the powers that rule the city.

Therefore the Church is called to be God's mission-community in the city, which stands for all that is righteous, humane and good, and denounces all that is unjust and inhumane.⁶⁰ Its mission is to set the city free to worship and obey God, calling it to repentance and faith, so that it will build its future according to God's revealed will. Such transformation will not occur merely at the end of history, but is always occurring in history, as the Church participates in God's urban mission today.⁶¹ **p. 156**

With such eschatological hope in historical realism, may the Church be faithful to God's mission in the city!

Dr. David S. Lim is teaching at the Asia Theological Seminary, Manila, Philippines. **p. 157**

Urban Missions: A Historical Perspective

⁵⁸ Conn, 237.

⁵⁹ Tonna, 119.

⁶⁰ The Church's mission is not to build a separate history, but to direct world history into a history of God-glorifying fulfilments amidst an ambiguous history of struggles for human liberation from all bondages (spiritual, social, political, economic, etc.) through its prophetic preaching and self-sacrificial service in the name of Christ.

⁶¹ Cf. Conn, 276f. This optimistic tendency is based not on youthful idealism nor sociological analysis, but on the eschatological vision. This is not post-millennarian, but historic premillennarian, which recognizes that the consummation will be brought about only through a dramatic intervention from heaven, not through human achievements.

Bong Rin Ro

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Not only is the Asian Church itself come of age; but also the Asian churches' mission and ministry. With his vast experience in Asia as the Executive Secretary of Asia Theological Association, Dr. Bong Rin Ro gives a survey of the history of the urban mission starting from the early church through Medieval, Renaissance and Reformation periods right through to modern times, and also chalks out the future of urban missions in Asian churches. The article ends with concrete steps to develop full-fledged theological courses on urban mission in Asian churches. (This is another paper presented at the recent ATA Theological Consultation in October/November at Singapore on the theme of Theological Education for Urban Ministry in Asia.) Theological courses in urban ministry, systematical, supervised practical ministry for the students and the search for and implementation of nontraditional forms of education in the urban churches are the burden of the author. No doubt these suggestions can be taken up in other regions of the world too.

Editor

INTRODUCTION

Every day 10,000 Indians are pouring into the commercial city of Bombay from rural villages to find employment. This phenomenon is typical throughout Asia and around the world. The interest in urban studies in recent years has captured the attention of both secular and Christian scholars. Yet as the study of urban ministry is a relatively new phenomenon, historical materials on the subject are quite scarce. Here I have selected only two questions relevant to the Asian church; namely first: how has urban ministry developed historically from the Early Church to the modern era? and secondly: how has the Asian church responded to the urban situation, particularly since World War II?

URBAN MINISTRY

Dr. Francis M. DuBose, professor of missions at the Golden Gate Baptist Seminary, states that Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem, **P. 158** grew up in the city of Nazareth, and was crucified and resurrected in the city of Jerusalem. He loved the city and wept over it ([Luke 9:35](#)); he went around cities and villages to preach the Kingdom of God ([Matt. 9:35-36](#)).¹

The ministry of the Apostle Paul centred around major cities of Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece and Rome to plant churches. Ervin E. Hastey's article, 'Reaching the Cities First: A Biblical Model of World Evangelization' in *An Urban World: Churches Face The Future*, describes the apostles' urban ministries in the 1st century.²

THE EARLY CHURCH (100-450)

Early Church Christianity was rapidly spreading throughout the major cities of the Roman Empire, and by 180 AD the gospel was spread to all the Roman Empire. By 200 AD the

¹ Ervin E. Hastey, 'Reaching the Cities First: A Biblical Model of World Evangelization', in Rose and Hadaway, *An Urban World* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1984), p. 148.

² Hastey, pp. 147-165.

first church buildings appeared in cities only, while the Christians prior to this time had their worship in homes.

Dr. David B. Barrett, who edited the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, published a very helpful booklet, *World Class Cities and World Evangelization*, with ample statistics and historical data. There were many early church fathers who established strong Christian centres in cities. Irenaeus (120–202), who wrote *Against Heresies*, became Bishop of Lyon in 175 AD. In Rome, Hippolytus (170–235) fought against Manicheanism, and in 249 seven missionary bishops were sent by Cornelius of Rome to the cities of Tours, Arles, Narbonne, Toulouse, Paris, Limoges and Clermont in Gaul. There were 45,000 Christians which represented 5% of 900,000 people and 46 Presbyters in Rome in 251. More than 100 bishoprics existed in southern cities in Italy.³

To the east, Abgar IX, King of Edessa in the Tigris-Euphrates valley (now Urfa) became the first Christian ruler in 179, and by 225 Edessa became the first city-state religion and thus became the mission centre for Eastern Syria.⁴

In North Africa Christianity spread to major cities from the 2nd to 5th century, and the North African Church became one of the strong [p. 159](#) Christian witnesses in Early Church history. Men such as Tertullian of Carthage (150–225), Bishop Cyprian of Carthage (248–258), Clement of Alexandria (155–220), Origen of Alexandria (185–254), who wrote the *Hexapla*, and St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) actively engaged in Christian ministries. St. Augustine, who produced the 14 year work of the *De Civitate Dei* depicted the fall of Rome and introduced a new model of a city which Christ established.⁵

Enormous spiritual contributions to the cities of Palestine and Asia Minor by the Cappadocean Fathers cannot be forgotten: St. Basil of Caesarea (329–379), Gregory of Nazianzus (329?–389), and Gregory of Nyssa (330–395). Since the dedication of the city as the capital by Emperor Constantine I in 330, Constantinople (now Istanbul) became the centre of Christianity in the Eastern Empire. Renowned preachers such as John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople (398–403), preached the gospel fervently. In Antioch by 380 AD 50% of the population of 200,000 people claimed to be Christian.⁶

The system of the metropolitan bishops was developed in the Early Church. The bishop was the spiritual leader in a city in which all the Christians joined the city-parish. The principle of one parish per one city was decided by legislation, and the Council of Chalcedon (451) even made a condition that a parish must be built in a city for it to be recognized as a city.⁷ Therefore, Christianity was predominantly urban in the Early Church.

The beginning of rural churches occurred only in the 3rd century in northern Italy. In the 4th and 5th centuries rural churches began to multiply in France, and by this time Christianity became widely spread throughout Europe.⁸

³ David B. Barrett, *World Class Cities and World Evangelization* (Birmingham, Alabama: New Hope, 1986), p. 40.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Harvie M. Conn, 'The Kingdom of God and the City of Man', *Disciplining the City*, ed. Roger S. Greenway (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), pp. 14–14. See Raymond J. Bakke, *The Urban Christian* (Bromley, Kent: MARC Europe, 1987). pp. 85–87.

⁶ Barrett, p. 41.

⁷ Crawley, p. 39.

⁸ *Ibid.*

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH (450–1350)

With the fall of the Roman Empire in 476, while the church became a powerful institution in Europe, Rome and other cities were deteriorating because of the invasions of barbarians (Visigoths, Vandals, and Ostrogoths) from northern and central Europe. The imperial authority had no power to protect the citizens in the cities, and the urban **P. 160** population sharply declined. This initial five hundred years after the fall of Rome is known as the Dark Ages.

With the weakening of the central power, the feudal system fully developed, especially from 900–1150 AD. In the feudal age most parishes had rural populations, towns were neither numerous nor populous. Castles and walled towns were safely guarded by the feudal lord's armies that provided security to peasants and townsmen. Consequently, the church structures disintegrated because of feudalistic pressures.

During the medieval age a new religious movement, known as monasticism, developed. With the establishment of the Benedictine Order at Monte Cassino in 529, monasticism spread quickly throughout the Medieval Church. The monastery which was a religious community, 'in fact a new kind of *polis*',⁹ replaced religious functions of the theopolis of the Early Church and became a link between the classical city and the medieval city.

It was in the monastery that the ideal purposes of the city were sorted out, kept alive and eventually renewed. It was here too that the practical value of restraint, order, regularity, honesty, inner discipline was established before these qualities were passed over to the medieval town and post-medieval capitalism, in the form of inventions and business practices: the clock, the account book, the ordered day.¹⁰

Thus the monastery played a very important role of keeping alive the relationship between the image of the heavenly city and the Roman cities.

The withdrawal of the church from cities to monasteries caused the church to be more inwardly oriented than the outward ministry and helped to create spiritual strength to meet the chaotic challenges of the medieval period: consequently, it affected the church to be illprepared for the new urban development of the Renaissance period.¹¹

From the 11th to 13th centuries a resurgence of new urban development took place. With the rise of the new Holy Roman Empire (962–1806) in Europe, imperial conflict with papal authority intensified. In 1054 there was a permanent separation between the Eastern **p. 161** Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. The papal power in the West sharply gained ascendancy through Pope Gregory VII (1075–85) who degraded Emperor Henry IV of the Holy Roman Empire at Canossa in 1077. Papal authority reached its peak during the time of Pope Innocent III (1195–1216).

With papal blessing the imperial rulers of Europe launched eight major Crusades (1096–1270) against the Muslim Turks to recover the Holy Land. The decline of feudalism saw a new developing mercantilism in the 12th century. Guilds, free crafts, corporations, and unions along with the new commercial-industrial classes developed in the 12th century. By the 13th century, a credit system was established in cities; consequently, Venice and Genoa became influential commercial cities in Italy. Early scholasticism began

⁹ Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (N.Y.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1961), pp.246–247. See Crawley, p. 40.

¹⁰ *De Civitate Dei*, XIV, 28, quoted in A. H. Armstrong, ed., *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967), p. 414. See Conn, pp. 15–16.

¹¹ Conn, p. 40.

to rise in the middle of the 11th century and universities were erected in cities like Salerno, Bologna (1150) in Italy, Paris (1200), and Oxford (12007); and Aristotle's literature was introduced to the West (ca. 1130–1280).¹² St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109), Thomas Aquinas (1226–74), John Dun Scotus (1265–1308), William of Ockham (1280–1349), and other scholars tried to unify reason with faith. Thus the late medieval cities became the education centres that made contributions to urban development.

The new religious orders of friars, the Dominicans, Franciscans, Augustinians and Carmelites, developed in the 12th–13th centuries in cities and outskirts of the cities. Quite different from the earlier monastic monks who spent time alone in prayer and meditation, these friars worked in urban hospitals and almshouses.

In the Eastern church one must not forget the important development of the Nestorian church, based in Syria. By 1000 AD the Nestorian church in Eastern Syria had 250 dioceses across Asia with 12 million members. These dioceses were organized in cities under 15 metropolitan provinces within the Arab Caliphate and five in India and China. The patriarch of Constantinople in the Greek Orthodox Church managed 624 dioceses in eastern Mediterranean cities. By 1150 the Western Syrian Church (Jacobite) had 20 metropolitan sees and 103 bishoprics based in cities.¹³

THE RENAISSANCE (1350–1650)

With the sharp decline of the papal power from the beginning of the P. 162 14th century, and the rise of the Renaissance, the secularization of cities took place in Europe. Harvie Conn in his 'Kingdom of God/City of Man' states that the nominalism of Ockham, which emphasized the concept of positivism and empiricism, led the Christian faith into probability rather than certainty; consequently, the humanist tendency developed not only within secular society but also within the church during the Renaissance period.¹⁴

New scientific discoveries uplifted human aspiration. Gunpowder began to be used from 1350, and Gutenberg's lead-cast printing published the first book in 1450. Copernicus (1473–1543) with his 'heliocentric theory', Galileo (1564–1642) with his use of the telescope and Johann Kepler's theories of planetary motion all challenged the traditional scientific views held in the church.

The money economy in this period created the banking system and led to the rise of capitalist economy. From the end of the 15th century exploration trade began in Europe. Columbus discovered America in 1492 and Vasco de Gama went to India through Capetown in South Africa in 1497. The next 450 years of the Western colonial period have been labelled by K. M. Panikkar, the Indian historian, in his *Asia and Western Dominance*, the 'Vasco de Gama Epoch' (1497–1945).¹⁵ Furthermore, Renaissance art, sculptures and gorgeous cathedrals created the humanistic and secularistic interpretation of religion and urban development.

THE REFORMATION ERA (1517–1600)

¹² Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), pp. 240–241.

¹³ Barrett, p. 41.

¹⁴ Conn, pp. 18–19.

¹⁵ K. M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1961). p. 13.

In the midst of the rapid transition from the 'theopolis to megalopolis',¹⁶ (i.e., from the church-state supported urban cities inherited from the Constantine Era, to the very large urban development of the Reformation Age), the Reformation encouraged the further development of urban cities.

First of all, the Reformation doctrines of *sola scriptura*, *sola fide*, [p. 163](#) *sola gratia*, and the priesthood of all believers, minimized the authority of the medieval church authority and helped the secular rulers to be free from the medieval concept of the *Corpus Christianum*, a Christian society in which both the church and state as God's instruments were to achieve God's purpose for man.

On the other hand, the Reformation attempted to bring the church and the state to the authority of the Scriptures, and exhorted true Christian freedom to be exercised for the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. Neither Luther nor Calvin, as the children of the medieval *Corpus Christianum* tradition, separated church from state as the Anabaptists advocated.

Luther emphasized in his Commentary on [Psalm 101](#) the distinctive and peculiar nature and commission of the state which he considered God-ordained, not as the secular arm of the Church. There is no doubt that the separation of the two powers was a real problem to Luther. Recent historians somewhat differ in their interpretations of Luther's separation of two powers as to whether he was more concerned with the Medieval concept of the church and state. However, his main concerns were to bring Christian moral and spiritual blessings to a society deeply stricken by sin.¹⁷

Calvin, 26 years younger than Luther, called Luther 'much respected father', and also distinguished the two separate worlds, repudiating both the magistrate's interference in the internal affairs of religion and the ecclesiastical claim of authority in the secular government. Paradoxically, it may seem, Calvin also believed in close interrelation between church and state, based on his belief that church and state had the same Lord and the same goal. After two decades of struggle, Calvin finally established a theocentric 'Christian commonwealth' in the city of Geneva (1555–64).¹⁸

The impact of the Reformation on the development of urban development cannot be minimized. Fifty out of 65 imperial cities in the Holy Roman Empire officially recognized the Reformation either permanently or periodically as a majority movement. Almost 200 cities and towns in Germany with a population of over 1,000 people including large cities with over 25,000 such as Nuremberg, Strasbourg, Lubeck, Augsburg, and Ulm had strong Protestant influences.¹⁹ [p. 164](#)

THE MODERN CHURCH AGE (1600 ONWARDS)

Industrial Revolution and Rapid Urbanization

With new discoveries in science in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Industrial Revolution made inroads into major cities in Europe. Isaac Newton's discovery of gravity (1687),

¹⁶ Harvie Conn uses four terms to describe the urban development from the early church to modern time: *Cosmopolis* for ancient cities, *Theopolis* for the medieval cities, *Megalopolis* for the cities of the Renaissance and the Reformation, and *Necropolis* for modern cities. See Conn, pp. 10, 13, 26, 28.

¹⁷ Bong Rin Ro, 'The Church and State in Calvin' (unpublished S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Lutheran Seminary, St. Louis, 1967), pp. 20–21.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 52–56.

¹⁹ Conn, p. 21.

Richard Arkwright's spinning machine (1768), James Watt's steam engine (1769), Edmund Cartwright's power-loom (1784), James Hargreave's 'spinning Jenny' (1770), and steam power and coal fuel (1775) produced the first Industrial Revolution in England (1760–1830). This later followed in other European nations, and finally crossed the Atlantic Ocean to America in the middle of the 19th century. Adam Smith published the *Wealth of Nations* in 1776 to encourage the *laissez-faire* concept of free enterprise.

The Enlightenment Age in Europe from the middle of the 18th century further undermined traditional biblical beliefs. With Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) and Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (1848), man became nothing but an animal conditioned by socio-economic environments.

One of the consequences of the Industrial Revolution was the rapid growth of urban population. According to Barrett's report, the population of London jumped from 861,000 (1800) to 2,320,000 (1850), then 4.2 million (1875) and 6,480,000 (1900), and that of Paris, from 547,000 (1800) to 1,314,000 (1850),²⁰ 2,250,000 (1875) and 3,330,000 (1900). The population of New York City had sharply increased from 682,000 (1850) to 1.9 million (1875), and then 4,242,000 (1900). Teeming millions migrated to cities to find jobs and happiness. Conn remarks that the question during the medieval time was 'Am I a good man?' and the question of the modern man is 'Am I a happy man?'.²¹

In 1800 no city had a million people, but in 1900 11 cities had more than a million, all in Europe and America except Tokyo and Calcutta. In 1980, 235 cities had over a million and in 2,000 AD there will be 439 cities with over a million people, 25 of which will have more than 11 million. Twenty-two out of these 25 metropolitan cities will be in the Third World. By 2,000 AD, the number of cities with more than 100,000 will be 2,200.²²

The over-crowded urban cities had many problems: child and p. 165 female labour, slums, poverty, prostitution, congestion, air-pollution. The horrible conditions of industrial cities in Europe and the United States caused churches to pay more attention to these human needs.

Evangelical Christians' Responses to Urban Problems

Evangelical Christians in England, Europe, and America in the 18th and 19th centuries were not unaware of the crying needs of the cities. Many Christian social agencies were established to help the poor.

The Wesleyan revival in the 18th century produced the Clapham Sect of wealthy Christian politicians and businessmen who initiated social reform in England. Henry Venn ministered to the people of the Clapham Sect, and his son, John Venn, who founded the Church Missionary Society, were champions of the abolition of slavery and prison reform.²³

At the end of the 18th century, when poverty was the greatest social problem in England, William Wilberforce, prominent Christian politician, set up the 'Society for Bettering the Conditions of, and Increasing the Comforts of, the Poor' in 1796, produced

²⁰ Barrett, pp. 42–43.

²¹ Conn, p.27.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 48. See Barrett, p. 49.

²³ William N. Kerr, 'Historical Evangelical Involvement in the City', *The Urban Mission*, ed. Craig Ellison (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 29.

the Clapham Sect's Manifesto in 1797, and led the way for the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.²⁴

Lord Shaftesbury out of his deep Christian social concern tried to improve the conditions of the working class, with better housing, health, sanitation, schools, and labour legislation. In 1845 he reported to Parliament about the housing conditions of the poor in St. George's, Hanover Square, in London in which 929 families had one-room dwellings, and sometimes five families lived in one single room; consequently, the 'model lodging houses' were erected.²⁵

The *Rauhe Haus* in Germany was a well-known Christian social institution founded by Rev. Johann Heinrich Wichen (1808–1881) a Luther pietist in Hamburg, for abandoned boys. There were 250 branches of *Rauhe Haus* in Germany alone, and these *Rauhe Häuser* finally started '*Die Innere Mission*' in 1848.

Roger S. Greenway, editor of *Urban Mission* in America, has identified a critical period of 1870–1910 in the history of the United States when many Christian social agency programmes developed. The American Christian Commission was established by James E. p. 166 Yeatman in 1865. The Commission gave reports on urban needs in 35 representative cities and recommended a cohesive strategy for Protestant churches for urban ministry.²⁶

The Salvation Army, founded by William Booth in London in 1878, had extensive slum ministry both in England and America. D. L. Moody built a humble church structure on Illinois Street especially for the urban poor and invited everyone to the church. Moody hung a sign at the door step: 'Ever welcome to this house of God are strangers and the poor; the seats are free.'²⁷ In 1876 Jerry McAuley started the Wall Street Mission and founded the Gremorne Mission in 1882 in a deprived area of New York City. Between 1872 and 1892 more than one hundred rescue missions were established in America and abroad.²⁸

The Rise of the Social Gospel (1900 onwards) and Evangelical Reactions

The social meaning of the gospel was already found in the writings of Horace Bushnell, J. W. H. Stuckenberg, and others, but it was Walter Rauschenbusch (1861–1918), of the Rochester Theological Seminary, who popularized the implications of the social gospel for the 20th century through his writings: *Christianity and Social Crisis* and *A Theology of the Social Gospel*. He was influenced by the thoughts of Kant, Hegel, Darwin, Karl Marx, Pleiderer, Ritschl, and Dewey, and tried to establish the Kingdom of God on earth through 'a progressive reign of love in human affairs' (*A Theology of the Social Gospel*, p. 142).²⁹

Evangelicals and fundamentalists in the 19th and 20th centuries were very much alarmed by the increasing influence of theological liberalism and the social gospel in theological schools and local churches. J. Gresham Machen, A. T. Robertson, and many

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33.

²⁶ Roger S. Greenway, 'History of Evangelizing World Class Cities', unpublished paper at the Trinary Consultation on Evangelizing World Class Cities in Chicago (March 14–17, 1986), p. 16.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁹ J. L. Neve, *A History of Christian Thought*, Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1946), pp. 316–318, 324–325.

other orthodox theologians and churchmen fought against the theological liberalism which promoted the social gospel. Roger Greenway states: p. 167

The controversy between Protestant fundamentalists and advocates of the Social Gospel did serious damage to urban missions. The one side offered positive suggestions for improved social conditions but lacked the soul-saving message of the Bible. The other side preached the gospel in a truncated form which left society as a whole unjudged and unchanged. In many ways we still face the dilemma caused by this controversy and the fears and suspicions which it created. Consequently, Protestant missions to the city have not moved much beyond the place where they were eighty to ninety years ago.³⁰

The Changing Ecumenical Theology of Missions for Cities

Conn has traced the history of ecumenical involvement in meeting human needs in cities from the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem from 1928 to the 1960s.

The rise of liberal theology from the Age of Enlightenment in the middle of the 18th century, down to the present wcc's 'Salvation Today' theology (Schleiermacher-Ritschl-Harnack-Barth-Bultmann-Liberation Theology) has had direct influence upon the present ecumenical urban mission.³¹

The population explosion, the rapid increase of megalopolis, inhumane conditions of living, and rising problems in urban cities, all directly influenced the theology of missions. In 1932 Dr. William E. Hocking in his *Rethinking Missions* redirected the theology of missions to the position of appreciation of other religions rather than bringing other religionists to Christ for conversion.³² Dr. Gerald Anderson, Director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in Ventnor, New Jersey, has succinctly summarized the historical development of Christian missions in this way:

The debate had moved from the strategy question of How missions at Edinburgh, to Wherefore missions? (Jerusalem 1928), to Whence missions? (Madras 1938), Whither missions? (Whitby 1947), and Why missions? (Willingen 1952). The Ghana Assembly of 1957-58 pushed it one step further, to the most radical question in history, What is the Christian mission?³³ p. 168

The whole emphasis on the horizontal relationship between man and man in this present world, often at the expense of the vertical relationship with God, has redirected the ecumenical thrust to poverty and human rights in urban cities and rural areas. wcc has a department of urban ministry which has its regional offices in different continents, including Asia.

In recent years the evangelical response to urban ministry has sprung up rapidly. The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) produced a booklet on *Christian Witness to the Urban Poor* out of the Pattaya meeting in Thailand in 1980. Dr. Raymond Bakke, LCWE Urban Ministry Coordinator, has been extensively travelling around the world to conduct urban seminars. The Evangelical Coalition for Urban Mission (ECUM) in England is another effort to reach the cities with the gospel. Urban mission programmes have been set up at an increasing number of theological seminaries both in the West and Asia. Evangelical foreign missions are giving more thought to urban ministry than ever

³⁰ Greenway, pp. 23-24.

³¹ Conn, pp. 47-51.

³² Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 456.

³³ Conn, p. 52.

before. There is no doubt that the future battles for the church and the world will be fought in cities.

URBAN MISSION IN ASIA

‘Modern civilization is European in origin, and it was not till our day that the Asiatics awakened to the need of modernization,’³⁴ said J. Selwyn Schapiro in his *Modern and Contemporary European History*. Certainly, the urbanization of Asian countries has an intimate relationship with Western trends.

Colonial Rule, Industrial Development and Rapid Urbanization

Panikkar divides his ‘Vasco da Gama Epoch’ of Asian History (1498–1945) into four periods: the Age of Expansion (1498–1750) the Age of Conquest (1750–1858), the Age of Empire (1858–1914), and European Retreat (1918–1939).³⁵ The European colonial powers of the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, British, Germans, and Americans along with the Japanese during World War II colonized all the nations of Asia except Japan and Thailand.

As the colonialists and Western missionaries developed urban cities in their colonies, rapid changes of life style took place, particularly in [p. 169](#) cities, for they brought industrial development, modern education, science and medicine, as well as Western cultures, to the East. Ceylon was controlled by the Portuguese (1509–1658), Dutch (1658–1796), and the British (1796–1948). In the 18th and 19th centuries it was *Pax Britannica* which saw the British Empire providing the balance of power around the world. Britain ruled India, Malaysia, Singapore, Burma, and Hong Kong. The Dutch ruled Indonesia, and the French in former French Indo-China (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia), Spanish and Americans in the Philippines.

China was torn into pieces by the foreign colonial powers: the British in the Yangtze River valley, the French in the south, the Germans in Shantung Province, the Russians in the north, and the Japanese in Manchuria. Following the visit of Commander Perry to Japan in 1853, Japan was forced to open her doors to the West, and from the beginning of the Meiji Period in 1868, modernization began. The hermit nation of Korea was opened to the West by the Open Door Treaty in 1882.

The Industrial Revolution occurred in Asia later than Europe (from 1750) and North America (from 1850). The Industrial Revolution began in China in the 1870s. The first steam navigation company organized itself in 1872, the first railroad, between Shanghai and Woosung, was built in 1876, and 768 miles of railway were constructed between Peking and Han Kow in 1895. The first telegraph line was established in 1881, and in 1890 the Hanyang iron works started. Timothy Richards founded the first public school in Shanghai in 1891.

Japan first experienced the Industrial Revolution in 1895, with common men and the middle class freely entering into many business careers; the second phase of its Industrial Revolution occurred in the early 20th century (1901–12). The modern Japanese economic miracle traces back to the Korean War (1950–53).

As the British East India Co., Dutch East India Co. and other colonial companies in Europe and America established extensive trade centres in major sea port cities in South

³⁴ J. Selwyn Schapiro, *Modern and Contemporary European History* (Cambridge Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1957), p. 617.

³⁵ Panikkar, p. 8.

Asia and South East Asia, the population of these cities swelled. There was a mass migration of population from one country to another under the colonial rule. For example, a large number of Chinese migrated to Malaysia in the 1850s and 1880s to work on tobacco plantations. Thousands of Indians were brought into Malaysia and Singapore by the British for rubber plantations. Consequently, there are a vast number of Chinese and Indians in major cities in South East Asia today who are controlling the economy of the countries. p. 170

The rapid urbanization of the Far East is rather recent, and in close relationship with the industrial development of the last 25 years. In 1983 among 57,330,000 workers in Japan, 18,820,000 (32.8%) were classified as factory workers and another 14,080,000 (24.5%) as factory-related industrial workers. These teeming millions of workers reside in urban cities like Tokyo (12 million) and Osaka/Kobe.

With the export processing zones developing in urban cities like Seoul and Kaoshiung (Taiwan), millions of factory workers were brought into cities from rural areas. For example, Dr. Tsai Kuo-Shan, Director of the Taiwan Industrial Evangelical Fellowship, reported that the industrial sector provided jobs for nearly 80,000 people in 1952 and over 2.8 million in 1983, and 3,863,000 by 1989 which will represent 46.9% of the total labour force. Between 1953 and 1982 the agricultural employment fell from 52.1% to 18.9% of the total work force, while the industrial work force rose from 16.9 to 41.2%.³⁷

Asian cities, like major cities in the West, are becoming overcrowded with increasing economic, political, social and moral problems, and provide tremendous challenges for the Christian church in Asia.

One of the horrible consequences of rapid urbanization is the creation of slums for the poor. Some 730,000 people, according to a survey by the Center for Urban Studies (1983), lived in 771 squatter areas in the modern city of Dakha which had the population of 3 million. By the end of this century, these urban poor may make up the majority population in the city with 20 million people. The destitute conditions of the poor in the relocation area of Manila have also created real concerns within the Filipino churches.³⁸ In Bangkok there were 1,020 slums in 1985, with only two churches and two house groups in the areas, and two Christian ministers are trying to witness to 600,000 prostitutes. In early 1976 a Christian group launched out in Malaysia to reach 500,000 drug addicts.

History of Urban Ministry

There is a wide range of development in church history among the p. 171 Asian nations. The Indian church claims to trace its origins to St. Thomas of the 1st century. *The Acts of Thomas*, written in the early 3rd century, describes the ministry of Thomas in north and south India, and by 226 the churches in north-west India, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan had bishops and did missionary work. When Marco Polo visited India in 1288 and 1292, he found many Christians and considered the Mar Thomas Church (which used the Syriac language) very significant.

Nestorian Christianity was introduced in China during the 7th and 13th centuries, and the Roman Catholic friars and the Jesuits did their missionary work in Asia in the 13th and 16th centuries.

³⁷ Tsai Kuo-Shan, 'Growing Factory Evangelism in Taiwan', *Asia Theological News*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Oct.—Dec., 1986), pp. 4–5.

³⁸ Viv Grigg, 'The Urban Poor: Prime Missionary Target', *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (July 1987), pp. 263–265.

Protestant missions were initiated mainly by William Carey in Calcutta (1793) and Robert Morrison in China (1807). Many foreign mission societies in Europe and North America sent their missionaries to Asia during the 19th century. Except for Japan, most recipients of the gospel in Asia in the initial years of missionary work were rural people. However, missionary popular education revolutionized the traditional educational systems in many Asian nations where only the elite class had the privileges of education. Consequently, missionary education produced the middle class 'white collar' Christianity in urban cities of many Asian nations.

While many Western missions agencies concentrated their ministries in urban areas, others like the China Inland Mission (founded by Hudson Taylor in 1865) had a strong emphasis in the interior ministry of China.

In light of the rapid urbanization of Asia after World War II, national churches and foreign missions agencies have given more thought to urban ministry. The Urban Rural Mission (URM) of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (WCC) has its regional offices throughout the world, including one in Singapore. The ecumenical 'Salvation Today' theology, or 'doing theology', has provided the theological basis for urban mission. A number of urban study centres have been established throughout Asia to train pastors for urban ministry: The Institute of Urban Studies and Development at Yonsei University in Korea, Kansai Institute for Workers' Culture and Education in Japan, and the Asian Labour Education Centre, which is a government agency which Filipino Christians utilize in the Philippines.³⁹

Although the Christian mass movements have taken place mainly in rural areas in India, the Evangelical Fellowship in India (EFI) initiated in 1968 the 'City Penetration Plan' in two major cities, Poona in the p. 172 west and Shillong in the northeast. Various pieces of evangelistic literature were distributed to homes, schools, and colleges. At the same time, revival meetings were held in local churches followed by a discipleship training programme and Christian Education seminars. The plan in the Shillong area (which had many nominal Christians) experienced great success, but in Poona (where philosophical Hinduism was strong) the fruits were small.⁴⁰

Dr. Met Castillo, Director of the Philippines Crusade, encouraged Filipino churches to concentrate more on urban ministry with a proper methodology. Since the Filipino culture is dominated with the spirit of *bayanihan* (community self-help), the pastor should build up a healthy team spirit for urban ministry against the foreign elements of destructive criticism, judgmental attitudes, and extreme individualism.⁴¹

The rapid rise of nationalism and resurgence of traditional values which have been promoted by the government since 1945 have made it increasingly difficult for the church to reach rural communities. Mass migration of people into cities, and the rapid transitional status of national cultures today, have provided ample opportunities for urban evangelism throughout Asia.

CONCLUSION

³⁹ Richard P. Poethig, 'Theological Education and the Urban Situation in Asia', *The South East Asia Journal of Theology*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (1972), p. 66.

⁴⁰ Theodore Williams, 'India, A Seething Subcontinent', *The Church in Asia*, ed. Donald Hoke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), pp. 223, 257.

⁴¹ Met Castillo, 'Shepherding the Urban Church', *Philippines Church Growth News*, Vol. 5 (April—June, 1982), p. 6.

The Barrett survey shows that of the ten largest cities in the world in 1985, four were in Asia: Tokyo/Yokohama (21,800,000), Shanghai (17,500,000), Beijing (14,000,000), and Seoul (10,200,000). By 2025 A.D. seven out of the ten largest cities will be in Asia: Shanghai (36,100,000), Beijing (31,900,000), Bombay (27 million), Calcutta (26,400,000), Jakarta (23,600,000), Dakha (23,500,000), Tokyo/Yokohama (20,700,000), and Madras (20,600,000).⁴²

In 1985 there were some 2,400 cities in the world with a population of over 100,000 people and 276 megacities with more than a million. By 2,000 more than half of the world's population will reside in cities.⁴³ p. 173

What do all these 'mega-numbers' mean to the church in Asia, and particularly its theological institutions?

1. We must develop urban ministry courses in the theological curriculum and offer degrees in this field. Qualified lecturers and research materials must be provided.

2. We must find more urban-oriented practical work for theological students and closely supervise them. Continuing education on urban ministry for pastors is also needed.

3. We must find more non-traditional forms of theological education to train the laity of the urban church, different forms of extension education (TEE). As Jesus wept over the spiritual and physical conditions of the people in Jerusalem in the first century, Christians today must have the same compassion and burden for the peoples of the cities in order to win them to Jesus Christ.

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Church and State in Socialist China, 1949–1987—II

Jonathan Chao

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This is the second and concluding part of Chao's analysis of the political situation in China over the last half century, and the Christian implications of it. The first half was published in our last issue.

Editor

⁴² Barrett, pp. 45–46. Bakke's statistics describe that 17 out of 25 largest cities in the world by 2000 will be in Asia.

⁴³ Raymond Bakke, 'Sociology and Demographics of World Class Cities', unpublished paper at the Trinary Consultation on Evangelizing World Cities in Chicago (March 14–17, 1986), pp. 4–5.