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Urban Missions in Historical Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

Every day 10,000 Indians are pouring into the commercial city of Bombay from 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. Between 1981 and 1984, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation alone conducted more than 60 evangelism consultations in Cairo, Mexico City, Bombay, Belgrade and Copenhagen.¹ The Trinity Consultation on Evangelizing World Class Cities, jointly sponsored by Moody Bible Institute, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Wheaton College and Graduate School, was held at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, March 14–17, 1986. The Urban Conference, December 27–31, 1987, focused on urban missions. The ATA held its 8th Theological Consultation on ‘Theological Education for Urban Ministry in Asia’.

With the study of urban ministry being a relatively new phenomenon, historical materials on the subject are quite scarce. Moreover, the historical scope of this topic is so vast that the author has selected only two areas of study relevant to the Asian church.

First we have to understand how urban ministry has developed historically from the Early Church to the Modern Era. Secondly, we must see how the Asian church has responded to the urban situation, particularly since World War II.

The objective of this paper is twofold: to encourage Asian church leaders to see how the Christian church has dealt with urban situations, and to emphasize the importance p. 260 of urban challenges of today’s Asia.

I

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF URBAN MINISTRY

Francis M. Dubose, professor of mission at the Golden Gate Baptist Seminary, stated that Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem, grew up in the city of Nazareth, and was crucified and resurrected in the city of Jerusalem. He loved the city and wept over the city ([Lk. 9:35](#)) and went around cities and villages to preach the kingdom of God ([Mt. 9:35–36](#)).

The ministry of the apostle Paul centred around major cities of Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome to plant churches. Hastey elaborately describes the apostles’ urban ministries in the first century.²

Early Church (100–450)

¹ Raymond J. Bakke, ‘Evangelization of the World’s Cities’, Larry L. Rose and C. Kirt Hadaway (eds.), *An Urban World: Churches Face the Future*, (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1984), p. 89.

² Ervin E. Hastey, ‘Reaching the Cities First: A Biblical Model of World Evangelization’, *An Urban World*, pp. 147–165.

Early Church Christianity was rapidly spreading throughout the major cities of the Roman Empire. By AD 200 the first church buildings appeared in cities only, while the Christians prior to this time had their worship in homes.

David 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 AD 175. 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 Christianity in Edessa became the first city-states 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 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 ministry. 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 will establish.⁵ p. 261

Enormous spiritual contributions to the cities of Palestine and Asia Minor by the Cappadocian 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 AD 380; 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 city was decided by legislation and the council of Chalcedon (451) even stipulated that a parish must be built on a city before it can 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

Medieval Church (450–1350)

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

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Harvie M. Conn, 'The Kingdom of God and the City of Man', Roger S. Greenway (ed.), *Discipling the City* (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1984), pp. 14–15. See also Raymond J. Bakke, *The Urban Christian* (Bromley, MARC Europe, 1987), pp. 85–87.

⁶ Barrett, p. 41.

⁷ Hastey, p. 39.

⁸ *Ibid.*

With the fall of the Roman Empire in 476, the church became the powerful institution in Europe. Rome and other cities deteriorated 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 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 developed fully especially from AD 900–1150. 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 early church and became a link between the classical city and the medieval city.

It was in the monastery that the ideal purpose of the city was sorted out, kept alive and eventually renewed. It was here, too, that the practical values of restraint, order, regularity, p. 262 honesty, and inner discipline were 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 oriented more inwardly than to the outward ministry and helped to create spiritual strength to meet the chaotic challenges of the medieval period; consequently, it affected the church so that it was ill-prepared for the new urban development during the Renaissance period.¹¹

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

With Papal blessing, the imperial rules 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 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 to rise in the middle of the 11th century and universities were erected in cities like Salerno and Bologna (1150) in Italy, Paris (1200), and Oxford

⁹ Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanrich, 1961), pp. 246–247. See also Hastey, 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 University Press, 1967), p. 414. See also Conn, pp. 15–16.

¹¹ Conn, p. 40.

(12007); and Aristotle's literature was introduced in the West (ca. 1130–1280);¹² St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109), Thomas Aquinas (1226–1274), 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 on the outskirts of the cities. Quite different from the earlier monastic monks who spent time alone in prayer and meditation, these friars worked in hospitals and alms houses.

In the Eastern Church one must not forget the important development of the Nestorian Church based in Syria. By AD 1000, the Nestorian p. 263 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 bishops based in cities.¹³

Renaissance (1350–1650)

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

New scientific discoveries uplifted human aspiration. Gunpowder began to be used from 1350, and Gutenberg's lead-cast printing led to the publishing of the first book in 1450. Copernicus' (1473–1543) 'Heliocentric theory', Galileo's (1564–1642) use of the telescope and Johann Kepler's planetary motion challenged the traditional scientific views of 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 trade and exploration were being carried out from Europe. Columbus discovered America in 1492 and Vasco de Gama went to India via Capetown in South Africa in 1497. K. M. Panikkar, an Indian historian, in his *Asia and Western Dominance*, called (the next 450 years of the western colonial period) the 'Vasco da 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)

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

¹² Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1981), pp. 240–231.

¹³ Barrett, p. 41.

¹⁴ Conn, pp. 18–19.

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

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

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*, *sola gratia*, and the priesthood of all believers, minimized the authority of the medieval church, and helped the secular rulers to be free from the medieval concept of the *corpus p. 264 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 under the authority of the Scriptures and exhorted true Christian freedom to be exercised for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. Both Luther and Calvin, as the children of the medieval *Corpus Christianum* tradition, did not separate the church from the 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 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 differ somewhat 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 the society, deeply stricken by sins.¹⁷

Calvin, 23 years younger than Luther who called Luther 'much respected father', also distinguished the two separate worlds and repudiated both the magistrate's interference in the internal affairs of religion and the ecclesiastical claim of authority in the secular government. Apparently paradoxically, however, Calvin also believed in the close interrelation between church and state since the church and the 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 (1555–1564).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 1000 people, including large cities with over 25,000, such as Nurnberg, Strasbourg, Lubeck, Augsburg, and Ulm, had strong Protestant influences.¹⁹

Modern Church Age (1600–)

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 law of gravity (1678), Richard Arkwright's spinning machine (1768), James Watt's steam engine (1769), Edmund Cartwright's powerloom (1784), James Hargreave's spinning-jenny (1770), and steam power and coal fuel (1775), produced the first Industrial Revolution in England (1760–1830). This Industrial Revolution later came to other European nations, and finally crossed the Atlantic Ocean to America in [p. 265](#) the middle of the 19th century. Adam

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

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 52–56.

¹⁹ Conn, p. 21.

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 the traditional biblical beliefs. With Charles Darwin's *Survival of the Fittest* (1859) and Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (1848) man became nothing but an animal conditioned by socioeconomic environments.

One of the consequences of the Industrial Revolution was the rapid growth of urban population. According to Barrett's report, the population in London jumped from 861,000 (1800) to 2,320,000 (1850), 4.2 million (1875), and 6,480,000 (1900); and in Paris, from 547,000 (1800) to 1,314,000 (1850)²⁰ 2,250,000 (1875), 3,330,000 (1900). The population of New York city had sharply increased from 682,000 (1850) to 1.9 million (1875), and 4,242,000 (1900). Teeming millions migrated to cities to find jobs and happiness: Conn stated that the question during the medieval time was, 'Am I a good man?' and the question of the modern man is, 'Am I a good 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 for Tokyo and Calcutta. In 1980, 235 cities had over a million, and by AD 2000 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 AD 2000, the number of cities with populations more than 100,000 will be 2200.²²

The over-crowded urban cities had many problems: child and female labour, slums, poverty, prostitution, congestion, air-pollution, etc. The horrible conditions of industrial cities in Europe and the United States caused the 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 urban cities. Many Christian social agencies were established to help the poor. Rev. Thomas Guthrie's statue with the Bible in one hand and his loving arm around a homeless child from the city slums stands in Edinburgh, Scotland.

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 p. 266 when poverty was the greatest social problem in England, Sir William Wilberforce, a prominent Christian politician, set up the 'Society for Bettering the Conditions of, and Increasing Comforts of the Poor' in 1796, produced the Clapham Sect's manifesto in 1797 and led the way for the abolition of the slave trade in 1807.²⁴

²⁰ Barrett, pp. 42–43.

²¹ Conn, p. 27.

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

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

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

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 room; consequently, the model lodging houses were erected.²⁵

The Rauhe Haus in Germany was a well-known Christian social institution founded for abandoned boys by Rev. Johann Hinrich Wichen (1808–1881), a Lutheran pietist in Hamburg. These were 250 branches of Rauhe Haus in Germany alone, and these Haus became the 'Die Innere Mission' in 1848.

Roger S. Greenway, former editor of *Urban Mission* in America, pointed out 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. 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, engaged in extensive slum ministry in both England and America. D. L. Moody built a humble church structure on Illinois street in Chicago especially for the urban poor and invited everyone to the church. Moody hung a sign at the doorstep: '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

Rise of Social Gospel (1900–1920) and Evangelical Reactions

The social meaning of the gospel was already expressed 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 writing: *Christianity and Social Crisis* (1907), and *A Theology of the Social Gospel* (1918). He was influenced by the thoughts of Kant, Hegel, Darwin, Karl Marx, Pleiderer, Ritschl, and [p. 267](#) Dewey had tried to establish the kingdom of God on earth through 'a progressive reign of love in human affairs'.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 other orthodox theologians and churchmen fought against theological liberalism which promoted the social gospel. Roger Greenway states:

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33.

²⁶ Roger S. Greenway, 'History of Evangelizing World Class Cities', Unpublished paper presented at the Trinity 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, Muhlenberg Press, 1946), pp. 316–318, 324–325.

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

Changing Ecumenical Theology of Missions for Urban Cities

Conn traced the history of ecumenical involvement in meeting human needs in urban cities from the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem in 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 World Council of Churches' Salvation Today theology (Schleiermacher-Ritschl-Hamack-Barth-Bultmann-Liberation Theology) has had direct influences upon the present ecumenical urban mission.³¹

The population explosion, 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 Gerald Anderson, Director of Overseas Ministries Study Centre in Hartford, Connecticut, succinctly summarized the historical development of Christian missions, as expressed by Conn:

... the debate has moved from the strategy question of How mission? 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

The whole emphasis on the horizontal relationship between man and man in this present world, often at the expense of the vertical relationship p. 268 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 Evangelisation (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 represents 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 in Asia. Evangelical foreign missions are giving more thought to urban ministry than ever before. There is no doubt that the future battles for the church and the worker against Satanic influences will be fought in urban cities.

³⁰ Greenway, pp. 23-24.

³¹ Conn, pp. 47-51.

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

³³ Conn, p. 52.

II

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF 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. Salwyn 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

An Indian historian, K. M. Panikkar, in his *Asia and Western Dominance*, divides the 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 Europe in 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 particularly in cities, took place, for they brought industrial development, modern education, science, 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, the French in former French Indo-China (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia), and the Spanish and Americans in the Philippines. p. 269

China was torn into pieces by the foreign colonial powers: British in the Yangtse river valley, French in the south, Germans in the Shantung Province, Russians in the North, and Japanese in Manchuria. Following the visit of Commander Perry to Japan in 1853, Japan was forced to open her door 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 in Europe (1750-present) and North America (1850-present). The Industrial Revolution began in China in the 1870s. The first steam navigation company was organized in 1872; the first railroad construction between Shanghai and Woosung was built in 1876, and 768 miles of railway were constructed between Peking and Kankow in 1895. The first telegraph line was established in 1881, and in 1980 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 the common man and the middle class freely entering into many business careers; the second phase of the Industrial Revolution occurred in the early 20th century (1901–1912). The modern Japanese economic miracle traces back to the Korean War (1950–1953).

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

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

³⁵ Panikkar, p. 8.

number of Chinese migrated to Malaysia in the 1850s and 1880s to work on tobacco plantations. Thousands of Indians were brought into Malaysian 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 now controlling the economy of the countries.

The rapid urbanization of the Far East is more recent and has occurred in close relationship with the industrial development over 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 millions of workers reside in urban cities like Tokyo (12 million) and Osaka/Kobe.³⁶

With the export processing zones developing in urban cities like Seoul and Kaohsiung (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 the projection is for 3,863,000 jobs by 1989, which represents 46.9% of the total labour force. Between 1953 and 1982, the p.270 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%.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 the a survey by the Centre for Urban Studies (1983), lived in 771 squatter areas in the modern city of Dhaka which had a population of 3 million. By the end of this century these urban poor may make up the majority of a total population of 20 million people. The destitute conditions of the poor in the relocation of Manila have also created real concerns within the Filipino churches.³⁸ In Bangkok there were 1020 slums 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 1986 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 Asian nations. The Indian church claims to trace its origins to St. Thomas of the first century. *The Acts of Thomas*, written in the early 3rd century, describes the ministry of Thomas in north and south India; and by AD 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 Syrian church, which used the Syriac language, very significant.

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

³⁶ Manoru Nakajima, 'Factory Workers in Japan', *Asia Theological News*, vol. 12, no. 4, (Oct.–Dec. 1986), p. 8.

³⁷ Tsai Kuo-Shan, 'Growing Factory Evangelism in Taiwan', *Asia Theological News*, vol. 12. no. 4, (Oct.–Dec. 1986), p. 8.

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 in 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 previously had the privilege 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, which was founded by Hudson Taylor in 1865, had a strong emphasis on ministry in the interior of China.

In the light of rapid urbanization in p. 271 Asia after World War II, national churches and foreign mission 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 and has promoted urban mission through its *URM Newsletter* three to four times a year. 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 Filipino Christians utilized in the Philippines.³⁹

Although the Christian mass movements have taken place mainly in rural areas in India, the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) initiated in 1968 the 'City Penetration Plan' in two major cities, Poona in the west and Shillong in the northeast of India. Various kinds of evangelistic literature were distributed to homes, schools and colleges. At the same time, revival meetings were held in local churches, followed by discipleship training programmes 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

Under the sponsorship of World Vision, Ray Bakke conducted urban ministry consultations in eight major cities of India. As a result, a number of urban ministry fellowships sprang up throughout the country. The Bombay Urban Fellowship started in 1985 and meets every month to pray for the 10 million people in the city. In January 1987 more than 50 members were helping pastors and lay leaders in various urban ministry programmes. Similarly, the Madras Committee on Urban Evangelism draws 400 church leaders every month to a day of fasting and prayer for the city. The Ahmedabad Urban Evangelistic Fellowship which was established in 1985 is able to reach 50,000 people with the gospel.⁴¹

Met Castilo, 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

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', Donald Hoke (ed.), *The Church in Asia*, (Chicago, Moody Press, 1975), pp. 223, 257.

⁴¹ P. Winfred Jeyeraj, 'Indian Churches Strategize for Urban Mission', *Together*, (April-June 1988), p. 10.

build up a healthy team spirit for urban ministry against the foreign elements of destructive criticism, judgement attitudes, and extreme individualism.⁴²

The rapid rise of nationalism and resurgence of traditional values, p. 272 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

The Barrett survey shows that among the 10 largest cities in the world in 1985 four were in Asia: Tokyo/Yokohama (21,800,000), Shanghai (17,500,000), Beijing (14,600,000), and Seoul (10,200,000). By AD 2025, 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), Dhaka (23,500,000), Tokyo/Yokohama (20,700,000), and Madras (20,600,000).⁴³

In 1985 there were 2400 cities in the world with population of over 100,000 people and 276 megacities with more than a million. By 2000, more than half of the world's population will reside in cities.⁴⁴

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

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

3. We must find more nontraditional forms of theological education to train the laity of the urban church, i.e., 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 urban cities in order to win them to Jesus Christ.

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⁴² Met Castillo, 'Shepherding the Urban Church', *Philippines Church Growth News*, vol. 5, (April-June 1982), p. 6.

⁴³ Barrett, pp. 45-46. Bakke's statistics indicate that 17 out of the 25 largest cities in the world will be in Asia by AD 2000.

⁴⁴ Raymond Bakke, 'Sociology and Demographics of the World Class Cities', Unpublished Paper presented at the Trinity Consultation on Evangelizing World Class Cities in Chicago, March 14-17, 1986, pp. 4-5.