

We are not meeting for the Sunday morning gathering, the next three Sundays.

We will meet again beginning July 24<sup>th</sup>

Our churches will continue to meet each Sunday evening

We have been building the Antioch City Initiatives throughout the US. Now we are putting more shape into our own local Ames Des Moines Initiative.

Why the cities? Why the emphasis on shaping our local initiative?

Putting more shape to our local initiative is important because:

- we are a model and prototype for churches across the world
- developmentally, we are at a place when many things have taken place, it is important to understand how/where they fit
- Our church families have matured, time for more strategic investment into our cities

Why all this talk about the City? And the 30 City Strategy? Why all the emphasis on City Initiatives?

- In 1900 – 8% of all people lived in cities
- In 2008 – 50% of all people lived in cities

The world is Urban, we live in cities now. The mission is not about crossing the oceans; it is about crossing the street. The world is becoming more urban and global. If the church is to have an impact on the world, we must understand urbanization and globalization.

For much of my life, I thought that if I just stayed on the farm, like David did, tending things and minding my own business, life would be great.

Look how much trouble David got into when he went into the city. The politics, the killings, the war, the cheating, the pain. Perhaps he should have stayed on the farm and avoided this.

So the principles here must be to stay out of the city and keep yourself pure right? Wrong!

Jer 29:4-7

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

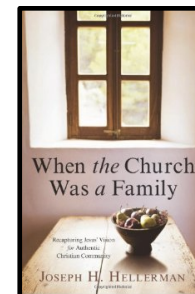
The Israelites were refugees that needed to seek the welfare of the city, not victims as they thought.

In my family (rural), when people ask who you are you respond with: your dad and mom's name or grandparents name and the landmark on your land

When we live in the city, and ask someone who they are, they respond with their occupation.

This has many implications, a few which are that if a person that lives in the city does not have a job, they not only have an economic problem, they have an identity problem.

**Accomplishing the Work in Ames Des Moines**



So the world is more urban and global today, and we are suppose to seek the welfare of our cities...

But what does it mean to bring our theology to the city? What is “doing theology in our cities”? What does doing theology in our culture mean? How can this actually take place? Where do we begin?

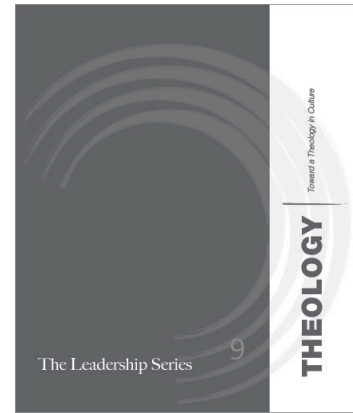


The faith is meant to describe our realities. Our human existence in the world is always an interpretive existence. We are constantly trying to understand what is occurring in our lives.

Why are nations fighting wars? Why do people constantly struggle in their marriages and parenting? Why is everyone so self-focused? Where do we find peace and satisfaction in our lives?

The faith is meant to describe our realities, it is meant to help us thinking biblically and interpret the world in which we live. We need to be able to address global and cultural issues with relevancy and clarity.

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One does not understand Scripture unless one can apply it to new situations, to situations not even envisaged in the original text.

Conn, Harvie. *Theology and Theologizing from Eternal Word and Changing Worlds*. Pg 234.

How is it that the Christian faith, committed as it is to relate faith to reality...continues to restrict this relating to its ordained leadership and to withhold it from the laity?

Farley, Edward. *Can Church Education Be Theological Education?* Pg 158.

...ordered learning in congregations should be theological education

...wisdom to the life of the believer, was not simply an emotion or feeling but included a kind of knowledge. Faith was a practical knowledge having the character of wisdom because it had to do with the believers ways of existing in the world.

Farley, Edward. Can Church Education Be Theological Education? Pg 161.

The faith of the believer, creates orientation to reality and therefore to ordered learning, a summary word for disciplined efforts to equip the believer to interpret reality.

Farley, Edward. Can Church Education Be Theological Education? Pg 161.

It is imperative that our churches returns to the understanding that all people need to be engaged in theological education so that the church can learn to do theology in every culture in the world, engaging in good occupations and meeting pressing needs. This is God's plan and system of welfare distribution for the world.



The third world church is making a discovery. Systematic theology is not simply a coherent arrangement of supracultural universals. It is a compilation of the Western white history of dogma. And that history, in the process of compilation has lost its missiological thrust. ...we let our theologizing slip into a naïve sort of idealistic pride in “our model”

Too often theology has lost this praxeological dimension. It has become known as an abstract discipline, not as a conscientizing instrument. Brevard Childs reminds us that the eschatological now of our stance between the already of Christ’s first coming and the not yet of His second...theologizing is the task of each new generation standing in its particular moment of history. It searches the scriptures in order to discern the will of God and strives to receive guidance on its way toward the obedient life that must be pursued within the concrete issues of the world’s concrete cultures.

Conn, Harvie. Theology and Theologizing from Eternal Word and Changing Worlds. Zondervan Corporation. 1984. Pg 223

3 men and First Principles, the church people in Lancaster, Chattanooga

their quote: “the world is beginning to make sense”

By understand the texts for themselves and devoting themselves to the first principles of the faith (not basing things on a secondary tradition), people begin to understand their own realities, understanding their role in their cities in which they live.

I am a leader, called to work with leaders in the city. I can get nostalgic about the farm life, but I live and am called to the city. My reality.

Doing theology in our culture, is helping people wisely deal with their life questions. People's theology tends to respond to their very specific and concrete issues...3 men and the First Principles

- What do I do with my parents faith? Is it mine?
- My dad has died, what do I do now?
- Why don't I have a girlfriend yet?
- My job is terrible, I want to quit but I need the money.



There is not a list of steps in scripture that tell the specific steps for proclaiming the gospel doing theology in our culture. However, we can see how all the early church leaders understood their role and what they did do was to proclaim and establish this good news in churches, while engaging with their culture. This is a normative pattern that we are expected to follow today.

- Built a framework from scripture based on Kerygma and Didache
- Addressed and engaged in cultural issues/activities
- They understood their cities
- They solved problems in the existing churches,
- They instructed the churches to:
  - Devote themselves to good works
  - Meet pressing needs
  - Be wise in all matter

## What I have learned in the past year of working on the Antioch City Initiatives

- If all the pastors knew about the idea of maturing their leaders in the church and also establishing their people to maturity. Once they understood that was the biblical model, through motivation they could do it and therefore bring this theology to their city, transforming it.
- I thought the barriers we had to overcome was in the cities themselves, the “under resourced” problems. I was wrong.
- I think most of the problems begin with the churches. It is complex, but the problems are not the cities, it is the churches that serve the cities.

I was naïve or overly optimistic, most churches vision is mainly about their church and their outreach is short-term, not comprehensive

When I look at the USA today, the biggest impact on our cultures has been business not the church. The church needs to get back into the game of doing theology in our culture.

## An example from this week, the Countermark Initiative

- When empires would take over, they would put another mark on the coinage, this added value to the currency.
- Ames DSM (the coin)- we seek the welfare of our city and in it we will find our own welfare (counter mark, more valuable for everyone) – Jer 29:4-7

## Insight into Sodom:

As I live, says the Lord GOD, your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done. This was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty, and did abominable things before me; therefore I removed them when I saw it. Ezekiel 16

## Same as instructions in Titus 3:14

And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive.

## Implications – The direction in which you need to Shepherd

Our city leaders, business owners, neighbors and school mates are wondering if religious communities make sense today? Is the church relevant to the culture and city we live in?

- Religious people answer this with a yes! But their current impact is minimal
- Others are so far alienated that this question is not relevant at all
- I think most people stand somewhere between these two views. People naturally seek relationships that bond into familial settings. People want to understand and be understood.

Look for and understand the Ames Des Moines City Strategies, everyone participate.

- More specifics are unfolding. Meeting tomorrow night with leaders
- Here is an overview:

Over the next weeks, use this time intentionally to engage with your own church and your neighborhoods. Leaders should shepherd two discussions in their churches.

1. Discussions about using the time to engage in activities that puts us in discussions with our neighborhoods.
  - Have people over for breakfast, brunch, lunch or dinner,
  - draft specific kids to your t-ball team so that you can interact with their parents.
  - The principle is that we want you to use the time to pause and take a fresh look, asking the question: “How can my family and our church (and cluster) ~~make~~ be an impact on our city or neighbors.

2. Shepherd everyone to be faithful in giving to the local church budget and BILD Summit.
  - We are a family. We have a budget for utilities, mortgages and salaries. Be faithful
    - If you typically pay on Sunday mornings, then before tonight is over, write checks and put them in envelopes so you can send.
    - If you give at your church, keep doing that.
    - Perhaps this is a time to consider having your bank automatically “bill pay”. Consider it.



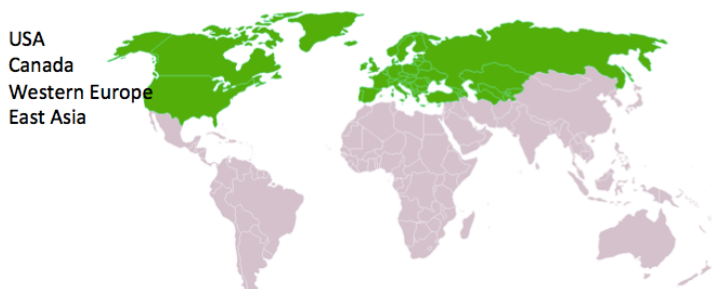
We are a growing and maturing network. The BILD Summit is approaching. Use Sunday AM time to figure out how much you can give to support the work of maturing and establishing the BILD network.

We need to play our role in shaping the next paradigm of Christianity. The BILD Summit is crucial for this work.

**Accomplishing the Work in Ames Des Moines**

In the last 60-70 years, the Global South, Christianity has grown at a pace previously not seen before in history.

Global North and Global South



USA  
Canada  
Western Europe  
East Asia

Africa  
Latin America  
Asia  
Middle East

citychurch  
AMES DES MOINES

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