THE RELEVANCY OF THE CHURCH

TO THE INNER CITY

by

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INTRODUCTION

The church is considered the body of Christ, and as such the work of the church should be relevant in any human situation. Today, however, the church receives criticism from various quarters concerning its failure to reach the inhabitants of deteriorated inner cities, to make the redemptive work of Christ relevant among them.

There are various reasons for this failure of the church, but regardless of the reasons, when the church fails to fulfil the redemptive task of Christ, it fails to be the body of Christ, the church.

A church, which thus lost its qualifications as the church, may still retain outward form and organization, but when it fails to participate in the redemptive task of the church, it is no longer the true church.

If this accusation is leveled against any church, it is a serious matter for that church, and the failure must be corrected, and the church must be restored to its original function.

Theoretically, perhaps, every Christian would agree to the truthfulness of the above statement. However, when faced with the bare fact of the thorough deterioration of human life in the inner cities, Christians are often at a loss as to what to do to correct this failure.

The purpose of this paper therefore is to study the problem of making the work of the church relevant in a deteriorated inner city situation.

The writer will first analyze the sociological implications of the development of the inner city situation; then against this background, take up various practical problems that a congregation may face in trying to make the redemptive work of Christ relevant in such a situation.

In the U. S., the problem of inner city deterioration is closely connected with the problem Negro people create as a persecuted minority race, as they are most likely the victims of the inner city situation. Thus a chapter will be given to find the organic relation the solution of the Negro problem may have in solving the inner city problem.

Just as a racial minority group is likely to be the victims of an inner city situation, so the victims are always economically handicapped. Under our present economic system, the system itself is often blamed for creating the economically handicapped.

Besides, Protestantism receives censure from some sources for its alliance with the economically well-to-do, and for its failure to reach the economically handicapped. So, in the next chapter, the author will try to find whether the capitalistic economic system is responsible for creating the inner city situation, and whether the criticism filed against Protestantism on this issue is justifiable.

Up to this point, the emphasis has been on the human side of the problem from sociological, practical, racial and economic view points. However, since this is the problem of making God's work

among men relevant, we must also take up the study of what God,
through the Scriptures, says about similar situations that must have
existed thousands of years ago. Modern industrialization was unknown,
but the ancient world was very far from ignorant of inner city de-
terioration of man and we can find relevant messages in the Scriptures.

Today, some Christians almost give up on the inner city situ-
ation, but the Bible shows that God is relevant in any situation by
seriously taking up the deterioration of the ancient world.

The study of the Scriptures can lead us to wrong conclusions
unless our theological orientation is sound, so the next step will
be to find what contemporary theologians have to say about this
problem.

As a conclusion, the author will make some attempt at dis-
cussing possible solutions of this situation. However, the author
is painfully aware that this problem is not something that can be
solved by mere research in the library.

CHAPTER I

SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

In this chapter a brief discussion of the sociological aspect
in the development of deteriorated conditions in the inner cities
will be made.

With the development of modern industries, workers are
attracted to centers of industry. Centers of industry are places
where raw-materials and labor can be cheaply and conveniently
obtained and products distributed profitably. They might be
along a navigable river, within a port town, near major railroad
lines, in the neighborhood of an abundant supply of coal, iron,
hydro-electric power, et cetera.

Regardless of the reason for the development of an industry,
when a large industry develops, it attracts a large number of
people; people who are directly employed as workers, and people
who serve the various needs of these workers.

Keeping pace with the increased need of people in industrial-
ized areas, there is at the same time a declining need for human
labor in farm communities due to the mechanization of farms. What
mules and farm laborers used to do in several days, a modern
machine with one operator can do in several hours.

Thus, there is a tendency the world over for the population
to move from rural into urban areas. The development of various

rapid and reasonably priced transportation systems also facilitate this trend.

Motion pictures, radio, television, et cetera with their false impression of urban life add to the lure of city life with the rumor of abundant job opportunities and exciting life in the cities.

This world wide trend is well represented in the U. S. where "by 1950, sixty per cent of the population lived in urban areas,"[1] whereas at the end of the Civil War, about a hundred years ago, only twenty-five per cent was urban.

As a result of this tendency, cities become larger and larger and in many areas become super-cities, where city after city is connected to form a huge metropolitan area such as the northeastern coast of the U. S..

When this happens, life inside these super cities becomes very different from that in rural areas or small towns. Millions of people become crowded into a comparatively small area. The people living in these areas become depersonalized; they hardly have a chance to know each other, or rather they prefer to remain unnoticed and unknown. Everybody becomes suspicious and wary of his neighbors and each individual is isolated from the rest of the crowd.

As is pointed out by Marty in his book,[3] industrialization

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[1]Gibson Winter, The Suburban Captivity of the Churches, (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1961), p.16.

[2]Walter Kloetzli and Arthur Hillman, Urban Church Planning, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), pp.21-25.

[3]Martin Marty, The New Shape of American Religion, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p.60.

with its mass production and commercialism, contributes greatly in creating this depersonalized man. A man merely lives in the crowd seeking conformity but lost as an individual.

As stated above, large industries in these cities attract vast numbers of people, but as the improved means of transportation make it possible for some to commute from a considerable distance, those who can afford the travel tend to live somewhat away from the center of industry.

Thus, in spite of the large concentration of people in centers of industry, some part of the concentration is dispersed at the edge of the concentration, in the suburban areas.

Besides the natural craving for the beauty of nature, some prefer to live in the suburbs, because there is more space. Families with little children especially prefer to live in the suburbs where children have a place to play rather than in the inner cities, where streets with traffic hazards are very often about the only place for children to play.

Also "increasing costs of city administration and consequent high taxes constitute an incentive for families of wealth to move beyond the boundaries . . . to a desirable suburb with lower tax rates."[4]

The deterioration of inner cities, which will be discussed later, also contributes to this tendency of the well-to-do to move out of the inner cities.

As a result of this tendency, the ones who live really close

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[4]Murray H. Leiffer, The Effective City Church, (2d. ed. rev., New York: Abingdon Press, 1949), p.24.

to the center of the city are likely to be the people who for

various reasons must live there rather than in the more comfortable

suburbs. Thus, the inner cities get a high concentration of people

who are attracted by the cities, but people who get the least

benefit of the city such as the chronically unemployed or the

members of minority races.

The expense of daily commuting is not necessarily the factor

that makes living in the suburbs more costly for the poor. Expenses

for the up-keep of sewage systems, sanitation, police protection,

fire protection, et cetera are passed on to the well-to-do in the

form of a higher tax rate in the cities, whereas in the suburbs,

the responsibility will be more evenly shared by all, thus making

it easier for the rich but harder for the less well-to-do.

> Without doubt the prime obstacle to urban decentralization is
> that a unit that consists of workers, without the middle class
> and rich groups that exist in a big city, is unable to support
> even elementary civic equipments or roads, sewers, fire de-
> partment, police service, and schools. At present it is only
> by remaining in metropolitan areas, where the taxes derived
> from the well-to-do districts can be partly applied to the
> working class quarters, that the workers can obtain even a
> modicum of the facilities for a good life.[5]

The above quotation may not sound convincing, but if one

visits backwoods communities in the southern states, from where

many of the inner city inhabitants come, the truthfulness of the

statement can be understood. Far from the reach of civilization,

extremely deteriorated life exists unnoticed without any benefit

of modern sanitation or police or fire department protection, with

a one room dilapidated school.

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[5]Lewis Mumford, The Culture of Cities, (New York:
Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), p.459.

Due to this situation, inner cities become a place for the poor and ignorant people to live, a place where poverty and ignorance prevail. Of course, there is nothing wrong in poverty and ignorance as such. However, persistent poverty with little or no hope for improvement, as in the case of poverty suffered by the ignorant inner city inhabitants, does something to personality.

> It may be said that there are two kinds of ill effects from being out of work--the lack of goods and personal demoralization.
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> . . . .
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> The moral decay which sometimes occurs during unemployment is in reality the break down of a life, of a personality. Often, too, there is an accompanying family disorganization: the constant presence of the idle breadwinner in the home accentuates friction which is already present in minor degree, or leads to clashes where formerly there was comparative peace.[6]

Consequently, degradation, crime, exploitation and a host of other undesirable traits in human life become rampant in the inner cities. These corruptions must be considered as symptoms of the havoc that has been worked within a man as a result of complete and lasting destitution.[7]

When this sort of condition persists in a community, the sanitation department is not too concerned in keeping the ever accumulating rubbish off the street, and the police are not too eager to protect the inhabitants who seem to prefer lawlessness and disorderliness over orderliness.

Sanderson speaks of the existence of this type of condition in East Harlem as follows:

The problems in the area grow greater each year. Some of them

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[6]Samuel C. Kincheloe, The American City and Its Church, (New York: Friendship Press, 1938), pp.47-48.

[7]Ibid., p.43.

are: poverty, low paying jobs, unemployment, abominable
housing, often dishonest landlords, a bad health picture, with
the highest rate in the city for tuberculosis; venereal
disease; infant mortality; rat bites; malnutrition, inadequate
trash and garbage disposal service, lack of recreation
facilities for all ages, overcrowded class rooms and too few
teachers, crime, gangs, juvenile delinquency, use of dope by
young boys and girls, unmarried mothers trying to support
their children and themselves, families broken by divorce
or desertion.[8]

When this happens, whatever respectable remnants that may
have stayed are forced to move out as the life in such an area
becomes intolerable and precarious. This also invites further
influx of undesirable elements.

Home owners conclude that it is wiser to sell the old house and
with the money build a modern residence beyond the area of
congestion, where land is less expensive, and there is play
space for the children. These advantages appeal particularly
to young couples rearing families.[9]

People who are likely to become victims of this kind of situ-
ation are Negroes, recent immigrants, and ignorant white people
from backwoods communities. Very often these people are resi-
dentially segregated, and are forced to live in this kind of area.
Landlords take advantage of the situation and overcrowd these
people into dilapidated buildings unfit for human residence. This
causes deterioration not only in morals but also in health as
already discussed. This is the kind of condition that develops
near the center of large and beautiful cities. New York may pride
herself in her sky-scrapers, in Rockefeller Center, Fifth Avenue,
and Broadway, but not too far from these spots of tourist
attraction, Harlem stretches over a wide area with every sign of

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[8]Ross W. Sanderson, The Church Serves the Changing City,
(New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1955), p.197.

[7]Murray H. Leiffer, p.26.

degradation and deterioration.

CHAPTER II

DIFFICULTIES THAT A CONGREGATION MAY MEET

IN TRYING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF

INNER CITY DETERIORATION

When deterioration hits an area, it influences the community
in many different ways. One of the results of the deterioration
is that churches located in this kind of community have to face
a new problem which will be discussed in this chapter.

Imagine there was a middle class suburban neighborhood just
outside a city thirty years ago. In the area was a church whose
members were mostly middle class people living in the neighbor-
hood. However, as the city grew larger, this suburban community
began to assume the role of an inner city, and what was a white
middle class neighborhood turned into a Negro Puerto Rican slum
in thirty years. This middle class white church located in the
neighborhood faces a problem.

Statistically churches are found to be extremely class and
color conscious. The church therefore is likely to fail to
minister to the new people who have moved in within the last
thirty years. The church has the choice of closing up, moving
out to the suburbs with its members, or starting to minister to the
new comers in the community.

Many churches in the inner cities have faced this problem

and found three different solutions. Those that closed their doors pronounced judgment upon themselves. "The Christian church that accepts its immediate community as its responsibility is laying a foundation for the future; the church that fails to do so has no assured future."[10] Those that moved out simply evaded the issue, and will have to face the same situation in the not too distant future.

Those that decided to remain had a tough problem to solve. Protestant denominations seem notorious for their inability to gain acceptance by the inhabitants of deteriorated inner cities. Protestant denominations seem to be identified with the middle class, and they are geared to middle class needs. Thus, even when a resolution is made by a middle class church to minister to the needs of the recent arrivals, the inner city lower class people are slow to join the communion of the middle class orientated snobbish saints.

Even lower class ministers themselves are rather pessimistic about bringing large numbers of lower class people into their churches. "Lower class preachers have long since despaired of saving the lower class en masse. They content themselves, as they phrase it with 'snatching a few brands from the burning"."[11]

At the other end of the social scale, there are thousands of city people who will not go to church nor let children go to Sunday school because they do not have the proper clothes. The notion that the church is a respectable institution for respectable people is hard to down despite the fact that the

[10] Charles Hatch Sears, _Church City Planning_, (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1928), p.57.

[11] St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, _Black Metropolis_, (New York: Brace and Company, 1945), p.618.

church ministers in the name of Him who came to minister to the lowly and the outcast and was known as the particular friend of sinners.[12]

The author of <u>Black Metropolis</u> also points to the same problem and says that the lack of good clothes and inability to pay dues are given as reasons for not attending church by lower class people.[13]

This economic inability to keep up with the middle class standards is not the only reason why church is rejected by the lower class. The failure of church members to show their saltness also seems to contribute to the unpopularity of the church. "Church folks do everything they's big enough to do. Why join the church? They ain't no different from anybody else."[14]

> Often hungry and beset by family troubles, discriminated against by white people . . . , Bronzeville's lower class . . . entertain serious doubts of either the necessity or the efficacy of religion. They demanded results in "here and now" rather than in the "sweet by-and-by".[15]

This middle class failure is also often a failure of white Christians to accept colored people in their midst. However, this failure of the white middle class is not necessarily the problem of the white middle class, as "members of the Negro elite have a real determination to adopt middle class values and the suburban way of life."[16] Among middle class Negroes a strong disapproval

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[12]Kenneth D. Miller, <u>Man and God in the City</u>, (New York: Brace and Company, 1954), p.57.

[13]St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, pp.606-607.

[14]<u>Ibid.</u>, p.652.

[15]<u>Ibid.</u>, p.617.

[16]Walter Kloetzli, <u>City Church--Death or Renewal</u>, (Philadelphia:Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p.138.

of lower class Negroes can be noticed.

Thus, Protestant denominations are failing to fulfill their function in areas where the need for redemption is most acutely felt.

In dealing with this problem of making church relevant in this kind of situation, the first problem is the sheer fact of deterioration of life, both material and spiritual. The residents of such areas

> have the highest density of population, . . . the highest unemployment rate, the lowest wages when employed, the poorest food, the most sickness, the highest infant mortality rate and the highest death rate by tuberculosis.[17]

Juvenile delinquency, dope addiction, alcoholism, violence, immorality, and crimes of all conceivable kinds are prevailing. The fact of this deterioration makes it easy for us to be convinced of the fall of man, but it makes it difficult to maintain faith in the redemptive work of Christ.

Middle class Christian complacency and mock decency are often criticized as taking the place of the Gospel of Christ, but in a world devoid of this mock decency, one often wonders if even the mock decency of the middle class is to be preferred over the decadent degeneration of the inner city lower class.

If Christianity distorted by middle class humanism is responsible for creating this chaos among the lower class as a reaction against middle class hypocrisy, then the conceited view of man possessed by the middle class is thoroughly exposed as to its inadequacy by the lower class deterioration.

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[17]Samuel C. Kincheloe, p.41.

In the face of this tremendous degeneration of man, one is made thoroughly aware of the human inability to deal with the problem of man, but at the same time one is also tempted to question the efficacy of redemption. "If Christ has conquered sin and death, why should a world like this exist?" is a disturbing question that constantly recurs in the mind of those who work in the inner cities.

When one somehow overcomes the initial shock, then he has to face the consistent lack of concern these people show to the witness of the church. The church has neglected this problem too long, or rather, the middle class church with humanistic emphasis cannot grasp the core of the problem, and it has lost relevance among these people. In so far as a man is considered to possess power to save himself by middle class church leaders, the work of the church cannot be relevant among the degenerate lower class mass.

Even where something like Scout work is welcomed, the work of the church becomes intentionally ignored. Among colored people, hatred against white people is often transferred into antagonism against the Protestant church.

> Young Negroes, particularly those with more education, are leaving Protestant churches in large numbers; some have joined the Roman Catholic Church, in part because it was not identified in their minds with days of humiliation, and in part because at least nominally there is no segregation in it.[18]

Another difficulty that needs to be overcome before churches can accomplish any work among inner city residents is that already mentioned, namely the middle class orientation of Protestant

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[18]Murray H. Leiffer, pp.108-109.

churches. In their organizational set up, in their intellectual emphasis, in their ritual, in their outlook on life, most Protestant denominations are too middle class and naive.

High mobility among these people becomes another obstacle in working among them, as a work may be started among children where resistance is the least, but "by the time the children of today grow up and marry they will probably have moved through two or three different communities,"[19]and not much can be gained within a certain congregation in an effort to build up a church through building up work among children. This also applies to adults; the constant change of people makes it difficult to build up a core of witnesses, the remnant to go out and convert the rest of the community.

Suspicion of strangers makes the apartments of these people an almost impossible place into which to gain entry. When the writer made some survey of several thousand families, about seventy per cent of the people would not respond at all, the rest spoke through closed doors, some opened then slammed the door, one spat on the writer's face, another screamed and threatened to call police. This inaccesibility of the people in inner cities is stressed by many writers.[20]

Another problem that needs to be overcome is the prevailing moral standard which is very different from what churches in general advocate. This difference exists at all levels of society, but among inner city dwellers, this difference appears to be

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[20]See for example, Fredrick A. Shippey, Church Work in the City, (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952),p.143.

almost a protest against the existing moral standard of super-

ficially decent middle and upper classes.

The failure of the church to influence society at all in

three class levels seems an admitted fact.

> Sociological theory and popular belief agree in assigning
> positive importance to religious values in the moral inte-
> gration of the community. The last Census of Religious Bodies,
> taken in 1936, was used to investigate this matter. I tried
> out two hypotheses. One was that the larger the proportion
> of church members in the community, the better the inte-
> gration. . . .
> . . . .
> Neither of these hypotheses was substantiated by the facts,
> and I therefore abandoned church membership as a factor in
> moral integration. Thorndike reached similar negative
> conclusions.[21]

An explanation for the above situation can be found in the

following statement:

> "Brother Cobb" symbolizes the New Gods of the Metropolis. He
> is the alter-ego of the urban sophisticate who does not wish
> to make the break with religion, but desires a stream lined
> church which allows him to take his pleasure undisturbed.[22]

The churches seem to have succeeded in upper and middle

class levels in making nominal Christians who have the pretence

of decency. At the lower level, it has failed to create even this

pretence of decency, and it is losing popularity.

> The church is the oldest and the wealthiest institution in the
> Negro community, and it is still an important part of urban
> Negro life. However, it is not the central agency that it was
> prior to World War I or that it still is in the small towns
> of the South.[23]

Thus, the church has hardly any impact upon the moral life

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[21]ed. Paul K. Hatt and Albert J. Reiss, Jr., Cities and
Society, (2d ed. rev. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957), p.627.

[22]St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, p. 646.

[23]George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, Racial and
Cultural Minorities, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), p.528.

of the lower class people. Hardly any sexual morality seems to exist, with the exception of the feeling of personal jealousy which may safeguard against some excesses. A man may display his sex organ in front of teen age girls out on the street in broad daylight, or stand and urinate out on the side walk facing the street. A child of six may already have experimented in intercourse, and so on. By the time a girl reaches fifteen or sixteen she is quite likely to get pregnant without being married. By the time boys reach sixteen practically all of them are said to have experienced intercourse, with perhaps a somewhat lower percentage among girls. Premarital intercourse is considered "nature" by parents and when a girl gets pregnant, her parents show token embarrassment. Many families have children with different last names, as each child assumes the last name of the man by whom the mother became pregnant.

When one tries to uphold Christian monogamous marriage amid this kind of community, one is ridiculed. One time, the church council of the congregation which the writer serves nominated as candidate for the church council a woman who was living with a man to whom she was not married. When the writer expressed his disapproval, the following reply was given: "If you start talking that way, you will not be able to have any member in your church council."

Sex is only one of the many areas of life in which this difference in moral standards is noticeable, and there are many other areas such as lack of personal honesty, of orderliness, of cleanliness, and of discipline and restraint, which make en-

forcing of what is normally accepted as a Christian standard

almost impossible.

Conducting a Sunday school class or confirmation class is

very often almost impossible, because of the disorderliness of

children. Public school teachers share this feeling.

Denominational educational materials are inadequate for

use in the inner cities. The reading ability of the children is

very poor. Materials meant for much younger children must be used

for much older age groups. While the reading ability and general

scholastic standing very low, the children have advanced

understanding about facts of life. Since denominational material

is not quite up to what they know, it is generally rejected as

childish by these children.

Lack of lay leadership creates another problem. Persons

qualified to teach Sunday school, or to supply adequate

music for the service, or persons who can be placed in responsible

positions are difficult to find in this kind of community.

> Few local residents have developed leadership ability, a
> further handicap and challenge to the Protestant church. The
> people, embarrassed by their lack of formal education, evade
> leadership responsibilities.[24]

This kind of situation is hard on ministers also.

> It is also difficult to secure capable ministerial
> leadership. . . .
> . . . .
> These churches do not offer a minister much prestige. He will
> have a higher status if he serves almost any other type of
> congregation. The salary is generally low and perhaps un-
> certain. If he lives in the community, as he must do if he is
> to identify himself with the people, he subjects his wife to

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[24] Murray H. Leiffer, p.97.

all of the physical and social hazards and discomforts which characterize the area.[25]

The difference in the economic standard is another problem that separates the lower class from the rest. The matter of not having decent clothes to send children to Sunday school is often used as an excuse for not sending children to church. The general budget of the church as compiled by middle class standards causes strain to lower class church members.

> Indigenous financing or member giving, is to be pushed without apology, whatever the eonomic status of the city church, or rural church.
> . . . .
> Alleged fright of local people, when budgets involving thousands of dollars are concerned can be seriously discounted.[26]

Cost of educational material, expense to attend conventions and synods and many other activities of the church at large are too expensive for participation by lower class church members.

It is one thing to talk about the failure of middle class churches in accepting lower class people among their communion, and it is an entirely different thing to face these practical issues of life which make the acceptance of these people difficult. Perhaps most Christians are aware of the importance of oneness in Christ, but when one faces these practical problems of life, then his knowledge of what ought to be fails to support him. He is likely to try to escape hiding behind the illusory decency to which he is accustomed. Middle class Christians cannot solve this problem by a mere theoretical, sentimental recognition of the problem.

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[25] _Ibid._, pp.97-98.

[26] Ross W. Sanderson, p.246.

Thus, from a superficial observation of the situation, the accusation of Protestantism by Paul Tillich that "it would become a religious possibility for only certain groups of men"[27] seems applicable to our case as one stands amazed at the difficulty of the problem.

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[27]Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era, trans. James Luther Adams, (abridged ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p.162.

CHAPTER III

NEGRO PROBLEM

In discussing the work of the church in the inner cities,
the problem of minority races or recent immigrants must be taken
up as an integral part of the problem, as these people are the
most likely ones to become victims of the inner city situation.
Recent immigrants as they adopt American ways of life have hopes
of getting out of the situation, depending on their ability and
initiative. This is also true of minority races of Caucasian
origin. However, in case of Negroes, the situation is very
different, the possibility for them to get out of the plight in
the inner cities is very slim, unless some drastic change takes
place in American society.

Under the present circumstances, a greater majority of
Negroes as a people are doomed to be the life long victims of the
inner city problem. This situation causes further complication of
the inner city problem, as "Negroes in America are becoming a city
people, and it is in the cities that the problem of the Negro in
American life appears in its sharpest and most dramatic forms."[28]

In The Church in the Changing City, published in 1927,
Paul Douglas illustrates this point very well. Describing the

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[28]St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, p.755.

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history of the Olivet Institute in Chicago, specifically es-

tablished to deal with inner city problem, he states:

> From 1903 onward, however, came a very rapid influx of Italians,
> which turned the Goose Island neighborhood into a "Little
> Sicily" ultimately harboring some 20,000 inhabitants of that
> nationality. This change was followed by a noticeable
> infiltration of Negroes. The older elements, in the main,
> were pushed farther north.
> . . . .
> The Institute consequently moved to a site about half a mile
> northeast of the original one. . . .[29]

Thus, he indicates that the Olivet Institute which capably took

care of various European immigrant groups, decided to move when

faced by the infiltration of Negroes. Evaluating the work of the

Olivet Institute, Douglas further states:

> Removal of location was good practical strategy, and the
> present site will doubtless remain permanently more central.
> Nevertheless, removal revealed the limitations of the
> Institute's relations to the community. It is able to deal
> with the Italian group in adjunct institutions without losing
> its older constituency; but the situation has not developed,
> and perhaps shows no sign of soon developing, into the
> complete assimilation of the more diverse racial elements.[30]

He seems to indicate that the inner city problem in which Negroes

are involved is more difficult than the one in which recent

immigrants from Europe are involved.

Thus, in this chapter, the Negro problem in the U. S. in

general will be discussed as an integral part of the inner city

problems.

First, the development of discrimination against Negroes in

the U. S. will be taken up.

Most writers trace the source of discrimination against

Negroes in America to slavery of Negroes in the early days of

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[29]H. Paul Douglas, The Church in the Changing City,
(New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927), pp.416-417.

[30]Ibid., p.442.

American history. Slavery in America at its outset was "an extension of the institution from the West Indies where the plantation system originated."[31] However, "the first Negroes brought to Virginia were given the status of indentured servants,"[32] and it was in the 1640s, that the holders of Negroes started considering them as slaves. It was in 1641 that Massacheusetts took the step of legalizing the practice.

However, it was the development of the cotton industry in the South that made slavery profitable in southern U. S.. The availability of slave labor and the invention of the cotton gin made cotton the most important industry in the South, and the system of slavery became firmly established in the economic life of the South.

In the North this was not the case. There were no large scale slave holders comparable to southern plantation owners. Slave labor was not too well suited to the industrial life of the North, and slaves were kept mostly as household laborers.

In the South with this situation of large scale holdings, it became necessary for the plantation owners to maintain some kind of justice and order among the slaves within their plantation. As a result a different set of laws and regulations to control the lives of slaves, and thus the lives of Negroes in general, was developed.

The above described development of a different set of laws and regulstions to rule the lives of Negro slaves continued even

[31] Maurice R. Davie, Negroes in American Society, (New York: McGrow-Hill Book Company, 1949), p.17.

[32] Ibid., p.19.

after the abolition of slavery. Matters of accepted practice among slave holders became legalized as the slaves were freed and Negroes were not any more under the direct control of slave owners. This outlines briefly the development of discriminatory practices against Negroes in America as an outcropping of the system of slavery.

Although the above is perhaps a rather accurate description of how discrimination against Negroes developed in the U. S., it does not necessarily follow that the discrimination as found is America today is an inevitable consequence of a slavery system. There are cases of other countries where slavery of Negroes was once practised, but where discrimination against Negroes is not practised today.

In the Latin American countries the policy of no color line has been adopted and "eventual absorption or integration"[33] of Negroes is expected.

> An outstanding example of complete racial equality is afforded by Brazil . . . . Brazil has no legal segregation of Negroes, no Jim Crow cars, and no disfranchisement. She has never had a lynching; and at no time in her history has she had laws prohibiting the intermarriage of whites and blacks.[34]

Even during the slave holding period, Brazil was known as a "humane slave holding nation,"[35] so the discrimination against Negroes in the U. S. cannot be justified on the grounds of its historical background in cotton plantation practices.

Somewhat different from the above case, Hawaii solved the

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[33] *Ibid.*, p.459.

[34] *Ibid.*, p.460.

[35] *Ibid.*, p.9.

problem of discrimination by intermarriage.

> The extensive intermarriage of foreign men and Hawaiian women
> and the presence of their descendants led to a special
> pattern of race relations. This code assumed racial equality,
> sanctioned intermarriage, and gave the children of such
> marriages a satisfactory social status.
> . . . .
> This brief reference to the situation in Hawaii is made to
> show that the rigid lines and strong feeling of most of the
> people in the United States are not inevitable.[36]

Thus, although discrimination against Negroes has developed

as a result of the slave system, and perhaps as an expression of

Teutonic racial pride, after the discriminatory practices had

become well established, people had to find some more plausible

justification for the practice.

Our next step is to examine various attempts at justifying

discrimination. Surprisingly enough, many Christian leaders who

defend discrimination against Negroes use what is called "The

Curse of Ham" as a justification for discrimination. The curse of

Ham comes from Genesis 9:25 where Noah, realizing that Canaan

laughed at the nakedness of Noah, pronounced a curse upon Canaan,

one of the four sons of Ham, saying "Cursed be Canaan; a slave

of slaves shall he be to his brothers." In verse 26 Noah blessed

Shem, another son of Ham, saying, "Blessed be Shem, and let Canaan

be his slave."

These words are meant to "explain the success of Israel in

subduing the Canaanites."[37]   "There is not the least suggestion

. . . . that it [the curse] was to apply to the other three sons or

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[36]George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, p.488.

[37]Cuthbert A. Simpson, The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. I
(New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), p.557.

their descendants: Cush(Ethiopia), Mizraim (Egypt), and Phut."[38]

According to Albright "all known ancient races in the region belonged to the so-called 'white' or 'Caucasian' race, with the exception of Cushites."[39] Consequently, Canaanites were not to be considered black. Thus, the use of this passage for the justifi= cation of slavery or discrimination is entirely out of place.

Among the white people there is a wide spread belief that the white race is superior and colored races are inferior. The following is an opinion expressed to this effect by a Ph. D.:

> The black man is indeed, sharply differentiated from the other branches of mankind. His outstanding quality is superabundant animal vitality. In this he easily surpasses all other races. To it he owes his intense emotionalism. To it again, is due his extreme fecundity, the negroes being the quickest breeders . . . . Lastly, in ethnic crossings, the negro strikingly displays his prepotency, for black blood, once entering a human stock, seems never really bred out again.[40]

However, scientifically there is no way of proving such a belief.

> We may say that one of the assured results of modern science . . . is that no innate difference which would account for present actual difference in social status and physical condition has been discovered.[41]

The same writer reporting the results of mental tests states:

> . . . The further these tests [mental tests] have been carried the deeper grows the conviction that the various races are so nearly alike in mental capacity and ability that racial difference should not play any part in our judgment of

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[38] T.B. Maston, Segregation and Desegregation,(New York: Macmillan Company, 1959), p.178.

[39] William F. Albright, Interpreter's Bible, Vol.I, p.238.

[40] Lothrop Stoddard, Rising Tide of Color, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), p.90.

[41] Edmund Davison Soper, Racism a World Issue,(New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1957), p.40.

individual men and women and what they may accomplish.[42]

To begin with, there is no such thing as a white race. "Caucasoid" and "white race" are considered synonymous. However, the inhabitants of India who are Caucasoid by race have very dark skin. So far as the darkness of their skin is concerned, they are hardly distinguishable from Negroes. Have the inhabitants of India after migrating from Europe several thousand years ago, and accumulating pigments under the tropical sun become a different race?

If one chooses to make comparison among Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid races, the individual differences among each group in matters of physical characteristics, mental characteristics and cultural attainments are greater than the difference between the racial groups. Thus, nothing conclusive can be said to prove the superiority of one race over the other, and the doctrine of white superiority is shown to be a mere myth.

Another area of life which is very often used as a justification for discrimination is the undesirable behavior patterns often found among Negroes. However, the undesirable behavior patterns that characterize lower class Negroes today are mostly results of discrimination. They may serve as an excuse to perpetuate discrimination, but truly they are a result, rather than a cause, of dicrimination.

"Southerners will say . . . that all 'niggers' are worthless and lazy."[43] This accusation against Negro laziness is rather

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[42]Ibid., p.42.

[43]John Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town, (3rd. ed. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1949), p.368.

common and there may be some ground to justify such an accusation. However, Negro laziness, even if it is true, should be considered as a cultural trait that developed among Negroes under a long period of unfavorable environment rather than a racial, biological, inherent trait among Negro people. Thus, ". . . 'the naturally lazy and ignorant' Negro peasant may become in a city where he is given the opportunity, a typical occupationally ambitious and thrifty member of the middle class."[44] Although this may not be too likely under the present circumstances in American society, we cannot deny its possibility.

Often Negro criminality is used to justify discrimination, but there are no available data to prove conclusively the existence of a higher rate of crimes among Negroes. There is a tendency among law enforcement officers to employ a different standard toward Negroes, and thus statistical figures proving a higher Negro crime rate cannot be justly used against Negroes.

It may be true that there are more cases of petty crimes such as theft and crimes of violence among Negroes, but these traits are to be considered as a result of the environment in which they are forced to live, rather than an inherent racial characteristic.

Thus, it is unfair to use Negro criminality as an excuse for discrimination. If proper treatment is accorded Negroes by society for several generations, who can say that they will still have a higher crime rate?

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[44] George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, p.164.

Some more typical accusations against Negroes are that
Negroes "lack initiative, are shiftless, have no sense of time, or
do not wish to better themselves."[45] All these and many other
accusations are justifiable to some extent, but these cannot be
used as an argument to prove inherent inferiority of Negroes, or
as an excuse for discrimination, since all these traits are
cultural and not biological heritages.

The discrimination against Negroes in the U. S. today takes a
somewhat different form in the southern states from the rest of
the U. S. . In the southern states segregation of Negroes is
enforced by state laws and a majority of non-Negro people back
up this legislation in their practice. In spite of the Supreme
Court rulings, segregation in schools, in public means of trans-
port, in restaurants, hotels, and places of amusement and recre-
ation is still widely practised. In many places the voting is
made difficult or impossible by a poll tax, or personal threat,
and a different wage scale for Negroes is enforced. Job opportuni-
ties for Negroes are limited mostly to manual labors, janitorial
or household work, excepting for the cases of Negro white collar
or professional workers who exclusively serve the needs of the
Negroes. Intermarriage between whites and Negroes is forbidden
by law and victims of lynchings are largely Negroes. During the
period of 1882 through 1947, "Negroes comprised about seventy-two
per cent of the victims."[46]

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[45] John Dollard, p.373.

[46] Maurice R. Davie, p.342.

In most cases Negroes are made to reside in restricted
areas. Most of the Protestant churches openly refuse Negro par-
ticipation in their worship services.

Separate but equal educational facilities for Negroes is
only nominal. In practice, Negro schools are definitely ill
equipped, the teachers are poorly paid, and the period during
which school is open each year is shorter.

The courts and police are likely to have double standards of
justice. "The Negro versus Negro offences are treated with undue
leniency, while the Negro versus white offences are treated with
undue severity,"[47] and a Negro cannot even expect proper police
protection.

In the northern states the discrimination against Negroes
is not legalized to the extent it is in the southern states.
There is no wide spread legalized discrimination against Negroes
in public schools, and in means of public transportation. Negroes
are given suffrage and the laws do not enforce different wage
scales for Negroes. Job opportunities for Negroes are still
limited, but in large cities like New York and Chicago more
Negroes are being employed for clerical and other white collar
jobs. Many northern states "have enacted civil rights statutes
to prevent discrimination."[48]

In social relations Negroes are still segregated, even in
northern states, and some restaurants and hotels will refuse a

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[47]Ibid., p.256.

[48]Ibid., p.289.

Negro customer. The matter of residence is another area where the Negro is still segregated in the North.

In summary,

the color line in the North is most tightly drawn (1) at inter-marriage and membership in white cliques, churches, and social clubs; (2) in recreational situations that emphasize active participation . . . which . . . involve close contact between Negro men and white women and (3) where "exclusiveness" is an issue, as in certain restaurants, night clubs, cocktail lounges, and hotels.[49]

Thus, northern discrimination against Negroes is less ag-gressive and more subtle, but at the same time Northerners are said to be less interested in the problems of Negroes. The different attitude toward Negroes among northern and southern people are described by a Negro as follows:"they will not do anything to him, but neither will they do anything for him.'"[50]

Effects of discrimination upon Negro people are numerous. Hardly any people would come out of the kind of mistreatment American Negroes have received without incurring deep scars on their personality traits and behavior patterns.

The most disheartening effect seems the instability of the family unit among Negroes. The slave system seems to have ignored the existence of family ties among Negro slaves; husband and wife, parents and children were torn apart at the convenience and whim of slave owners.

After abolition, freed men had trouble in getting a steady job, especially if they did not want to stay on plantations.

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[49]Ibid., p.309.

[50]John Dollard, p.466.

Consequently, Negro men were often unemployed. On the other hand Negro women had more opportunity for household work.

In a Negro family, a man without means of supporting his family naturally loses his prestige to the women who can support the family. Thus, women who carry prestige become the center of a Negro family. This is also a carry over from slavery days when children were more likely to have stayed with their mother in case the parents were separated.

When this matriarchal system exists, it is conducive to promiscuous sex relations. The husband is a mere appendage to a family, and he comes and goes without much responsibility or a proper place in the family. He is very often reduced to something like a boarder.

As long as it is convenient, he stays with a woman. When some unfavorable circumstances arrive, however, he finds another woman with whom to cohabit, leaving the first one and her offspring behind. The children added to the woman's family simply become the mother's property with the father's last name.

Thus, marriages that were not binding under the slave system are not very much binding in the lower class Negro society today. When marriage relationships are contracted and discarded at will without much hindrance, sex morals are bound to become loose.

When marriage is not sanctioned and protected by the society, various taboos that surround sex life to protect married relation-ships become obscured. This results in the wide spread lack of sex inhibitions that normally surround civilized society. Conse-quently, among lower class Negroes there is a wide spread laxity

of sex morals.

Another characteristic that marks a Negro is his agressiveness toward a member of his own race. Long continued oppression by the white majority led Negroes to vent their hostility against members of their own race. The anger, the resentment, the dissatisfaction that naturally should have been directed toward white oppressors had to be directed against the members of their own race as the only safe outlet.

This tendency, together with the laxity with which laws against violence are enforced among Negroes, seem to cause characteristic Negro aggressiveness and violence among their own people.

Decadence or apathy is the next effect. Who can long survive denial of job opportunities, exclusion from decent residential districts, limitation of educational, recreational, and social activities, without becoming apathetic and despondent? Majorities of Negroes impress others as ones who are not interested in life, but as ones who are living without much purpose surviving merely for the satisfaction of immediate needs and desires.

When all these factors and some others are combined an extremely disorganized life is the product. "The Black Ghetto also suffers from a type of social disorganization which is reflected in high illegitimacy and juvenile delinquency rates, and a high incidence of insanity."[51]

This disorganized condition is the further cause to perpetuate

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[51]St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, p.204.

discrimination and segregation. One may hesitate to employ a

shiftless irresponsible workman to occupy a position that requires

careful, responsible work. One may hesitate to have as a neighbor

somebody who ignores rules of sanitation and may openly engage in

immoral practices. Association with such a person will certainly

have a bad influence on the person himself and on his family.

Further, his own standing in the society will go down as a result.

Thus, discrimination gives rise to these traits, hampering

Negroes from becoming accepted in the general society, and the vicious

circle sets in.

American Negroes who are caught in this condition of deca-

dence do not even realize the existence of an outside world

which may not be quite as decadent. A child in a Negro community

grows up absorbing decadence as an integral part of human life.

> A child is responsive to the rewards and punishments of his
> immediate environment, his family, his clique, his community.
> Behavior patterns which bring social approval and satisfaction
> from these groups are adopted very early. Only slightly does
> one strive for a pattern of action that is approved by "society
> in general".[52]

In this way, the disorganized pattern of life becomes an es-

tablished way of life.

The middle class and upper class Negroes are aware of this

vicious circle and are trying to break it by improving the

behavior patterns of lower class Negroes. At the same time they

are appealing to the white world to change their attitude toward

Negroes.

This feeling is expressed by various people.

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[52] St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, p.559.

It is not poverty that outrages their sensibilities, but lack
of public decorum--what they call "ignorance", "boisterousness",
"uncouthness", "low behavior".[53]

Race leaders of all class levels are agreed upon the necessity
for cultivating a set of attitudes built on the basic fact of
widespread "race consciousness". As they see, "race conscious-
ness" should be transformed into "race pride", replacing shame
and the lack of confidence. "Race pride" they feel should
produce "race solidarity": a solid front facing the white
world.[54]

The above is the feeling among the Chicago upper and middle

class Negroes, but the same feeling was expressed in North

Carolina also.

The woman who founded Mather in 1867 knew that one of the first
steps toward helping the Negro girl to take her place in a
white-dominated country was to lift her up in her own eyes.
That is why the home economics teacher shows girls in her
class how to dress in clothing that fits properly and that
combines the right colors.[55]

The Black Muslim movement that seems to be gaining influence

among Negroes reveals an awareness of the importance of improving

the general behavior pattern of Negroes.

Before the black man can become independent of whites, . . .
he must "wake up, clean up, stand up." So the membership,
many of whom never got through elementary school, attend weekly
classes at the mosque. The women learn home-making, sewing,
cooking how to set a table and serve dinner in a middle class
manner.[56]

This movement is painfully aware of the image of a Negro in

American society.

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[53]St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, p.559.

[54]Ibid., p.731.

[55]R. Dean Goodwin, There Is No End, (New York: Friendship
Press, 1956), p.78.

[56]Gordon Parks, "Watch the Black Muslims", Life, LIV, No.22,
(May 31,1963) p.27.

Liquor and profanity are forbidden, and sexual infidelity would
bring banishment from the movement up to five years . . . . .
. . . Music singing and dancing . . . are forbidden . . . .[57]
Muslim holiness includes being a good husband and provider.

Another Negro leader expresses himself as follows:

We Negroes, on the whole, are not ready to assume the responsi-
bilities that are inseparable concomitants of the freedom we
seek. There are reasons for this, and the Negro's "culture
gap" has everything to do with what has happened to the black
man in America since his reluctant migration from Africa. But
that was almost four hundred years ago. To be sure, we are
still scarred by what happened then, and since, but democracy
is as demanding as it is infectious, and the Negro is by no
means relieved of the imperative to further change things by
becoming a much more responsible citizen than he now is.[58]

This emphasis on the part of Negro leaders to improve the

behavior pattern of Negroes is not to be used as a substitute for

the effort by the white world to give Negroes justice in every

phase of life.

Occasionally the opinion is expressed that Negroes are not
"ready" to move into better neighborhoods, that they must first
prove their worth by making the Black Belt a cleaner, more
orderly, better kept area.
. . . .
This theory that individual Negroes must wait until the whole
group improves itself before they can get out of the Black
Belt is not at all popular with ambitious Negroes.[59]

. . . We must certainly agree there is a strategic danger
in the emphasis on minority self-improvement as the way to
reduce prejudice and discrimination. Nevertheless, attention
by minority group members to the effect of their characteristics
and their responses to hostility, however caused, can be of
value.[60]

The above is the upper and middle class Negro reaction to the

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[57] Ibid., p.28.

[58] Louis E. Lomax, "Why the Negroes Continue to Revolt,"
Look, XXVII, No.18, (Sep. 10, 1963) p.53.

[59] St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, p.200.

[60] George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, p.712.

disorganized state of things among lower class Negroes. The lower

class Negroes resent the above attitude among upper and middle

class Negroes, but the church among lower class Negroes seems to

have a somewhat similar attitude as middle and upper class Negroes,

although this feeling expressed by lower class church people is

not very effective.

> These lower-class church women are, on the whole, an influence
> for stable family relations within their social strata.
> . . . .
> "Respectable lowers"--male and female--are usually "church
> people" but they are decided minority within the large lower
> class.[61]

> The influence of the church on lower class sex and family life
> seems to be confined to moderate public brawling and to
> creating a group of women who try to make their children
> "respectable" . . . even though they themselves, due to
> "weakness of the flesh" . . . do not maintain stable family
> relations.[62]

> Middle class people expect the ministers to be interested in
> "advancing The Race".[63]

Thus, as a result of centuries of prejudice and discrimi-

nation, American Negroes are placed in the most difficult place

in American society, and their personalities are warped in many

ways.

The white American world is being made more and more aware

of this injustice, and Negroes themselves are putting forth effort

to change the attitude and practices of the white world toward

Negroes and to improve behavior patterns of Negroes.

The majority of lower class Negroes seems somewhat oblivious

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[61] St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, p.612.

[62] Ibid., p.615.

[63] Ibid., p.682.

to these efforts by their own leaders; and the majority of the
white world seems not too anxious to change their attitude and
practices toward Negroes.

There are stubborn people who cannot see anything but the
traditional way, and they hamper the solution of the problem.
There are also others who seem to fail to grasp the problem in its
totality, and they suggest a somewhat misleading analysis of the
situation.

Killers of the Dream is an interesting book analyzing the
white man's dilemma in segregation, but it fails to see the part
Negroes played in the problem. Furthermore, it seems to apply
Freudian analysis to an extent which may obscure the real issue.

> In the old days, a white child who had loved his colored nurse,
> his "mammy" with that passionate devotion which only small
> children feel, who had grown used to dark velvety skin, warm
> deep breast, rich soothing voice and the ease of a personality
> whose religion was centered in heaven, not hell . . . found it
> natural to seek in adolescence and adulthood a return to this
> profoundly pleasing experience.[64]

As a whole, Lilian Smith's failure to come to grips with the
responsibility of Negroes in their present plight seems to reduce
the value of her work.

> Throughout the ordeal of slavery they remained people of easy
> dignity, kindly, humorous, bending only when necessary, deeply
> hurt and sad . . . , but sane at the core as neither a
> vengeful nor a cringing people can be. They developed severe
> faults, of course, during these centuries. Easy lying, deceit,
> flattery became almost second nature to many of them . . . .
> . . . .
> There were the exceptions: crazed individuals who ran amok;
> others who turned their hate upon themselves and members of
> their own race with their Saturday night razor fights and quick
> killings over trifles; still others there were who brazenly

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[64]Lilian Smith, Killers of the Dream, (2d. ed. rev. New York:
W. W. Norton and Company, 1949), p.127

exploited their own shame, pawning their dignity for profit.[65]
The book neglects to study the effects of these "exceptions" upon
segregation. When one observes a large Negro community such as
Harlem, where these "exceptions" seem the rule producing a
consequent hell in this world, the failure to note the significance
of "exceptions" makes the work almost meaningless.

Thus, any failure to face the problem in its totality, that
is the part the white society has to change, and the part that the
Negro world has to change, will simply prolong the solution of
the problem. Negroes are not agents of the devil nor are they
representatives of angels. We must face the problem frankly with
all its bareness, and then we will be able to untangle this
difficult problem that is adding complication to the urban
situation in the U. S. today.

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[65]Ibid., p.118.

CHAPTER IV

BOURGEOIS PROTESTANTISM AND INNER CITIES

According to Paul Tillich, the capitalistic system is based upon human conceit. Capitalism assumes that man is able to take care of himself and that when left alone he will work out a situation best fitted for human happiness. Perhaps this is the philosophy behind a free competitive economy.

If this is the case, his criticism against "the self-sufficient finitude of bourgeois society"[66] is justifiable. This complacency makes capitalistic society intolerably shallow and spiritually impoverished.[67]

The unfortunate thing for Protestantism is that it is often identified with this complacent capitalism. "The sociological connection of the Protestant churches in central Europe with the petite bourgeoisie and feudalism, and in western Europe and America with big business and the successful entrepreneurs,"[68] seems a proof of the above identification.

Although there is no intrinsic necessity within Protestantism

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[66] Paul Tillich, _The Religious Situation_, trans. H. Richard Niebuhr (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1956),p.94.

[67] _Ibid._, p.97.

[68] Paul Tillich, _The Protestant Era_, p.161.

itself for the above identification, and identification that exists

at the superficial level seems to make the work in the inner cities

for the Protestant denominations difficult.

The complacent, self-righteous, and profit motivated capi-

talist system is undeniably responsible to a large extent in

creating the havoc that exists in the inner cities.

The capitalistic system does not necessarily operate to

create supply where need is felt. It creates supply where the most

profit is evident. Thus, even though there is a pressing need for

adequate housing in the inner cities, the capitalistic system

ignores the need and uses the land in the inner cities for more

profitable purposes and makes the need for housing more acute.

> As the standards of housing have risen, the opportunities for
> profit through their sale or rent dropped.
> . . . .
> Result: a quantitative shortage in dwelling space has been
> chronic in highly industrialized contries like England ever
> since the beginning of the nineteenth century.[69]
>
> . . . The effect on the land round about the heart is usually
> not beneficient. Often people who own this property, . . .
> move toward the edge of the city and rent their former homes
> to others . . . . Owners feel that there is little point in
> making repairs or any fundamental improvements . . . . They
> hope that the expanding business will in time reach out and
> absorb their land, multiplying its values.
> In the mean time the building becomes run-down, and only
> people who cannot afford to live elsewhere move in.
> Consequently this is where immigrants first settled when
> they came to America and where large Negro communities are to
> be found.[70]

Thus, profit motivated capitalism instead of being able to

meet the need for adequate housing in the inner cities, is directly

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[69]Lewis Mumford, p.460.

[70]Murray H. Leiffer, p.28.

responsible for the shortage, but has to suffer financially from

the situation, as the existence of bad neighborhoods in the inner

cities increases the expense of local government.

> The drop in land value produces a decline in the City's income
> from the area, even though the population is increasing and
> the local costs of government are rising. More teachers may
> be needed in the public schools; additional policemen must be
> employed; and public expenditures mount.[71]

The havoc that the capitalistic system works in the inner

cities is not limited to the housing shortage alone. The most

basic factor that is directly responsible for the poverty of inner

cities is poor wages and unemployment. If enterprisers are paying

all they possibly can and still some people are suffering from poor

wages, then perhaps there is nothing that can be done about the

poverty of some people.

However, "is any industrial and social order righteous when

ten per cent of the people possess over sixty per cent of the

wealth?"[72]   Since this is the case, the poor wages and unemployment

seem the result of hard bargaining on the part of employers to

keep the wage level at a minimum. Ignorant people from the

backwoods communities come into cities not knowing that they will

become prey to this system of exploitation.

> The competition which exists among the members of the labor
> force is keenest at the lowest level of unskilled labor. An
> excess in the number employable over the number that is
> required to do the work leaves employers in the best position
> for bargaining and many laborers unemployed.
> . . . .
> One of the reasons why industry located in cities and continues
> to operate to a large extent in cities is to be accessible to

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[71]_Ibid._, p.86.

[72]Charles Hatch Sears, p.52.

an abundant "supply of cheap labor".

. . . .
. . . Cities have continued to draw in new people because of
the traditional notion that there were greater opportunities
there--a treacherous idea.. . . . [73]

While this injustice was going on, what did the denominations

do? They did not do anything to cure the evil at its source.

That brotherhood has not been practised by the employer, that
unholy acquisition at the expense of other's welfare has
existed, is in part due to the failure of the church to make
clear the principle of the kingdom in respect to all business
relationship. [74]

As in Jesus' day, all the church has done is to catch a

prostitute who became a victim of this vicious environment, and

to accuse her, while building palatial churches by the contribution

received from these industrialists.

No wonder "the worker has distrusted the church, has looked

upon it as a bulwark of Capitalism, and has not been sensible of

any sympathetic understanding or interest in his problems and

aims." [75]

The above is not a mere chance happening but is a well

established typical pattern of life among Protestant denominations.

To make the matter worse, when this pattern became established,

it received social sanction, and the Protestant church as a part

of the society even appeared to promote it as some sort of God-

given way of human life.

A further result was the concentration of wealth and property
ownership in the upper strata through inheritance. This

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[73] Wilbur C. Hallenbeck, American Urban Communities, (New York:
Harper and Brothers, 1951), p.354.

[74] Charles Hatch Sears, p.58.

[75] Ibid.,p.57.

together with the position of financial and political importance, kept within these groups, resulted in a very substantial control over the life of the whole community.

This power was used to protect the ideas, the values, the conventions, the positions, and the property of the power group.

. . . .

The difficulties in which those in the lower strata found themselves were considered to be due to their own indifference and lack of ambition.[76]

Since Protestantism stood for universal priesthood, rejecting the intermediating Roman pontiff, it may have something in common with the spirit of _laissez-faire_ economy. However, since Protestantism is aware of man's fall and his consequent weakness, it should not sanction free, unrestrained, competitive economy, nor go glong with the capitalistic philosophy of humanistic self-sufficiency which overlooks the possibility of devastating, unrestrained exploitation.

In reality,though, Protestantism has miserably failed in fulfilling its prophetic function in this respect. Consequently, what Marxists say of religion fits fairly well in describing the Protestant failure. As Marx predicted, free competitive economy with huge industrial capitalists "has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with rural . . . . "[77] The monotony from which urban industrial workers suffer is well described when The Communist Manifesto says that "owing to the extensive use of machinery and the division of labor, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character,

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[76]Wilbur C. Hallenbeck, p.538.

[77]Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto, ed. Samuel H. Beer, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), I,p.14.

and, consequently, all charm for the workman."[78]

It also describes periodic depression, international warfare
to gain markets and to destroy competitive productive forces.

> . . . There breaks out an epidemic that, in an early epoch,
> would have seemed an absurdity--the epidemic of overproduction.[79]

> And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the
> one hand by enforced destruction of a mass productive
> forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by
> the more thorough exploitation of the old ones.[80]

Thus, while Protestants saw an angelic glow behind the newly
rising capitalist class, communists saw demonic power within them.

Communists realized quickly the fruitlessness of efforts by
improvers of society who try to cure the symptoms without removing
the cause of sickness.

> A part of the bourgeoisie is desirous of redressing social
> grievances, in order to secure the continued existence of
> bourgeois society.
> To this section belong economists, philanthropists,
> humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working
> class, organizers of charity, members of societies for the
> prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-
> and corner reformers of every imaginable kind.
> . . . .
> They wish a bourgeoisie without a proletariat.
> . . . .
> . . . The proletariat should remain within the bounds of
> existing society, but should cast away all its hateful ideas
> concerning bourgeoisie.[81]

Christian leaders seem just now to be becoming aware of the
futility of this type of "hole-and-corner" reform.

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[78] Ibid., p.16.

[79] Ibid., p.15.

[80] Ibid., p.16.

[81] Ibid., III,2, pp.40-41.

It is now seen that the church does not have the financial
resources to meet the relief problems in a major depression or
in the urban community of recent decades. Some church leaders
take the attitude that the church must recover the task of
helping the poor, while others say that we are now "beyond
the relief stage" and the task of the church is to speak for
an economic organization that will make large scale relief
unnecessary.[82]

Religious groups were not ready or able, in the depression of
the thirties, to meet with any degree of adequacy the religious
and social needs of that great number of men thrown into urban
centers.

. . . .

These men need redemption of body and soul. After their
sense of defeat has worked on them for a time they need
something more than good advice. To convert a man and then
turn him out into the darkened street is not good religion.
Constructive rehabilitation is needed.[83]

Thus, the notorious failure of Protestant denominations to

meet the spiritual needs of inner city inhabitants seems to have

its roots in a much deeper place than the mere lack of knowledge

concerning the proper way to approach these people or the

inadequate type of worship service.

The failure of the churches to deal adequately with the

problem of inner cities is caused in many ways by the economic

system based upon free enterprise. Such failure is also shared

by the government which attempts to deal with the problem at the

level of symptoms rather than of cause. The Inhabitants,[84] a novel

written by a former welfare agent describing degenerate recipients

of welfare aid, eloquently depicts the inadequacy of government

dealings with inner city problems from a welfare type of approach.

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[82]Samuel C. Kincheloe, p.52.

[83]Ibid., pp.133-134.

[84]Julius Horwitz, The Inhabitants, (New York: The New
American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1960).

Instead of relieving the misery of inner city inhabitants,
the welfare aid system seems to perpetuate their misery. Unwed
mothers and many other recipients of welfare aid seem to become
victims of defeatism, pauperized for the rest of their lives.
As often criticized, welfare aid encourages unwed mothers to
increase their illegitimate offspring as a means of bringing in
more income in the form of government aid.

In this process, government aid simply encourages degeneracy
and degradation of inner cities. What is needed is not removal
of symptoms but the changing of society so that every member of
it can positively contribute to its life. Economic and political
systems may be involved in such a change, but outward changes
alone will not bring about a desirable society.

In so far as man remains a fallen creature--and he remains
a fallen creature even after redemption, as long as the present
aeon lasts--a completely satisfactory society is unthinkable,
but this fact does not relieve us of the responsibility of trying
to fight and remove whatever evil we find.

Although we must engage in this fight, we must do so with
deep awareness of our inadequacy for the task, and this is the
task of Protestantism. We must involve the inhabitants of the
inner cities in this struggle against the titanic evil that
dominates our society. We must do this task, however, not for the
purpose of building an utopia here and now, but because we are born
to participate in the redemptive function of Christ's church. In
this participation, inner city inhabitants will be saved from
meaninglessness, and in the fulfilling of this task, the church

will restore its relevance.

It is high time for Protestant denominations to wake up from their complacent dream under the wing of capitalistic humanism, and to start involving themselves in the task of redeeming the sinful world of the inner cities.

CHAPTER V

INSIGHT FROM THE SCRIPTURES

The Old Testament is aware of cultural influence such as the
influence of Canaanite Baal worship upon Israel or the influence
of city life upon the Israelites which made them forget God who
brought them out of the land of Pharaoh.

In the New Testament, Christ seems more sensitive to the
snobbish self-righteousness of middle class religious leaders,
perhaps out of His lower class background. Paul, on the other
hand, seems more critical of lower class decadence, perhaps out of
his middle class intellectual orientation.

> . . . With great and goodly cities, which you did not build,
> and houses full of all good things, which you did not fill and
> cistern hewn out, which you did not hew, and vineyards and
> olive trees, which you did not plant, and when you eat and are
> full, then take heed you forget the Lord,.. . .[85]

> . . . Lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built
> goodly houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks
> multiply, and your silver and gold is multiplied, then your
> heart be lifted up, and forget the Lord your God, . . . Beware
> lest you say in your heart, "My power and the might of my hand
> have gotten me this wealth."[86]

> For when I have brought them into the land flowing with milk
> and honey, which I swore to give to their father, and they
> have eaten and are full and grown fat, they will turn to
> other gods and serve them, and despise me and break my
> covenant.[87]

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[85]Deut.6:10-12. [86]Ibid.,8:12-17. [87]Ibid.,31:20.

As Kincheloe says "urbanization and secularization tend to go hand in hand,"[88] and the Pentateuch seems to reflect the fear of this danger. Israel was primarily made up of nomadic people. They may have scorned, therefore, settled, agricultural city life as a corrupt form of life. Perhaps in the mind of the early Israelites, urbanization and idolatry were closely connected, since agricultural life seems to have been closely connected with Baal worship in the land of Canaan. Today we think of urbanization in connection with industrialization, but to ancient Israelites, urbanization--village life--came with agriculture.

As far as inner city dwellers are concerned the danger does not lie in their forgetting God when they accumulate silver and gold or build goodly houses. Rather, their danger is mimicing the secularization of middle and upper class urbanites. A house-maid is likely to say "My mistress does not go to church. Why should I?" Although lower class people resent the manner of life of upper and middle classes, they unconsciously crave to imitate their way of life. Just so colored people resent the whiteness of Caucasian skin, but read colored magazines full of advertise-ments for skin whitening lotions.

The lower class people want to be up-to-date in not being religious. Religiosity is the thing of the past. It is what they want to leave behind in that hateful old South. So, although uncomfortable in life, the lower class people imitate the secular-ization of their leaders.

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[88] Samuel C. Kincheloe, p.113.

Of all the writers of the Old Testament, Amos seems the
foremost in his denuuciation of urban corruption. He speaks out
against winter and summer houses,[89] houses of ivory, cows of Bashan
who demand their husbands to bring more wine, the rich who become
rich by oppressing the poor,[90] those who are at ease and secure,[91]
those who eat the best of the flock and enjoy idle songs,[92] the
merchants with dishonest or cruel business practices.[93] Thus,
Amos condemns the corruption of city life, but his attack is
directed more against the upper class rich people who are comfort-
able at the expense of the misery of the poor multitude. Thus,
Amos would be most violent in his attack against the complacent
suburban churches.

It seems natural for this shepherd farmer to have noticed the
corruption of city life most keenly. However, we cannot dismiss
the problem by saying that Amos represents the residue of the
nomadic element who resented the agriculturalization or that he
represented a cultural lag.

Jeremiah, who was of the priestly family, and who could not
have represented the nomadic element, was also very keen in his
criticism of urban corruption. As the writer of Deuteronomy, he
also seems to have felt that secularization, urbanization and
accumulation of riches go hand in hand.

You followed me in the wilderness, and I brought you into

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[89]Am.3:15.   [90]Ibid.,4:1,5:11.   [91]Ibid.,6:1.

[92]Ibid.,6:4-6.   [93]Ibid.,8:4-6.   [94]Jer.2:1.

a plentiful land, but when you came in you defiled my land.[95] His

condemnation of secularization is sharp. He says, "What do you

mean that you dress in scarlet, that you deck yourself with orna-

ments of gold, that you enlarge your eyes with paint? In vain you

beautify yourself."[96] One has the feeling that Jeremiah penned

this passage after taking a walk along the streets of New York.

He becomes more specific as he says, "When I fed them to the

full, they committed adultery and trooped the houses of harlots.

They were well-fed lusty stallions, each neighing for his

neighbor's wife."[97] This may not necessarily be the urban problem,

but our inner cities are well depicted in this brief passage.

Then he condemns the rich for their injustice by which they

managed to accumulate riches. " . . . Their houses are full of

treacheries; therefore, they have become great and rich, they have

grown fat and sleek. They know no bounds in deeds of wickedness.

. . ."[98] "Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness,

and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbor serve him

for nothing, and does not give him his wages. . . ."[99] The land-

lords who take as much rent from their tenants as possible without

doing anything in return, who crowd the tenants as much as they

can be crowded, and then live in Florida luxuriously throughout the

year can be put in this category.

So, Jeremiah laments that high and low are alike corrupt:

". . . These are only the poor, they have no sense, . . . I will

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[95]Ibid.,2:7.　[96]Ibid.,4:30.　[97]Ibid.,5:7-8.

[98]Ibid.,5:27-28.　[99]Ibid.,22:13-15.

go to the great, and will speak to them . . . but they all alike

had broken the yoke, they have burst the bonds."[100]

Religious leaders also are included in his indictment.

". . . From the least to the greatest of them, every one deals

falesly. They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying

peace, peace, when there is no peace."[101] This makes me think of

a modern pulpit where psychological peace is proclaimed, and this

is what Peter Berger criticizes as upholders of an "OK world".[102]

Thus, the people may not confess themselves to be atheists,

but in practice they are. "They have spoken falesly of the Lord,

and have said, 'He will do nothing; no evil come upon us, nor

shall we see sword or famine!"[103] How often do we find this same

complacency!

A part of Isaiah has a message somewhat similar to the above

message of Jeremiah. There was luxury among members of the upper

class, but the luxury of the upper class was bought at the price

of the oppression of the poor and of social injustice. When this

kind of corruption rules the life of the upper class, religious

leaders obscure their message by emphasis on the ceremonies.

> The Lord enters into judgment with the elders and princes of
> his people: It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the
> spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by
> crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?[104]

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[100] Ibid.,5:1-5.

[101] Ibid.,6:13-14. 5:3-31, 8:1-12, 23:17 have similar
messages.

[102] Peter L. Berger, The Noise of Solemn Assemblies,
(Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1961), This message is found
throughout the book.

[103] Jer.5:12.   [104] Isa. 3:14-15.

Among ignorant people, a man is known as a kind person, if he will
lend a man in need ten dollars as long as the man returns eleven
dollars on his pay day. This means a high interest of ten per
cent within a month. The rent also, in the Negro areas with
delapidated apartment buildings is unreasonably high as there is
an extreme housing shortage among Negroes due to residential
segregation. These and many other practices such as selling
numbers and traffic in dopes seem to fall directly under the
category of the evil condemned by Isaiah here.

> Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run
> after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening till wine
> inflames them! They have lyre and harp, timbrel and flute
> and wine at their feasts; but they do not regard the deeds
> of the Lord, or see the work of his hands.[105]

> Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men
> in mixing strong drink.[106]

This condemnation of party and strong drink lovers applies
very well to urban population, high and low alike. Even among
teen agers an all night party is a common occurrence. A thirteen
year old girl would say: "I did not come to Sunday school, because
I did not go to bed till five this morning." Heroes of drinking
are a common sight on the side walks of Harlem. These heroes
sleep in the broad day light sprawled out on the side walk with
an empty whisky bottle at their side, defying the midday sun on
a hot summer day.

The money that these heroes use to buy their liquor or dope
is very likely to come from evil sources.

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[105]Ibid.,5:11-12.   [106]Ibid.,5:22.

Who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of
his right![107]

Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Every one
loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not defend the
fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them.[108]

This makes one think of the recent New York corruption in con-

nection with the liquor business. Among the lower class heroes,

the money comes by street side soliciting or by threatening at

knife or gun point.

The oppression of the poor and the luxury and love of liquor

and party go hand in hand with vain corrupt women.

Because daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with out-
stretched necks, glancing wantonly with their eyes, mincing as
they go, tinkling with their feet; the Lord will smite with a
scab the heads of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will
lay bare their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take
away the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the
crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarfs, the
amulets; the signet rings and nose ring; the festal robes,
the mantles, the cloaks, and the handbags; the garments of
gauze, the linen garments, the turbans, and the veils.[109]

If Isaiah were writing for the New Yorkers today, the list would

be much longer.

When these corruptions prevail, somehow religions become

popular and the liturgical emphasis comes back. Instead of taking

up and facing the problem of social injustice and corruption,

ministers become preoccupied with cassocks and robes, and incense

and candles. But God would say as in Isaiah's day "I get

nauseated at your service!"

What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of

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[107]Ibid.,5:23.   [108]Ibid.,1:23.   [109]Ibid.,3:16-23.

fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before me, who requires of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and the calling of assemblies--I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen, your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes;cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.[110]

Like Jeremiah, then Isaiah is extremely relevant for our time.

Today when we see the utter corruption and apathy of inner city residents, we lose courage to preach the word of God, and evangelism among Negroes of the large city is almost considered a lost cause among white denominations. However, to this kind of easy giving up Ezekiel has a definite message. He says that regardless of whether people listen or not, we must proclaim the word of God.

If I say to the wicked, "You shall die," and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.[111]

Ezekiel lists various evils which prevail in the inner cities today.

Father and mother are treated with contempt in you; the sojourner suffers extortion in your midst; the fatherless and the widow are wronged in you. You have despised my holy things, and profaned my sabbaths. There are men in you who slander to shed blood, and men in you who eat upon the mountains; men commit lewdness in your midst. In you men uncover their father's nakedness; in you they humble women who are unclean in their impurity. One commits abomination with his neighbor's wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law. In you men take bribes to shed blood; you take interest and

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[110]Ibid.,1:11-17.

[111]Ezek.3:18. This message appears again in 33:7-9.

increase and make gain of your neighbors by extortion; and you have forgotten me, says the Lord God.[112]

Ezekiel upbraids the arrogant urban prosperity of Tyre.[113] What he says of Tyre fits very well in more exaggerated form for New York or any other metropolis. Only a small portion of these passages are quoted here. "O Tyre, you have said 'I am perfect in beauty.'"[114] The beauty of Tyre was made possible by her ships, and in her ships firs from Senir were used for planks, cedars from Lebanon were used as masts, oaks of Bashan were used as oars, pines from Cyprus were used for decks. Egyptian linen was used for sails, and men from Sidon and Arvad were rowers. In other words, riches from all over the then known world contributed in making Tyre beautiful. As a result of this beauty and prosperity, the people of Tyre became arrogant, and its prince thought that he was God.

> Because your heart is proud, and you have said, "I am a god
> . . . . . [115] . . . though you consider yourself as wise as god
> . . . .

> . . . Behold, I will bring strangers upon you, the most
> terrible of the nations; and they shall draw their swords
> against the beauty of your wisdom and defile your splendor.[116]

Today when material prosperity makes nations dizzy with pride, this message seems timely. People have to be afraid of the end of the world that may be introduced by large scale nuclear warfare.

Similarly, Hosea speaks against social injustice and pride of prosperity. "A trader, in whose hands are false balances, he loves to oppress: Ephraim has said, 'Ah, but I am rich, I have gained

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[112]Ibid.,22:7-12. [113]Ibid.,27:1-28:19. [114]Ibid.,27:3.

[115]Ibid.,28:2. [116]Ibid.,28:7.

wealth for myself'; but all his riches can never offset the guilt he has incurred."[117]

The writer of Jonah has a somewhat different insight on the problem. "And should not I pity Nineveh that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"[118] So we must remember that in spite of the great corruption and degradation, God pities the millions that crowd the inner cities.

Micah has a message against a situation which somewhat resembles American religiosity of today. As some recent writers say ministers flatter their congregations by praising them for being so religious as Sunday morning traffic gets heavy from church going people. Mission-naries go to foreign countries to preach the American way of life instead of Christ's gospel. These religious leaders flatly refuse to face the race problem or exploitation of the poor saying merely that all is well because America is superficially religious.

> "Do not preach"--thus they preach--"one should not preach such things; disgrace will not overtake us."[119]
>
> If a man should go about and utter wind and lies, saying " I will preach to you of wind and strong drink," he would be preacher for this people![120]
>
> Its priests teach for hire, its prophets divine for money; yet they lean upon the Lord and say,"Is not the Lord in the midst of us? No evil shall come upon us.[121]

Zephaniah has a message against the corruption of city life and he sees behind this corruption a practical atheism. Because people consider God irrelevant, they do as they please and expect

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[117]Hos.12:7-8.   [118]Jonah 4:11.   [119]Mic. 2:16.

[120]Ibid.,2:11.   [121]Ibid.,3:11.

to get by with it. His denunciation of this practical atheism is very relevant in this day of scientific atheism.

> Woe to her that is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing city!!
> She listens to no voice, she accepts no correction. She does
> not trust in the Lord, she does not draw near to her God.
> Her officials within her are roaring lions; her judges are
> evening wolves that leave nothing till the morning. Her
> prophets are wanton, faithless men; her priests profane what is
> sacred, they do violence to the law.[122]

> At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will
> punish the men who are thickening upon their lees, those who
> say in their hearts, "The Lord will not do good, nor will he
> do ill."[123]

The rich and comfortable forget God, and when they forget God, there is no bounds to their iniquity and exploitation. Then their victims in turn become desperate and adopt practical atheism, and deterioration of life sets in. The religious leaders then perfunctorily announce God's blessing to all and make a living out of this dispensation of cheap grace. This seems to be an Old Testament picture of urban life.

When we turn to the New Testament, the situation is somewhat different. Both Jesus and Paul do not seem to make any particular distinction between rich and poor, or urban and rural. All men are sinners and stand in need of Christ's redemption.

Reactions of people to Jesus also seems rather difficult to divide into urban and rural patterns. In the case of the Gadarenes demoniac, all the city came and asked Jesus to leave.[124] In the case of the Samaritan woman, many Samaritans of her city believed.[125] Jesus explicitly states that He must preach to the

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[122]Zeph.3:1-4.   [123]Ibid.,1:12.   [124]Mat.8:38.

[125]John 4:39-42.

other cities,[126] but when they do not receive Him, He upbraids

them and tells His disciples to wipe off the dust of the cities.[127]

He was aware of peculiar problems that are more likely to

happen in the urban setting, and He was aware of the lure of the

cities. The devil promised Him all the glories of the cities.[128]

In the parable of the sower, Jesus says that the word sown

in the heart of man whose heart is preoccupied with the cares and

riches and pleasures of life will not be fruitful.[129]

Jesus is critical of the corrupting influence of riches. He

says that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a

needle than for a rich man to enter God's kingdom,[130] you cannot

serve God and mammon,[131] and warns us not to lay up treasures

where thieves can break in.[132] Above all, in the parable of the rich

man and Lazarus, the rich man is told that he will end up in hell

because of the nice things he had in this world.[133] In Luke we

have outright condemnation of the rich.[134]

In contrast to the condemnation of the rich, Jesus shows

sympathy to the poor. (Extreme wealth and poverty are one of the

besetting urban problems.) He says blessed are the poor, the

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[126] Luke 4:43, Mark 1:38.

[127] Mat.11:20-24, Luke10:13-15, Mat.10:14, Luke10:10-11.

[128] Mat.4:8-10, Luke4:5-8.

[129] Mat.13:22, Mark4:18-19, Luke8:14.

[130] Mat.19:24, Luke18:25, Mark10:25.

[131] Mat.6:24, Luke16:13.   [132] Mat.6:19,   [133] Luke16:24-26.

[134] Luke 6:24-25.

hungry and the weeping.[135] Somehow the people who fall into this category in the inner cities seem to reject this message of Christ. They do not want to be blessed; they want to curse and hate God.

Jesus' indictment against the show of religiosity on street corners and the self-righteous attitude of religious leaders[136] applies very well to the middle class protestantism of the suburbs where lower class people are given the cold shoulder. "Whoever would be first among you must be servant of all"[137] seems an open disapproval of this type of snobbishness. Those who refuse the company of lower class people would be refused entry into God's kingdom however much they call Jesus Lord.[138]

However, condemnation is not the only attitude Jesus assumed toward the rich. In the case of Zacchaeus, He confronted him and led him to immediate repentance.[139] Jesus was concerned about the redemption of the rich when at all possible.

In the same way, Jesus' attitude to the poor is not wholly sympathetic. The decadence that characterizes the inner city would meet with His disapproval. The importance of our faithfulness toward the things of this world is emphasized in the parables of the talent,[140] and of the dishonest steward.[141] Jesus' warning not to throw pearls before swine might apply to some of the degenerate inner city inhabitants.

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[135]Luke 6:20.   [136]Mat.6:5-6, Luke 18:9-14.

[137]Mat. 20:26, Mark 10:43, Luke 12:26.

[138]Mat.25:31-46,   [139]Luke 19:1-10,

[140]Mat.25:14-30, Luke 19:11-27.   [141]Luke 16:1-3.

However, this should not be confused with snobbish self-righteous exclusiveness. His prime concern was always the repentance of sinners. He came to call sinners, [142] and He went about all the cities because people were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.[143] When a sinful woman washed his feet He said her many sins were forgiven because she loved much.[144]

The parable of the laborers in the vineyard discloses Jesus' awareness of the problem of unemployment and the concept of just wage or the principle of distribution according to need.[145]

Thus, urban problems do not meet Jesus' exclusive attention, but He was aware of the many urban problems, and He had keen insight and understanding of them.

The Book of Acts shows the strategic importance of cities as centers of evangelism. This seems in line with the commandment to distribute Levites among important cities throughout the Land of Promise.[146]

Paul likewise seems to have considered cities as strategically important places. He is also aware of many urban problems.

His warning not to be conformed to this world [147] would apply well to secularizing tendencies of urban churches. His admonition not to be haughty but to associate with the lowly seems well directed to middle class churches.[148]

When he speaks against lawlessness and emphasizes the

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[142] Mat.9:13, Mark 2:9, Luke 5:31-32.

[143] Mat.9:35.   [144] Luke 7:36-50.   [145] Mat.20:1-16.

[146] Num.35:7-8.   [147] Rom.12:2.   [148] Ibid.,12:16.

importance of obeying the existing authorities of the society, he seems to be speaking to the type of lawless people we find in the inner cities.[149]

The vices he names apply very well to the inner city situation: reveling, drunkeness, debauchery, licentiousness, greed, uncleanness.[150]

He warns women that they should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire.[151] He also warns them not to be idle gossips.[152]

Against racial prejudice or exclusiveness he says: "there cannot be Greek and Jew . . . barbarian, Scythian, slave freeman, but Christ is all and in all."[153] Thus, there is no such distinction as middle class, lower class, colored, white, Puerto Rican.

His admonition to husbands, wives, parents, children, slaves, and masters . . . applies to the inner city society very well.[154]

He also condemns practical atheists: lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it.[155]

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[149]Ibid.,13:1-7.

[150]Ibid.,13:13, Gal.15:19-21, Eph.6:19.

[151]I Tim.2:9.   [152]Ibid.,5:13,   [153]Col.3:11.

[154]Eph.5:21-6:9, Col.3:18-4:1.

[155]II Tim.3:1-5

Thus, we find many passages that speak about the problems of inner city churches.

CHAPTER VI

THEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The problem of making the church relevant is often discussed as
if the goal is attained when a church becomes popular and influ-
ential in the community in which it is located. However, the
problem is not that simple. A church can be popular and influ-
ential in a community as some kind of a social club, but in that
case, the organization called "church" is not any more functioning
as a church. The mere fact of attaining popularity is not to be
identified with the church's becoming relevant in the community.

Thus we must examine exactly what making the church relevant
in an urban situation means theologically. For this purpose, we
must understand what the church is, and in order to understand what
the church is, we must understand the relation between the church
and the world. For this purpose we must ask questions such as:
"What is the place of the church in God's creation?" "What is its
relation to the created world?"

Depending on how these questions are answered, we may also
have to ask if a church is really necessary at all in God's cre-
ation. When we emphasize God's rulership over His creation as
some universalists do, we start wondering if the church is really
necessary. Unless we make some attempt to answer these questions

making the church relevant in an urban situation can become a meaningless issue. We cannot assume that churches have become relevant simply because census statistics indicate that the large majority of urbanites identify themselves as church members.

In order to fulfill the above purpose, let us begin with the problem of God's relation to His created world. If God rules His universe with an inevitableness as of a puppet operator manipulating his puppets, then making the church relevant in any situation becomes an unnecessary and non-existent problem.

Richard Niebuhr discusses the problem of Christ's relation to the created world in his Christ and Culture,[156] and classifies this relationship into five possible categories as follows: Christ against Culture, the Christ of Culture, Christ above Culture, Christ and Culture in Paradox, and Christ the Transformer of Culture.

Christ against Culture says that anything that is of the world is bad and is therefore against Christ. Christ and culture are diametrically opposed. Brunner says that

> this Gospel is concerned with man's relation to God in its innermost mystery and with the relation to man in the most personal and intimate sense, without any reference to cultural values and social institutions. The teaching of this kingdom of God, however, is the be-all and end-all of the Gospel of Jesus; there is no room in it for anything else; for all these important but temporal and secular things like art, education, social and political order.[157]

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[156]Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951).

[157]Emil Brunner, Christianity and Civilization, (2 parts, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948) First Part, p.7.

When this view receives fundamentalistic emphasis, then it would

be the Christ against Culture view.

The Christ of Culture view would be represented by those

who consider that Christ represents the best in any culture. Any

culture at its best is good and is in harmony with Christ; there-

fore, there is no tension between culture and Christ acccording to

this view.

Somewhat similar to this view is the Christ above Culture

view, which although it recognizes some gap between Christ and culture,

holds; that the gap can be overcome by gradual improvement of

culture. This view is able "to combine life in the world with life

in Christ...... with the aid of the idea of stages."[158]

Christ and Culture in Paradox takes the tension between Christ

and culture more seriously. Different from the Christ against

culture view which rejects all cultural products as evil, this view

does not categorically reject culture, but sees tension that cannot

be resolved between Christ and culture while at the same time

recognizing ultimate rulership of God over the world of culture.

The tension that exists between Christ and culture is not the

kind that can be surmounted by a gradual, stage by stage im-

provement of culture.

This world is God's creation, and as such it is good, but the

goodness of this world was invaded by the fall of man in all its

aspects. Therefore, as long as the present order of creation lasts,

there will remain tension between Christ and culture.

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[158] H. Richard Niebuhr, p.148.

To people who hold this idea, the building of a utopia in this world is a meaningless hope. When they talk about making the church relevant in the present culture, they are not talking about the introduction of a classless, tensionless, and sinless society in this world.

The Christ of Culture group would say that Christ's utopia is here, already among us. The only thing necessary is to open our eyes to see its wonders. The Christ above Culture group would entertain the possibility of the attainment of the utopia by a gradual improvement of mankind by Christ's help. To the Christ and Culture in Paradox group the coming of Christ's kingdom waits its full realization by the introduction of a new order at the end of time.

Thus, when a person belonging to this last category talks about making the church relevant, what he means is to make people live conscious of this tension. In the mind of a majority of people in the world today, especially the great majority of urbanites who are the worst examples of modern people, God does not exist; therefore, there is no such thing as tension between Christ and culture to them. The only tension that exists in their lives is the gap between their hedonistic utopia and their inability to reach that utopia. However, when the church becomes relevant to these millions that swarm "hog's heaven" (or hell), they will become aware of a new tension; the tension between culture and Christ: the tension between the new man in Christ and the carcass of the old man he has to drag about to the end of his life in this world.

The last category in Richard Niebuhr's classification is

Christ the Transformer of Culture. If the Christ and Culture in Paradox group can be said to take the fall seriously, this group must be said to take the incarnation seriously. " . . . The conversionist is less concerned with conservation of what has been given in creation, less with preparation for what will be given in a final redemption, than with the divine possibility of a present renewal."[159] This group live in "awareness of the power of the Lord to transform all things by lifting them up to himself."[160] Human culture according to this view can be a transformed human life in and to the glory of God. This theme is seen especially throughout the Fourth Gospel and seems to make an interesting contrast with the Christ and Culture in Paradox view which seems to reflect Paul's view strongly.

For those who take this last view, making the church relevant in an urban situation seems to create a big problem. The goal is only too apparent, but when the existing situation is faced, how many can long continue to hold on to this view? In two thousand years of the church's history, how much transformation of culture has it accomplished? An optimistic observer may see great accomplishments of the church in human culture in the last two thousand years, but in the eyes of a pessimist the world looks as bad as it was two thousand years ago.

In Calvin's Geneva, the church may have appeared to transform the culture, but it must be remembered that the cruel execution of a unitarian leader took place within that culture. When a culture is improved in one respect, it is at the same time

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[159]Ibid., p.195.   [160]Ibid.,

sagging in another area almost inevitably, and total transformation of the present culture by Christ seems to be a somewhat mistaken goal.

Emil Brunner sees that the church has influenced western civilization.

> If you understand the word Christian in its full meaning as incorporated in the New Testament, the true disciples of Jesus Christ, as the Apostolic teaching presupposes them, were a minority in all centuries of European history within the Western world at large. But it is just a manifestation of the superhuman power and reality of Christian faith and of the New Testament message, that they are powerful factors within the cultural world, even where they are present in very diluted and impure manifestations.[161]

In another place he states that

> The New Testament faith is radically revolutionary in the culture, that is, in its relation to God and to men, but it is not at all revolutionary in the periphery. Neither Jesus nor the Apostles attack the social order with the intention of replacing them by another order. Not even such an immoral institution as slavery is directly questioned.
> . . . .
> If we recall, however, that little jewel of the New Testament, St. Paul's letter to Philemon, we see that this conservatism is merely apparent . . . .
> . . . .
> Whilst St. Paul takes the institution of slavery for granted, he transforms it from within into a relation of brotherhood. A silent revolution takes place in the personal center and from there transforms social relationship.[162]

However, in discussing the problem of technics, Brunner admits the failure of the influence of the church in contrast to the success of Confucian thinking in Chinese culture.

> The development of crafts almost everywhere gives rise to the development of war technics. There are exceptions to this rule, one of the most interesting being that of the older China where an almost unique development did not lead to a parallel development of war technics, because war and fighting were stigmatized,

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[161] Emil Brunner, p.5.

[162] Ibid.,(Second Part, 1949), pp.38-39.

culturally and morally.

. . . .

The moral discredit of war was so deep that gunpowder was never
allowed to be used for war purposes, and its dangerous energy
was puffed out in harmless fire works.

. . . .

It is strange and somehow shameful that Christian Europe did
not succeed in doing--perhaps did not even attempt to do--what
had been achieved by the Chinese. At any rate, with gunpowder,
technics begins to acquire a negative trait in European
history.[163]

Criticizing contemporary American society Will Herberg says

that

the religious characteristic of America today is very often a
religiousness without religion, a religiousness with almost
any kind of content or none, a way of sociability or
'belonging' rather than a way of reorienting life to God.[164]

Thus, in spite of its popularity, the church is apparently

failing to transform American culture.

According to E. L. Allen, who interprets the thought of

Reinhold Niebuhr, the latter seems to belong to the group of Christ

and Culture in Paradox.

That indeed is the position which Niebuhr occupies in all his
books. We should throw ourselves into the struggle for a just
society, while at the same time realizing that when that
society comes it will be much less just than we imagine now.
. . . .
. . .While we really do God's will and serve his kingdom as we
identify ourselves with the cause of social justice, we look
for the fulfilment of our hopes in a kingdom beyond this world.
We must neither with Marx take the social problem too seriously
and become fanatics, nor with Luther evade it and so become
quietists.[165]

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[163] _Ibid._,pp.7-8.

[164] Will Herberg, _Protestant--Catholic--Jew,_(Garden City:
Doubleday & Company, Inc.,1960), p.260.

[165] E. L. Allen, _Christianity and Society,_ (London:
Hodder & Stoughton,),pp.20-21.

Reinhold Niebuhr himself states that

> . . . on the whole it must be admitted that rationalistic
> political theory from Aristotle and the Stoics to the thought
> of the eighteenth century and the theories of Marx, has con-
> tributed more to a progressive reassesment of the problems of
> justice with which politics deals than either orthodox or the
> liberal Christian thought.[166]

He explains this failure as the result either of overemphasizing

the sinfulness of man and accepting imperfect existing justice

without much question, or of naive moralism which failed to see the

deep-rootedness of sin in human society.

In another connection Reinhold Niebuhr says that

> . . . the children of light are virtuous because they have some
> conception of a higher law than their own will. They are
> usually foolish because they do not know the power of self-will.
> They underestimate the peril of anarchy in both the national
> and the international community.
> . . . .
> It must be understood that the children of light are foolish
> not merely because they underestimate the power of self
> interest among the children of darkness. They underestimate
> this power among themselves.[167]

In this connection, he is not referring to Christians when he

speaks of children of light, but this quotation and the one pre-

ceding can both be considered to show that Reinhold Niebuhr

considers that there exists tension between Christ and culture.

Otto Piper also recognizes the existence of this tension.

> Human life before the Fall did not require, however, political
> or economic order or an organized worship. Such institution-
> alization of human life is a further development willed by God
> to upset the effects of sin; it is not based upon human nature
> as such. Social institutions have their necessary place in the

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[166]Reinhold Niebuhr, _An Interpretation of Christian Ethics_,
(New York: Meridian Books, 1956), p.129.

[167]Reinhold Niebuhr, _The Children of Light and the Children
Darkness_, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), pp.10-11.

period between the Fall and the Return of Christ but will disappear when the new heaven and the new earth will come.[168]

Lutheranism is aware of the fact that no form of political life can be more than relatively good because not only do they all imply the operation of sin in the people thus joined together, but also is their functioning hampered by the limitations of a world that is under the curse of God.[169]

He also defends Lutheranism against the criticism that Lutherans advocate quietism by saying that

Contrary to a wide spread misconception Lutheranism has also been opposed to otherworldliness in the Church and has condemned the sectarian withdrawal of the church and its members from the tasks and responsibilities of secular life.[170]

Recognizing the existence of tension between Christ and culture is not to be identified as withdrawal of the church from culture. However, he also admits that many Lutheran churches were "led to political apathy"[171] when the laity lost initiative, as the function of ministry was overemphasized in later times. For this failure of Lutheran churches, Luther is not to be held responsible, for it was a later development.

John C. Bennett seems to say that the present day culture has made so much progress and has become so complicated that Christ has been excluded from the picture. Therefore, what a Christian can do is to make sure that he is with Christ regardless of where the society to which he belongs may stand.

The ultimate faith that God has redeemed and will redeem, that the future is in His hands, that neither totalitarianism nor atomic war can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus,

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[168] ed. Warren A. Quanbeck, God and Caeser, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959), p.13.

[169] Ibid., p.14.   [170] Ibid., p.20.   [171] Ibid., p.21.

is the only antidote to the distortions which anxiety or de-
spair introduce into our life, and into our judgments about
what we should do.[172]

However, when he says that

> one of the ways in which today we can see the meaning of
> "justification of faith" is that it enables us to live amidst
> the inescapable evils of our common life, choosing programmes
> and identifying ourselves with groups which in part embody
> these evils, and yet to do so with the knowledge that, if our
> hearts are open to His love, God will accept us as we are.[173]

he shows himself to belong to the Christ and Culture in Paradox

group.

William Lazareth also expresses the Christ and Culture in

Paradox opinion as he writes as follows:

> Permeating this spirit of community is the "already-not-yet"
> tension in which Christians live between the times of Christ's
> first and second coming. On the one hand, they already
> experience a foretaste of eternal life as they live by faith
> in God's kingdom in the reception and transmission of divine
> love (John 17:3). Signs of the kingdom break through here and
> there whenever faith overcomes distrust and love defeats hate
> in the Christian's worship and social action (I John 4:9ff).
> On the other hand, however, while Christ's "D-Day" victory over
> the powers of evil has already dethroned them decisively, he
> has not yet annihilated them completely. Christ's victory has
> already been won as an eternal reality, but it is not yet
> manifest as historical actuality.[174]

> . . . It is primarily in and through the personal and corporate
> witness of his faithful followers in their civic vocations, as
> well as their church worship, that Christ's lordship--however
> hidden in its servant form--is made manifest in our communal
> life in contemporary society.[175]

In this last point, he somewhat resembles Brunner, and the

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[172]John C. Bennett, *The Christian as Citizens*, (London:
Lutterworth Press, 1955), p.28.

[173]*Ibid*., p.29.

[174]ed. Harold C. Letts, *Life in Community*, (Philadelphia:
Muhlenberg Press, 1957), p.49.

[175]*Ibid*., p.74.

distinction between Christ the Transformer of Culture, and the

Christ and Culture in Paradox, views becomes somewhat obscured.

Discussing this problem of relationships between culture and

religion, Paul Tillich classifies the possibility into three

categories; namely: autonomy, heteronomy and theonomy. In autonomy

man is the boss of his life and destiny. This system does not

recognize the existence of a law above human beings. In heteronomy,

man is ruled by a superior law which is strange to man; he is a

victim of a blind destiny or tyranical, whimsical god or gods. In

theonomy, man is ruled by a superior law, but this superior law is

not blind and strange to man.

> Theonomy asserts that the superior law is, at the same time, the
> innermost law of man himself, rooted in the divine ground which
> is man's own ground: the law of life transcends man, although
> it is at the same time, his own.[176]

Paul Tillich advocates the third view himself. Thus, he seems

to recognize the existence of tension between that which transcends

man and which at the same time is his own. He would be considered,

then one of the Christ and Culture in Paradox group. So far, the

majority of persons whose opinions were studied, seem to belong to

Christ and Culture in Paradox view.

Supposing that this is the conclusion. Now we can say that if

this is the case, then making the church relevant does not mean the

building of a model community in the inner cities.

In the great material accomplishment of this century Emil

Brunner sees the danger of the tower of Babel.

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[176]Paul Tillich, _Protestant Era_, pp.56-57.

> . . . It is in these architectural structures that something of
> that dangerous titanism finds expression, which the narrative
> of the Tower of Babel has in mind. It is perhaps, not so much
> the builders as individuals, but the generation which sees
> these colossi rise from the ground and sees also the greatest
> rivers bridged, the Atlantic ocean crossed in a day's flight
> and the city of Hiroshima destroyed by a single bomb--it is
> this generation which is tempted with a feeling of God-like
> power.[177]

The danger Brunner sees in material accomplishment can be seen in

an attempt to build the tower of Babel in spiritual life. Any

attempt to build Utopia in this world seems to meet God's disap-

proval. In this world we are to have tribulations, but we must be

of good cheer, for Christ has overcome the world.

Thus, different from Communists, we should not think that we

can by our own effort establish an ideal community; this is not our

goal in making the church relevant.

However, this recognition of tension that has to remain to the

end of the world should not make us withdraw from the community and

make us start establishing monasteries and convents in the inner

cities. The existence of tension implies the continuation of

struggle, and continuation of struggle is not a withdrawal.

However, to understand the meaning of this struggle properly,

the meaning of "church" must be made clear, so that the struggle

does not end in a mere struggle for the sake of struggle.

Richard Niebuhr defines the church thus:

> . . . Negatively, the church is not the rule or realm of God;
> positively, there is no apprehension of the kingdom except in
> the church; conversely, where there is apprehension of, and
> participation in, this Object there the Church exists, and

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[177]Emil Brunner, First Part, p.151.

finally, the subject counterpart of the kingdom is never an individual in isolation but one in community, that is the church.[178]

. . . No substitute can be found for the definition of the goal of the Church as the increase among men of the love of God and neighbor. . . .[179]

The Church, therefore should not be identified as the kingdom of God; it is as it were a foretaste among believers of the fellowship between God and man which will be fully experienced in God's kingdom. Naturally, its goal is the increase of this experience.

According to Otto Piper

in Lutheranism the Church is . . . one of the fundamental factors which constitute the life situation in which God's call reaches the individual. The means of grace through which the individual is brought into personal contact with God and kept therein are entrusted to the Church.[180]

In this view, the church participates in the work of Christ in bringing the sinful man to God. The Church is the functioning body in bringing the sinful world to Christ.

According to Nygren, the church is the body of Christ and this must be interpreted to mean that anybody who becomes a member of this church becomes a part of the body of Christ and participates in His victory over sin and death.

In the resurrection of Christ all powers and dominions, which held us captive in their thraldom, have been despoiled of all power and authority. When "we are in Christ", we are free from their tyranny, for we belong to another master. We are

[178]Richard Niebuhr, The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry, (New York: Harper Brothers, 1956), p.19.

[179]Ibid., p.31.   [180]Warren A. Quanbeck, p.6.

members in the body of Christ, and thus partakers in his[181] victory and triumph.

This participation in Christ's victorious body gives the participant a new task. " . . . Each finds his own particular mission through the place which has been accorded to him in one common body."[182]

Ruben Josephson considers the one office of the church as the ministry of the Word. This ministry does not mean the preaching of a "peculiar word of Jesus," but "the important thing is the fact of redemption."[183]

> Thus we see that the basis of the ministry lies in the very center of the Christian faith, in Christ's redemptive action. That that action reaches out to sinful man through Word and sacraments supplies the function of the ministry.[184]

In this we see that the participation in the Body of Christ is a participation in the work of His redemption. The church is the functioning body of Christ to reach out to sinful man.

With these definitions, now we can say what our struggle is. We recognize the world at tension with Christ, and the minute we discern Christ's lordship over us, we get involved in this tension. The task of the church is to involve the sinful world in this tension. The community which had been comfortable in sin starts to be uncomfortable when it recognizes the lordship of Christ over it. The community which had hitherto complacently snoozed in sin and degradation, now wakes up to the fact that it is standing under the rule of Christ who has overcome death and sin. Degeneration and

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[181] ed. Anders Nygren, This Is the Church, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1952), p.15.

[182] Ibid., p.14.   [183] Ibid., p.275.   [184] Ibid.

redemption cannot live comfortably together. As the lordship of Christ is recognized, a participation in the struggle against sin and degeneration will take place in all seriousness. But this participation in the struggle against sin has to last. It is not a participation to build up a utopia, but rather a participation in the struggle itself.

When a church involves the community within which it is located in this struggle, then the church has become relevant, and it is not any more a social club but is the body of Christ engaged in the struggle of redeeming the world.

Involvement in this struggle is the task of the church, and it is our task here on earth. Bearing fruit is God's business. We are here to participate in Christ's redemption, and we know that if we participate in the struggle we are participating in the victory also.

CHAPTER VII

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

It is easy for us to say that we can make an inner city church relevant by making it an agent of Christ's redemption, by making it a motive force to involve the community in its struggle against sin and deterioration. Theoretically, the goal may be clear, but as a practical issue, how can we attain this goal?

Various solutions have been proposed by many writers: When one walks around deteriorated inner city streets, he starts to notice the numerous store front churches with bizarre names. These sectarian groups seem to come and go as individual organizations, but as a whole, these groups seem to be popular. They are emotional in emphasis, and they reject the existing society as evil, and put their hope in the sweet-by-and-by. Their denial and rejection of the existing society seem to appeal to the lower class mass who themselves are more or less rejected by the existing society.

Within their communion, they are said to have close friendship and brotherly love, and they try to maintain Christian legalism in their conduct of life. Thus, they seem to serve as somewhat of a purifying agent of the lower society, but as their members start moving up the ladder of society as a result of their better organized personal life, they are said to leave their

communion to join middle class denominations.

> The mission is at best only a partial answer to the church's
> responsibility . . . . It does reach a few individuals
> effectively, but in the majority it reinforces an already
> cynical attitude toward organized religion. Men need more than
> the haphazard song-and-preaching service of the mission, topped
> off with coffee-an'. They must be seen as whole personalities,
> and a broader and integrated ministry provided for them.[185]

In contrast to these small store front churches, largeness

of size seems to receive quite an emphasis by many writers. "Just

as successful business requires a certain amount of volume, so

churches must ordinarily reach a certain size before they can

function constructively."[186]

Hallenbeck summarizes Sanderson's argument for size as

follows:

> Supermodal churches were larger and were increasing in size and
> so had the advantage of greater resources of people with which
> to work. They had exceptional lay leadership and larger and
> better professional staffs which had been longer on their
> jobs. They had greater financial strength of their own or by
> virtue of subsidies from their denominational city mission
> societies. They had little competition in their area or in the
> kind of service they were rendering. They had more varied
> programs, which demonstrated their adaptability, but also had
> the will to adapt and were cooperative in their relationships.
> . . . .
> Submodal churches on the other hand, were too small to gain any
> momentum. They lacked lay leadership and also strong minis-
> terial leadership, which changed more frequently. They were
> financially weak. There was a slight tendency toward compe-
> tition. Programs were very limited. Adaptability was lacking.
> Group solidarity was seldom present; in fact, squabbles occured
> twice as frequently and schisms four times as frequently as in
> supermodal churches.[187]

Some of the items mentioned above do not have anything to do

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[185]Murray H. Leiffer, pp.101-102.

[186]Ross W. Sanderson, The Strategy of City Church Planning,
(New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1932),p.134.

[187]Wilbur C. Hallenbeck, pp.481-482.

with mere size, but some of the points mentioned in supermodal

churches are possible only with some large down town churches.

The necessity for a reasonable size is known, but where it is not

attainable nothing can be done.

> Yet in this area of special need the church has had most
> difficulty in maintaining a foothold. Because the income of
> the people is low, they themselves can scarcely support a
> Protestant church with a full-time minister.[188]

When we become size conscious, the next danger seems the

danger for competition. Competition whether it is on congregational

or denominational basis, is meaningless. When we consider how

vastly church people are outnumbered by un-churched people in the

inner cities, there must be co-operation rather than competition at

all levels. To attain this end, perhaps there must be interdenomi-

national cooperative planning.

> Contiguity of church location in the most central portion of a
> typical urban area, and in the more important subcenters, does
> not necessarily constitute competition. Super-modal churches
> so located rarely think of their neighbors as competitors. . . .
> What chiefly impresses all such churches is the vastness of the
> religious need of the total urban area and the inadequacy of the
> churches to minister to this need.[189]

> Ecumenicity may need to come to grips with the better
> churching of the changing city and the ecclesiastical adminis-
> tration involved. Neighborhoods were not made for denominations,
> but denominations to serve people in their natural groupings.
> If we need new ecclesiastical mechanism to meet community needs
> why not create them?[190]

> What modern city planning proposes to do about streets, parks,
> zoning and other matters, the strategy of city church planning
> proposes to do about churches, in so far as a divided

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[188]Murray H. Leiffer, p.97.

[189]Ross W. Sanderson, The Strategy of City Church Planning,
p.157.

[190]Ross W. Sanderson, The Church Serves the Changing City,
p.247.

Protestantism can work out a cooperative procedure. As one
street cannot be discussed without reference to the total
street system of a city, so no one church can be adequately
considered without reference to the total churching of the
city.[191]

So far superficial problems of size, location, and compe-

tition have been discussed, but the more central problem is the

content of church activities. The center of the activities of the

church is the message of Christ.

In proclaiming the message of Christ, the first thing we must

remember is the fact that Jesus was crucified, and that the message

of Jesus is offensive to sinful human beings. Thus, regardless of

where the Gospel is preached, it is a mistake to expect welcome

acceptance.

. . . The faithful presentation of the scandal of the Christian
gospel does not always win a ready acceptance, particularly
among those who associate it with a remote institution, the
church, that has never drawn near their own lives.[192]

Realizing this difficulty, some people seem to suggest that we

temporarily close our eyes to the centrality of the Gospel and

engage in some other activities.

It has been suggested by some wise observers that new insti-
tutions different from anything which we now see, will need to
be devised for the more difficult urban situations and es-
pecially for those regions where people have lost interest in
any religious approach.[193]

One of the attempts at this kind of solution is good-will

industries and

. . . in spite of the discouraging aspects of their work, [they]

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[191]Ross W. Sanderson, The Strategy of City Church Planning,
p. 185.

[192]ed. Robert Lee, Cities and Churches, (Philadelphia:
Westminster Press), p.157.

[193]Samuel C. Kincheloe, p.137.

are more successful than the missions in changing life
patterns. Their emphasis is not simply on saving man's soul,
but also rehabilitating his body and re-establishing his
self-respect.[194]

Along this same line but not limiting itself to good-will

industries is an attempt by the church to offer a variety of

programs. This kind of adaptation seems necessary for the church

to make its presence felt to the otherwise unfriendly inner city

populace.

> Many city churches make only slight adaptations, not seeing the
> major avalanches which are moving upon them. They die because
> they seek to be what they have been, and this they cannot be[195]
> in a growing city with new populations surrounding them.

Thus, some churches made adaptations to meet the changing

needs.

> Perhaps the most significant adaptation of the Protestant church
> to the changing or disorganized community is the development of
> an "institutional" program. Instead of maintaining services
> primarily for the benefit of members who have left the area, it
> deliberately remodels the building, employs a professional
> staff, and developes a seven-day-a-week program. It is in
> effect both a church and a social settlement. The usual
> religious activities--Sunday worship--are retained. But in
> addition any or all of the following elements can be added:
> a nursery school to care for children of working members,
> handicraft classes, playground groups, basketball teams, drama
> groups, discussion forums, a library, low-cost movies, Boys'
> and Girl' Scouts, citizenship classes for adults, mothers'
> clubs, a family adjustment center, counseling service, com-[196]
> munity betterment clubs, and a summer camp.

This emphasis on variety of programs may be a wise suggestion

to attain some kind of acceptance, but unless this is done carefully,

this may end up reducing the church into some sort of community

center. If this were to happen, what is the use of an institution

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[194] Murray H. Leiffer, pp. 102-103.

[195] Samuel C. Kincheloe, p.106.

[196] Murray H. Leiffer, pp.109-110.

accepted by the community but failing to fulfil the redemptive

work of Christ?

> Though the institutional church type is now definitely es-
> tablished in the city, there are some projects where a pro-
> gressive de-emphasis upon religious ministry has reduced the
> work to scarcely more than a social-service center. Religion
> has been relegated to a remote corner of the program and
> rendered but a token effort.
> . . . .
> Social work has thrived in the arrangement while religious work
> has moved toward eclipse.
> . . . .
> When the religious orientation and motivations are lost, social
> work sinks to an embarrassingly low level.[197]

Because of the nature of the Gospel, we cannot expect popular

acceptance, but this should not be confused with the inadequacy of

the church's approach in reaching sinners.

The next thing we must consider, therefore, is elimination of

every element within the church that does not represent the Gospel

of Christ. One of the things that needs to be eliminated is the

middle class snobbery and the middle class pretense of decency.

Christian decency is necessary, but it does not have anything to do,

for instance, with how one is dressed when he comes to church. If

overalls are the only clothes somebody has, let him come to church

in overalls. It is disheartening to hear many mothers say that

their children cannot come to church because they do not have

decent clothes. All such foolish notions about the church must be

done away with.

A somewhat similar problem is making the church meaningful at

its local level. Just as forcing middle class clothing upon lower

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[197]Frederick A. Shippey, pp. 105-106.

class church members is meaningless, so is forcing the middle

class expense standard upon the lower class church meaningless and

harmful. If the expense of a church is within reach of the lower

class people, they will be more willing to cooperate with programs

sponsored by their own contribution.

Speaking of an exceptional neighborhood city church, Ross

Sanderson states: "Finally, this church has had a 'sense of

responsibility'. The fact that the expenses have been kept down

has given the local group power to keep the organization in its own

control."[198]

Churches exist at the place where they are located and they

must become meaningful at their own location.

> As a matter of fact the neighborhood church will encounter
> enough difficulty in seeking to thrive if it does not work for
> community improvements.
> . . . .
> . . . Its spiritual objectives are not "pie in the sky, when
> you die" but rather the progressive infiltration of contempo-
> rary society with religious ideals until all may feel the
> pressure of Christ's life upon their own.[199]

Even among teenagers who are likely to be criticized for their

irresponsible attitude, the church can be made meaningful if the

effort to make church meaningful comes from their own initiative.

> A sample study of the teen centers across the country revealed
> two important things: First, they were successful, and they
> continued to be so, in a direct relationship to the degree to
> which they were actually operated by the initiative and efforts
> of the young people themselves; second, as they continued, the
> young people became less and less interested in their own
> enjoyment, especially dancing to the music of their juke boxes

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[198]Ross W. Sanderson, The Strategy of City Church Planning,
pp. 130-131.

[199]Frederick A. Shippey, p. 191.

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and using their snack bars, as they became more and more absorbed in service activities in their communities.[200]

Another thing that needs to be changed is the complacency that prevails at all layers of society. People are made to believe that all is well in so far as they live in the "OK world" of Peter Berger.[201] And this complacency is especially strong among urban people. "Greater New Yorkers of greater New York" expect free entry into God's kingdom on the basis of their citizenship in this city of sky scrapers. It is the task of ministers to shatter this complacency and to let people see how bare and sinful they are in the sight of God.

Reluctance to announce God's judgment also seems a weakness among decent Christians. Some ministers may be afraid of proclaiming judgment for fear of losing members, because they are too keenly aware of the sinfulness in the inner cities. They may also be afraid of denouncing vices that prevail in the inner cities, since they may be criticized for race prejudice; some vices are more rampant among some groups than others.

This leads to the next point. As has been discussed, the race prejudice is an integral problem of the inner city churches. Since there is no reason to tolerate segregation within the churches, a church must be unconditionally integrated if it is located in a mixed neighborhood. Since segregation is based on prejudice, this must be overcome first. However, we must realize that both sides

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[200] Wilbur C. Hallenbeck, p.374.

[201] Peter Berger, The Noise of Solemn Assemblies.

are responsible for segregation. The white people are responsible
for starting it, and colored people are responsible in retaliating
with decadence and perpetuating it. White people must learn to
overcome prejudice, and colored people must try to restore re-
spectability in their lives.

A minister of the inner city must be a strong disciplinarian
to help both sides in this adjustment. Programs such as Scouting
and cadets that require discipline would be good to teach orderli-
ness to otherwise disorderly city youngsters, and to teach re-
straint to children who do not have any restraint at home. Strong
discipline is a must in the inner cities.

If every inner city congregation could somehow succeed in
obtaining a core of middle class people, to help the minister in
enforcing discipline, it would be a big help to inner city
ministers. Also, the lower class people must be taken to places
and occasions where they get exposed to standards other than their
own. In most cases these people are amazingly blind to the
existence of standards other than their own.

One of the reasons that is given for the popularity of
sectarians is their compact size and friendliness which prevails
within their small communion. Contrary to the argument for size,
then, a smallness could be advantageous where attaining a large
size is out of the question.

Under Nero, Christianity was persecuted, but it spread. Under
Constantine it received state sanction, and it was diffused and
diluted. Today, we try very often to find a Constantine type of
solution to our problem. If we do follow such a solution, however,

it will simply serve to further weaken Christians.

The work of the church has become too much like that of a large business corporation. People think that the work of the church can be made more effective by improving organizational set up, by putting more effective executives in key positions, and by organizing committees. They forget that the basic work of the church is done by the individual Christians as he is led by God.

Thus, the basic issue is not improving organizational set up or the psychological effect of the worship service or finding out the sociological implications of the problem, but proclaiming the word of God's judgment and forgiveness confronting sinful man.

Basically, this task must be done by personal proclamation of the word of God, and this function the church must continue to carry out.

Another aspect of the church's work is its ministry of love. This also is a matter of an individual Christian loving his neighbors personally. Today, the ministry of the church's service also seems to be getting done by professionals, with the majority of members participating only in financial aid and nominal prayer. Too much of the work of the church is done through money, but this must be corrected; it must be done by the person who has the love toward the person whom he sees in need.

Many of the inner city residents resent welfare aid; they do not want to be handled in a subhuman way. When handled by the government, they are not regarded as humans but mere objects of government rule. When people start to meet certain requirements prescribed by law, they start receiving aid just as a dog is issued a license because

he fits the category of a dog.

Even the work of the church when it is done by an organized institution tends to become like this, and fails to touch the most basic need of a man. A man may realize that an institution recognizes his needs as a categorical man, but this does not satisfy his desire to be recognized by another person as a man in need, and object of his personal love, concern and sympathy.

Thus, the ministry of love by the church must primarily be carried on by concerned individuals. Although this method may seem ineffective, because many of us are not professionally trained, our stumbling through is better than the well organized impersonal professional help.

This personal ministry of love can overcome the barrier that separates residents of inner cities from one another and where this ministry of love becomes noticeable, the inner city church and its message will cease to be irrelevant.

> It is quite possible that if the church were to give itself in
> a full program of service, divesting itself of its sacerdotal
> robe and girding itself with a towel, the result would be a
> larger acceptance of the church's program and the church's
> Christ than our service of preaching and oral evangelism has
> yet accomplished.[202]

Such loving service will prepare the hearts of the people to accept the message of the Gospel. And this is not naive wishful thinking, for we believe that the God of love will supply us His agape enabling us to reach the hearts of inner city residents, and enabling us also to fulfil this difficult task.

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[202] Charles Hatch Sears, p.24.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the progress in mechanical civilization,
population the world over tends to get concentrated in centers of
large industry. When this concentration of population takes place,
there is always a decay at the center of the concentration. People
who are racially discriminated against, recent immigrants who have
not yet established themselves in their new country, and unedu-
cated people from backwoods communities all come to these centers
looking for a new opportunity. However, when they arrive, they
become easy victims to keenly profit motivated enterprisers. They
get the least paying jobs, or no jobs at all and join the large
reserves of unemployed forces to keep the wage scale low for
industrialists.

They also become exploited residentially, and they swarm the
slum areas at the center of large cities. When this happens, the
life in these slum areas becomes extremely deteriorated. These
areas become seed beds for crime, disease and human deterioration.

The deterioration of life in such an area affects all aspects
of life, and the spiritual life of a man is no exception to this rule.
In this kind of environment, the work of the church becomes largely
ignored, because the people of the area are not responsive and also
because the church is not too interested in the spiritual wellbeing
of the lower class mass. The church prefers to stay complacent

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among suburban middle class people.

This complacency, of course, is not right. The church must be relevant to all people. When we remember Jesus' saying that He came to call sinners to repentance, we realize that the church should be all the more relevant among these deteriorated people of the inner cities.

The fall of man is no new event of the industrialized twentieth century; it is as old as Adam, and the Scripture is full of messages to these deteriorated human beings. Both Old and New Testaments have many messages to speak against the type of deterioration that prevails in urban centers.

What, then, is the task of the church among the inhabitants of inner cities? Are we called to labor and to establish a utopia in the inner cities? If we consider the building of a utopia in the urban centers to be our task, we will inevitably be disillusioned and discouraged, because as long as we live in the present age we will not be able to do away with the flesh. In the present world we Christians will have to live under tension; we are called to participate in the struggle of Christ's redemption. Christ has called us to take up our cross and follow Him. He has not called us to enjoy a lazy life in the utopia. Thus, the task of the church in the inner cities, as well as in any other place, is to call men to join this struggle of Christ's redemption. When the inhabitants of the inner cities join in this struggle, their life will cease to be meaningless. In this struggle they will find new meaning for an otherwise meaningless life.

Theoretically, the above statement is right; but how can we

persuade the inhabitants of inner cities to join in this struggle?
In the past when the church carried life and death authority over
the large majority of the populace, if this statement had been
proclaimed by the church, everybody would have listened to it
simply because it was a message of the church. However, the church
does not carry that kind of authority any more, especially among
residents of inner cities. The church has failed too long to reach
them.

There are many ways suggested by different people as to the
practical means of regaining confidence and relevance among these
people. Most of these suggestions have to do with making the church
become aware of titsr needs. What the church has done up to now is
to send a hungry beggar away with a word of benediction, without
giving any bread. Therefore, what the church has to do now is to
tend to thisr need for bread, and through this effort somehow try
to reflect the love of God. We proclaim that God loves sinners to
the extent He sent His Son to die for us; then we fail to show this
self-giving love of God, when we withholdd bread for ourselves and
refuse to share it with sinners of the inner cities. Again, what
we must do is to share our bread, and then say that this sharing is
a very small way in which we try to reflect the love of God who sent
His Son to die for our sins.

When we do this, or rather when we are enabled to do this by
the persuation of God's love, the inner cities will respond and
will join the rank and file of Christians to take up their cross
with them and follow Jesus. The inner cities will remain inner
cities,but to those who willingly take up their cross to follow

Jesus, their life will cease to be meaningless, and the church
among them will be alive and relevant.

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