

Reflection Questions

Chapter 1

Gentrification: The Good News and the Bad News

1. Has gentrification come to the neighborhood of your ministry or church? How has it hurt the community, and how has it helped?
2. How can you protect the poor of your community from displacement?
3. How can you help community residents purchase homes in your community?

Chapter 2

Working Together to Restore Our Communities: Networking and Collaboration

1. Evaluate your ministry honestly and prayerfully. Are you more motivated by the idea of making a name for your church, your group, or even yourself, or by the idea of seeing the community transformed for Christ?
2. Prayerfully determine the essential Christian beliefs that you must agree on in order to fully engage in a partnership with another church or ministry to advance the kingdom. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal which ministries in your area fit those criteria.
3. Based on 1 Corinthians 12:12–31, what are three personal steps you can take to begin developing the mind-set that others very different from you are just as valuable and just as integral to helping the residents of your city or neighborhood become like Jesus?
4. With no holds barred, dream about some outcomes that could take place in your neighborhood, town, or city if you committed to working together with other churches, ministries, or community organizations to address the serious issues in your midst.

Chapter 3

“Exegeting” Your Community: Using Ethnography to Diagnose Needs

1. How informed are you and/or your church about the needs in your neighborhood? What are you doing to “exegete” your audience (become “street-wise”)?
2. Do you have relationships with the “gate keepers” (informants) in your community? Who are these “people of peace” (Luke 10)?
3. Can you and/or your organization identify the significant lifestyles/beliefs/ethnicity in your ministry area? How can ethnography help you do that?
4. Are you actively partnering with other churches/ministries/agencies to impact lives locally? What networks can you tap into for greater effectiveness?

Chapter 4

The Border, the Barrio, and the 'Burbs: Ministry Among America's Biggest Minority

1. How can your church actively engage in education, reflection, and action about the

- moral issues related to undocumented immigration?
2. Do you understand the systemic challenges that make life harder for the poor? What are you doing to become better informed?
 3. In what practical ways can you learn about the specific assets and needs of the Latinos and immigrants in your community?
 4. What are the churches in your area doing to develop cultural awareness to effectively receive and serve Spanish-dominant newcomer neighbors, or newcomers from other areas?

Chapter 5

A Special Blessing from the Lord? Muslims Among Us

1. What practical ways could you support those who are reaching out to Muslims in your community?
2. What would it take for you to start your own prayer and support group for Hindus or Muslims in your area? How might your church be involved?
3. How can you share the gospel, the love of Christ, with Muslims in our postmodern world?

Chapter 6

Economic Development in the Hood: The Church's Role in Creating Jobs

1. What are the God-given opportunities in your setting to help bring about the "fullness of life" for individuals and the community? Ask God to give you a new perspective. Walk around the community, and talk to the people.
2. What strengths, capacities, and resources are in the group or the community to build on? Do an "asset map" of your resources. Pray for discernment.
3. Share ideas for the next steps. Visit other groups that are doing things in your area. Determine a short-term plan (six months) and move forward.

Chapter 7

New Wineskins: Paradigm Shifts for the Church

1. Do you have open hands toward God with the ministry you are currently involved in? Are you able to pray, "God, I will do anything and go anywhere"?
2. What is a greater win for your church: community development or church numerical growth? How do you support that answer through allocation of the church's time, talent, and treasures?
3. What social markers would need to change in your community for you to be able to say it is being transformed? How is your church allocating resources to get after those markers?

Chapter 8

Growing a Church Through Prayer: The Story of Chicago Tabernacle

1. What are the God-ordained priorities of the church? How does your church show

- prayer as one of its top priorities?
2. How does a leader inspire true passion in the fellowship of believers?
 3. When does God stretch out His hand of power, and why? In what ways have you experienced God's power in your life?
 4. How can God use you to ignite a ministry of prayer in your church?

Chapter 9

Jesus on the Mic: The Hip Hop Church

1. What is the difference between hip hop culture and the hip hop industry? What are the elements in hip hop culture that are visible?
2. Where is Jesus Christ already working in the culture of hip hop? How is the fifth element of Knowledge a potential doorway for the gospel?
3. Why is hip hop an important influence today? Can a church reach this generation without having to have a hip hop worship experience?

Chapter 10

The Volcanic Model: An Eruption Within the Latino Community

1. What does it mean for your ministry to follow Jesus and love people sensitively and spontaneously?
2. What vision do you see for the residents in your community? How can you empower and equip them?
3. Do you tend to lean more toward organization and structure, or spontaneity? How can you begin to lean toward the other side in ministry to people?

Chapter 11

Becoming a Chinese Neighbor: Pursuing a Church with Yellow and White

1. In what ways does your congregation need to grow to embrace God's vision for multicultural worship? In what ways will your church culture need to change?
2. How is your church actively being a neighbor to the hurting in your community? Are there any neighborhood issues or people groups that it would be easier to just ignore? How will you equip your church to stop and help these neighbors?
3. Do you have an updated knowledge of the population of your area? What are the cultural characteristics of the different groups in your community?
4. How can your church collaborate with other ministries to more effectively minister to the neighborhood? How can you begin to expose your congregation to the cultures you seek to reach?

Chapter 12

Church in Emerging Culture: Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther Ministry

1. Do you believe that the way you use your material wealth is God-honoring in all respects? If no, in what areas is it not? What action are you taking to make changes?

2. Do you desire to participate in God's vision of economic renewal, particularly in the realm of caring and advocating for the poor? What experiences have you had with this in the past?
3. To what degree would you say you are currently an ambassador of reconciliation? What experiences have you had in regards to multicultural ministry or racial reconciliation?
4. In what ways would you say you are leveraging your vocation to further the cause of Christ or honor God?

Chapter 13

House Church: Historical and Current Trends

1. What does the urban street gang have to say to the church?
2. Reflect on your journey with the church. Where have you found spiritual family, and where has it been absent?
3. House churches are present throughout the New Testament and the history of the church. What are the implications for the church now?

Chapter 14

Hospitality in the City: Reaching the Nations Through Neighborliness

1. Why do you think hospitality is important in the city? Is hospitality something you see in your life? If not, why?
2. Why was hospitality so important in Jesus' ministry? What does that say about our "strategies" today? How is hospitality a key component to discipleship?
3. How is food important as it relates to the Kingdom of God and to hospitality?
4. What are some practical ways you can practice hospitality in your own life? Is there a refugee or low-income family or an international student you can begin to reach out to?

Chapter 15

Healing the Hurting in Humboldt Park: Church Rebirth

1. What does a holistic gospel look like in your community? What specific human needs can your church address?
2. Can you clearly articulate your church's/ministry's mission statement? Does it have a justice component? If not, how could God use you to strengthen that aspect of the ministry?
3. Do you have the staying power, with God's enabling, to purpose not to leave your city or community? What does it take for you to be at home in your area?

Chapter 16

"Alternative" Cell Church: A Training Lab for Urban Missions

1. What are some passages of Scripture through which God has deeply impacted your perspective on your own ministry? What might God be trying to teach you through

- the unique ministry environment in which He has placed you?
2. How would it transform the way that you ministered to others if you focused more on the relational aspects of ministry and less on the organizational ones?
 3. Who are some people in your life who are potentially leaders for the next generation? What are you doing proactively to give them the ministry experiences they need to be great missionaries?

Chapter 17

Church in the City Center: Diversity and Constant Change

1. Consider getting involved in a local neighborhood church ministry. If this will involve moving your home or church, what are the steps you need to take to accomplish it?
2. Evaluate your capacity to be satisfied, in your church, with less than total satisfaction. Meditate on Philippians 2:1–5; 4:10–13, then clarify the nonessential, cultural issues that you need to release and appreciate in your fellow worshippers.
3. Study the following Scriptures as they relate to personal ministry engagement with others: Matthew 9:9–13; Mark 1:14–20; 3:13–19; John 1:35–46; 2 Timothy 2:1–7. Now, identify specific individuals whom you can disciple and mentor as well as those who can build spiritually into you. Pray over these potential relationships and then discuss the possibilities with these people.
4. Prove your acceptance and appreciation of God working outside your “box.” Schedule prayer time with other pastors or leaders; network with other churches toward a common goal for your city; practice saying “good-bye” to faithful folks who move away from your ministry.

Chapter 18

The Times They Are a-Changing: The Suburbanization of Poverty

1. Have you studied the history of your city or town and community? How is history unfolding today?
2. What is happening around you demographically? Is the ethnic makeup changing in your community or city? With whom could you engage to become better informed?
3. Does your church reflect the ethnic/racial makeup of your city or town? If not, why do you think that is so?
4. Is your congregation talking about the changes happening in your city or town? Is it preparing for change? What is the likely future?

Chapter 19

Seizing the Moment: Churches in Racially Changing Communities

1. Historically, Protestant churches have not done well in racially changing communities. Why do you think this is true?
2. What would the Lord Jesus want from a local church that finds herself in the midst of a cultural and racial transition in a suburban community like South Holland? Be specific and concrete.

3. What is it about church planting that makes it such hard work? Why is longevity in church planting ministry important?
4. What are the practical implications of 1 Corinthians 9:19–23 for the ministry of your church in your racially changing community?

Chapter 20

Mobilizing the Suburban Church: Moving from Charity to Development

1. Where is the closest under-resourced community or neighborhood to your church? If you are not already engaged in that neighborhood, what could you do to learn more about the walls that need rebuilding or restoring?
2. If your church is already engaged in ministry with the poor, would you describe the activities you do as being Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 activities? What is one step you could take to move from charity to individual development or from individual development to community development?
3. How are you personally involved in ministry with the poor or marginalized? Have you been challenged by this chapter to do something more or different than you are currently doing? Who is someone you could ask to join you in taking your work with the poor to a deeper level?

Chapter 21

Urban Issues in Suburban Towns? Poverty Among Luxury

1. Why are mentors important? Who are three people that God has used to positively influence your life?
2. Why are suburban welfare and section eight housing communities ignored by most churches and seen as regrettably necessary by many believers? Are you familiar with any low-income housing community within five miles of your home?
3. Did you ever attend a Christian residential summer camp during your childhood? What lasting memories do you have from camping? Why is Christian camping a unique way to earn the right to be heard with youth and families from economically stressed areas?
4. How can you best mobilize a “Christian caring force” in your neighborhood to welcome and sustain a greater move of the Holy Spirit to change the spiritual climate in the neighborhood you serve?

Chapter 22

Becoming a Multi-Ethnic Suburban Church: Intentional International Diversity

1. Discuss: “There is no influence without contact.” How does this relate to multiethnic ministry?
2. Acts 17:26 says that God has established the boundaries and times of the peoples of the earth. What does this mean as it relates to the neighbors on your block?
3. Second Corinthians 5:17–21 says that we are ambassadors of reconciliation to the people around us. Ambassadors often work in situations where nations are estranged for some reason. Who are the people in your community who are estranged both from

- God and from your church?
4. In what practical ways can you help your neighbors to find reconciliation with God?

Chapter 23

The Great Community: A Pathway from Diversity to Unity

1. Describe an experience you had in a multi-ethnic church or worship service. What stood out to you as beneficial that was outside your normal worship experience?
2. On the pathway up the steps of acknowledgement, acceptance, affirmation, appreciation, and appropriation, where are you and what evidences do you point to of that step in your experience?
3. According to John 17:20–23, what is the purpose and power of our unity despite our diversity?
4. From the list of lessons learned, which resonated with you as something that you also have observed, and which one was the biggest surprise?

Chapter 24

Loving the Sexually Broken: The World of Male Prostitution (Emmaus Ministries)

1. Did you know anything about male prostitution before reading this chapter? What might be some of the reasons society does not talk about this issue?
2. What does C. T. Studd's quote mean to you? What does it look like to "run a rescue shop within a yard of hell" in today's culture and society?
3. Are you open to doing ministry with the sexually broken? What would it take? How could you or your church get involved in such a ministry?

Chapter 25

Heart to God and Hand to Man: The Salvation Army in Chicago

1. William Booth received his vision for ministry when walking through the East Side of London. Where have you walked that you have seen God's vision for your ministry? What impression has God placed on your heart? Can you say, as he did, "Those people shall be our people and they shall have our God for their God"?
2. What might God be calling you to do in your community to bring about change that will not only help people, but bring them dignity and respect through involvement and work?
3. What churches or Salvation Army centers are you collaborating with in ministry to your city? Are you the "lone ranger," or are there others you can unite with to bring about a larger impact in your greater community?

Chapter 26

Unleashing the Family: Safe Families for Vulnerable Children (Lydia Home)

1. We have all heard news reports of children being abused and neglected. Many of us are in danger of becoming calloused to these situations where our hearts are no longer stirred. Are you still moved by these injustices? If not, what do you need to do to

- soften your heart?
2. Do you know anyone who seems to have mastered the discipline of hospitality? If so, what is it about their lives that put them in this category? What barriers do you struggle with when thinking about opening up your home?
 3. A premise of this chapter is that the Christian home/family is an untapped yet powerful source of change in our society. Do you agree? What is it about the Christian family that gives it this potential?
 4. Just like the church, a healthy family needs to effectively care for its own and reach out to others. How can your church implement these principles?

Chapter 27

In Search of Lost Sheep: How Young Life Reaches North Side Teenagers

1. How can you or your church work together with Young Life to reach teens in your city?
2. What is your church's attitude toward nonbelieving teens in your community? Would non-Christian teenagers feel comfortable coming into your church? Why or why not?
3. Who are the lost teenagers in your city? Where do they hang out? What are their needs?
4. What are you doing to reach out to them with the love of Christ?

Chapter 28

Using Principles of Excellence to Change Young Lives: By the Hand Club for Kids

1. How does Satan use lack of education to destroy youth today?
2. What can Christians do that government cannot do to address the problems of our age?
3. What are some pitfalls ministries must guard against when taking a results-oriented approach?
4. If you are a ministry leader, how can you use principles of excellence to improve your overall ministry effectiveness?

Chapter 29

Aggressive Evangelism: Taking the Gospel to the Streets (YWAM)

1. What communities in your city may be isolated from the normal influence of the Church? What parts of your city represent key marketplaces, cultural gathering points, or places of recreation that could be used for evangelism strategies?
2. Are there evangelistic models that could build bridges into some of your city's places of need? What evangelism strategies could be used to effectively lay the groundwork for the church in that area?
3. Are there families, youth, or college students in your church who could be trained and mobilized into some of these areas with unique forms of evangelism?