

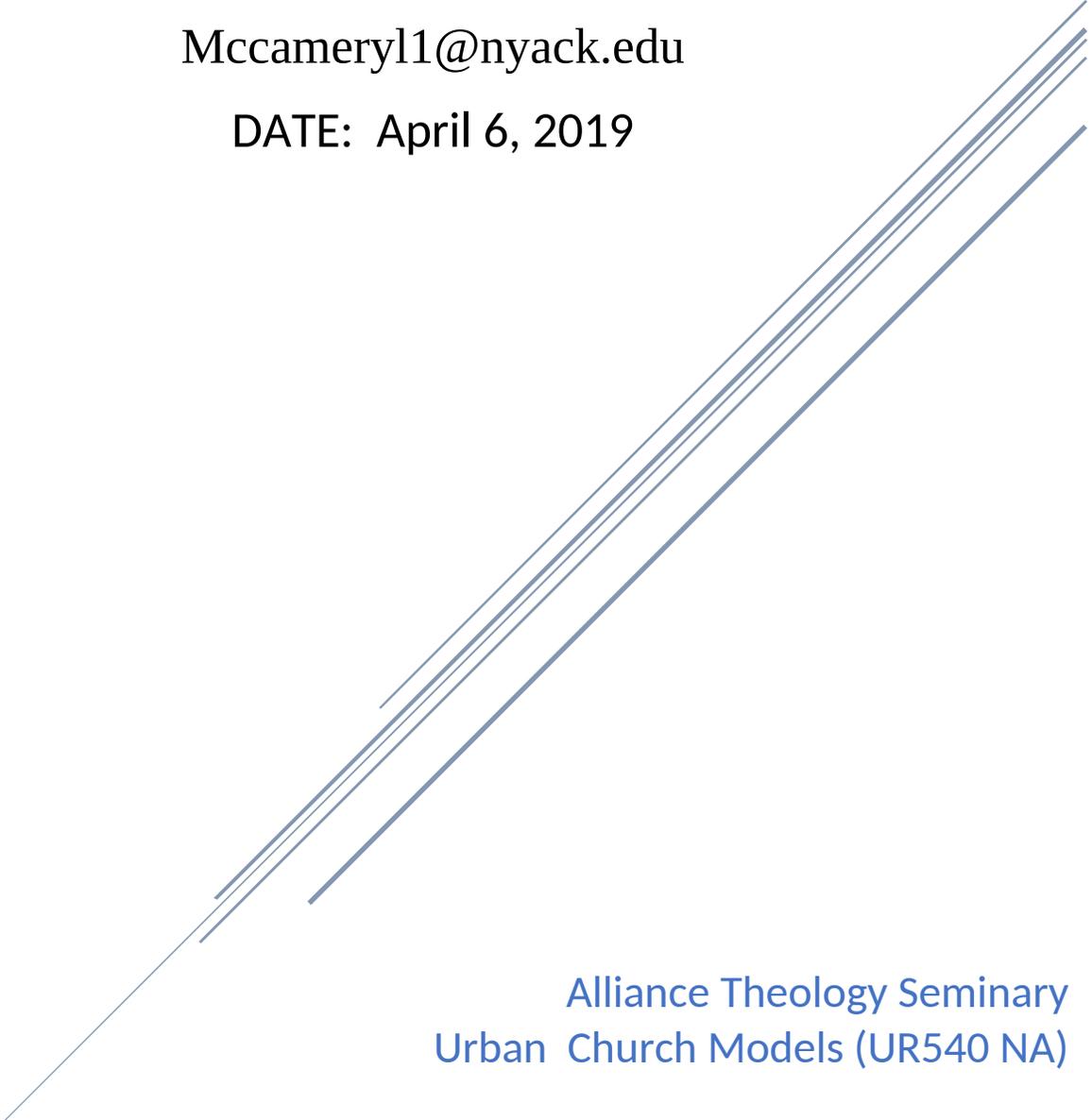
A THEOLOGY AS BIG AS THE CITY BY RAY BAKKE

Book Reflection

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This paper will be a reflection of Ray Bakke book “A Theology as Big as The City.” Bakke’s book takes us past the four walls of our different ministries to engage the needs of the people in the city/street. Bakke started the book speaking about his own faith experiences, along with his wife and family. “Corean and I married in 1960 and soon had two remarkably large, robust boys. Our third child, our daughter, was seriously damaged by rubella in early pregnancy and was dead at birth on April 21, 1965.”¹ Starting out so vulnerably to express that fact that we all have challenges in this life, and stressing how God allow his family to overcome this hardship and move on in service within their ministry. There are key issues that Bakke expresses in concrete details, through the life of experiences of the saints and also through the life and work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Bakke uses good Theology, the Holy Bible from Genesis through Revelation. He deals with ministry, especially evangelism and engaging the marginalized and disregarded. Bakke is speaking of a divine call to ministry to the people who make up the Cities. “Mission is no longer about crossing the oceans, jungles and deserts, but about crossing the streets of the world’s cities.”² Through the demonstrations of evangelism, engagements and even overcoming all down here on earth. Jesus Christ incarnated has been an excellent example of how to draw people to salvation and then healing of the body, by prayers of the Holy Spirit where it has been demonstrated again and again Salvation has come to the cities, job opportunities, educational opportunities and finically and legal assistance is available. The needs of the people in the cities are many, while the church has for years now have been moving away from the cities they serve. “The Church must learn how to go up to the urban powerful and down to the urban powerless with equal integrity.”³

¹ Ibid, loc 136.

² Ibid, loc 67.

³ (Bakke 1997), location 78.

Bakke asked a simple questions, is it right for only some to benefit of the ministry while we use a blind eyes to the majority of people being serve within the cities. In one demonstration Bakke spoke on the actual interaction of the church of old to the cities which was more the just preaching the word of God, teaching, prayer for the sick and destitute. The church of old would see to the whole needs of the city, the people beyond the walls of the church. “Three Persians” remind us it takes a strong long-term partnership to rebuild urban communities, especially those ravaged by war and Sanballat-like political machines that exist in codependent fashion to exploit the vulnerable masses who fall through the cracks of success culture.⁴ The duties performed the prophets and Judges of the Old testament consist of spiritual, counselling of Kings, they would keep records, they were asked to translate of interpret events and documents of national and public proclamation, organizing and administrating festivals, supervising storehouses, confronting of gangs, jury duty, publishing notices, and many other duties to help to bring about renewal or restorations of the cities. “Remember, you are never more like God than when you are living in relationships with God’s people and working in partnerships for the re-creation and redemption of God’s world.” We are in this world, but not part of this world, but through the divine direction of the Holy Spirit and through a good Theology we can be the conduits of bringing salvation to the city, not just spiritually, but also financially. I read stories of renewal, restorations, to bring back life and hope to the cities. “Gods kingdom agenda seeks that personal salvation of all person and the social transformation of all places.”ⁱ

Bakke use several instances from the Holy Bible, the divine word of the Jesus, to validate some of the duties he expected to see in today’s church, these excepts, or abstracts were pull

⁴ Ibid, loc 1024

from Genesis to Revelation. These historical interaction between the Prophets, ministers, confidants who gave spiritual guidance which resulted in the successful restoration, or renewal of war-torn cities. “History is not circular; it’s not an accident; it’s not even a conspiracy. It is moving toward a goal; the salvation of God’s people.”⁵ Seeing to the needs of the people and their communities will even the more demonstrate the love and power of our Lord Jesus Christ. “Is Jesus just our message Just is he also our model? In fact, we know now that nearly all urban person come to Christ through relationships, not through media.”⁶ Even, in the highlighting of the cities of the Bible, it showed a center cycle that are repetitive through the bible. There are those that come to build the cites and other who come to tear them down. The unification of church and community will bring about the change in gang violence, crime. As spoken on lectures in class, ‘We need to look through the lens of the cruciform (through the eyes of Jesus) to be truly effective in our engagement with the world.

By exploring all the difficulties that the people of God had to endured, remarks upon our own failures to be faithful to the instructions of God. There is so much information we can reference from the scriptures that can help us to bring about change in the city. Bakke reflection showed a true concern, or evening calling to engage the marginalized, the destitute, the home and families within the cities. “Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city” (Act 18:9-10).

Several of the abstracts Bakke discusses is the deaths/killings of Children made me cringe at the very ages of those who were a party to the violent, rather is be the assailant or the

⁵ Ibid, loc

⁶ Ibid, loc 231

victim. These children were too young, ages 10+ to suffer such a violent existence that ended in a life being taken, regardless of them being the victim of assailant. One such case was of the young 11 old young man 14-year-old young accused, who was executed and buried with his teddy bear, “Yummy”, my heart broke when I heard this story, which occurred here in America, not in a foreign country. Hearing about the violent shooting happening throughout our country, especially in Chicago and the Bronx, brings it home to me. Bakke is careful to supply several examples of how the ‘church’ can bring about a change, through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and directions. “Some America city communities are so violent that only women will be safe and effective as evangelists, pastors and church planters.”⁷

Notes from the prophet Nehemiah, Jeremiah, Elijah, Solomon, and the priest giving divine instructions, as being directed by the God, incite me to know, that the same God move by fire, is the same God that is through the Holy Spirit directing us today. “There is relationships always between the presence of the godly and the preservation of urban communities.”⁸ And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.(Is 58:12).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (John 3:16-17).

⁷ Ibid, loc 1028

⁸ Ibid, loc

Bibliography

Bakke, Ray. *A Theology as Big as The City*. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 1997.

