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The church in the urban context

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History of the Hamlets of Rockland County

One of the popular cities in Rockland county is Spring valley, Ny is in Rockland county, 14-mile N.E of Paterson, New Jersey and 26-mile N. of New York. Spring valley is considered a village and is a part of the New York metropolitan statistical area. According to City town info, Spring Valley was originally a part of town. The city was settled by Scotsmen and was then renamed Scotland. In 1842, the area was then renamed Spring Valley. It then became its own village on July 09,1902.

Spring valley was once a summer resort where people would come to and vacation with the population of only 5,000 at the time there was not as much traffic. There was once a lake called Lake Hyenga which was located here in spring valley, swimmers mostly children, would come to this lake with their parents. The lake was unfortunately close to summer bungalow colonies in the spring valley area, the dam in the background apparently created the lake. According to the census bureau, Spring Valley has a population of about 32,261 people alone with majority of the population being Hispanics and Haitian in the area. There are about 32 churches located on one rode called main street majority of them being Haitian churches and rest Hispanic churches.

Before there were no churches at because spring Valley used to be a resort were people would come on vacation. There were more of shopping malls and even a downtown where people would go and walk around for fun. Now there is no such thing anymore because we have more houses and supermarket and businesses people have built catering to their culture and the population. Moving on to one of the well-known hamlets in the Rockland county because of its demographic is Monsey. It is the home of 22,000 Jews and now has the largest Jewish population per capita of any U.S county, with 31.4 percent (90,000) of its residents identifying as Jewish (Green & Ziri 2019). The migration began back in the 1950's when the ultra-orthodox Jews were seeking affordable real estate with their communities growing at a very fast community.

They found that in Monsey they would be able to live *en masse* establishing enclaves where they could lead lives based on halakha (Jewish religious law) without coming into regular conflict with their non-Orthodox neighbors (Green & Ziri 2019). This why they live separate as they do because they have did not personal law on which they abide to, before this migration, they would live in Brooklyn strongholds – Borough Park, Crown Heights and Williamsburg. There are more than 40 schools in the hamlet of Monsey and 15 synagogues in this small hamlet.

Another well-known hamlet is Nyack New York in which our school resides, Nyack seemed to be the home lumber, shoe, and stone factors before it became home to the many people that is today. Farmers along the shore found that the outcroppings of red sandstone provided them with an additional “cash crop” for which there was a ready demand in the city. The quarry business thrived and between 1810 and 1840 there were 31 quarries between

Grand View and Upper Nyack, employing about 200 men. Hudson River sloops were improved and enlarged like the modern replica “Clearwater”, and served as the main link with the outside world, carrying passengers, produce, freight and stone (Perry). Stimulated by the demand to carry stone and Haverstraw brick, Nyack developed many boatyards and became by far the largest producer of sloops along the Hudson.

The quarrying and shipbuilding industries created a need for housing and a full range of goods and services, so farmland was subdivided, and downtown Nyack grew exponentially, from 7 houses in 1814 to more than 2000 people in 1860(Perry). Smaller neighborhoods developed around boatyards in Upper Nyack and South Nyack (Perry). From 1840 to 1890, shoe manufacturing blossomed in Nyack. About six different companies built large factories, mostly 2- and 3-story brick buildings, each producing 1000 or even 2000 pairs of shoes per week and employing hundreds of people ("Nyack History & Links"). The railroad came to Nyack in 1870, providing greater speed and capacity for passengers and freight, and taking some of the business away from the steamboats. Commuters and shoppers could get from Nyack to downtown Manhattan in a little over one hour by train and ferry (Perry). Nyack started on business reinventions with improvements in both river and land transportation, Nyack developed a significant hotel business ("Nyack History & Links").

Several hotels lined Main and Burd Streets, a large hotel was built in South Nyack, and Prospect House was a huge palatial structure on Highland Avenue overlooking the whole community until it burned in a spectacular fire("Nyack History & Links"). Today, Nyack remains a center for the dining, the arts, and business ("Nyack History & Links"). A vibrant waterfront village, Nyack looks to the future while remembering its storied past. ("Nyack

History & Links”) According to the US census the population of Nyack today is 7,185 is home to many including the Nyack college and their students.

THEOLOGY OF CITY - what does the bible say about a city – 5 - 7 pgs.

In the United States, an incorporated city is a legally defined government entity. It has powers delegated by the state and county, and the local laws, regulations, and policies are created and approved by the voters of the city and their representatives. A city can provide local government services to its citizens (Rosenberg 2020). “Community” is so easy to say. The word itself connects us with each other. It describes an experience so common that we never really take time to explain it. It seems so simple, so natural, and so human. In the social sector, we often add it to the names of social innovations as a symbol of good intentions (for example, community mental health, community policing, community-based philanthropy, community economic development).

But the meaning of community is complex. And, unfortunately, insufficient understanding of what a community is and its role in the lives of people in diverse societies has led to the downfall of many well-intended “community” efforts (Chavis, Lee, & Chavis 2015).

Adding precision to our understanding of community can help funders and evaluators identify, understand, and strengthen the communities they work with. There has been a great deal of research in the social sciences about what a human community is (see for example, Chavis and Wandersman, 1990; Nesbit, 1953; Putnam, 2000). Here, we blend that research with our experience as evaluators and implementers of community change initiatives (Chavis, Lee, & Chavis 2015). A community would be considered a group of people who share the same beliefs

and or tradition. Sometimes with the same ethnicity or race or sometimes with completely different race and traditions. What is a Church?

What is a church? The word is familiar to the average person, but quite a few different things come to mind when the word church is said. Often, we use the word to refer to a building, whether the building is being used for “churchly” activities, such as, “The Boy Scout troop meets at the church tonight.” Sometimes the word is used to talk about the institutional structure of a network of religious bodies: “The church wielded enormous political and economic power in Medieval Europe (Pratt 2017).” When people think about churches, they often think about programs, events, and leaders as the essential features (Pratt 2017). However, the New Testament uses the word church a lot, and never in any of these ways. Instead, the Bible consistently uses the word church to refer to an assembly of people (Pratt 2017).

This can even be an assembly of unbelievers, as in Acts 19:32 and 41, where the Greek word *ekklesia* refers to the assembly—or mob, as it were—gathered in the theater in Ephesus at the instigation of Demetrius the silversmith. The word is never used to designate a building in the New Testament, but rather a group of people (Pratt 2017). Specifically, a New Testament church is a group of believers in Jesus Christ who assemble regularly and who are committed to one another to be the body of Christ together (Pratt 2017). A New Testament church is a group of believers in Jesus Christ who assemble regularly and who are committed to one another to be the body of Christ together (Pratt 2017).

Each of these features is essential (Pratt 2017). A church is a group of believers in Jesus Christ, many people believe the church is the building where people congregate as a community.

Where in the reality the Christian church is within the heart of the people. As a Christian we are the church, not the building. The building is only the place where people meet and fellowship (Pratt 2017).. The bible says in Ephesians 2:19-22 ,So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

This verse proves that we have the temple of the Lord in us and the spirit dwells in us as it also dwells in the temple which we worship. Leviticus 29 tells us what the bible has to say about the city. A commentary written by Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers says a dwelling house in a walled city. —It is, however, quite different in the case of houses in walled cities. These are not the creation of God (see Leviticus 25:23), allotted by His command to the different tribes of Israel; they are the work of man, who build them up and raze them to the ground at their own will, and according to their fancy.

Hence the law of jubilee does not apply to these temporary human buildings ("Leviticus 25 Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers"). Though an Israelite could sell his house without being driven by stress of circumstances to do it, still, as he may feel attached to his home, the Divine law affords him some protection for a limited period, during which he or his family may redeem the building ("Leviticus 25 Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers"). During the second Temple “a dwelling house in a walled city” was defined to be a house standing within an area of land which was first walled round for the purpose of building upon it human habitations, and in which the houses were afterwards erected("Leviticus 25 Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers"). But if the houses were built first, and the city wall afterwards, they do not

come within the law here laid down, The commenter explain a house is built before a city, the city is based on the number of households and population that is included plays a huge part of what a city is ("Leviticus 25 Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers"). According to the bible, community fosters love as the bible ask us to be forgiving to one another in Colossians 3:13–14 NIV, “Paul held love above all else in his letter to the Corinthians. And he did the same with his letter to the Colossians: “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone”. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity”.

So therefore, the bible is in favor of community and is in favor of it. When people are sharing the same beliefs and tradition and living in love regardless of the flaws and forgiving each other is what the bible to request us as a community to do. At times this does not always happen because there is an issue between races, for instance we have been through the times of segregation with the white and black. Moreover , today in our society Asians in china are being disapproved in our community and even Muslims who are being discriminated in our country and communities as times because of what’s being said on the news about them and how they are being perceived in the eyes of other people due to this. One quote which has resonated with me is the “ the bible is a story that begins in a garden and end in a city. God desires for his people to build cities.

God’s first word to his people was a command to cultivate the good creation and fill the earth with worshippers (West & Cross 2018). Simply, Adam and Eve were to make stuff out of God’s creation and have babies who would grow up to be worshipers of God. In other words, God’s plan is for his people to develop his world into a city (West & Cross 2018). I never

thought about the creation of the world like this, now that I think about God did set out plans for Adam and Eve to live well in this place, they were supposed to cultivate the earth's resource. Therefore, the end of the biblical narrative does not have God's people living in a garden, but in a city. The cultural mandate (Genesis 1:28) is an urban mandate. God's desire for his people, all throughout the narrative of the Bible, is to worship him through making stuff out of his good creation and making worshippers of him. (West & Cross 2018). Jesus had a heart for cities.

Jesus was born in a small village, but the expansion of His ministry clearly moved in an urban direction, ultimately journeying to the great city of Jerusalem. Jesus taught His followers to be an "alternate city" within their actual cities (Matthew 5. (West & Cross 2018). Jesus himself partake in the festivities of the city. A city is something that was created and intended since the beginning of time. Even Jesus himself was in born a city of Jerusalem. Which was way before there was a San Diego, California or even a Miami, New York the creation of cities was way before our times and have increased humongous in the number and in population.

Apparently, cities are here to play an important role in the lines of this nation and world. Christ himself speaks about his own city and how he is preparing this place for us, this is a city where we will rejoice and when there will be no pain or sorrow or even sickness. But only joy and happiness will be here and only a few will be able to see this. Because there is a major step to be fulfilled. God's plan of redemption will culminate in his people living in a city. Revelation 21 describes and depicts the apex of God's redemption as a city; at the end of time, God's people will worship God in God's city. Cities have a central role throughout the narrative of the Bible God's plan of redemption will culminate in his people living in a city(West & Cross 2018)..

God has a heart for the cities of in the bible it shows us a story of a man which God sent into a city so that he would be able to speak through him and warn the city of their sin and turn from their ways. But this man believe that this city was too sinful and did not the deserve the forgiveness of God. He himself moved out of this city in hopes that God would punish them for their sins. But God did not want to do it this way because he had always had a heart for the cities. He went through them himself speaking to what was considered the most sinful and outcast person and made them whole through him. So there has been a week spot for these people in the cities and loved stored in his heart from him.

Jonah hated the city of Nineveh because he had a selfish heart. Against God's leading in his life, Jonah moved out from the city in hope that God would judge them for their sin and destroy them and their city. God accused Jonah of having more concern for his own life than the lives of those who lived in "that great city. (West & Cross 2018)."

In contrast, Jesus loved the city and all city-dwellers because he had a selfless heart. Jesus is the prophet of God who loved the city so much that he went outside the city to save it. He was dragged outside the city while weeping for its inhabitant. (West & Cross 2018). He was exiled to Golgotha and executed there. Through his atoning death and victorious resurrection, hearts can be changed. Jesus can enable city dwellers to live for the welfare of the city, and not themselves. (West & Cross 2018). In the same Christ has a super love for the cities in which we live in and there is many who still carry their sinful ways.

God is pretty much waiting on us Christians to be a Jonah and share the good news with them. To let them know that there is a God who cares about them and someone in which will take them with all of their flaws and still listen to them and make them clean. The question really to us Christians is how are these people supposed to know about his good news if we are being

selfish and not sharing with those who do not know but only those who do know the word of God say Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” We must not be like Jonah in our city but be more like Christ and inviting people into the banquet that we already have a seat in. so that they to will be able to join and participate in the intended plan of the city.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

According to the US census bureau, the population of the village of spring valley is 32,281 which means there are 16,055 people per square mile. The age median is 30, 33% are under the age of 18, 59% and only 8% of the population is the age 65 and older. 50% is both male and female. With 31% being white, 35% being black, 30% being Hispanic and remainder being other. From what I know personally, majority of the population are Haitians and Hispanics both with the same amount of population threshold.

The income declared on the U.S Census based per capita is 21,595 and the median salary 43,949, almost more than half of the population’s salary is under 50,000. 26.6% persons below poverty line which is substantially low. There are 9,373 number of households, making it 3.4 per household. Moreover, there are many institutions in the village of spring valley, there is one library which is called the Finkelstein library and ample amount of schools to follow. The crime rate is 364.64 in spring valley in the year of 2018, there has been a significant decrease compared to tin the rate of crime in the past.

The village of Spring Valley offers many social services from NAP which stands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program enable households to supplement their food budget.

There is also HEAP which stands for Homes assistance Energy Program assist households to pay their energy bills. there are also support services which are offered, there is children and family service which provides preventive and protective services to children, adults, and families. Adult services that are offered providing monitoring of home care services to Medicaid recipients. Lastly, we have temporary assistance provides temporary help to individuals and families who are unable to work or working in a job that pays less than the poverty level of the specific area. These are all the same social services which applies for the hamlet of Nyack and Monsey. If one would need to apply for one of these social service they would need to go to Rockland County Department of social services in Pomona so that they would be able to apply for these social services in person with a social worker or a case manager who would be able to walk them along this time.

In the hamlet of Nyack, there are 7,188 people in total population of Nyack, making it 9,331.1 people per square mile. The median age range of Nyack is 43.2, 62% of the population are between the age range 18 to 64, under 18 and over 65 are both 19%. More than half of the population is female with the percentage of 56% and 44% being male. Majority of the population is white with the percentage of 47% and right next in line are the African Americans who are at 27% following with the Hispanics at 18%.the average income per capita is 44,222 and the median household income reported is 71,474 ranging preferably higher than spring valley, with more than double of the income reported. The poverty level is at 13.6% and there are about 3,300 number of households reported 2.2 person per household. The single status is rather higher than the marital status at 43% and the 57% for the singles. The educational attainment is 88.1% are high school graduates and higher, 51% are bachelor's degree or higher which significantly higher than the village of spring valley which has a 71.3 % high school grad or higher and only

16% with a bachelor's degree or higher. The crime is very low compared to the other villages in Rockland county. There are about 7 institutions including elementary, middle, colleges and trade schools in the area there about 36 different congregations between Nyack, valley cottage and west Nyack.

Finally, the population of Monsey is 22,073 according to the U.S census bureau, making it 9,729.8 people per square miles. The age median is young at 16.1 over half of the population being under 18 at 55%, 40% are between 18, to 64. the population is quite equal between male and female is there is only 1% more of females then there are males making 96% of the population white there are no other race & ethnicity despite 2% of Hispanics and African American. The income per captia 12,382 and the median income per household 37,103. Making 43.4% of the population below the poverty line, there are 3,989 households and 5.4 person per households. The Jewish demographic are well known with being fruitful and bearing children, they have a 21.4% rate of fertility rate. 95% of household are has a married which is significantly higher than most cities and the whole country. The educational attainment is 77.2% high school grad and higher and 13.6% bachelor's degree or higher.

Overall, we know that there is a huge difference in population between Spring Valley and the other hamlets. Spring Valley is the biggest village in Rockland county with about 32,000 people in population, Monsey comes next in line with high poverty level.

In summary although the populations and the communities are different, they are open and welcome to attain service at the Rockland county department of social services and Pomona.

Where any one from the villages and hamlets would be able to seek help. After conducting this research, I would convince my leaders to play a bigger social role in the lives of the population. Whether doing a food drive, or a community diaper raffle where these people can come in and get all that they may need while providing the social service outreach. I believe that there are many churches in spring valley but not many offer the social service because we are too busy being occupied within ourselves rather than helping the one who are truly in need. I now dedicate my service to all these communities who are in reach.

This research has opened my eyes to the many institutions around that I did not even know existed. It has allowed me to be informed and enlightened. As well as raise awareness for all the help that is needed in our community with all those who are around me including my leaders and fellow church members. Overall, we know that there is a huge difference in population between Spring Valley and the other hamlets. Spring Valley is the biggest village in Rockland county with about 32,000 people in population, Monsey comes next in line with high poverty level.

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