

The urban challenge

by Tim Svoboda

The urban challenge I the world is urbanizing

Tim is uniquely qualified within YWAM to address urban issues, having led our work in Chennai, India, where he pioneered city-wide networks and diverse ministries in ways unprecedented in our mission. He recently earned his D.Min. degree under Dr Ray Bakke, Lausanne Senior Associate for Urban Missions.

Tim: The world is quickly urbanizing. Two hundred years ago, the world was 97% rural and just 3% urban. Today more than 50% of the world are living in urban areas. This is not just taking place in Europe. This is a world wide phenomenon. Africa and Asia urban populations are expected to double in the next three decades. The UN predicts that 7 out of 10 people in China will live in cities by 2050. In the next 5 years China is building 300 new cities just to keep up with the massive migration!

The YWAM Urban Network is not just talking about the big cities. There are four kinds of cities we are focusing on:

- Super Giant Cities: There are now 25 cities with a population of over ten million. Growth in these cities is levelling off.
- Giant Cities: 49 cities have a population between four and ten million.
- Mega Cities: Another 468 cities are from one million to four million in population and are growing quickly.
- Frontier Cities. These are the cities from 100,000 to four million in population. There are thousands of such cities like this in the world today. These are the cities where explosive growth is going to take place.

If we look at the 4K Project through the eyes of cities we can quickly see where we are located and where we are not. Here is a slide of the cities in the YWAM region of Western Europe. The cities in black are where some

kind of YWAM ministry exists. The cities in red are where there is no presence at all.

Remember that just because we have one YWAM presence in a city does not mean we have penetrated that city! Out of the 854 YWAM listings in the 2007 Go Manual, 623 of them are single address listings. This does not mean that we do not have multiple ministries in those places. However it also does not indicate that we have multiple locations in those places. Cities like New York, San Francisco, Berlin, Cairo, Calcutta, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo and many others could easily have 20 or more YWAM locations in one city with diverse expressions.

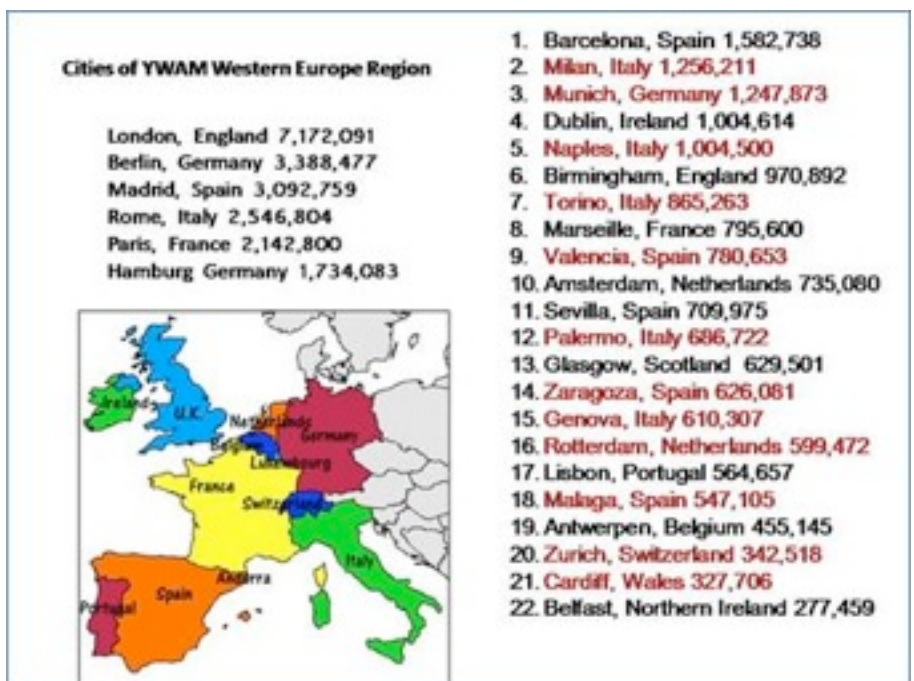
We have to also keep in mind that the 10/40 Window is moving! East is moving West and South is moving North. Amsterdam is home to 180 nations. The whole former British empire lives in London. Paris is quickly become African and Germany is becoming Turkish while Toronto is becoming Chinese.

San Francisco is now 38% Asian. My own neighborhood of 20,000 people in San Francisco operates in 9

languages. Vancouver has more Sikhs than any city outside the Punjab. Bangalore operates in Urdu, Hindi, Telegu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, English and more.

The world has moved to the cities! Mission is no longer geographically distant. It is now culturally distant while being located just across the street in our own cities around the world. In the past, missions was primarily about going over the ocean, through the jungle, across the desert to reach the remote. Today missions is about crossing the street in the cities where we live.

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The urban challenge II a dual strategy

by Tim Svoboda

When we talk about Urban Missions we are not referring to ministry only to the inner city or poorer sections of cities. YWAM Urban Missions focuses on the Whole City. That means ministry to the powerful and the powerless, to the middle class, and the migrants, to the upper class and the poor, to the business community, neighborhoods, unreached people groups, the 'seven spheres of society', the university campus, issues of injustice, mercy ministries, evangelism... and all that the city gives us opportunity for.

Diversity

We need a dual strategy for cities. Both of these ways require two kinds of leaders. One is the Micro Strategy which requires Micro Apostles and the other is the Macro Strategy which requires Macro Apostles.

In the Micro Strategy we need to divide the city up as much as possible, which gives us opportunity for much ministry. We cannot look at cities as single entities in which we only plant a single YWAM ministry.

Cities are diverse. Here is a pie chart that divides a city into some of this diversity. We have to divide the city for strategic purposes into as many slices as possible. We need to cut it along ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural lines. We also need to cut it along neighborhoods as some are rich and others poor. We also have to cut it along the lines of arts, business, education, media as well as the special needs of each city—prostitution, suicide, homeless, senior citizens, youth, or issues of injustice, community health, etc.. The more the city is divided in sections, researched and strategized for, the more ministries will multiply. Cities could easily sustain hundreds of focused teams that are living incarnationally amidst the diversity of the city.

This pie chart is not comprehensive but begins to give us an idea of the complexity of the city. Having one mission base per city does not really afford us to live incarnationally amongst the people we are trying to reach. As we target the neighborhoods, people groups and concerns of the city, our teams become more focused in what they are trying to accomplish.

As we do this, we develop Micro Apostles who become specialists in the field of their calling. For instance, Anil Kumar in Chennai, India, started with a team of two working with lepers. Today the team has expanded to more than 50 staff with a Leprosy DTS, Primary Health Care, Relief and Development, Church Planting and other ministries just amongst one micro group of people who are leprosy patients.

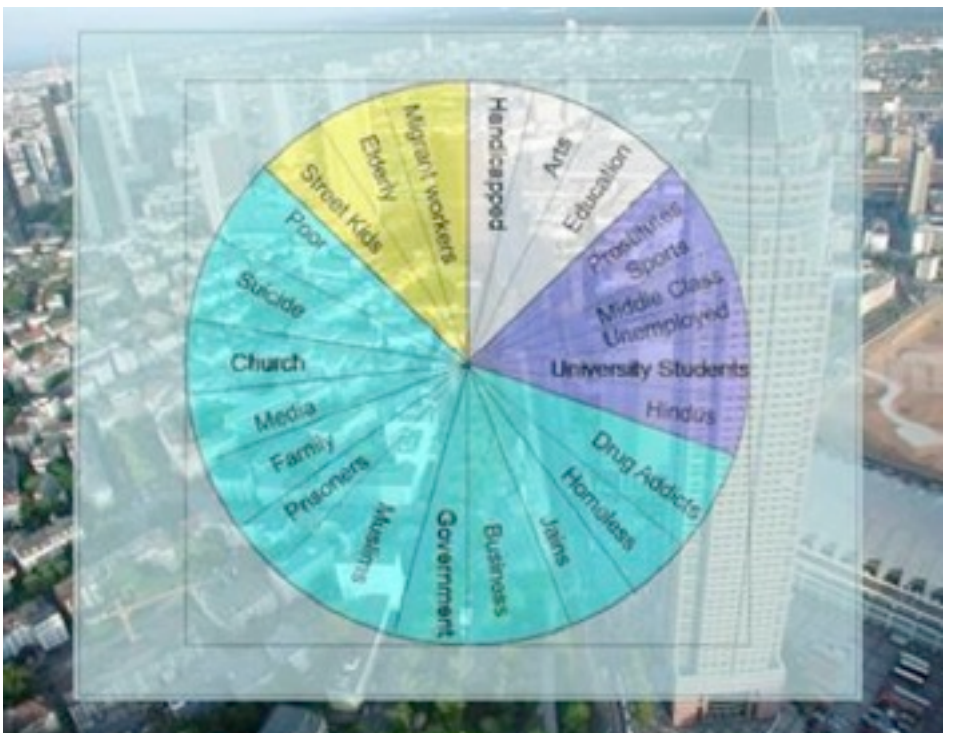
The second strategy for the city is through the Macro Strategy. Micro apostles are what it takes at the grassroots to engage people in all the spheres, neighborhoods and places of the city. Yet at the same time there needs to be those leaders that take a Macro view of the whole city: Macro Apostles. I was talking with a senior Christian leader in a Super Giant city (cities with more than 10 million population) where YWAM continues to struggle to this day to establish a presence. He told me our teams have been wonderful but we have struggled to become

established throughout the city because we lacked the one or two broad shouldered leaders who would give the moral support to the micro teams that were trying to take root in the city. Although this YWAM work in a Super Giant city has had many micro teams, it has struggled to become established throughout the city because there were no leaders who could give moral support to the micro teams that were attempting to take root in the city.

Door Openers

Just as a base needs a base director so the city needs a City Director. City Directors are not building YWAM bases but are making the city their base and expanding the efforts of YWAM throughout the city. City Directors are concerned with the transformation of the entire city. A city director is a facilitator who makes sure the micro teams stay alive. He/she does a little bit of everything which may include pastoral care, promotion, networking, teaching, strategizing, resourcing and whatever it takes to keep the teams moving forward in their endeavors. They are passionate about the city and are calling the All of YWAM to the All of the City.

City Directors are not gate keepers protecting teams and YWAM from the city but are door openers who are inviting the All of YWAM and the Body of Christ to build the Kingdom of God in the city.



The urban challenge III strategic engagement

by Tim Svoboda

Cities are where a large mass of the people are living. The trend is continuing that way with more and more people moving into cities. If we are going to be strategic in our missionary focus then cities have to be kept in our strategic planning. Here are a few recommendations that I would like to make.

1. YWAM needs to be located in the city. That does not mean that those who are now having properties in rural areas need to close down and relocate! But the new centers we start should consider the strategic nature of locating in cities.

St. Ignatius, in the 16th century, wrote 6815 letters to his Jesuit followers during his lifetime. Approximately 2300 of those letters were on the strategic positioning and acquiring of properties in cities. He once wrote, 'Take special care that you obtain a good and sufficiently large site, or one that can be enlarged with time, large enough for house and church, and if possible, not too far removed from the conversation of the city, and having bought that, it will be a good beginning for all that follows.'

Thomas Lucas in his book *Landmarking: City, Church and Jesuit Urban Strategy* says, 'Ignatius found his vineyard not on the terraced slopes of the Pincio but at the busy corner of Piazza Alberti, in downtown locations all over Europe, and ultimately in crowded cities all over the globe.'

In contrast, many of our YWAM bases are located in such a way that conversation with people is difficult. We have therefore developed a 'Theology of Going/Theology of Outreach.' Mission

for many of us is 'over there'. However the city is the place where the people are and we are finding the unreached more and more in our own backyard. Ignatius gave birth to Loyola Colleges which today are strategically placed in cities around the world.

2. YWAM needs to continue to develop a 'Theology of Place'.

A Theology of Place helps us to focus on reaching the people within walking distance of our own living space. It also helps us to make sure we are living where it is strategic rather than living

where it is cheap rent or cheap real estate. While it is financially smart to buy cheaper land, such property is often not strategic for engaging the people in our cities.

I am finding around the world that students in our DTS's and other training programs are excited when they are being taught in locations that have hell in their front yards. In one such base

that I know you literally walk out their front door and are slapped in the face by drug addicts, derelicts, homeless and the lost. The DTS students have to struggle with not only facing their

own problems but are interacting each day with those outside their door who are in much worse conditions than themselves.

Location in cities gives us proximity for engagement but location does not always motivate our hearts to reach the people around us. .

3. We need multiple oplocs (operation locations) in cities. One base is not enough for cities with the kind of populations we are experiencing today. Can you imagine cities such as

Paris, Calcutta, Tokyo, Penang, San Francisco, Toronto and others with multiple YWAM long term teams that are each with a specific focus? One team may be doing church planting while another is doing business—mission; yet another is focused on suicide prevention, while another may be working with the artist community. Possibilities for ministry in cities is vast.

4. The University of the Nations needs to consider appropriate curriculum for the Urban World.

Church planting, primary health care, counseling, world view, performing arts and community development need to be looked at through the lens of cities. While

perhaps small adjustments, they are nevertheless ones that need to be considered.

5. Every YWAM region of the world needs an Urban Advocate who helps us strategize towards effective ministry into the cities of their region. I would encourage these advocates to be part of the regional leadership team to provide regular input. They need to be people who can interface with Mercy Ministries, Frontier Missions, Kings Kids, Impact World Tour and the University of the Nations so cities are opened up in our regions to the All of YWAM.

YWAM needs:

1. to be located in the city

2. to develop a 'Theology of Place'

3. multiple oplocs in cities

4. to consider appropriate curriculum for the Urban World

5. Urban Advocates who help us strategize towards effective ministry into the cities of our region

The urban challenge IV making adjustments?

by Tim Svoboda

Here are three reasons why YWAM needs a focus in cities through significant statements made by three different urban leaders.

1. Dwight Moody once said, “If we reach the cities we will reach the nation. If we fail in the cities they will become a cesspool that infect the entire nation.”

Hollywood influences the world through movies. New York influences the world through money. Paris influences the world through Art. Tokyo influences the world through electronics and the list can go on how cities influence the world. Cities also influence nations. San Francisco has influenced the US with its cultural revolutions. The British leaders of India knew that if they ruled from Delhi they would influence the whole nation. The Apostle Paul stationed himself for three years in Ephesus and the whole province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. This did not happen because Paul was traveling. In fact he never visited Colossae and other nearby places. It was because Ephesus became as Ray Bakke says, “the woofers and tweeters” of the gospel as people traveled through the marketplace from other cities and the countryside to where Paul was preaching at the school of Tyrannus. If our cities started to have revivals it will affect our nations.

2. Floyd McClung said, “There is no escaping the influence and power of the city. It has become the dominant social force in the world. Cities are the mountain peaks of society; trends, ideologies and fashions are born in the fermenting cauldron of city life and then flow down and out to influence the populace.”

Most of the significant social movements have been borne in cities. Though Gandhi galvanized many of the rural people in a mass movement he was an Urban person whose movement was borne amongst city people who began to dream about a free India. Cities are the staging ground for the seven spheres of society or the seven mind

molders that we have been taught about in YWAM. Arts, Business, Media, Education, Government are primarily city based entities. As an organization we have to find ways to influence these 7 spheres of society. YWAM Korea has influenced the two key areas of Business and Education through their Business DTS and University DTS. Both of these DTS's have been located in the city and on the campus where they influenced key people in these domains. Monastic communities have both fled from society and merged into society in their pursuit to either Know God or to Make him Known. In YWAM, we are called to both. Today, many people are discovering the city as the place that helps to develop our spirituality as well as our mission.

3. Ray Bakke said, “Yesterday the cities were in the nations. Today the nations are in the cities.”

No longer is mission just geographically distant. It used to be that mission was over the ocean, across the desert and through the jungle. Today mission is just across the street. I am writing this email to you as I teach in the Manhattan DTS in East Village which is a conglomeration of nations. Mission is now culturally distant and just across the street. In my tiny neighborhood in San Francisco, of just 22,000 people, we are discovering groups of Nepali's, Vietnamese, Chinese and Gujarati's all within walking distance of our front door. Our new theme has become “through the neighborhoods to the nations” as a motto for YWAM San Francisco. And we are not a unique city. This is happening all over the world today. Walking through a city like Perth, Australia; Penang, Malaysia or Dearborn, Michigan quickly shows you that the nations are in our neighborhoods. Every day 160,000 people migrate into cities. Though some cities like Tokyo or Chennai are primarily mono-ethnic cities there are nevertheless many strata's of society that require a diversity of approaches.

In conclusion let me end with another quote and a thought. Roger Greenway and Timothy Monsma, two great urban Missiologists, said the following in 1989 in their book

Cities: Missions New Frontier, “Urbanization of Christian Missions is an urgent and serious need. Cities determine the destiny of nations and their influence on the every day affairs of individuals is incalculable. Beyond question the new chapter in world and mission history is entitled Cities and the church of tomorrow will be largely an Urban Church.”

The world has and continues to urbanize. The question for us as YWAM is, “are we as a Mission understanding this trend and making adjustments so that we are effective in a largely Urban world?” A few years ago I asked a leading Missionary statesman in India to name how many mission agencies out of the 180 mission agencies he was closely acquainted with were focused on City Mission. He could only name a handful. How many of our YWAM bases around the world are located in strategic parts of the city that gives us outreach opportunities within walking distance of our front doors? The world has been urbanizing. Are we thinking, planning and strategizing for this? As regional directors, transnational leaders and trainers, our mission must address this issue at each local level in order to remain relevant.

The question for us as YWAM is, “are we as a Mission understanding this trend and making adjustments so that we are effective in a largely Urban world?”

The urban challenge V incarnational presence

by Tim Svoboda

There are three kinds of City Transformational movements that I have observed along with other urban thinkers around the world.

They are:

a. Prayer and Revival Movements.

These are the movements that are birthed out of united prayer across denominational, church and parachurch lines. Leaders of the city begin to cry out to God in unity, holiness, worship and faith for God to heal their land. It is the kind of prayer that is based on II Chronicles 7:14. We have seen God move in places like Fiji, Argentina and other places of the earth in supernatural ways in answer to united prayer. YWAM has played a key role in bringing together the body of Christ in places like Fortaleza, Brazil through Tony Lima or more recently in Stockholm, Sweden through Tjebbo van de Eijkhof with the Jesus Manifestation event that brought together some 15,000 people. *YWAM in Cities can play a key role in United Prayer Movements.*

b. Mobilization Movements.

Call2All, Transformation City Networks, Megacities Outreach from YWAM Perth, Impact World Tours, City Wide Evangelistic etc, are movements from people and organizations outside of the city to reach the city. They provide catalytic events that unite the church together for a season to help bring some breakthroughs. YWAM Perth has done a marvelous job in their Mega City outreaches and the World Impact Tours which have united churches in outreach. *YWAM in Cities can play a key role in working with catalytic events that have a city wide effect.* We can all learn from YWAM Perth how they have targeted their outreaches on specific cities over an extended period of time to bring about a catalytic movement that is sustained by the local church.

c. Incarnational Movements:

Church planting, Mercy Ministries, Community Development, Neighborhood ministries. These are the long term ministries that locate amongst the people, passion or place in the city and seek to bring

transformation. We see this through some of our street children ministries in YWAM in places like Chennai, Calcutta or Belo Horizonte. We see this through our church planting teams in places like the Kullu Valley in Himachal Pradesh, India or through our community development work in places like Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. We see this also through the local body of Christ in their long term presence as the church in a city or neighborhood. The Catholics especially have developed a “theology of place” that has led them to a parish type of church that ministers to a people within a geographical place and also engages the place for holistic transformation. *YWAM in Cities can play a key role by establishing long term ministries that are focused on Peoples, Places and Passions of the city.*

Incarnational presence as we all know is the most effective long term strategy for reaching people as it works together with short term outreaches and other strategies like those mentioned above. Incarnational movements are built on a “theology of place.” YWAM has primarily what I would call a “theology of going.” Our “theology of going” has shaped YWAM into a worldwide mobilization organization that allows people a cross cultural missions experience. This should not change. However as the world continues to change with nations moving to cities we need to make some adjustments. I would submit to you that while we keep our emphasis on a “theology of going” that we also intentionally build a “theology of place.”

A theology of place begins to look at the location we are currently at. For years in Chennai, which is the largest church city of India, I kept my focus on the unreached beyond. However, I soon discovered that I was missing the unreached at my doorstep. Even though Chennai is predominantly a monoethnic city it had large populations of unreached peoples that churches were not focusing on and did not want to focus on. Now being in San Francisco, I am discovering that the Bay area may have one of the largest Afghan population outside of Afghanistan in the US. There are also many Marathis, Gujarathis and other unreached people groups. Look carefully at your locations through proper research. It will unveil key segments of society that the Lord would lead us to engage with.

A “theology of place” not only helps us to look at the location we are at but helps us to move into the location that is most strategic where we can reach out to people. In my dissertation titled, “Monastic Communities, Missionary Compounds and Parallels with YWAM bases: Restructuring for Urban Effectiveness,” I asked 110 YWAM bases around the world a series of questions. One of those questions was. “Are you actively engaged in the local community that is within walking distance of where you live?” About 30% of the bases indicated they had a strong local emphasis while the others ranged from very little to some having local involvement. I understand that most of those that had very little involvement were primarily training bases with an emphasis on sending students abroad. Some of those training bases are located in remote areas where doing outreach during the lecture phase requires some kind of transportation. **What is needed are YWAM bases located in neighborhoods that give our students seamless interaction with lectures and interaction with non-Christians.** I can only name a few YWAM training centers around the world that provide this kind of environment. Unfortunately, many of our YWAM bases have become bubbles of YWAM activity and we are cloistered from the world around us.

God has led us to many properties outside the city that are large and accommodate our students. I have been praying, with a sense of leading from the Lord that we would obtain properties inside the city or near to strategic unreached people groups that would allow our U of N courses to have close interaction with the neighbors around them. I heard Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City say one time in a teaching tape, “I am a better Christian because I live in the city.” The city forces us as Christians to think contextually and engage practically. Another benefit of locating our training near to unreached people groups is that it helps students to return to potential ministry opportunities rather than coming back to staff a training school only. Most of our DTS students do not become long term cross cultural missionaries upon completion of their DTS. **In fact some research shows that it takes 20 DTS's to produce one long term cross cultural missionary.** That research may be controversial and perhaps not totally accurate. However we need to discover ways to give our students and staff access to local non believers around our bases so they start dreaming about a career in missionary service that goes beyond YWAM base life.

The urban challenge VI a paradigm shift

by Tim Svoboda

Jim Stier in his May 2008 Prayer Day letter on the Fourth Wave of World Missions begins to define what this wave might look like.

He gives us 10 possible definitions that are not exhaustive. In point 5 he says the fourth wave will “break out of the sphere of the institutional church and find expression within the multiple spheres of society. Mission has traditionally been the business of the church. Now, however, there is a surge of vision and activity that strongly suggests that Christians in business and commerce, government, education, arts and media, journalism, family concerns, science and technology, and numerous other sub-categories will increasingly be the leaven that permeates society with the Kingdom of God.”

The first wave went into *port cities* around the world. The second wave went *inland* to remote areas. The third wave stressed *unreached people groups*. The fourth wave is the **empowering of every believer within their sphere of society**.

I want to talk here about **a paradigm shift** that we need on how we see cities being reached and what role we as YWAM can possibly play.

The seven spheres of influence are a key to the transformation of cities which in the end will bring about the transformation of nations. Cities affect the destinies of nations. To influence these seven spheres, two things have to happen.

1. Believers have to be empowered to be ministers in their sphere of society. There needs to be a paradigm shift that the mission field is not just “way over there” but it is right here where we are working and spending most of our time. Groups like Harvest Evangelism led by Ed Silvano and others like Repurposing Business (www.repurposing.biz) are doing a superb job in strategically focusing on empowering believers to be marketplace ministers. This development is tearing down the old division of secular and sacred and the need for people to become “full

time missionaries” by leaving their jobs.

2. The second thing that has to happen is that **Christians need to allow God to show them how they can transform society through the application of biblical values within their sphere of society.** Christian education is not Christian just because Christians are teachers. YWAM can play a key role in the accomplishment of this. But before I get into that let me explain another paradigm shift that I believe has to take place if we are going to be effective in our ministry.

In the chart below I have taken the seven spheres of society plus a few more and put it in a diagram with the church in the center. The reason I put the church or YWAM in the center is



because I used to think the church or YWAM was the key to transforming society. When we think the church or YWAM is the key to transforming society we will end up calling people from those spheres into our church services and programs. Pastors or YWAM leaders can see a good musician and call them to the church or base as they see leading worship as their calling of service. Or an educator can be called to church to fulfill the role of teaching Sunday School classes. When the paradigm has the church or YWAM as the center we are basically consumed with the growth of our organization and the effectiveness of our programs.

However if you look at the diagram to the right you will see almost the same diagram but the church has been taken out of the center and instead I have put into the center “Christians in the city” which in reality is the church. It is only the building that I have taken out of the center in

reality because the building/church/organization has to be taken out of the center of our thinking. YWAM can be as guilty as the local church for putting ourselves in the center. If we make this change in our thinking we open up possibilities for YWAM to be more involved with non YWAMers who are in the marketplace through our training programs. In a previous email I mentioned about YWAM Korea and their model of the Business DTS and University DTS. The challenge before us is how do we get YWAM out of YWAM? YWAM Korea has some models that are worth looking at for all of us. In the last GLT a small discussion was ventured into about Opus Dei as an organization that has two types of members being the numeraries and the supernumeraries. The numeraries are the full time priests who carry the lesser title. They make up about 30% of the organization. In our terms they would be considered the “YWAMers.” The supernumeraries are the working people in the marketplace and they make up about 70% of the organization. In YWAM terms these would be our DTS students who have decided not to join YWAM but are in jobs in the marketplaces of life.

Opus Dei has a strategy for getting the church out of the church and into the marketplace. **The challenge before us as YWAM as cities continue to emerge is how do we get YWAM out of YWAM and yet continue to be YWAM?** YWAM Korea, Opus Dei, Harvest Evangelism and others have some key working models that we need to consider as we think about how we start reaching the millions of unreached at our doorsteps in the cities around the world.

