

It was God's Idea, First—

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Our church has been moving out of the cities to the suburbs. My contention is that we would have lost both the cities and the suburbs if the church had not moved into the suburbs. Our people would have joined other denominations. Also, we did not have the expertise, the experience, or the personnel to work with immigrants, and multi-cultural neighborhoods. We would not have had the finances to maintain evangelism and buildings when our people moved out of the city. Consequently, we would have lost both segments of society.

Over the past twenty years we have built some strong suburban churches. These churches are now paying off their indebtedness. They have trained personnel who have worked in the cities for various occupations. They are ripe for a challenge and a thrust, just like we were ready for foreign missions in previous years. Also, our schools have been training ministers, social workers, teachers, business people, musicians, youth and children's workers, and theoreticians who can articulate the strategies needed to relate to city populations. Our financial ability had become sophisticated so that we are getting more for the dollar for church expansion. All through the church there is an awareness of talent, expertise, and experience waiting to be harnessed to be exploited for the Kingdom. We have not been idle during these years of transition. A great preparation has been in progress.

What did God use to hold the cities and suburbs until the present hour? He used the Pentecostal movement infiltrated the "Old Line" churches. The message of the power of the Holy Spirit and prayer is the main thrust. The Catholic church, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, and others were infiltrated by the Holy Spirit. Large rallies were held in Notre Dame stadium. A surge of spiritual power swept through the churches in the cities and the Holy Spirit is still working.

In the suburbs people were challenged to build new churches, infiltrate new neighborhoods, develop outreach programs, and invest in new enterprises. All these activities were reinforced by electronic music, youth choirs, and a burgeoning youth population. Now these youth are young and middle adults. They are now ready for a new challenge. Why not the cities?

These two spiritual thrusts complemented each other along with our continued Biblical preaching and emphasis on the Holy Spirit and holy living. What should our message be in the cities? It should be the message of the Holy Spirit. The cities are ripe for the warmth, the power, the anointing, the comfort, the abiding presence, and the whole message of heart holiness. Today is our day. the spirit is moving. The city is on everybody's lips. the challenge is before us. Accept we must. No other message will win the cities. Prayer and the Holy Spirit are our only actualization for this task.

The cities are filled with networks of people. Extended families now exist. These two characteristics of rural environment are now in the cities. They can be utilized to our advantage. The message can be communicated readily and easily. God prepared the Roman Empire for the "fullness of time" when our church should enter the cities. God had done for us what we could never have done for ourselves. He had a hidden plan working all the time. We would never have thought of such a plan and its timing. But it is here, now, in America, for our eyes to see, our ears to hear, our feet to walk, our hands to do, our hearts to feel. This is

God's plan. It was His idea first. It is His doing. No other message but the message of the Holy Spirit. No other reliance that reliance on prayer.

They are waiting in the cities,
Will you be the one?
To take our blessed Christ to them,
They beckon you to come.

Will you answer the challenge,
To save the lost from sin?
The cities are waiting,
There's a multitude to win.

Will you volunteer for battle,
Christian soldiers one and all?
Let's not keep them waiting,
Rise up, march in, answer God's call.

Beverly Strong Toland