HOW SHALL THEY HEAR? THE INTERFACE OF URBANIZATION AND ORALITY IN NORTH AMERICAN ETHNIC CHURCH PLANTING

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APPROVAL SHEET

HOW SHALL THEY HEAR? THE INTERFACE OF URBANIZATION AND ORALITY IN NORTH AMERICAN ETHNIC CHURCH PLANTING

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I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Beth. Thank you for the love, support, and sacrifice that made this degree possible. I am looking forward to the journey ahead with you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBS	Chronological Bible Storying
ESL	English as a Second Language
IMB	International Mission Board
NAMB	North American Mission Board
SBC	Southern Baptist Convention

PREFACE

I certainly have not completed this work in isolation. I thank David Sills, my supervisor, for his friendship and for introducing me to the study of anthropology, a discipline with which I have fallen in love. He is the supreme example of a man who balances a gifted academic mind with a passion for reaching the nations. His love for his family, faithfulness to God's mission, and clarity in writing are all traits I hope to imitate. I thank Jeff Walters for his humor and encouragement along the way. His obvious heart for the local church and the nations challenges me every day. I thank J. D. Payne for his sharp mind and burdened heart for reaching the unreached peoples God has brought to the United States.

I am indebted to my friends and colleagues who have provided clarity, support, and encouragement throughout this process. I fondly remember long days in seminar classes where the only thing that kept us going was that pot of "special" Indonesian coffee. I thank Hayward Armstrong for the gentle reminders as he often asked, "When are you going to get that paper done?" I enjoyed sharing an office with David Wells during the latter stages of my writing, especially the fact that we both enjoy near arctic temperatures in the office.

I am thankful for my two sons, Benjamin and Owen, who often greeted me with running (or crawling) hugs when I came home after a long day. I am grateful for Benjamin, who always asked me how my day at school went. I thank Owen for loving me when I was in a sour mood from writing for too long. I pray God will use you both to greatly impact the nations.

I am especially thankful for my wife, Beth. She continually prayed for me, sacrificed her time, and lovingly supported me through many years of school, including

moving five times in seven years. I look forward to the next chapter of our lives.

And finally, I thank God, who pursued me when I was tired, absent, and consumed with things lesser than Him. It is by God's grace that I am able to do anything of value, and I pray He uses this dissertation to help others make disciples of all peoples.

Anthony Casey

Louisville, Kentucky

December 2013

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Regarding the Great Commission, "[I]t has always been God's plan for the Church to go to the world, [however,] this strategy is only half of God's equation for reaching the people who don't have a personal relationship with Christ."[1] The world truly is at our door here in North America. The statistics are staggering. Over 1,000,000 people were granted legal immigration status in 2009.[2] Nearly 100,000 were given refugee or asylum status.[3] Another 162,000,000 people were granted non-immigrant admission to the United States, as tourists, students, or business people.[4] Overall, nearly 164,000,000 people entered the United States in 2009 from every nation on earth.

The United States ranks number one in the world among countries receiving international migrants. At mid-year 2010, the United Nations estimated that 42,813,281 migrants had entered the United States, 20 percent of the global total number of migrants.[5] Of these migrants, 562,359 were refugees. By comparison, Russia ranks

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[1]Tom Phillips, Bob Norsworthy, and W. Terry Whalin, *The World at Your Door: Reaching International Students in Your Home, Church, and School* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1997), 29.

[2]United States Department of Homeland Security, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2009* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2010), 5, http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook /2009/ois_yb_ 2009.pdf (accessed March 9, 2011).

[3]Ibid., 52.

[4]Ibid., 65. This figure includes any foreign born entrant to the U.S. for any reason, including vacation and business.

[5]United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in*

second in receiving migrants, taking in 12,270,388 or 5.7 percent of the global total at mid-year 2010.[6]

At the same time, the United States has been urbanizing at a rapid pace. According to the United States Census Bureau, "The nation's urban population increased by 12.1 percent from 2000 to 2010, outpacing the nation's overall growth rate of 9.7 percent for the same period."[7] The same source indicates that 80.7 percent of the U.S. population now live in an urban area. The world is at our door, there is no question about that. The questions are now, who are these people, where are they in our cities, and how do we reach them with the gospel?

Darrell Whiteman remarks that

> as urbanization and globalization come together in the megacities of the world, they present incredible opportunities but also tough challenges for the church. [However,] insights from urban anthropology can help us understand the tremendous rural to urban migration of people all over the world and why migrants are often more open to religious innovation when they move to the city. Anthropology can reveal how people move from rural kinship to urban social networks as the primary organizing principle of people in cities.[8]

It is precisely the challenges of reaching these global migrants, understood through the framework of urban anthropological theory, that form the core of this dissertation.

Research Problem

The main problem this dissertation addresses is how does immigration, particularly from rural to urban settings, shape the worldview and cultural identity of

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International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev, 2008), http://esa.un.org/migration/p2k0data.asp (accessed April 4, 2012).

[6]Ibid.

[7]U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Growth in Urban Population Outpaces Rest of Nation," http:// www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb12-50.html (accessed April 4, 2012).

[8]Darrell Whiteman, "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing Theology in a Globalizing World," in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 66-67.

immigrant peoples? I answer this major question by exploring two key facets related to immigrant worldview. First, I explore the relationship between urbanization and the formation of cultural identity. Urban living shapes the ways in which people relate to one another. The city itself is divided spatially and is governed according to city planner and politician's goals for the function of their city. Subsequently, those living in the city respond to the pressures of the city and seek to form communities that give expression to their cultural identity. Second, I explore the oral worldview because many immigrants coming from rural settings are closer to being primary oral learners than highly literate learners. They bring with them their oral worldview, communication preferences, and learning style, all of which pose challenges for church planters attempting to reach them in North America. These two facets, response to urban living and the retention of aspects of an oral worldview, form the basis for the production of cultural identity in an immigrant, urban setting.

It is my theory that literature and training available for North American church planters does not adequately prepare them to effectively plant churches among urban, ethnic, and oral background peoples. It is my hope that the research, analysis, and recommendations presented in in this dissertation will be a helpful resource to those with a passion to reach the nations here in North America.

Urbanization in North America

Urbanization is an old term that has been used to describe city-based processes related to city formation and growth.[9] Urbanization also addresses the way social networks use urban space and how micro-societies relate to one another within the broader complex urban population. Urban areas are constantly changing, whether

[9]Mark Gottdiener and Leslie Budd, *Key Concepts in Urban Studies* (Reprinted, London: SAGE Publications, 2006), 183-84.

growing in population and infrastructure like Las Vegas or declining like Detroit. The overarching trend, however, is that North America has been urbanizing at a rapid pace. The United States' urban population increased by 12.1 percent from 2000 to 2010, outpacing the nation's overall growth rate of 9.7 percent for the same period, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.[10] Many cities grew at a tremendous pace during the ten year period, none more than Palm Coast, Florida which grew by 92 percent between the last two census readings.[11] Growth of the ten largest cities in the United States accounted for nearly a quarter of the total population growth in the United States from 2000 to 2010.[12] North America, in general, is urbanizing at a rapid pace.

The proportion of new urban dwellers that are also immigrants is likely to be high. More than half of all foreign born peoples living in the United States live in one of four states: California, New York, Texas, and Florida.[13] Among the 40,000,000 foreign-born residents in 2010, 82.6 percent reported a year of entry prior to 2005. The remaining 17.4 percent entered from 2005 to 2010.[14] These figures show a large percentage of first generation immigrants living in the United States. As this dissertation reveals, these immigrants are caught between two worlds, the old and the new. They struggle with their

[10]U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Growth in Urban Population Outpaces Rest of Nation," http:// www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb12-50.html (accessed April 4, 2012).

[11]U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Population Distribution and Change: 2000-2010," http:// www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-01.pdf, 4 (accessed April 4, 2012).

[12]Ibid., Figure calculated from the population growth of the ten largest U.S. cities on page 4 and the total growth of the U.S. population from page 1.

[13]Elizabeth M. Grieco, et al, "The Foreign-born Population in the United States: 2010" (United States Census Bureau, 2012), 3, http:// www.census.gov/prod/2012 pubs/acs-19.pdf (accessed May 15, 2012).

[14]Nathan P. Walters and Edward N. Trevelyan, "The Newly Arrived Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 2010," under "American Community Survey Briefs," U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration, 1, http://www.census.gov /prod/ 2011pubs/ acsbr10-16.pdf (accessed September 5, 2012).

identity and the identities of their children.

Another mark of an urban area is one characterized by high density, diversity, and complex social organization.[15] Immigrants do not come with a clean slate; they bring with them religious, cultural, and linguistic preferences. Often, these cultural traits clash with the diversity found in North American urban areas. Cities are often regarded as "more diverse ethnically, racially and with regard to class than suburbs."[16] The diversity and general flavor of urban life adds pressures to immigrants that they often have not experienced. Immigrants respond to this pressure in a number of ways as they seek an assimilation strategy that allows them to survive in their new setting.

Assimilation and the formation of cultural identity are related. This dissertation explores this connection, specifically how the city reorients immigrants' understanding of their own cultural identity and complicates strategies for effective church planting. First generation immigrants bring with them their cultural heritage. This heritage often includes a worldview and orality background that play heavily into how they interact in their new setting. Such factors are also important when reaching immigrants with the gospel.

Literacy, Orality, and the Worldview of Immigrants

Literacy background of immigrants. Where immigrants are on the orality-literacy spectrum carries crucial implications for developing church planting strategies.[17] Current research on immigrants and literacy focuses on the process of learning to speak, read, and write English. For example, in 2000, about 17,800,000 U.S. adults, or 8.5

[15]Gottdiener and Budd, *Key Concepts in Urban Studies,* 186.

[16]Ibid., 187.

[17]See David Claydon, ed., *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* (Lima, NY: Elim Publishing, 2005), 20-21.

percent of the population, had limited English proficiency (LEP). Today, there are roughly 22,500,000 LEP adults, accounting for 10 percent of the U.S. adult population and 9 percent of the labor force.[18] The overwhelming majority of LEP adults are immigrants but little research is available on the literacy capabilities of these immigrants in their mother tongue. However, an interview with an ESL teacher informed me that the majority of those learning English through agencies in Louisville, Kentucky cannot read or write well in their mother tongue. These agencies only focus on teaching immigrants English and rarely consider the cultural background of the student.[19]

Even as immigrants gain familiarity with English and the written word, they tend to retain their preference as oral learners. Ito notes that in many societies, "even after literacy has become common, oral mentality and preference for orality have persisted."[20] Orality expert Walter Ong concurs that "even after the development of writing, the pristine oral-aural modes of knowledge storage and retrieval still dominate."[21] Immigrants' retention of an oral learning preference poses significant problems for not only teaching English, but for reaching them with the gospel in an understandable way.

The oral worldview. People holding an oral worldview pose a unique and

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[18]Chhandasi Pandya, "Limited English Proficient Workers and the Workforce Investment Act: Challenges and Opportunities," http://www.migrationinformation. org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=900 (accessed August 29, 2012).

[19]Dana Lindgren, interview by author, Louisville, KY, August 24, 2012. Lindgren teaches ESL for two refugee organizations in Louisville and expressed a lack of training to handle the cultural traits immigrants bring with them. Of particular challenge are those immigrants coming from oral preference backgrounds who, consequently, are the majority of immigrants needing ESL services.

[20]Akio Ito, "The Written Torah and the Oral Gospel: Romans 10:5-13 in the Dynamic Tension between Orality and Literacy," *Novum Testamentum* 48 (2006): 244.

[21]Walter Ong, *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 214.

challenging context for North American church planting. Oral peoples approach not just language but life itself from a very different perspective than many western, literate church planters. For example, the Lomwe of Africa house their theology in their songs and not in written texts. Laryea writes of "the many ordinary Christians whose reflections on the gospel can be discerned in their prayers, songs, testimonies, thank offerings, and sermons. They are the ones who are now beginning to set for us the parameters and framework for doing theology in a new key."[22] The author recorded and analyzed two-hundred sixty three songs to discern the theology of the tribe. The themes which emerged were deemed most important and most contextual to the people. Prominent themes were judgment, the return of Christ, personal and corporate sins, repentance, death, and life characterized as a journey.

Oral peoples approach theology in a very personal manner that is closely tied to the context in which they live. It is emic, or insider theology. Speaking of Pentecostal oral theology, which is prominent in that denomination, Camery-Hoggatt notes,

> The theology of the oral Church is automatically more pragmatic, more experiential, less critical, less logical, and more personal. It relies, if you will, more on testimony, and less on written texts. Written texts—even the Bible itself—are judged according to this different set of expectations, and they play a fundamentally different role in the daily life of the Church than they do in the technical world of scholarship.[23]

Oral theology relies on face to face contact between those involved in the interpretation and application process. Oral theology values testimony more than texts. In conclusion,

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[22]Quoted in Stuart Foster, "Oral Theology in Lomwe Songs," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 32 (2008): 130.

[23]Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, "The Word of God from Living Voices: Orality and Literacy in the Pentecostal Tradition," *PNEUMA: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 27 (2005), 249. See also Kenneth Archer, "A Pentecostal Way of doing Theology: Method and Manner," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9 (2007), 306.

it is clear that theology done in oral contexts is personal and closely tied to the perceived ways God has worked in the lives of those in the culture. Oral theology is expressed physically and verbally and is packaged in a dramatically different form than that which westerners are familiar. The personal interpretation and application of oral theology calls for a detailed examination of the interpretation process. Do oral cultures approach Scripture interpretation differently than literate cultures?

One author argues that theological reflection based on the spoken word is fundamentally different from that based on print. Oral theology employs different strategies of argumentation and exposition that stem from different understandings of what it means for something to be "true." He concludes that oral theology then leads to different dispositions toward spirituality and ecclesial life.[24] Oral learners are part of a community, and interpretation of Scripture often involves the entire body of believers. However, a prominent societal figure can have tremendous power through relationship and trust. This power can be used to lead the community toward or away from the truth. Consequently, the relationship of the community with the teacher or master is as important as the actual features of the story.[25] The following example comes from the Pentecostal oral tradition:

> Just as oral people distrust experts, so also oral Christians tend to measure theological competence against a more pragmatic yardstick. Consider this comment, which I once overheard at an Assembly of God district council: "He may have a string of degrees, but he can't preach his way out of a paper bag." What matters here is not what is said, but the assumption upon which the claim is made: The ability to preach one's way out of a paper bag is surely more important than a Ph.D. behind one's name. In an oral community, "them as can, does; them as can't, teaches." Practice trumps theory every time. It is not that the experts know something that the oral preacher cannot find out. It is that that exegete knows something the oral

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[24]Ibid., 225-26.

[25]Michael A. Rynkiewich, "Mission, Hermeneutics, and the Local Church," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 1 (2007): 50-51.

preacher thinks is irrelevant.[26]

A final example sheds additional light on the oral interpretation and delivery process. Davis notes that oral cultures "demonstrate a certain pattern of thought and behavior. Characteristics of such cultures include a lack of concern for original forms and authorship, extreme respect for rhetorical skills, placing greater value on interpersonal interaction than on abstract sets of values and logical deductions, and stress on the community rather than on individualism and individual thought."[27] In summary, oral theology and interpretation is accepted by the community because of the relationship of the community to those transmitting the information. Teachers are considered experts because of who they are and what they have done within the community.

Without an understanding of the complexities of the oral worldview, a church planter will not likely choose a methodology that relates to his people. He may be ineffective and not know why. Orality is a new paradigm for many in North America so training is necessary. The question remains, is the right kind of training available?

NAMB's Efforts at Urban Ethnic Church Planting

Churches are moving toward efforts to reach urban dwellers in the United States. I will use the North American Mission Board (NAMB) as a case study for this introduction to illustrate that urban church planting appears to have become a priority with NAMB. This urban priority has surfaced especially after Aaron Coe became the agency's vice president for mobilization. Coe states that cities are "the mouthpiece of any nation and the place where culture is created."[28] NAMB believes that if it reaches

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[26]Camery-Hoggatt, "The Word of God from Living Voices," 248.

[27]Casey Wayne Davis, "Hebrews 6:4-6 from an Oral Critical Perspective," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51 (2008), 754.

[28]North American Mission Board, "Why Send?," https: //www.namb.net/overview-why-send

the cities, it can reach the world and is launching efforts to plant churches in fifty key North American metropolitan areas.[29]

NAMB also realizes that there are many ethnic groups in North America that lack sufficient gospel witness. North America has "become a modern crossroads of peoples from around the globe."[30] NAMB sponsored ethnic church planting meetings and training sessions are beginning to happen around the United States. At the 2011 NAMB ethnic leadership summit, president Kevin Ezell said that NAMB's Send North America strategy will "benefit ethnic networks and churches more than other groups because many of you [ethnic church planters] are already established in the 26 'send cities' we're focusing on."[31] NAMB's 2012 summer missions opportunity list reveals a focus on urban, ethnic church planting. The description for Vancouver, Canada, states that, "As Vancouver is one of the most international cities in the world, students will connect with many different people from many cultural backgrounds."[32] Many of the missions opportunities include some kind of outreach to those of other ethnic or worldview backgrounds. In order to help equip Southern Baptists to reach diverse ethnic groups and their respective religious worldviews, NAMB has developed a tool for

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(accessed May 15, 2012). I do not agree that cities are the only place culture is created and disseminated. Rural communities have their own traditions and cultural expressions that may not be related to surrounding metropolitan areas in any way. I include this quote from Coe simply to show that NAMB is placing a priority on city ministry, partially because they feel cities are the primary place for the creation of culture.

[29]North American Mission Board, "Send North America Cities," https://www.namb.net/send-cities/ (accessed May 15, 2012).

[30]North American Mission Board, "People Groups," https://www.namb.net/peoplegroups/ (accessed May 15, 2012).

[31]North American Mission Board, "40 Attend NAMB Ethnic Leadership Summit," http:// www.namb.net/nambblog1.aspx?id=8590000986&blogid=8589939695 (accessed May 15, 2012).

[32]North American Mission Board, "SEND: North America 2012 Summer Opportunities List," 5, https://www.namb.net/uploadedFiles/2012%20Sojourner% 20Opport unities%20List%20% 282-10-12%29%281%29.pdf (accessed May 15, 2012).

understanding the major religions and prominent cults likely to be found in North America.[33]

Aside from a small number of brochures and the occasional ethnic church planting conference, there are not many training materials available to equip NAMB church planters to reach urban, ethnic populations. The intersection of urbanization, ethnicity, and oral backgrounds pose a difficult challenge for North American church planters. Books written specifically on church planting in the North American context have surprisingly little to say on matters related to ethnic, urban church planting and even less to say on orality as a methodology. Ed Stetzer, in *Planting Missional Churches*, gives little attention to these issues. One page is devoted to ethnic church planting, even as Stetzer acknowledges, "Although most growth in church planting in recent years has occurred among ethnic groups, comparatively little has been written on the subject."[34] Stetzer makes no mention of orality as a possible strategy in church planting, though he mentions the value of narrative preaching on two occasions as being helpful in modern North American culture.[35]

Former NAMB missionary, church planting professor, and author J.D. Payne covers many key aspects of church planting in his feature work on the topic. Payne acknowledges the need for contextualization, including cultural and linguistic contextualization.[36] Payne devotes a chapter to urban church planting, including helpful information on immigration. He writes, "Globalization, urbanization, and migration have

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[33]Tal Davis, *Barriers & Bridges* (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board, no date).

[34]Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 121.

[35]Ibid., 139, 274.

[36]J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009), 193, 196-97.

all contributed to the unreached peoples of the world being scattered across the great cities of the world" and urges church planters to share strategies with those operating in similar contexts around the world.[37] While making good points and alerting the reader to key dynamics of urban, ethnic church planting, Payne makes no mention of *how* to reach these unique populations.

This dissertation addresses the gap that exists in the literature, training, and practice of urban, ethnic church planting in North America. As noted above, these immigrants bring with them unique cultural and worldview traits that must be understood in order to effectively reach them with the gospel. Before I move on, a number of key terms germane to this dissertation need to be defined.

Defining Terms

Before describing my background and research methodology for this dissertation, it will be helpful to define key terms I will use throughout the dissertation. These terms include urban, urbanization, diaspora, refugee, urban tribe, orality, Chronological Bible Storying, storyset, church, church planting, anthropological theory, and assimilation.

Urban is difficult to define and is better understood through description. The United States Census Bureau's definition has changed with each administration of the census. Currently, the Bureau divides *urban* into two categories. The first is an "urbanized area" that contains 50,000 or more people. The second category is an "urban cluster" containing at least 2,500 but less than 50,000 people. The document notes that there are 486 urbanized areas and 3,087 urban clusters in the United States.[38] Additional

[37]Ibid., 354.

[38]U.S. Census Bureau, "2010 Census Urban and Rural Classification and Urban Area Criteria," http://www. census.gov/geo/www/ua/2010urbanruralclass.html (accessed September 26, 2012).

urban descriptors in the document include densely developed, and encompassing residential, commercial, and non-residential land uses. The United Nations notes that definitions of *urban* vary from country to country and even from time to time within the same country. These definitions are often more encompassing than the U.S. Census definition that focuses more on population than other economic or social factors. Many countries define urban through a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures.[39] The average population size often used to consider an area urban typically falls into a range between 2,000 and 30,000 people.[40]

In some regards, it is helpful to consider markers other than population when defining an urban area. Urban centers can be classified economically as well. Donald McGavran distinguished rural centers as those where the population "earn their living from the soil, dwell in villages, and eat largely what they raise" while urban centers contain people who "live in market centers and live by trade or manufacture."[41] McGavran's definition works better in lesser developed countries than in North America. McGavran also deemed the population need be over 10,000 for an area to be considered urban, regardless of its economic or social makeup. For this dissertation, I will use the U.S. Census Bureau standard of 50,000 people to determine an urban area. This population standard is the same by which a Metropolitan Statistical Area is determined.[42]

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[39]United Nations, "Methods for Projections of Urban and Rural Population United Nations (1974*)," Manual VIII. Methods for Projections of Urban and Rural Population* (United Nations, No. E.74.XIII.3), 9, http://www.un.org/esa/population/techcoop/ PopProj /manual8/chapter1.pdf (accessed April 4, 2012).

[40]Ibid., 11.

[41]Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 278.

[42]Federal Register, "2010 Standards for Delineating Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas," 75, No. 123, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/fedreg_2010/06282010_ metro_standards-Complete.pdf (accessed August 30, 2012).

Urbanization can be defined as "the process of city formation and city growth. Urbanization involves the way social activities locate themselves in space and according to interdependent processes of societal development and change."[43] Key terms in the definition include city growth and the interdependency of societal change.[44] Cities are places of density, cultural diversity, and complex social organization.[45] In North America and elsewhere, immigrants largely come to cities for economic reasons.[46] Immigrants are dependent on the larger urban economy to provide them a job. Urbanization will be used in this dissertation to refer to the influence of growing population, diversity, and social complexity on residents of cities.

Diaspora is an oft-used term that carries a plethora of connotations. Broadly, diaspora can be defined simply as people on the move who take up residence away from their place of origin. Diaspora differs from migration in the essence that diaspora peoples "share a certain collective consciousness of group distinctiveness and memory of homeland, and social solidarity in a new/host country."[47] It is this shared collective consciousness in an immigrant setting that is explored throughout this dissertation.

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[43]Gottdiener and Budd, *Key Concepts in Urban Studies*, 184.

[44]For an excellent discussion on the uses of urban and urbanization in the social sciences, see Edwin Eames and Judith Goode, *Anthropology of the City: An Introduction to Urban Anthropology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 30-70. The work is dated, but Judith Goode is one of the most recognized and respected urban anthropologists today.

[45]Gottdiener and Budd, *Key Concepts in Urban* Studies, 186.

[46]Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 48-49. The authors note that at least 91 percent of all migrants do so for economic reasons.

[47]See Enoch Wan, "Introduction" in *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice*, ed. Enoch Wan (Portland, OR: Institute of Diaspora Studies – U.S., 2011), 3. The term diaspora does not always need to refer to those suffering from forced displacement. Evans-Braziel and Mannur use the term to mean those "dislocated from their native homeland through the movements of migration, immigration, or exile." See Jana Evans-Braziel and Anita Mannur, "Nation, Migration, Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies" in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, ed. Jana Evans-Braziel and Anita Mannur (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 1.

Refugee is defined as someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."[48]

The term *urban tribe* was coined in 1985 by French sociologist Michel Maffesoli and was elaborated upon in his seminal work, *Le Temps des tribus* (The Time of the Tribes).[49] I follow Maffesoli and define an urban tribe as a microgroup of people who share common interests in urban areas. Heterogeneous immigrant groups may form urban tribes, at least temporarily, as they find more in common with their fellow immigrants in the new setting than they do with their home cultures.

Orality is a complicated term that carries at least three distinctions: (1) Someone who cannot read or write. (2) Someone whose most effective communication and learning format, style, or method is in accordance with oral formats, as contrasted to literate formats. (3) Someone who prefers to learn or process information by oral rather than written means.[50] Oral peoples fall on a spectrum from primary oral cultures to highly literate cultures. This spectrum will be expanded upon later in the dissertation. I will add that orality goes further than merely the way people communicate. Oral peoples approach truth in a different manner than literate people. Oral peoples' approach to truth will also be expanded upon later in this dissertation.

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[48]United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Refugees," http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c125.html (accessed September 25, 2012).

[49]Michel Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, trans. Don Smith (London: Sage Publications, 1996). Maffesoli, in accord with his postmodern approach, does not provide a concise definition of *urban tribe*. Rather, he describes the phenomenon through his work. See also Ethan Watters, *Urban Tribes: Are Friends the New Family?* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2004).

[50]These distinctions originated with Durk Meijer and are quoted in M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 176.

Chronological Bible Storying is the sequential selection and telling of key stories from the Bible in a way that is faithful to the text but also able to be understood, remembered, and reproduced by the hearer. Chronological Bible Storying differs from other types of storying in that it is generally used to convey the message of Scripture in its entirety rather than focus on a single theme.

A *storyset* is a collection of Bible stories that cover the topic to be taught. For example, a storyset may contain ten stories that focus on what the Bible says about shame.

Regarding *church*, I follow the definition and outline used by the International Mission Board and based on the 2000 edition of the Baptist Faith and Message.[51] The central components of the definition include intentionality, identifiable membership composed of born again believers, and a commitment to the Bible as the authority for life and practice. I realize that the church has many cultural expressions and is often in a state of change.

When I use the term *church planting*, I am referring to the intentional starting of new churches, primarily by means of evangelizing non-believers, and incorporating them into a fellowship governed autonomously. I do not consider multi-site campuses to be separate churches, nor do I consider multiple services held at the same facility to be separate churches. I do consider a new church to be planted, even if it meets in the same building as an existing church, if the new church is governed autonomously from the other congregations using the building.

Anthropological theory is that which "makes sense of a series of observations, statements, events, values, perceptions, and correlations. It is the glue that aggregates facts into a hypothetical description of a given time and place, which then can be used to

[51]The International Mission Board definition and explanation of church can be found here, http://imb.org/main/news/details.asp?StoryID=3838 (accessed April 5, 2012).

predict/explain events in another time and/or place."[52] Essentially, theory describes why things are the way they are. Within the context of this dissertation, anthropological theory is used to discuss understandings of assimilation strategies and cultural production of immigrants in urban settings.

Finally, *assimilation* is the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences. At least three key factors must be accounted for: 1) ethnicity is essentially a social boundary that shapes attitudes and actions toward others, 2) ethnic distinction plays out in a number of social and cultural differences between groups that form the boundary and allow one group to be able to say "they are not like us" and 3) assimilation is a form of change that may occur through change taking place in both groups on either side of the boundary."[53] As assimilation occurs, individual ethnic origins become less relevant as individuals on both sides see themselves as more alike than different. This definition of assimilation allows for the influence of the mainstream culture on the immigrant group but also allows for movement by the mainstream toward cultural values of the immigrant group. Ethnic distinctions do not have to disappear, yet assimilation is still possible.

Background

I have worked with internationals in the United States for more than ten years in a variety of settings. As a college student, I was part of a team ministering to students, mainly from Asian countries. We had no idea what we were doing and spent most of our time practicing English at the "Talk Time" weekly event we hosted. I enjoyed

[52]Stephen Schensul, Jean Schensul, and Margaret LeCompte, *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaires*, vol. 2 of *Ethnographer's Toolkit* (Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press, 1999), 10-11.

[53]Ibid., 11.

exchanging cultural experiences, whether they be making sushi with Japanese students or feeding them the squirrels my roommate and I had hunted (both quite the cultural experience). I spent a summer ministering in Chicago, and it was there that I was first confronted with the incredible diversity of urban migration. There are seventy-seven distinct Community Areas in Chicago, and many of them are ethnically homogenous.[54] I remember riding the Red Line train to its northern terminal and stepping off into an Indian-Pakistani community where little English was to be found, spoken or written.

After college I spent time in China doing linguistic research among Khamba Tibetans. These people lived in isolated valleys from twelve to fifteen thousand feet in the Himalayan foothills. It was here that I first encountered truly oral people. The isolated nature of each valley meant that villages had little interaction with each other. The result was that people in nearly every valley had a distinct dialect. There existed a Tibetan national script, but only the most educated Tibetan Buddhist monks could read it. The Chinese government had attempted to force the Mandarin Chinese language and education system on the Tibetans but they fiercely rejected giving up their cultural heritage. No translations of the Bible existed in the dialects I researched. The people had been oral for thousands of years. The agency I served with faced the problem of whether to produce written translations for each of the dialects. Some of the dialects were dying out, and others were merging with nearby dialects as advances in technology afforded opportunity for travel to surrounding regions. I remember thinking, "How could these people ever be reached without a Bible in their language? There are no Christians anywhere who speak their language." At the time, I had no understanding of orality or oral methodologies for evangelism and church planting, but the experience of being with

[54]Nancy Hudspeth, "Neighborhood Change in Chicago," under "College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs, Great Cities Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago," 2003, 1, http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/voorheesctr/Publications/VNC%20CONFERENCE.pdf (accessed April 4, 2012).

a people who had no written language left a deep impression in my mind.

Several years later I moved to Louisville, Kentucky, to attend The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. At the time, I fully intended to use seminary to prepare to go overseas as a church planter. My wife and I began attending a small house church that focused on reaching international students at the University of Louisville. These students were extremely intelligent but very unfamiliar with Christianity. At the same time, I had a class entitled Intercultural Communication, taught by David Sills. A large portion of the content of the class aimed at addressing how oral peoples think and communicate. Sills would often reiterate that stories make up the core of one's worldview. He showed the class how the stories of the Bible can address and replace erroneous worldview components of the target people. I talked with the leadership of the house church I was a part of and we began trying different orality methodologies in our preaching and teaching. We tried teaching biblical truth through songs, stories, and dramas. I thought it odd that our whole church would act out the story of Abram leaving Ur and following God's word but looking back, that particular drama proved effective in communicating obedience to God's word.

Later that summer, I went on a mission trip with Sills. We were based in Cusco, Peru and ministered in an oral community an hour's drive outside of the city. We spent the first week researching the worldview of the Quechua people and identifying bridges and barriers between their worldview and the Bible. We developed a fourteen story set that addressed those worldview issues and spent the second week telling two stories a night in a little mud-walled church. I was amazed at the interest of the people in our stories, as well as their ability to remember and retell the stories during our follow-up time. I took a class entitled Communication in Oral Cultures as part of the trip and read several books on orality that began to change the way I thought about reaching oral

peoples.[55]

During that trip to Peru I began to consider seriously pursuing a doctor of philosophy degree in order to study orality. I knew that I did not fully understand how oral peoples approach life, but I knew that orality was about more than just presenting Bible stories in a chronological fashion. When possible, I focused my doctoral seminar papers on some aspect of orality. I wrote on the rise of orality in modern missions practice, tracing the methods of preaching and teaching since William Carey. I explored how oral people think and whether oral theology is sufficient for sustaining healthy, reproducing churches. I researched how rituals act as communication models in animistic societies. These papers, coupled with hearing from my colleagues in the Ph.D. program who worked internationally, helped me to begin to understand orality as a way of life, not just an evangelism method.

During most of my Ph.D. course work, I led a team using orality to expose a group of Nepali refugees to the gospel and also to help prepare them to make the transition from Nepal to the United States and find work in Louisville. The process was fairly straightforward at first because I had an audio storyset that a missionary to Nepal had developed. A group of Nepalis would come, we would share the story from Scripture, and then do vocational English training. Before long, however, Iraqi Muslim refugees began coming to learn English. I was faced with the decision to focus solely on the Nepalis because I already had a storyset in their language or open up the group to the Muslims. I decided to open the group to the Iraqis, but my methods had to change because of the mixture of polytheistic and monotheistic worldview as well as the cultural

[55]Four of these books in particular are David Claydon, ed., *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* (Lima, NY: International Orality Network, 2005); Daniel Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries* (Self-published, 2007); ICEL, *Tell the Story: A Primer on Chronological Bible Storying* (Rockville, VA: ICEL, 2003); and Tom A. Steffen, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry: Cross-cultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2005).

distinctions of each group. I quickly realized that such a multi-cultural setting is coming in urban areas. I wanted to research how others were attempting to do ministry in a multi-cultural, oral setting and quickly found that many people were as unsure as I was. I presented my research on identifying and reaching ethnic groups in the city at the annual regional Evangelical Missiological Society conference and received feedback encouraging me to pursue the topic further.

This dissertation is the culmination of years of struggle to understand and minister in urban, ethnic settings in the United States. It seems to me that my situation is one of the most pressing issues in North American ministry today. I have talked with orality and church planting experts like Grant Lovejoy of the International Mission Board and J. D. Payne, formerly of the North American Mission Board, and both strongly encouraged me to pursue the topic of the intersection of urbanization and orality in North American ethnic church planting.

Limitations and Delimitations

The scope of this dissertation is limited by two main factors. First, there is a much smaller body of published material relating to North American urban, ethnic church planting than other kinds of church planting. For this reason, I draw heavily from the field of urban anthropology in order to understand assimilation and cultural identity in urban areas. I synthesize that research with what is written on church planting methods in order to address the topic of this dissertation. Second, there is little written on the area of orality, especially by evangelicals. Most evangelical writing is based on theories posed by a select few researchers who conducted their studies on oral peoples decades ago. I attempt to research orality as broadly as possible in an effort to provide a balanced description of the oral worldview.

Regarding delimitations, I have established several. First, the primary scope of the research for this dissertation focuses on urban, ethnic church planting in North

America. There are numerous resources on urban church planting approaches in international contexts but one of my goals is to show that relatively little application has been made to the unique milieu of the North American context.[56] Second, I focus my research primarily on first generation immigrants because they are most likely to retain their cultural preferences and are possibly most likely to return with the gospel to their homelands. Third, I limit census research to the period 1990-2010. The United States government publishes a new report on population nearly every day so the research body would never end unless I cap it. The year 2010 makes the most sense because that is the last census and is close enough to the present to contain applicable and relevant statistics. Forth, I limit application primarily to those church planters working with immigrants from more oral backgrounds. I make the case in chapters 4 and 5 that the majority of people around the world lean toward an oral preference for learning, but I also realize that there are those immigrants who are highly educated and prefer a very literate approach for learning.

Research Methodology

My research methodology relies on two main areas. First, I undertake a

[56]Books focused more on the international context include Steve Addison, *Movements that Change the World: Five Keys to Spreading the Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011); Charles Brock, *Indigenous Church Planting: A Practical Journey* (Neosho, MO: Church Growth International, 1994); Robert Brynjolfson and Jonathan Lewis, eds., *Integral Ministry Training: Design and Evaluation* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2006); Paul R. Gupta and Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Breaking Tradition to Accomplish Vision: Training Leaders for a Church-Planting Movement* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2006); David Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991); David Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: A Guide for Home and Foreign* Missions (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1982); David Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer, *MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium* (Nashville: B and H Publishing Group, 2010); Paul G. Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995); Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011); Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); and Tom Steffen, *Passing the Baton: Church Planting that Empowers* (La Habra, CA: Center for Organizational and Ministry Development, 1997), among others.

literature review of book and journal articles in the fields of urban anthropology, orality studies, and North American church planting. Second, I draw from personal ethnographic research done in urban centers around the world. For several years, I have conducted various research projects in Louisville, Kentucky on the formation of cultural identity among refugee groups. I have also conducted research for the North American Mission Board and the International Mission board in places such as New York City, Nunavut, Canada, and London. My professional training in ethnographic research methods includes several doctoral seminars on cultural anthropology, ethnographic research, intercultural communication, and urbanization. Additionally, I have received linguistics research training from SIL. My research methods are informed by several key works in the field.[57]

My primary means of analyzing the research is to draw out data focused on factors of urbanization effecting cultural identity, how oral peoples perceive the world and prefer to communicate, and for books on church planting that mention urban, ethnic church planting and orality. I use literature research to inform my understanding of the production of cultural identity in immigrant settings. I use personal ethnographic research and interviews to shed additional light on the topic, especially in areas lacking in

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[57]See Margaret LeCompte and Jean Schensul, eds., *Ethnographer's Toolkit* (Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press, 1999). See also Pertti Alasuutari, *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1996); Michael Angrosino, *Projects in Ethnographic Research* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2005); Shane Bennett and Kim Felder, *Exploring the Land: Discovering Ways for Unreached People to Follow Christ* (Littleton, CO: Caleb Project, 2003); H. Russell Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*, 3rd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2002); John Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998); David Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step by Step*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998); Bryan Galloway, *Traveling Down Their Road: A Workbook for Discovering a People's Worldview* (Self published, 2006); Carol McKinney, *Globe-Trotting in Sandals: A Field Guide to Cultural Research* (Dallas: SIL International, 2000); Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1995); James Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview* (Orlando: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1979); Idem., *Participant Observation* (Orlando: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1980); and Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998).

the literature.

Overview of Chapters

This chapter introduces the dissertation as a whole. I presented the research problem, which is how does immigration affect the worldview and cultural identity of immigrants, particularly from rural to urban settings? I examined the context from which this dissertation arose, particularly that of recent trends of globalization and immigration to urban settings. I defined the terminology necessary for the discussion of the topic. Next, I provided my personal background and experiences that led me to select this dissertation topic. I outlined limitations and delimitations for this research project. Finally, I presented the research methods I used to conduct research necessary for this dissertation.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature necessary to seat the dissertation within the broader spectrum of urban anthropology, assimilation theory, orality, and urban, ethnic church planting. Because of those views held by Rynkiewich and others, I primarily review secular urban anthropological theory in order to glean the best research from professional anthropologists to infuse into current evangelical writing on urban ethnic church planting.[58] I discover little overlap between the disciplines of urban anthropology, orality studies, and urban church planting. My research reveals that while general patterns are predicable regarding assimilation theory and church planting strategy, church

[58]Rynkiewich claims that current missiologists are teaching anthropology in the classroom as the discipline was conceived thirty years ago. He believes that anthropology has made a turn to follow the great changes occurring in the world over the past three decades but missiology has not. See Michael Rynkiewich, *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 8. See also Darrell Whiteman's chapter, "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing Theology in a Globalizing World" in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 52-69.

planters must have the skills to conduct their own ethnographic research to understand the specific dynamics of their target people.

Chapter 3 presents research on urbanization and cultural identity of immigrant peoples. I follow two anthropological approaches to describe the city and its effects on immigrant peoples. First, I study the anthropology of the city and discover several helpful metaphors to describe how city planners, laws, politics, and urban space in general shape where immigrants live and how they interact with one another. Next, I examine anthropology in the city, specifically how immigrant groups respond to the pressures of the city and urbanization. I describe three assimilation models that are common in U.S. cities – ethnic enclaves, cultural threads, and the urban tribe theory. Finally, I synthesize the data and theorize formation of cultural identity according to the degree of urbanization, public and private identity, and cycle of cultural identification of immigrant groups.

Chapter 4 surveys the oral worldview. I look at oral cognition, including discussing key features of oral language structure, how oral peoples categorize according to function rather than abstraction, and the nature of oral memory. I show that oral peoples need to tie memory to experiences or else memories slough off as the information no longer relates to their current needs. Oral peoples memorize thematically rather than verbatim and several studies show that oral peoples make small but continuous changes to their message over time. Next, I discuss the nature of the oral community, including how the community controls the transmission and interpretation of the message. I then explore what the introduction of literacy does to the oral worldview.

Chapter 5 draws together conclusions from the research base presented in chapters 2 through 4. I describe the need for church planters to have the skills to use ethnographic research to understand the specific dynamics of their target people in their city. I provide a specific approach to carrying out field research, including presenting

tools to identify the worldview, cultural identity, and orality preferences of the people. The second half of chapter 5 applies research to inform church planting strategies for several scenarios commonly found in the city. I discuss the question of whether to plant a mono or multi-ethnic church. I discuss key issues related to orality strategies, including the limitations of purely oral methods for church planting. I survey Paul Hiebert's model of critical contextualization as a means for church planters to help their people view their culture biblically as they work through the assimilation process. I present a general strategy for planting churches in each of the three models of assimilation found in the city. Finally, I write of the need for churches to partner together to share resources and carry out the great commission in the city.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation. I summarize the dissertation and then comment on the general applicability of this dissertation to urban contexts around the world. Next, I discuss the limitations of this dissertation for application to other urban contexts. I then encourage church planters and researchers to read broadly from the field of urban anthropology to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of the city for more effective church planting. Finally, I list several areas for further study related to areas of this dissertation that were beyond the scope of my particular topic.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter serves as a literature review that will provide the historical, theoretical, and methodological background the rest of the dissertation rests on. The structure of this review follows Randolph's guide for dissertation literature reviews.[1] The focus of the review is to summarize, synthesize, and analyze relevant literature from the fields of urban anthropology, orality, and urban, ethnic church planting strategy to discover areas of further study from which to build throughout the content chapters of this dissertation. Material surrounding these topics comes from a variety of academic disciplines, both secular and evangelical in nature. Thus, this dissertation is interdisciplinary in nature.

Personal Bias

I need to acknowledge my bias up front. Recent literature, especially in the field of orality and published by evangelicals, makes many claims about the nature of the oral worldview and presents strategies to reach oral peoples. Perhaps more than any other, *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* has had the most impact on practitioners' understanding of issues surrounding oral peoples.[2] Many claims made in the book are

[1]Justus J. Randolph, "A Guide to Writing the Dissertation Literature Review," *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation* 14 (2009), 1-13, http://pareonline.net/pdf/v14n13.pdf (accessed September 3, 2013).

[2]David Claydon, ed., *Making Disciples of Oral Learners: To Proclaim His Story where it has not been Known Before* (Lima, NY: International Orality Network, 2005). According to Google Books, at

not footnoted and if any legitimate research has been used as the basis for those claims, the reader is not provided a means to access that research. I am highly supportive of using oral methods to reach and teach oral peoples but I want to set my practices within the bounds of a broader range of study on oral peoples than what can be found coming from evangelical publishers. In taking this approach, I hope to more holistically study the oral worldview and avoid too simplistic and narrow an approach for reaching people from oral backgrounds.

Additionally, the discipline of cultural anthropology has changed much over the past thirty years.[3] Along with the evolution of anthropological theory, a distinct trend has occurred in the training current missions professors have had who now teach classes related to anthropology in Bible schools and seminaries. The fathers of the Christian anthropology movement like Nida, Loewen, Tippett, Hiebert, and Hesselgrave all received their formal training in anthropology from state universities with specializations in the field.[4] These men hold the Ph.D. in anthropology or intercultural communication. Each went on, at some point, to teach at an evangelical institution where their teaching restrictions required them to combine the study of anthropology with other fields like theology and missions. The discipline of missiology arose out of the crossing of anthropology, linguistics, and theology.[5] The result was a new generation of PhD

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least 187 publications refer to *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*. See https://www.google.com/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=%22making+disciples+of+oral+ learners%22&num=10 (accessed July 5, 2013).

[3]For a chronological overview of the development of anthropology and its application to missiology, see Michael Rynkiewich, *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), xi – 10.

[4]Some of these men, such as Nida, Loewen, and Hesselgrave, were trained in linguistics or intercultural communication, but I am considering these sub-disciplines within the anthropology domain.

[5]See David Sills' treatment of the rise and evolution of missiology as an academic discipline in his paper, "Missiology in a Changing World Since WWII," presented at the 2011 annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology, http://www.asmweb.org/content/ previous-meetings (accessed July 17, 2013).

holding professors who received their training in a setting that may not have allowed the full discipline of anthropological theory and method to be taught. These men are mainly the professors who currently teach missiology in U.S. Bible schools and seminaries. Their anthropological training is two generations removed from men who had formal training in the discipline.

Some, like Rynkiewich, who himself received the PhD in anthropology from a secular university have begun writing their thoughts that modern professors of anthropology and missions in seminaries are out of touch with modern anthropological theory and are teaching the discipline as it was thirty years ago.[6] He writes that those engaged in cross-disciplinary study, of which missiology is an example, are under an obligation to keep up with developments within both disciplines.[7] In light of these statements, I want to look beyond material from evangelical missiologists and their publishers in an attempt to draw from the best and most current theories from the field of urban anthropology. I hope that in doing so, I can infuse the evangelical world with new thoughts that will better ground our understanding and ministry of and to urban immigrants.

Research Methods

My method of research for the section on urbanization and cultural identity draws mainly from individual ethnographies conducted by professionally trained anthropologists and sociologists. Anthropological theory is typically built through field research and subsequent ethnographies are then compared with established literature.

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[6]Rynkiewich, *Soul, Self, and Society*, 8. See also Darrell Whiteman's chapter "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing Theology in a Globalizing World," in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 52-69.

[7]Rynkiewich, *Soul, Self, and Society*, 139.

Patterns are found that begin to explain important concepts like assimilation and cultural identity. It is from these ethnographies and works seeking to analyze them that the theories presented in this dissertation are drawn from.

There is less of a body of research available for the field of orality. In this case, I had to draw from the fields of education, psychology, linguistics, and anthropology for a research base. Field studies specifically related to the oral worldview are dated and their validity may be in question. In these cases, I found it helpful to read ethnographies on the social structure, authority base, and communication practices of oral peoples since these practices derive from the oral worldview. Orality is worked out in the context of community so studying the structure of oral societies can provide insight into the oral worldview.

Finally, many books are published from evangelicals on a variety of approaches to and models of church planting. I gathered major works in the field, especially those directed toward church planting in North America and in urban contexts. I searched these works for chapters and topics related to orality, oral methods for evangelism and church planting, urbanization, ethnic church planting, and contextualized approaches for reaching ethnic peoples in the city. Additionally, I evaluated several key works on international church planting to discern topics essential for those to understand who work with ethnic groups here in North America.

Coverage

Regarding coverage I chose to use a purposive sample of published literature. Thousands of books and articles are in print from the fields of urban anthropology and sociology. I mainly drew from works critiquing key studies on theories of assimilation and cultural identity from the past two decades. There are a handful of publications that have set the theoretical standard for understanding ethnic enclaves and assimilation patterns. These topics in turn inform immigrant cultural identity.

For the section on orality, I gathered a host of published books on the topic from evangelical authors. I searched for articles in recent peer reviewed journals as well. The field of literature is small so I was able to find most everything published in recent years on the topic from the evangelical perspective. Outside of evangelical publications, I draw heavily on the seminal work by Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy,* which is a standard in the field that is often cited in other works dealing with orality.[8]

Literature on urban, ethnic church planting in North America is sparse so I collected all major publications on church planting in that field published in recent years. A handful of authors are recognized experts in the field so I collected all of their publications on church planting.[9]

Organization

The organization of this literature review follows the general organization of the dissertation. I begin with an overview of key concepts necessary for this dissertation derived from a synthesis of the literature. These concepts are urbanization, urban anthropology, assimilation and cultural identity, orality and the oral worldview, methods for reaching oral learners, urban, ethnic church planting strategy, and ethnographic research methods needed for worldview and social structure identification.

After introducing key concepts, I provide an analysis of findings on each concept. This analysis will show any inconsistencies in theory and provide the basis for the research presented in the rest of this dissertation.

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[8]Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Methuen and Company, 1982). *Orality and Literacy* is cited in at least seventy published books according to Google Books, https://www.google.com/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=%22Orality+and+Literacy:+Technologizing+of+the+Word+%22&num=10 (accessed July 17, 2013).

[9]These authors are reviewed later in this chapter, but see especially Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City & the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

The literature review concludes with a summary of the literature, major issues needing to be further explored, and an introduction to the rest of the dissertation.

Urbanization and Cultural Identity

Urbanization and immigration are closely linked since part of the definition of urbanization is increasing populations in urban centers. The growth of cities requires a new field of study, as cities are the most complex societies. In this section, I survey the rise of urban anthropology as an academic discipline along with assimilation theories resulting from urban studies on immigrants. Urban anthropology provides the tools to study and theorize the city and its inhabitants and is useful for the goal of this dissertation. Assimilation is the natural outworking of immigration to urban centers and must be studied alongside urbanization. This dissertation seeks to better understand the effect of immigration on cultural identity of immigrants so assimilation theories are essential.

Rise of Urban Anthropology as a Discipline

Urban studies in the United States have their roots in the University of Chicago, which houses the first sociology department in an American university.[10] Robert Park was one of the first faculty members and transitioned to teaching from a journalism background. Park was particularly interested in issues of race and crime in urban contexts and found Chicago to be an ideal laboratory for theorizing and study. Ernest Burgess soon joined Park at the University of Chicago and the two began pioneering urban studies in America. Their early research examined the role economic competition played in the social organization of cities, as class and industry claimed

[10]This history of the origins of the Chicago School is taken from "The Chicago School," in *Key Concepts in Urban Studies*, ed. Mark Gottdiener and Leslie Budd (London: SAGE Publications, 2006), 1-3.

geographic space in the city.

This use of space was termed urban ecology and was studied more in depth by Burgess. Burgess noticed in Chicago the spatial sorting that led to concentric rings rippling out from the center city. The urban core contained a centralized business district surrounded by rings of neighborhoods consisting of various ethnic groups and social classes.[11] Early professors from the Chicago School were influenced by German social and economic theorist Max Weber, thus much of what the school published concentrated on the economic drive that produced social phenomenon.

Later, other urban theorists began studying how social networks, primarily through kinship, produced communities in urban contexts. These studies explored how cities are made up of small communities that function at the micro level within the larger city.[12] These authors reduced the city to the individual neighborhood, where local identity became the grounding feature of urban living in the midst of a diverse environment. Rather than focus on economic drive, identity based on kinship networks and local community was put forth as the central theory to understand the complexity of the city.

By the 1980s, a shift back to economy occurred as the main area of interest in urban studies. Susser published an extensive ethnography of a Brooklyn neighborhood that studied not only the lives of the working class people, but also the institutional forces

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[11]See Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, *The City* (1925; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974). This publication contains Park and Burgess' theories of the urban center and is somewhat of the seminal work in the field of urban studies from which later theories were developed. Several recent students from the Chicago School who draw on the school's early urban theory include E. Anderson, *Streetwise: Race, Class and Change in an Urban Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), and L. Wacquant, "The New Urban Color Line: The State and Fate of the Ghetto in Post-Fordist America," in *Social theory and the Politics of Identity*, ed. C. Calhoun (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 231-276.

[12]See Peter Marris, *Family and Social Change in an African City: A Study of Rehousing in Lagos* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1962), and Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (Middlesex, UK: Penguin, 1957).

of the city, politics, and class division.[13] Susser's study produced a string of other studies critically examining the anthropological method used in the preceding era.[14] These studies took a more holistic approach, rather than merely study a local neighborhood in isolation from the larger city context. These studies became a turning point away from studying only the lives of people through participant observation to broadening the research to include the way the city itself exerts pressures on people through political and institutional policy.

Current urban anthropological method and theory studies both anthropology *in* the city and anthropology *of* the city. The distinction is not trivial. Anthropology in the city studies groups in the city from an insider's view and notes how kinship, social networks, economic survival strategies, and other social patterns play out.[15] Ethnographies of immigrant communities often are built on fieldwork and participant observation and are used to build theories of assimilation and cultural identity within ethnic groups in the city.

Anthropology of the city, as noted above, examines the nature and structure of the city itself on its inhabitants. This approach links everyday life with the broader process of class formation, politics, housing authorities, and so on.[16] Jacobs theorizes that while global cities share much in common, they are not all alike. Other theorists

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[13]Ida Susser, *Norman Street* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[14]See, for example, Ulf Hannerz, *Exploring the City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), and *Cities of the United States: Studies in Urban Anthropology*, ed. Leith Mullings (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987). Mullings work contains sections on public policy and the urban poor, organizational race relations, and public schooling. These ethnographies are the hinge in method from previous studies on the people themselves to a broader study of the city at work *on* the people.

[15]Edwin Eames and Judith Goode, *Anthropology of the City: An Introduction to Urban Anthropology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 31-32.

[16]See for example, Jane Jacobs, "The City Unbound: Qualitative Approaches to the City," *Urban Studies* (30): 827-48.

have postulated that cities can be grouped and studied according to a number of metaphors and images characteristic of key cities. Low identifies twelve such metaphors in her reader on theorizing the city: The ethnic city, the divided city, the gendered city, the contested city, the deindustrialized city, the global city, the informational city, the modernist city, the postmodern city, the fortress city, the sacred city, and finally, the traditional city.[17] In chapter 3 of this dissertation, I draw on the research body of ethnographic studies on several of these urban metaphors. Such an approach helps provide a framework for studying the urban context and can enable the researcher to more quickly discern patterns from which to apply the anthropological research in his or her own specific context.

Research method has necessarily changed as anthropologists moved into the city. Early on, anthropologists mainly studied peasants who had immigrated to the city.[18] Here, peasant communities were studied in isolation from the broader urban context. Such isolationism was not possible in the city as it was in a mono-cultural village however. Modern anthropologist Darrell Whiteman concurs that in today's globalizing world, anthropologists must change their research methods. He writes that "we have often been more comfortable as "bush anthropologists" stomping through the steaming jungle than we are trying to make some cognitive sense out of the concrete jungle of today's megacities, teeming with a diversity of cultures, religions, and economic classes."[19] The result is just what urban anthropologists have discovered – that people

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[17]Setha Low, "Introduction: Theorizing the City," in *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader*, ed. Setha Low (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 5.

[18]See Eames and Goode, *Anthropology of the City*, 19-29 for the progression of research methods as anthropologists adapted to studying people in the city. For an early example of anthropological method in transition from traditional rural fields to the city, see William Mangin, ed., *Peasants in Cities: Readings in the Anthropology of Urbanization* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1970).

[19]Darrell Whiteman, "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing Theology in a Globalizing World," in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed.

groups cannot be studied in isolation in the urban context. They must be studied in how they relate to others and to the politics and institutions of the city itself. Whiteman summarizes that "insights from urban anthropology can help us understand the tremendous rural to urban migration of people all over the world and why migrants are often more open to religious innovation when they move to the city."[20]

Assimilation Theory

Studies of assimilation are the natural outworking of and complement to urban anthropology. Urban centers are often immigration destinations. Assimilation is essential to this dissertation because it relates closely to the cultural identity of immigrants. This section overviews the progression of assimilation theory in the United States throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Alba and Nee note that "assimilation is a contested idea today."[21] One only has to think of the plethora of metaphors used to describe the country to understand the conflicting ideas of assimilation: melting pot, stew, salad, tapestry. Each metaphor carries connotations of various degrees of assimilation. Early theories of assimilation saw the process as one sided. Immigrants would inevitably melt into mainstream American culture. An early landmark study on immigration and assimilation concluded that "the future of American ethnic groups seems to be limited; it is likely that they will be quickly absorbed."[22] Assimilation, it was written, required ethnic groups to discard their perceived inferior cultural traits in favor of acquiring the superior mainstream traits.

Craig Ott and Harold Netland (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 53.

[20]Ibid., 67.

[21]Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1.

[22]W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1945), 295.

Such a position smacks of ethnocentrism. American ethnocentrism was strong around the time of World War Two as Western military might and technological advancement were confused with cultural superiority.[23] A multi-culture theory of total assimilation was proposed, where lighter skinned Europeans would quickly assimilate but darker skinned "negroes and all negroid mixtures" would require generations to acquire mainstream culture, it such an adjustment was even possible.[24] Conveniently, these assimilation theories worked well with the pre-civil rights era racism and discrimination that was rampant in the United States. Blacks were viewed as incompletely assimilating even as they were asked to essentially become White Americans.[25] This era of assimilation thought required immigrants to "play the game by our rules or leave."[26] The cultural standard required at the time was the White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant (WASP) model popularized in Gordon's classic *Assimilation in American Life*.[27]

Over time, the "assimilate or perish" mentality fell away as immigrant peoples maintained their cultural characteristics and still found success in America. There then arose the mentality of multi-culturalism. This theory proposed that ethnic groups could maintain their ethnic identities in the midst of diverse cultures. The rise of ethnic enclaves like Chinatown in San Francisco and New York provides grounds for a vigorous

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[23]This thinking eventually spawned the infamous work *The Ugly American*. See William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick, *The Ugly American* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1958). The authors seek to reveal the American ethnocentrism that resulted in horrible foreign policy and relations in Southeast Asia in the decades following World War 2.

[24]Warner and Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*, 292.

[25]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 3. See also Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem in Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1944).

[26]Blair Ruble, Lisa Hanley, and Allison Garland, "Introduction: Renegotiating the City," in *Immigration and Integration in Urban Communities: Renegotiating the City* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008), 1.

[27]Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

ethnic pluralism where groups are free to maintain their own culture.[28] Findings on the nature of assimilation within enclave communities varies widely, however. Chapter 3 will explore models of assimilation more in depth.

Current theorists, such as Alba and Nee seek to produce a new understanding of assimilation that spans the boundary between complete assimilation into mainstream culture or strong identification with ethnic culture traits maintained in an ethnic enclave environment. These authors note three concepts that must be understood when studying assimilation.[29] First, ethnicity and identity is a social boundary that shapes one's actions and mental orientation to others. A Han Chinese in a Han dominated city in China may not even see himself as "Han" but such a distinction becomes important in a more multi-cultural context as he distinguishes himself from others. Second, ethnic identity is embedded in social and cultural traits expressed in a community that creates tangible differences between "us" and "them." For example, language, religion, and food taboos are shared by a community and are clearly visible to observers. Third, assimilation may occur through changes taking place on both sides of the ethnic boundary. Ethnic communities are not passive recipients of the culture around them. They contribute and shape the culture they inhabit just as it shapes them.[30]

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[28]See studies on ethnic enclaves in Thomas Bailey and Roger Waldinger, "Primary, Secondary and Enclave Labor Markets: A Training System Approach," *American Sociological Review* 56 (1991): 432-45; Greta Gilbertson and Douglas Gurak, "Broadening the Enclave Debate: The Labor Market Experiences of Dominican and Colombian Men in New York City," *Sociological Forum* 8 (1993): 205-20; Peter Kwong, *Chinatown, New York: Labour and Politics, 1930-1950* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979); Peter Kwong, *The New Chinatown* (New York: Hill and Wong, 1996); Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach, *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the U.S.* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985); and Min Zhou, *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

[29]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 11.

[30]See also Douglas Massey and Magaly Sanchez, *Brokered Boundaries: Creating Immigrant Identity in Anti-Immigrant Times* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010). The authors provide an overview of historical assimilation theory in their first chapter, "Constructing Immigration Identity," 1-15.

Thus, Alba and Nee define assimilation as "the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences."[31] By decline, they do not necessary mean the disappearance of ethnic traits, but rather, the distinction that the trait is "other" lessens and a wider category of what is culturally appropriate is formed. The cultural boundaries of both mainstream Americans and ethnic groups expand or dissolve as "assimilation" takes place. Alba and Nee's perspective on assimilation requires neither complete assimilation into some romanticized "American" culture nor does it romanticize ethnic pluralism in the form of ethnically segregated enclave communities. Their theory is balanced and provides fertile ground for further study through ethnographic research.[32]

Orality and the Oral Worldview

This dissertation focuses primarily on those immigrants to the city that come from oral backgrounds. Orality as a field of study has become prominent within missiology in recent years. It is important to examine the major academic works that built the first theories on the oral worldview. Modern missiologists have applied these early studies to create strategies for reaching oral peoples with the gospel today. The relationship between the academic study of orality and its practical applications is essential for developing a correct and balanced understanding of the worldview of oral peoples.

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[31]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 11.

[32]While Alba and Nee's theory provides ground for further study, public opinion is not in agreement that assimilation should involve a give and take between immigrant and mainstream culture. A 2004 survey found that 62 percent of Americans agreed with the statement, "the U.S. should be a country with a basic American culture and values that immigrants take on when they come here." See Kennedy School of Government, "Immigration in America: The NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School Immigration Survey" (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, 2009), http://www.npr.org/news/specials/polls/2004/immigration/ (accessed July 24, 2013).

Academic Origins

The academic study of orality came as a result of anthropological inquiry into tribal peoples' language, social structure, and cognition. Malinowski and Levi-Strauss, among others, were interested in how "primitive" peoples formulated meaning, categorized the world around them, and created vocabulary to describe it all.[33] After the Soviet invasion of many of the central Asian countries, Russian sociologists and psychologists began studying peasants who were either completely oral or perhaps had very low levels of literacy. Luria's classic study on cognitive development among pre-literate Uzbeks is still one of the best insights into the minds of oral peoples.[34] It was Luria who explored the limits of abstract thinking among oral peoples and provided many examples from the field on how utility and usage drive cognition among oral peoples.

These early studies were expanded in the 1960s through the 1980s as oral methods were applied to literary studies such as Homer's epic poems. Parry began to see features like metrical patterns, formulaic structure, and character repetition in *The Odyssey*, all features common in oral communication methods, and wondered if in fact, these epic poems were memorized and delivered long before being recorded in written form.[35]

Parry's understudy, Albert Lord, continued Parry's literary research but also

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[33]See Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages," in C. K. Ogden and Ivor Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1936), 296-336. See also Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. George Weidenfelf (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966). Other early studies of oral peoples include Bronislaw Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, 1926), 23, 43; and Franz Boas, "The Folklore of the Eskimo," *Journal of American Folklore* 64 (1904).

[34]See Aleksandr Luria, *Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundations*, ed. Michael Cole, trans. Martin Lopez-Morillas and Lynn Solotaroff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).

[35]See Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse*, ed. Adam Parry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

conducted fieldwork to see if it was possible for modern oral poets to memorize works as lengthy as *The Illiad* and *The Odyssey.* Lord studied Yugoslavian oral poets who composed their works in a similar fashion to Homer, using a metrically governed, formulaic approach. Lord discovered that, while the oral poems were metrically and thematically the same, they were never sung the exact same way twice. Interestingly, the singers thought they were not altering the words of the poem, but audio recordings revealed that they had.[36] Lord came to understand that the oral people he studied had no concept of word for word memorization. Rather, they memorized thematically. Goody, drawing on the study of thematic memory, found that many oral peoples often have a word in their language for "speech" in general, for a theme or concept, but no word for "word" as in an isolated and singular bit of speech.[37] In short, memory operates differently in an oral person's mind that it does in a literate person's mind.

Ong developed the work done by Parry and Lord and produced another standard work in the field of orality studies, *Orality and Literacy.*[38] Ong further developed concepts of oral cognition and memory. A major contribution is Ong's description of homeostatic memory in oral peoples. He found that many oral communities live in the present, retaining information that is functional in their day to day lives, but sloughing off memories that no longer have current relevance.[39] Some of Ong's research was based on an earlier study by Goody and Watt that suggested oral

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[36]See Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964).

[37]Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 115.

[38]Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Methuen and Company, 1982).

[39]Ibid., 46.

people have what they called structural amnesia.[40] Goody and Watt analyzed tribal genealogies that the Tiv of Nigeria used in settling land disputes in their territory. The Tiv were convinced their oral genealogies were accurate to at least four decades past. The British government, for their own legal purposes had been keeping record of these same genealogies, which were printed and sealed. The researchers discovered that the Tiv oral histories had changed over time based on which tribal family was in power. Essentially, tribal "memory" functioned in a way that suited current needs rather than remain overly concerned with past events that no longer had bearing on the community.[41]

These early studies laid the foundation for understanding oral peoples. Unfortunately, recent studies of the same magnitude have not been conducted. The foundational studies were all conducted during times of colonization where western governments and academics encountered oral peoples and were interested in their approach to life.

Missiological Applications

Missionaries began to attempt to better understand the oral cultures they were encountering as this body of academic research was being published. First, out of necessity, agencies like New Tribes Mission experimented with alternative teaching methods to disciples oral believers in places like the Philippines.[42] Shortly thereafter, the

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[40]See Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968).

[41]Ibid., 27-68.

[42]Tom Steffen has written the most detailed and accurate chronology of the orality movement in missions but the document has not yet been published. I have the document via an email from Steffen, but in deference to his copyrights, will not draw from his research at this time. He was a New Tribes missionary in the Philippines around the time his agency began using oral methods for teaching and discipleship. See a lesser overview of the orality movement in J. O. Terry, "The Worldwide Spread of Bible Storying: A Look at Where We've Been," *Orality Journal: The Word Became Fresh* 1 (2012): 41-62.

International Mission Board (then called the Foreign Mission Board) began using communication methods geared toward the oral worldview.[43] Over time, these early practitioners began writing on orality from a missiological perspective.

In 2004, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization convened in Pattaya, Thailand. There was a special group working on issues relating to making disciples in oral cultures, with a culminating paper being written summarizing a consensus of the group's thinking on orality.[44] This paper was published the next year and has become one of the most cited works in recent literature on orality and missions.[45]

The authors of *Making Disciples* make the case for the need for appropriate methods to reach oral peoples. They state that two-thirds of the world population, more than four billion people "can't, don't, or won't take in new information or communicate by literate means."[46] This is a strong statement and one which the writers do not justify with any citation of statistical research. Certainly, there are a large number of oral learners today, but one must be careful not to overstate the case to make a point. There are many such overstatements in the book, and while I do not wish to discredit the work in any way, I feel I must address several issues because of the impact this book has on current practice in missions.

The authors write that "stories heard in the mother tongue are easily

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[43]For a history of the International Mission Board's development of orality strategies, see Hayward Armstrong, ed., *Tell the Story: A Primer on Chronological Bible Storying* (Rockville, VA: International Centre for Excellence in Leadership, 2003). See also Harriet Hill,"Conversations about Orality" *Missiology* 38 (April 2010): 215-17.

[44]See the Lausanne Occasional Paper 54, "Making Disciples of Oral Learners," series editor David Claydon, http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lops/870-lop-54.html (accessed July 26, 2013).

[45]David Claydon, ed., *Making Disciples of Oral Learners: To Proclaim His Story where it has not been Known Before* (Lima, NY: International Orality Network, 2005).

[46]Ibid., 3.

memorized and retold to others. Oral learners can often recite large portions of scripture when they hear these passages in their mother tongue and packaged in the stories that they can easily learn and reproduce"[47] These statements lead the reader to believe oral peoples have astounding memories, however, no quantitative study is done to prove how well oral peoples can remember stories. Compare this statement with the findings of Lord's study on Yugoslavian oral poets. Lord did record and analyze the poets he was studying and found that they never told the poem the same way twice.[48] Interestingly, the authors of *Making Disciples* list Lord's work in their annotated bibliography and include the following statement: "This volume established conclusively that oral cultures are capable of producing lengthy, complicated, and beautiful oral art forms without the use of print and reproduce them with accuracy over long periods of time."[49] It seems to me that Lord would not entirely agree with such a strong statement on the reliability of memory with oral peoples.

Making Disciples does add that oral Bible stories should be recorded to ensure accuracy, as that may be the only scriptural resource available to oral peoples at the time.[50] Additionally, they describe a situation where a church planting movement was sustained through Bible storying. However, the teaching came in a variety of formats such as through radio broadcasts, listening groups, face to face storytelling, and through

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[47]Ibid., 26.

[48]See Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 26-28. Furthermore, the annotation of Luria's work describes Luria's account of a "remarkable journalist who remembered everything that had ever happened to him and explores what that phenomenon reveals about the human memory," 100. Luria's work has far more to say about orality and memory than that statement, which can lead the reader to believe that all oral peoples have such a remarkable memory.

[49]Claydon, *Making Disciples*, 99.

[50]Ibid., 36.

audio cassette reinforcement.[51] Such a mixture of delivery is much more involved than depicting that an oral learner can immediately retell the story after one hearing as the book leads the reader to believe in other instances.[52]

One last statement from the book needs further examination. The authors write "the 'oral Bible' is the singular key to unlocking church planting movements among unreached people groups."[53] Indeed, other specialists in orality make similar claims. *Making Disciples* cites Steve Evans workbook, which nearly equivocates the use of Bible storying and oral methods with producing church planting movements.[54] Even David Garrison, author of the book *Church Planting Movements* finds more is needed than simply an oral Bible to spawn and nurture a CPM.[55] Furthermore, other authors have studied confirmed CPMs that used printed Scripture.[56] Again, the authors of *Making Disciples* have made a very strong, unqualified statement that has influenced church planting practice.

Orality practices are coming to North America as well. Sample, Steffen, and Willis have observed declining literacy rates, along with the receptivity of people to stories in the United States, and have written hybrid works applying oral methods to more

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[51]Ibid., 44-45.

[52]Ibid., 42-43.

[53]Ibid., 70.

[54]Steve Evans, *Communicating Christ in a Cross-Cultural Context: Developing Effective Media and Communication Strategies Leading to Church Planting Movements*. See Evan's PowerPoint teachings on the issue found on the CD included with the workbook *Tell the Story: A Primer on Chronological Bible Storying*.

[55]David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004).

[56]See Daniel Sinclair, *A Vision of the Possible: Pioneer Church Planting in Teams* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2006).

literate contexts.[57] Additionally, several churches and church networks are experimenting with using oral methods to reach educated, post-modern people in the United States.[58]

Orality is a key issue in mission today, both abroad and in North America. The International Orality Network has begun publishing a journal to stay abreast of the latest developments in orality. I have presented several papers on orality and the oral worldview at recent Evangelical Theological Society and Evangelical Missiological Society meetings that were received with interest. I recently received an email from Ed Smither, vice president of the Southeast Region of the Evangelical Missiological Society informing me that the theme for next year's meeting is urbanization and orality – the very subject of this dissertation. With such interest in orality, it is important to continue to explore just what orality is and how oral peoples operate. Chapter 4 of this dissertation explores the oral worldview in depth in an attempt to provide a balanced approach to the oral methods used today.

Urban, Ethnic Church Planting in North America

This dissertation synthesizes an understanding of both urbanization and orality with regard to planting ethnic churches in North American cities. Much has been written on church planting but the question remains, what has been written on the specific context of reaching oral immigrants in the urban context? In order to answer this

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[57]See Tex Sample, *Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994); Tom Steffen, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry: Cross-Cultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2005); and Avery Willis and Mark Snowden, *Truth Sticks: How to Communicate Velcro Truth in a Teflon World* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2010).

[58]See particularly Soma Community Church, which has developed an entire training program using narrative preaching and hybrid storying methods for preaching and teaching, http://we aresoma.com/ (accessed July 26, 2013).

question, I survey three major arenas for church planting to glean insights into my topic and to also discover gaps in the writing that need to be filled in the remainder of this dissertation. I devote more space to a review of works on church planting than I did for urbanization and orality since this dissertation does not include a chapter focused solely on church planting literature. Rather, chapter 5 presents the culmination of dissertation research to develop a strategy specifically for urban, oral, ethnic peoples in North America.

Books Written for the North American Context

Ed Stetzer. The majority of recent books on church planting written for the North American context focus little on the unique dynamics of urban, ethnic church planting. Ed Stetzer is one of the most recognized authors and speakers on North American church planting yet a survey of his works reveal little emphasis on urban, ethnic church planting.

Stetzer includes a chapter on African-American and ethnic church planting in one of his earlier works, noting that "although most growth in church planting in recent years has occurred among ethnic groups, comparatively little has been written on the subject."[59] Ironically, he goes on to offer little insight into how to carry out the brief strategies listed. He provides statistics describing the cultural diversity of the United States and notes that planting churches using the heart language of the people is an essential strategy if we are to reach North America.[60] There is little connection between these statements and how to implement such a strategy. Stetzer describes several ethnic

[59]Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003), 159.

[60]Ibid., 160.

church planting models, broken into two broad categories. The first is geared toward the anglo church that desires to plant a new ethnic church somewhere in the community. The second category relates to churches desiring to house ethnic church plants within their own building.

Stetzer first describes models that fit the context of an anglo church desiring to plant a new ethnic church. First is the natural birth model where an existing, and likely anglo church, plants a new church in an ethnic community geographically distant from the home church. Second, a sponsoring church finds an existing ethnic church in another neighborhood and adopts it to help in its development. Third, the implantation model consists of a sponsoring church beginning an ethnic mission in its building and then transplanting the church out into the neighborhood once it begins to grow.[61]

Next, Stetzer provides models that work with churches who wish to use their building and allow more than one church to meet. Stetzer notes the multiworship service where multiple ethnic groups worship simultaneously but in different parts of the church in order to accommodate linguistic needs. Next, some church may use one corporate worship service in one language but provide small groups or Sunday School divided linguistically and culturally. Finally, Stetzer notes the multicultural church where the church is integrated but designs services for a variety of cultural groups.[62]

Stetzer concludes by stating that African-American and ethnic church planting is not the same as planting a predominantly Anglo church.[63] However, he does not offer any additional insight into the specific skills and strategies needed to effectively reach ethnic peoples with the gospel. The rest of the book is directed toward reaching primarily

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[61]Ibid., 161.

[62]Ibid., 163.

[63]Ibid., 164.

Anglos with a postmodern mindset.

Stetzer wrote another major work on church planting three years later.[64] One would think that in light of his previous comment about little being written on ethnic church planting, Stetzer would expand his attention on the subject in this subsequent work. He includes a chapter entitled "Understanding Cultures and Models," yet most of the chapter is focused on the distinctives between builder and boomer generations of white Americans and gives even less attention to the needs of ethnic church planting.[65] Ironically, Stetzer again includes the same statement that "although most growth in church planting in recent years has occurred among ethnic groups, comparatively little has been written on the subject" and devotes only one page to the subject.[66] He writes of the need to exegete the community in order to understand cultural dynamics but provides no insight into the process.

Regarding orality, Stetzer makes no mention of the oral worldview nor does he present oral methods such as Bible storying as a possible strategy in church planting. He mentions the value of narrative preaching on two occasions as being helpful in modern North American culture.[67]

Aubrey Malphurs. Malphurs has written two major works on church planting in the North American context.[68] Malphurs provides excellent resources for general

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[64]Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006).

[65]Ibid., 115-23.

[66]Ibid., 121.

[67]Ibid., 139, 274.

[68]See Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), and idem., *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting: A Guide for Starting Any Kind of Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011).

church planting but gives almost no attention to the unique dynamics of urban, ethnic church planting. He asks the question of why new churches are needed and cites the decline of the American church, the growing number of unchurched people, the growth of cults, and the unique needs of the Baby Boomer generation yet does not mention ethnic groups, immigrants, or those holding to other world religions.[69] Malphurs chapter on culturally relevant evangelism only briefly analyzes the worldview of increasingly unchurched, non Judeo-Christian background "Americans"[70] Here he mentions the need for cultural adaption but only speaks to being flexible on church meeting times and dress expectations.[71]

In Malphurs' follow up work, as with Stetzer, one might expect increased attention to the growing field of urban, ethnic church planting. Malphurs mentions the challenge when describing the need to understand the community the church is in. He notes a growing number of ethnic groups in key immigration states like California, Texas, and Florida but only writes that a church "will need to plan strategically how it will reach all who live there, especially those of a different ethnicity from the church."[72] Later, he encourages church planters to use demographic maps to find heavily populated ethnic groups in the city and comforts the church planter that if these groups "won't come to you, then eventually you go to them. Come up with a strategic plan for establishing churches in the areas of your community that are populated by specific ethnic groups."[73] He provides no insight into how such a strategy is to be carried out.

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[69]Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches, 31-46.*

[70]Ibid., 207-26.

[71]Ibid., 215.

[72]Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*, 125.

[73]Ibid., 133.

J. D. Payne. Former NAMB missionary, church planting professor, and author J. D. Payne covers many key aspects of church planting in his feature work on the topic. Payne acknowledges the need for contextualization, including cultural and linguistic contextualization.[74] He devotes a chapter to urban church planting, including helpful information on immigration. He writes, "Globalization, urbanization, and migration have all contributed to the unreached peoples of the world being scattered across the great cities of the world" and urges church planters to share strategies with those operating in similar contexts around the world.[75] While making good points and alerting the reader to key dynamics of urban, ethnic church planting, Payne makes no mention of *how* to reach these unique populations. Payne is in touch with global needs, especially unreached peoples in the United States.[76] Payne has done a good job raising issues related to the interface of urbanization, immigration, and church planting in North America but more needs to be written to flesh out the implications of this world movement.

Richard Harris. Harris' edited book contains two chapters devoted to ethnic church planting, the first among Asian-Americans and the second among Hispanics.[77] Prieto, who wrote the chapter on Asian church plants begins with general statistics on the makeup of the Asian population in the United States. He provides a general defense that contextualized churches are more effective in reaching the Asian community because

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[74]J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009), 193, 196-97.

[75]Ibid., 354.

[76]See J. D. Payne, *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVaristy Press, 2012).

[77]Richard Harris, ed., *Reaching a Nation through Church Planting* (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board, SBC, 2002), 151-80.

"not all Asian peoples are alike."[78] The author gives a short paragraph each to two crucial issues with immigrant church planting – reaching newly arrived Asians and second generation churches.[79] The chapter concludes with thoughts on the preparation, planting, growth, and reproduction stage of church planting but without sufficient detail.

Daniel Sanchez, an experienced church planter and missions professor writes the chapter on Hispanic church planting. Sanchez addresses important matters like the religious background, family structure, and assimilation stages of immigrants, though the latter is divided by generation rather than assimilation patterns of the first generation.[80] Sanchez concludes the short chapter with a multi-step process to church planting including a demographic analysis, finding persons of peace, sharing the gospel, finding respondents to the gospel, and then gathering believers into churches[81] Sanchez provides more detail regarding the steps necessary to find and engage ethnic groups in the city but does not show the reader how to actually carry out the process of completing each of the steps.

David Jackson. Jackson has edited another book intended to provide a comprehensive approach to church planting.[82] *PlantLife* contains a small section on ethnic church planting, primarily geared toward Hispanic and Korean communities. These short chapters simply bring to attention the need for ethnic church planting,

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[78]Jaime Prieto, "Starting Churches in the Asian Community," in *Reaching a Nation through Church Planting*, 156.

[79]Ibid., 160-61.

[80]Daniel Sanchez, "Starting Churches in the Hispanic Community," in *Reaching a Nation Through Church Planting*, 171-75.

[81]Ibid., 176-77.

[82]J. David Jackson, ed., *PlantLife: Principles and Practices in Church Planting* (Smyrna, DE: Missional Press, 2008).

primarily for the same reason Payne wrote *Strangers Next Door* – the world has come to the United States.[83] Jackson lists three suggestions for engaging local ethnic groups. First, he recommends opening existing church facilities to fledgling language congregations because these ethnic groups have difficulty finding meeting places. Jackson believes this step is the best thing an existing church can do to help reach the immigrant population.[84] Second, churches should teach English as a second language to immigrant groups. He states that almost every immigrant is eager to learn English and advises using materials based on the Gospels to teach literacy to start new churches. Finally, Jackson suggests local churches provide cars, furniture, clothes, and food to immigrants in the city as a means to connect with them and share the gospel.[85]

Jackson's section on ethnic church planting provides several simple steps a church can take to engage the immigrant community. However, the strategies are over simplified and do not take into account the complexities of immigrant worldview and assimilation patterns. These topics are expanded on in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Assorted Others. Until now, I have provided more depth on authors and books that contained some material relevant to urban, ethnic church planting. The reality is, many other books on church planting say nothing at all about the issue. These works focus on key components of general church planting such as the church planter himself, church planting models, the launch, and so on but are too general to be applied to ethnic church planting.[86]

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[83]Ibid., 115-16.

[84]Ibid., 116.

[85]Ibid.

[86]See, for example, Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping around Gospel and Community* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008); Mark Driscoll and Gary Breshears, *Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008); Tom Jones, ed. *Church*

Books Written for the International Context

Early literature on church planting in the international context focused on the indigenization of the church into local contexts.[87] The Church was moving out of the colonial age and in theory, colonized countries and subsequently, their churches were to be self-governed.[88] Missions history suggests that the transition of leadership, if one even legitimately occurred, was a messy one from western missions agencies to national believers. Westerners were fraught with ethnocentric tendencies, stemming from a variety of factors like perceived military, educational, and cultural superiority. Nationals were also fraught with ethnocentric tendencies, intensifying and stemming from reactions to poor treatment by colonial governments and even western missionaries.

The rise of cultural anthropology as an academic discipline,[89] propelled first by colonial interaction, and then by the cultural clashes encountered in the world wars, led to a new generation of literature related to church planting. Men like Alan Tippett, David

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Planting from the Ground Up (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2004); Larry Lewis, *The Church Planter's Handbook* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992); Mike McKinley, *Church Planting is for Wimps: How God Uses Messed-Up People to Plant Ordinary Churches that do Extraordinary Things* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010); North American Mission Board, *Bivocational Church Planters: Uniquely Wired for Kingdom Growth* (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board, SBS, 2008); and Darrin Patrick, *Church Planter: The Man, The Message, The Mission* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010).

[87]Venn (d. 1873), Anderson (d. 1880), Nevius (d. 1893), and Allen (d. 1947) were among the most prominent early writers on the indigenous church. See Henry Venn, "On Steps Towards Helping a Native Church to Become Self-Supporting, Self-Governing and Self-Extending," in *To Apply the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Henry Venn*, ed. Max Warren (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 74-78; Rufus Anderson, "Principles and Methods of Modern Missions," in *To Advance the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Rufus Anderson*, ed. R. Pierce Beaver (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 97-102; John L. Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (1886 repr., Hancock, NH: Monadnock Press, 2003); and Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (1912 repr., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997); and idem., *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It* (London: World Dominion Press, 1949).

[88]For an overview of the period, see Norman Etherington, ed., *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[89]See Rynkiewich, *Soul, Self, and Society*, 169-97 for a historical overview of the relationship of colonialism and post colonialism to cultural anthropology.

Hesselgrave, Paul Hiebert, and Charles Kraft deemed themselves "missionary anthropologists" and sought to draw from their professional study in the social sciences to offer insights into cross-cultural church planting.[90]

More recently, a new generation of literature is circulating, most of which interacts with the idea of Church Planting Movements. Mission agencies like the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention began to use creative means to access peoples in countries that were closed to missionary presence starting in the 1980s.[91] Strategies were developed to quickly and efficiently reach and train nationals so they were equipped to plant churches among their own people. As these "movements" began to take shape, men like David Garrison studied them and attempted to draw out general principles common to the rapid acceleration of church growth.[92]

Missions strategy in general has moved from western based models where missions efforts and local pastorates were occupied by foreigners to a model that Tom Steffen calls the facilitator era.[93] The trend today is empowerment of nationals to carry

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[90]See, for example Alan Tippett, *Verdict Theology in Mission Theory* (Lincoln, IL: Lincoln Christian College Press, 1969); David Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978); idem., *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: A Guide for Home and Foreign Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980); Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries.* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985); and Charles Kraft, *Anthropology for Christian Witness* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996).

[91]See Bruce Carlton's book detailing IMB strategy transition through this time period: R. Bruce Carlton, *Strategy Coordinator: Changing the Course of Southern Baptist Missions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011).

[92]See David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004). Subsequent works on the same topic include Kevin Sutter, *Keys to Church Planting Movements* (Ann Arbor, MI: Asteroidea Books, 2008); Steve Addison, *Movements that Change the World: Five Keys to Spreading the Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), and to a lesser extent Daniel Sinclair, *A Vision of the Possible: Church Planting in Teams* (Colorado Springs: Authentic, 2006).

[93]Tom Steffen, *The Facilitator Era: Beyond Pioneer Church Multiplication* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011). See also Steffen's earlier work *Passing the Baton: Church Planting that Empowers* (La Habra, CA: Center for Organizational and Ministry Development, 1997).

out the remaining task of reaching the nations including church planting, Bible translation, leadership training, and even formal Bible school and seminary schooling.[94] These authors and their works interact with cross-cultural issues in overseas contexts. There is little application to the North American context found specifically in the works, but perhaps church planters here can draw from two key principles that are useful in any ethnic context.

Usefulness of cultural anthropology. Paul Hiebert, perhaps the preeminent missionary anthropologist, draws a close connection to the value of cultural anthropology to the task of missions and church planting.[95] Hiebert writes that in past generations, church planters understood the Scriptures well but not the people they served. The result of cultural misunderstanding is the message is not understood, churches look foreign to the context, and believers remain tied to outside support.[96] Hiebert notes that all people live in a specific context: that of their family, neighborhood, city, and nation. Yet, most people do not give specific thought to these issues and how they shape the worldview and perception of what is true, right, and proper. People inevitably assume everyone is like them.[97] Hiebert observes that oftentimes, "only when things go wrong, or change rapidly, or when our views of reality conflict with the assumptions from another culture

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[94]See one example in Paul R. Gupta and Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Breaking Tradition to Accomplish Vision: Training Leaders for a Church-Planting Movement* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2006). Gupta and Lingenfelter developed an extensive training model for pastors and church planters across India.

[95]See a dissertation treatment on the connection in Philip Barnes, "Missiology Meets Cultural Anthropology: The Life and Legacy of Paul G. Hiebert" (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011).

[96]Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 10.

[97]Paul Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 17-18.

do we question them."[98] In the midst of these crises, cultural anthropology can help the church planter make sense of why things are going wrong in the new cultural setting.

Anthropology helps the church planter discover the worldview of the target people. Hiebert defines worldview as the "fundamental cognitive, affective, and evaluative presuppositions a group of people make about the nature of things, and which they use to order their lives."[99] Basically, worldview dictates how people perceive reality and provides the basis for what they value with regard to religious beliefs and social relationships – two key categories for church planting. Without an awareness of the distinctives of culture, ethnicity, and social grouping, a church planter may inevitably treat all people the same. Such an approach fails to take into account the diversity of God's creation and the expression the church can take in a variety of contexts. Hiebert and others offer insight for missionaries into how to discover the worldview of a particular people. Chapter 5 of this dissertation explores this process in detail specific to the urban context in North America.

Contextualization. In light of the above discussion, church planters should have the goal of implementing a church that is biblically faithful but at the same time culturally understandable.[100] There are times in history where churches were biblically faithful but looked foreign in the culture. There were times when churches look very much like the local culture but to the expense of biblical truth. Church planters in every age and in every culture must find the balance and writers from the international church

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[98]Ibid., 18.

[99]Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 15.

[100]See Hiebert's chapter on contextualization in *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 75-92.

planting arena provide insight. Hiebert has written one of the most used models for what he calls critical contextualization, which consists of four interwoven steps.

First, one must exegete the culture. Understanding the local people, culture, and practices is essential to avoiding later syncretism or presenting a gospel that makes no sense to the people. Second, one must examine the Scripture along with the local believers. At this stage, cultural practices that are in conflict with biblical truth should come to light. At the same time, cultural practices that are not sinful can be retained within the church. The third step involves the people critically evaluating their cultural practices and decided which are inherently sinful and must be rejected, which can be altered and used for Christian purposes, and which are biblically neutral and can remain unchanged. The fourth step entails implementing the new contextualized practices in the life of the church.[101]

Critical contextualization addresses two major issues in church planting. The first is making the gospel understandable to the people. Cultural exegesis helps the church planter learn the specifics of the worldview and culture of the people so that the gospel can appear less foreign. The second help is to avoid syncretism. The church planter, along with national pastors, now hopefully understand both the culture and the Scriptures and can address practices and expressions of church that begin to blend sinful aspects of the culture with essentials of the gospel.[102]

Books Written for the Urban Context

There exists within the field of church planting literature a specific focus on

[101]For an excellent cultural survey and application of these principles at work in a specific people group, see Kenneth Nehrbass, *Christianity and Animism in Melanesia: Four Approaches to Gospel and Culture* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2012) .

[102]Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*, 91-92.

the urban context. Tim Keller is one author many affiliate with urban ministry. His recent work, *Center Church*, may become the standard for those engaged in city ministry. Here, one would expect to find treatments including immigration and ethnic issues since cities are by definition diverse. Keller gives attention to immigration as he discusses globalization. His point is that because of globalization, immigrants to urban areas connect the city to their respective homelands.[103] Keller notes that cities give the church access to unreached peoples who immigrate to the United States.[104] However, Keller does not go into detail on these niche ministries.

Center Church, Keller's attempt at holistically describing city ministry, is excellent for those working in the financial districts of large cities, but fails to provide any in depth insight into those working with immigrants or ethnic groups. Perhaps this discrepancy is the result of Keller addressing contexts similar to that of his church in Manhattan.

Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz, at the full maturity of their thought on urban ministry, published a comprehensive guide to urban ministry.[105] Their *Urban Ministry* is more suited to the questions this dissertation seeks to answer. The work is divided into six sections, four of which relate to the context of this dissertation and will provide the framework for further review of the literature on urban, ethnic church planting.

The place (primacy) of the city. As noted above, urban anthropologists have begun to study the city itself and examine how law, codes, and urban planning and design

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[103]Tim Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 155.

[104]Ibid., 161.

[105]Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City & the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

work to create culture within the city. Conn and Ortiz draw from some of this research and include a section in their work on understanding the city.[106] These authors seek to demonstrate how urban centers are at the center of culture production, a place where religion, politics, and sheer numbers of people come together and influence both the local and global culture.

Several papers presented at a recent Evangelical Missiological Society meeting stress the importance of the city as place as well. McMahan lists ten key reasons why the city is strategic: Numbers of people, opportunity, freedom for people to explore their beliefs, receptive people, receiving centers for immigrants, world influence, cultural center, cities are on travel route cross-sections, cities can meet holistic needs of people, and cities are places for renewal and reinvention.[107] Essentially, cities are places of influence, power, and possibility regarding cultural production and missiological opportunity.

Globalization is the phenomenon that allows cities worldwide influence. Baker writes of three defining characteristics of a globalized world, centered in the city.[108] First, she notes that cities are now interconnected as never before. Travel and transportation, of goods human, industrial, and technological in nature, is fast and low in cost. Second, globalization compresses people into high density centers where diverse interaction is forced. Third, globalization causes deterritorialization. Major world cities share more in common with each other than they do with the culture of the country in

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[106]Ibid., 157-254.

[107]Alan McMahan, "The Strategic Nature of Urban Ministry," in *Reaching the City: Reflections on Urban Mission for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Gary Fujino, Timothy Sisk, and Tereso Casino (Pasadena, CA: Evangelical Missiological Society, 2012), 1-18.

[108]Susan Baker, "Introduction: Globalization, Urbanization and Mission," in *Globalization and Its Effects on Urban Ministry in the 21st Century*, ed. Susan Baker (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 20-21.

which they are located.

Research needs. The complexity and diversity of the city leads to difficulty in understanding the specific realities that individuals face in their own neighborhoods. The only way to learn of these realities is through research. Yet, J.D. Payne writes that historically, evangelicals have not placed much confidence in research.[109] Thankfully, times are changing. The creation of worldwide evangelical research databases like the Joshua Project, IMB Global Research, and the World Christian Database showed the usefulness of people groups research for missions strategy.

These groups mainly focus overseas, however, and Payne feels that evangelicals in many ways have a better understanding of peoples across the oceans than we do here in the U.S. and Canada. He writes "we have little to no knowledge of the peoples in our neighborhoods."[110] What Payne is referring to is the lack of ground level understanding of people groups in cities. Census data and demographics can only provide what Payne calls the "15,000 foot perspective."[111] At this level, one can only find that there are pockets of Somalis living in a zip code. The census cannot tell where they precisely live, what specific people groups are there, whether they have an evangelical presence or not, and what their social relationships are with other people in the area. Only street level anthropological research can answer these important questions. These authors and urban ministry practitioners see the value of research, both demographic and ethnographic in nature, to effectively minister in the city.

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[109]J. D. Payne, "Examining Evangelical Concentrations and International Migrations in the US and Canada: A Call for More and Better Urban Research," in *Reaching the City: Reflections on Urban Mission for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Gary Fujino, Timothy Sisk, and Tereso Casino (Pasadena, CA: Evangelical Missiological Society, 2012), 139.

[110]Ibid., 140.

[111]Ibid., 145.

Harvie Conn raises the need for anthropological research in addition to demographic and census research for effective urban ministry.[112] Conn and Ortiz's larger work includes chapters on the value of the social sciences for missions and sections on both ethnographic and demographic studies.[113] Fuder lists ethnographic research as a critical issue for urban ministry.[114] Fuder was trained at Biola University under anthropologists Sherwood and Judy Lingenfelter. He cites his training in ethnographic research methods as one of the most profound and helpful learning experiences of his life.[115]

These evangelical authors and urban church planters include research as an essential component in the urban church planting process. For decades, urban anthologists have relied heavily on ethnographic studies conducted in urban neighborhoods to ground their theories of immigration and social dynamics in diverse urban environments. While a call for this type of research is not widespread in urban church planting literature, authors are beginning to see the value and even necessity of research for effective church planting strategy.

Diverse strategies for church planting. Research reveals the diversity of peoples and their social settings in urban environments. The outcome of these findings should lead to multiple strategies for church planting. Works in this field contain two

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[112]See Harvie Conn, ed., *Planting and Growing Urban Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), chapters 1-2, pp. 35-52. It is worth noting that Conn begins his work on urban church planting with a section detailing the need for research as the basis for strategy.

[113]See Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, chapters 14-16, pp. 255-310.

[114]John Fuder, "Exegeting Your Community: Using Ethnography to Diagnose Needs," in *A Heart for the Community: New Models for Urban and Suburban Ministry*, ed. John Fuder and Noel Castellanos (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 67-82.

[115]Ibid., 69.

main areas of strategy – addressing felt needs in the urban environment and accommodating strategy to people groups or population segments in the city.

Many authors identify strategies involving addressing felt needs of urban dwellers. Ellison notes that the clamor of urban life pulls peoples' attention in many different directions. Addressing felt needs (1) provides a point of redemptive contact – it builds a genuine relationship, (2) felt needs ministries add credibility to the communication of the gospel, and (3) the Scriptures command ministry in word and deed.[116] Baker includes a section on reconciliation because the city brings together peoples who may have traditionally been at war or the subject of oppression and discrimination.[117] Fuder includes a section on reaching disenfranchised subcultures such as the homeless, homosexual communities, and housing projects.[118] Conn and Ortiz include a section on social transformation that extends beyond the individual to the community itself.[119] Felt needs ministries are important in the urban context.[120]

Urban centers contain a variety of population segments. There are some who insist on a multi-ethnic approach to church,[121] though most works argue for a

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[116]Craig Ellison, "Addressing Felt Needs of Urban Dwellers," in *Planting and Growing Urban Churches: From Dream to Reality* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 94-110.

[117]Baker, ed., *Globalization and Its Effects on Urban Ministry*, 109-76. This section includes chapters on addressing ethnic marginalization, social justice, and warring between people groups living in close proximity.

[118]John Fuder, ed., *A Heart for the City: Effective Ministries to the Urban Community* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 327-404.

[119]Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 340-57.

[120]See also Harvie Conn, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1982),

[121]See, for example, Mark DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007). DeYmaz argues that a church is in sin if its congregation does not reflect the diversity of the neighborhood within which it is located.

contextualized approach to reach various social and ethnic groups in the city. Harvie and Conn argue for appropriate strategies for populations of immigrants, with linguistic and cultural distinctions, and then other strategies for the poor in the city, with their social distinctions.[122] Neighbour suggests a thirteen step process for creating a contextualized strategy to reach the entire city, with attention given to various ethnic and social dimensions from center city to suburbs.[123]

Aspects of training leaders in urban contexts. A final category authors deem crucial for urban ministry is the selection and training of leaders in the urban context. Conn and Ortiz suggest there are three kinds of leaders in the urban context.[124] The first is the relocated leader who moves to the city from a distinctly different context. The second is the indigenous leader who grew up in the city and belongs to a particular cultural group in the city. The third kind of leader is the multiethnic leader. This type of leader networks and partners with the diverse array of ethnic leaders found in center city contexts and has the aptitude to navigate interculturally. These authors warn against overlooking the indigenous leadership that may already be in place in the community in favor of bringing in a relocated leader who is unfamiliar with the context and does not have the trust of the local people.[125]

Appropriate models of mentorship, informal, and formal theological education are important in the urban context. Aviles describes the difficulty in reaching and

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[122] Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 311-39.

[123]Ralph Neighbour, "How to Create an Urban Strategy," in *Planting and Growing Urban Churches*, 111-24.

[124]Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 379-86.

[125]Ibid., 412.

training leaders from gang backgrounds in Chicago.[126] People in the city have a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds that must be considered when developing training programs. Are the leaders from a high oral culture where intensive hands on learning is essential? How does the teacher build trust in a trustless environment? How does one motivate urban leaders to stay in the city and start new works?[127] The urban environment brings unique challenged for training leaders and one that must be taken seriously for effective ministry.

Findings

In general, two themes rise out of the research conducted for this literature review. First, it became apparent that there is little overlap between the fields of urban anthropology, orality studies, and urban church planting. How do these fields relate, if at all, and can an interdisciplinary approach yield effective results? Second, there is an obvious need for further field research to be conducted by those working with ethnic groups in the city. Theories are in flux and it is difficult to discern how broadly applicable any apparent patterns are to other cities.

Little Overlap between Fields

A survey of the literature from the fields of urban anthropology, orality studies, and urban church planting reveals little overlap between the disciplines. Urban anthropologists have not studied the impact on the oral worldview of literacy introduction through English as a Second Language courses or other means during the immigrant assimilation process. Conversely, orality studies were conducted in primarily rural, mono-cultural settings. The question arises; in what ways do people from oral

[126]Pedro Aviles, "Mentoring: Developing Urban Leaders in Chicago," in *Globalization and Its Effects on Urban Ministry*, 283-304.

[127]See Conn and Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 401-52, for chapters on each of these issues.

backgrounds adjust to the urban, literate realm of U.S. cities? Additionally, urban church planting literature draws little from the assimilation theories generated by urban anthropologists and sociologists. For example, how do theories of assimilation produced by the social sciences relate to church planting strategies? Are certain strategies more appropriate for various models of assimilation? Can one develop specific strategies that are grounded in field research and transferable to cities with similar assimilation models?

With orality, evangelicals seem reticent to draw from the full breadth of secular research or conduct new research on the realities of orality. The majority of the studies cited in the evangelical literature are thirty to seventy years old. As Whiteman, Rynkiewich, and others note, the world is not the same today as it was decades ago. People groups hardly live in isolated, mono-cultural and mono-lingual, communities of the past century. Are these evangelical proponents of orality strategies naïvely reliant on near perfect oral memories and a belief that oral peoples never change the message? Will these claims made in works like *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* fall apart if subjected to further study?

Regarding church planting, most books are too general to be helpful in specific contexts like urban, ethnic church planting with all of its complexities. Major authors like Ed Stetzer say little to nothing on reaching oral peoples or ethnic groups in the city. Standard works in the field such as those by Harvie and Conn make no mention of reaching oral peoples as well.

In order to develop an appropriate strategy for reaching ethnic groups in the city from oral backgrounds, one must draw from the most accurate research on how immigrant identity is shaped by the new urban environment and also how the intricacies of the oral worldview factor into the cultural identity and approach to life in a U.S. city, which almost certainly requires a move toward literacy for purposes of education and employment.

Need for Ethnographic Research

The contested nature of recent studies on urban theory and assimilation theory mean that continued ethnographic research is necessary. Low raises the theory of cities as metaphors, but can commonalties be found among cities sharing similar identities? Furthermore, how do these metaphors like the contested city impact immigrant identity? Harvie, Conn, Fuder, and Castellanos, among others, call for church planters to conduct ethnographic research to develop appropriate strategies. How is this research to be carried out? Are unique research methods required in the urban context?

Summary and Conclusions

These findings raise a number of questions in three major arenas that must be explored further in order to fulfill the goals of this dissertation. First, church planters must read across the disciplines in order to gain access to the latest and best research available. Evangelicals must read beyond evangelicalism and be prepared to assess current evangelical publications in light of broader research. This need is especially apparent with orality and oral strategies. Just what is the oral worldview and how strongly does it remain in the face of immigration and exposure to literacy? This dissertation will explore in greater detail just what the oral worldview is and how strong memory faculties really are among oral peoples.

Second, urban anthropology has developed many theories regarding how the city impacts its residents and how immigrants adapt to their new environment. There is a relationship between assimilation and cultural identity that becomes important with regard to church planting strategy. Do ethnic groups lessen their individual identities when they immigrate? Can they be reached as "immigrants" in general or must their unique cultural backgrounds be taken into account? This dissertation will explore in greater detail how assimilation relates to cultural identity to answer those questions.

Finally, what tools does a church planter need to begin the task of reaching

ethnic groups in the city? Research reveals the need for further ethnographic research. This dissertation will explore whether specific research methods are required for urban ethnographic research and will present a model for church planters to follow as they learn about their people, seek to discover their worldview and cultural identity in their new urban setting, and develop appropriate church planting strategies based on what they find.

CHAPTER 3

URBANIZATION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how urbanization and urban living affect the worldview and cultural identity of immigrant peoples. My aim is to bring in recent urban anthropological theory to make a contribution to current evangelical literature on immigrant cultural identity.[1] These urban anthropologists are, through ethnographic research, seeking afresh to explore both how the city shapes its residents and how residents respond to the shaping forces of the city. I hope to provide insight on understanding ethnic groups in the city and influence church planting methodology as a result. Anthropological theoretical models are useful because they are explanations for why things are as they are in the city. These theories of cultural identity allow for general predictions to be made regarding assimilation patterns that can help church planters formulate effective strategies for reaching people groups in the city.

This chapter begins with an overview of immigration trends in North America from 1990 until 2010. North America is urbanizing at a rapid pace and the majority of immigrants settle into urban areas. The second section examines an anthropology of the city and seeks to answer the question of how the city itself influences assimilation and cultural identity of immigrants. This section employs three metaphors urban

[1]See, for example, Harvie Conn, ed., *Planting and Growing Urban Churches: From Dream to Reality* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997; Harvie Conn and Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City and the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001); John Fuder and Noel Castellanos, eds., *A Heart for the Community: New Models for Urban and Suburban Ministry* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009); and Roger Greenway and Timothy Monsma, *Cities: Missions' New Frontier*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000).

anthropologists have created to help understand the myriad dimensions of urban centers - the divided city, the contested city, and the city as stabilizer. The third section examines an anthropology done in the city and answers the question of how immigrants respond to the pressures of the city on their expression of cultural identity. Assimilation is a crucial issue for those interested in immigration and this section examines three models of assimilation and how each relates to the cultural identity of the people. Understanding factors driving assimilation is key for those working with immigrants. This chapter concludes with a synthesis on how the city itself, along with factors of assimilation, shapes the worldview and cultural identity of urbanized immigrants.

These immigrants are not the same people they were when living in their tribal villages. Indeed, Bierstedt notes that the city person and the country person "adhere to two different views of the world, have different rounds of activity, sustain in different ways the progression of the seasons, indulge in different kinds of work and play, and spend their span of life in different settings."[2] Yet, "too often we try to plant country churches in urban areas, and we don't know why we fail."[3] The city has changed them and consequently, a different church planting strategy is needed than those employed in monocultural rural villages. The theoretical foundation laid in this chapter will serve as the basis from which to develop church planting strategies that are explored in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

Immigration Trends from 1990-2010

People are on the move. Hiebert notes that "never before in history have so many people moved from one place to another. In 1800, less than 3 percent of the

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[2]Robert Bierstedt, *The Social Order*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1970), 411.

[3]Paul Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 257.

world's people lived in towns with more than 5,000 people.[4] Yet, today, more than half of the world's population lives in an urban area. North America receives the largest number of immigrants the world over. The United States ranks number one in the world among countries receiving international migrants. At mid-year 2010, the United Nations estimated that 42,813,281 migrants had entered the United States, 20 percent of the global total number of migrants.[5] Of these migrants, 562,359 were refugees.[6] By comparison, Russia ranks second in receiving migrants, taking in 12,270,388 or 5.7 percent of the global total at mid-year 2010.[7] There are many factors influencing immigration, especially for those coming to the United States. In 2010, nearly 100,000 people were given refugee or asylum status.[8] Another 162,000,000 people were granted non-immigrant admission to the United States, mostly students and business people visiting for brief periods.[9] Overall, nearly 164,000,000 people entered the United States in 2009 from every nation on earth.

At the same time, North America in general and particularly the U.S. and Canada are urbanizing at a rapid pace. According to the United States Census Bureau,

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[4]Ibid., 259.

[5]United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev, 2008), http://esa.un.org/migration/p2k0data.asp (accessed April 4, 2012).

[6]For an extensive treatment on refugees and other migrants who fall under the diaspora heading in particular, see Enoch Wan, ed., *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice* (Portland, OR: Institute of Diaspora Studies – U.S., 2011).

[7]United Nations, *Trends in International Migrant Stock.*

[8]United States Department of Homeland Security, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2009* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2010), 5, http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook /2009/ois_yb_ 2009.pdf (accessed March 9, 2011). Ibid., 52.

[9]Ibid., 65. This figure includes any foreign born entrant to the U.S. for any reason, including vacation and business.

"The [United States'] urban population increased by 12.1 percent from 2000 to 2010, outpacing the nation's overall growth rate of 9.7 percent for the same period."[10] The same source indicates that 80.7 percent of the U.S. population now live in an urban area. Canada is seeing increased urbanization as well, particularly among immigrants. Payne notes that many migrants to Canada "are predominantly urbanites and are even more likely to live in a metropolitan area than Canadian-born citizens. In 2006, 94.9 percent of the foreign-born population and 97.2 percent of the recent immigrants lived in either a census metropolitan area or a census agglomeration (i.e., urban community)."[11] Major cities in Canada such as Hamilton, Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver, and Toronto have foreign born populations comprising 25 percent to nearly 50 percent of the city population, and this growth is not slowing down.[12] The world is at our door, there is no question about that. The questions are now who are these people, where are they in our cities, and how do we reach them with the gospel?

Anthropology of the City

Urban anthropology primarily grew out of the University of Chicago during the 1920s and 1930s.[13] Faculty at the school studied what was essentially their backyard, a rapidly urbanizing city with an influx of immigrants. Historically, anthropologists had done anthropology *in* the city, but a shift occurred where they began to study the anthropology *of* the city. Such a shift in terminology may seem superfluous, however,

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[10]U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Growth in Urban Population Outpaces Rest of Nation," http:// www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb12-50.html (accessed April 4, 2012).

[11]J. D. Payne, *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 43.

[12]Ibid.

[13]See Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, *The City* (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1974). Park and Burgess were the faculty that pioneered ethnographic studies in Chicago around the time the Chicago School rose to prominence in sociological and anthropological academia.

the nuance is important. Doing anthropology in the city provides an emic perspective on the relationships of people with each other. Ethnographic interviews give voice to immigrants' experiences, challenges they face, and their dreams for the future. Such an approach is essential to understanding the immigrant experience.

Anthropology of the city is also important. This approach examines how the city itself influences residents, through urban design, use of public space, and laws and codes. City planners intentionally design urban centers for a purpose. For example, Brasilia was designed and built to be free of private space. There were to be no sidewalks, no intersections, and no cross walks. Store fronts were not to open onto the street as in the majority of U.S. cities. In fact, streets themselves were no to exist. They were replaced by highways without a place for pedestrian interaction. In lieu of intersections, traffic circles led from one highway to another.[14] This type of urban planning had a profound effect on the feel of the city and physical effects how people are able to interact. In this sense, the city itself can create or hinder cultural formation.

Early theories of the city started with a central core of financial and industrial activity with expanding concentric rings rippling out toward the suburbs. Each ring was thought to house certain social classes and their respective occupations.[15] Not all cities follow the same geographic pattern as Chicago, however. Cities like Los Angeles have multiple "cores" and other cities have undergone major industrial and population changes through the years and are no longer functioning like the early Chicago School model theorized.

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[14]James Holston, "The Modernist City and the Death of the Street," in *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader*, ed. Setha Low (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 245. Such urban planning can be found in the U.S. as well. Columbia, Maryland was designed under similar pretenses as Brasilia and the city has a distinct feel when compared to older, surrounding cities.

[15]Setha Low, "Introduction: Theorizing the City," in *Theorizing the City*, 2.

Urban anthropologist Setha Low realizes that contemporary studies of the city are complicated and do not fall into neat models. A review of current urban anthropology literature largely falls into what can be captured through twelve images or metaphors of the city – the ethnic city, the divided city, the gendered city, the contested city, the deindustrialized city, the global city, the informational city, the modernist city, the postmodern city, and the fortress city.[16] Each of these metaphors and its corresponding base of ethnographic studies are useful to view the city in all its facets. There is not scope within this dissertation to examine all facets so I have limited my study to three most salient to the topic under study – the divided city, the contested city, and the city as stabilizer, which is an offshoot of the global city metaphor.

Modern urban anthropologists are asking questions like "Do city planners intentionally divide the physical space of the city in order to segregate ethnic groups?," "How do these groups interact with each other in their respective areas of the city?," and "Is there any stabilizing effect of the city on immigrants as they assimilate? Do ethnic groups give up or lesson their cultural identities in order to succeed in their new urban environment?" These questions and their answers are crucial to understand the effect of the city on immigrant peoples, their worldview, identity, and how to effectively reach them with the gospel.

The Divided City

The metaphor of the divided city may bring to mind images of living on the "wrong side of the tracks" or in the "bad side of town." Most studies on urban division have indeed focused on aspects of racial and class segregation.[17] However, in more

[16]Ibid., 5. *Theorizing the City* contains ethnographies focused on the divided city, the contested city, the global city, the modernist city, and the postmodern city.

[17]See Brett Williams, "Poverty Among African Americans in the Urban United States," *Human Organization* 51 (1992): 164-73.

recent years a phenomenon known as gentrification is causing new division in urban centers. Gentrification refers to a kind of renewal of dilapidated neighborhoods flowing from an influx of capital investment and cultural value assigned to areas previously avoided by the largely white, middle and upper class.[18] Old warehouses become art centers and project housing is torn down and modernist condominiums are built. Real estate values increase quickly and the old lower class is driven out as more and more wealthy people move in. Such a division of class does not happen by accident. Urban planners often lay out a city or revitalize an area according to some idea of function.

Historically, colonial cities from the Spanish age typically have a city plaza in the center of the city. The plaza was a place for people to gather and hear public addresses from religious leaders. Catholic churches often ring the plaza, emphasizing the central place of religion in the society.[19] Latin American cities like Cuzco, Buenos Aires, Lima, and Sao Paulo are all similarly designed, with religious and political leadership, often one in the same, at the center of the city. Cities like Sao Paulo have great gated communities where the elite live.[20] One cannot enter this divided section of the city without certain credentials. Once inside, the elite no longer have to worry about the crime, dirt, busyness, and noise common to the rest of the city. Within the walls of the gated community lay all that is needed to enjoy life. Grocery stores, malls, auto service centers, hair salons, and even places of worship fill the space of this city within a city.

The divided nature of this type of urban planning speaks a message: the poor

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[18]Mark Gottdiener and Leslie Budd, "Gentrification," in *Key Concepts in Urban Studies* (London: SAGE Publications, 2005), 32-33.

[19]See, for example Low's ethnography of design and social space of cities in Costa Rica: Setha Low, "Spatializing Culture: The Social Production and Social Construction of Public Space in Costa Rica," in *Theorizing the City*, 111- 37.

[20]Teresa Caldeira, "Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation," in *Theorizing the City*, 83-110.

are not welcome.[21] There need be no mixing of class in the divided city. The elite have their own chauffeurs and leave the walled complex safely behind the heavily tinted windows of their cars. As they are driven to their place of employment, they pass the poor and disgraced. The use of space communicates where people's place is in society and physically and emotionally bars them from coming in close proximity to each other. In London, the Tube is used mainly by immigrants. My ethnographic study revealed that white Brits prefer to drive their own cars as a symbol of their status in society.[22] The Tube is for those unable to afford expensive cars and the fuel necessary to operate them. Furthermore, driving affords the separation of the masses and protects the elite from the commoners.

Many cities in North America contain the same kinds of division, though it is often more subtle. Chicago and Los Angeles each contain more than seventy distinct neighborhood communities, many of which are markedly mono-ethnic.[23] A single city street separates Hispanics from Greeks, blacks from South Asian Indians. There is little crossing over. The prominence of gangs protecting their territory and the informal economy that allows them to prosper under skyrocketing unemployment lead to further division of ethnic groups.

Segregation of refugee groups into apartment complexes by the government or

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[21]Anthropologist E. T. Hall was one of the first to draw implications from the arrangement of public spaces. See E. T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1966).

[22]Anthony Casey, ed., "London Ethnography," 46, http://culturnicity.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/london-ethnography.pdf (accessed September 4, 2013).

[23]Hiebert, *Incarnational* Ministry, 268. Hiebert makes a case that such street level analysis is necessary to clearly understand the local dynamics of the neighborhood. Such understanding can only be achieved through ground level ethnographic research. A sociological approach relying on census statistics does not provide insight into everyday life. One must begin with the sociological "helicopter" view of the city and then move to ground level research. See Chapter 5 of this dissertation for a description of ethnographic methods useful for city research and analysis. For Hiebert's defense of the necessity of both the sociological and anthropological approach, see Hiebert, *Incarnational Ministry*, 257-63.

low income housing laws further divides the city.[24] Certain apartment complexes in Louisville, Kentucky are known for housing refugees. Some groups, such as the Somalis in Louisville, have further divided the city by purchasing an old warehouse near the Somali dominated apartment complexes. This warehouse, known as the Somali Mall, contains everything a Somali needs to live. The building contains a mosque, coffee shop, cafeteria, grocery store, tax preparation, and dozens of stalls selling everything from clothing to household goods. Such division promotes a lack of need to assimilate into the larger surrounding culture. A refugee need not learn English because he can have all needs met in the mall.

Ethnic enclaves such as various Chinatowns, Little Havana, Little Italy, and so on carry their own unique use of space in urban contexts. The term *ethnic enclave* became prominent after the publication of *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States*.[25] Portes and Bach studied urban ethnic formation and use of space in Miami in particular. Many other studies have been conducted in the wake of Portes and Bach's work.[26] The general theory is that bounded and cohesive ethnic enclaves possess the ability to create their own economies, manufacturing, religious, and cultural centers in the midst of a diverse city. In some cases, these groups so dominate their territory that newly arriving immigrants do not need to learn English to find work

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[24]Such segregation is described as the institutional mechanisms at work within a city that can be studied under the anthropology of space. See Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 52-53.

[25]Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach, *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the U.S.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

[26]See, for example, Greta Gilbertson, "Women's Labor and Enclave Employment: The Case of Dominican and Colombian Women in New York City," *International Migration Review* 29 (1993):657-70; Greta Gilbertson and Douglas Gurak, "Broadening the Enclave Debate: The Labor Market Experiences of Dominican and Colombian Men in New York City," *Sociological Forum* 8 (1993): 205-20; Peter Kwong, *The New Chinatown* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996); and Min Zhou, *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

for the rest of their lives. The power and cohesiveness of these enclave communities is debated and will be explored later in this chapter under the section on assimilation.

In summary, the divided city metaphor uses anthropological theory to determine how the use of space works to form a unique cultural identity of immigrants in their respective locales. In some cases, city officials and urban planners deliberately design and zone a city to segregate people via social status and income. In other cases, immigrants willingly occupy sections of the city and form ethnic enclaves that provide a means of support financially and culturally. Both uses of space and division carry repercussions for understanding cultural dynamics necessary for effective church planting. Chapter 5 of this dissertation will further explore these dynamics.

The Contested City

Division within a city, both physically and ethnically, leads to the contested city. Whose neighborhood is it anyway? The Ozone Park neighborhood in Queens, New York City is a good example of the contested city. My ethnographic interviews revealed that Jamaicans, Latinos, and Bengalis are fighting for ownership of the area.[27] Each group is striving for ethnic dominance that allows them to rent shop space, sell more of their cultural goods, and draw a larger customer base. Typically, members from one ethnicity do not enter the shops of another group. The singular exception I found was the prominence of Chinese operated nail salons. Chinese women were known for their abilities to produce the kind of fingernail design Jamaican women desired, and at a low price. No Chinese shop owner lived anywhere near Ozone Park, but commuted in for business.

Many other North American cities are known for their expressions of ethnic

[27]My personal research, June 9-15, 2012.

ownership through visible demonstrations like parades. Urban anthropologists study these expressions of culture and have concluded that taking to the streets in mass is a way for the minority ethnic group to "temporarily invert the urban power structure through symbolic control of the streets."[28]

Understanding the contested nature of the city is important. Hiebert writes that a system of hierarchy dominates most public urban relationships. Every diverse area will have ingroups and outgroups, dominant groups and minority groups. How these groups relate to one another and to outsiders can make the difference between receptivity of the gospel or hostility toward it. Hiebert describes that "in relationships between ethnic and class groups, hierarchy helps preserve order by maintaining the status, wealth, and power of the dominant group."[29] Such a description seems untenable for those in gospel ministry. Hiebert, however, is describing the anthropological dimension of contested urban neighborhoods. Whether or not the missionary is comfortable with such a setting is not the issue. Missionaries must begin with people as they are, and without the gospel, people fight for dominance in their neighborhoods.

Minority peoples and immigrants are often most aware of their ethnic consciousness.[30] Minorities feel the subtle racism and discrimination that those in the dominant group rarely notice. I was not aware of the degree of suspicion projected toward African-Americans until I spent a summer in Chicago and heard the stories of dark skinned people who were avoided on the streets and monitored closely whenever

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[28]Low, "Introduction: Theorizing the City," in *Theorizing the City*, 10. See studies of such phenomena in Brooklyn and Greenwich Village: Philip Kasinitz, *Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992); Jack Kugelmass, *The Greenwich Village Halloween Parade* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

[29]Hiebert, *Incarnational Ministry*, 273.

[30]Ibid., 283.

they entered the store of a white owner. Minority immigrants in London fought for rental space in open air markets amidst the more dominant Latin American groups. A research team discovered that the market, in the Seven Sisters area of London, was a contested space. Latin Americans were the most numerous peoples in the market area and referred to the market as a Latin American market. However, after interviewing several Asian background immigrants, a different picture immerged. These Asians were adamant that the market was not a Latin American market and always referred to it as the Seven Sisters market – the geographic name rather than the ethnic name.[31] In a situation like this, a missionary should not expect to reach Asians via Latino believers or by hosting a Bible study in a Latino market stall. The hostility between the dominant and minority groups is simply too strong. Low concludes that these urban spaces are not only arenas for struggle with outsiders like developers and city officials, but they are sites of conflict for the subgroups that live with their boundaries.[32]

The City as Stabilizer

What is to be made of the contested city? Ethnic individuals and groups now live in a heterogeneous cultural environment, sometimes very different from the mono-cultural tribal villages they immigrated from.[33] The city forces contact with "the other." This forced contact "transforms migrant groups into ethnic communities with shared memories and perceptions, because it is on city streets that migrants discover their own similarities in opposition to the world around them."[34] In some regards, the context of

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[31]Casey, "London Ethnography," 48.

[32]Low, Introduction to *Theorizing the City*, 11.

[33]See Lisa Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Marking Asian-American Differences," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, ed. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 132-55.

the city acts as a stabilizer, the venue of exchange between immigrants and the host society.[35]

The gathering and stabilizing nature of the city does not exert its force on immigrants in a one way dimension. Brettell argues that the city and its ethnic groups have a dynamic relationship, and one of continual renegotiation as urban culture, traditions, economic vitality, and use of space change with the flux of incoming and outgoing peoples and changing city politics and zoning laws.[36] Immigrants respond to the pressures of cultural heterogeneity in one of three ways. Some immigrants choose to form or find themselves gathered in tightknit ethnic enclaves such as a Chinatown, Little Italy, or Little Havana. Other groups do not live in such an enclave community but maintain close ties to their people group through social networks spread throughout a geographic dispersion within the city. Still others appear to leave behind many of their own cultural preferences and band together into an urban tribe. Urban tribes consist of diverse individuals who find affinity with each other because of their shared life stage, social status, or some other uniting factor that plays a larger role than their own individual cultural heritage. These three responses to the city as stabilizer will be explored in the next section of this chapter.

This section has explored what is called the anthropology of the city. Urban anthropologists see the realities of how the physical, structural, and political aspects of

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[34]Alejandro Portes, "Children of Immigrants: Segmented Assimilation and its Determinants," in *The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays on Networks, Ethnicity and Entrepreneurship*, ed. Alejandro Portes (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1995), 257.

[35]Blair Ruble, Lisa Hanley, and Allison Garland, "Introduction: Renegotiating the City," in *Immigration and Integration in Urban Communities: Renegotiating the City*, ed. Lisa Hanley, Blair Ruble, and Allison Garland (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008), 5.

[36]Caroline Brettell, "The City as Context: Approaches to Immigrants and Cities," in *Metropolis International Workshop Proceedings*, ed. Luso-American Development Foundation (Lisbon: Fundacao Luso-American para o Desenvolvimento, 1998), 141-54.

urban centers exert pressure on immigrant groups. The city itself needs to be studied in order to identify and trace why immigrants are responding the way they are in their new setting. The next section of this chapter focuses on doing anthropology in the city. Assimilation and cultural identity are factors involved in the way immigrants respond to the pressures of the city on them. It is important to understand assimilation patterns in order to effectively reach ethnic groups with the gospel.

Anthropology in the City: Assimilation and Cultural Identity

The theory of assimilation, particularly in the United States, has been fraught with issues of racism driven by a strong American ethnocentrism. For decades, many assumed that assimilation meant immigrant groups would become like the "rest" of the U.S. They would do so because, first, they wanted to. It was assumed that everyone came to the States for a better life and to live the American dream. Second, it was assumed that immigrants would assimilate completely because it was inevitable for survival. Assimilation was considered a one-way endeavor where "they" became like "us."[37] Mid-twentieth century studies on assimilation concluded that ethnicity in the U.S. was temporary and immigrants would inevitably be absorbed into what was thought to be American mainstream culture.[38] These authors believed immigrants would unlearn their distinct cultural traits, which were deemed inferior, and acculturate into their new environment.[39] The ideal American, in those days, was the White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP). Lighter skinned ethnic groups were thought to have a better chance

[37]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 2.

[38]W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1945), 295-96.

[39]Ibid., 285.

in the U.S. and regardless of color, everyone would become a Christian[40]

Early theories of assimilation proved to be false. Assimilation is not a one-way venture. One only has to survey the city today to see the dramatic impact immigrant groups have had on mainstream American culture. The popularity of ethnic restaurants has skyrocketed among white Americans.[41] Major universities often have more Asians in local Christian ministries and more whites in Buddhist groups than ever before. Assimilation cannot be explained easily.

At least three key factors must be accounted for: 1) ethnicity is essentially a social boundary that shapes attitudes and actions toward others, 2) ethnic distinction plays out in a number of social and cultural differences between groups that form the boundary and allow one group to be able to say "they are not like us" and 3) assimilation is a form of change that may occur through change taking place in both groups on either side of the boundary. Essentially, assimilation is "the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences."[42] As assimilation occurs, individual ethnic origins become less relevant as individuals on both sides see themselves as more alike than different. This definition of assimilation allows for the influence of the mainstream culture on the immigrant group but also allows for movement by the mainstream toward cultural values of the immigrant group. Ethnic distinctives do not have to disappear, yet assimilation is still possible.

In some instances, immigrants do not consciously see themselves as assimilating. They simply strive for a good job, quality education for their children, a decent place to live, a network of friends, and general security of life. The pursuit of

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[40]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 4.

[41]Ibid., 13.

[42]Ibid., 11.

these goals leads them down the path of assimilation. Their children make friends with mainstream Americans at school. Job opportunities call for interaction with those outside the ethnic group. Neighborhoods are diverse. Complete assimilation is not inevitable but neither is some level of it unavoidable.

Immigrants face many choices as they adapt to life in the United States. Strategies are formed, usually with the second, third, or even future generations in mind. First generation immigrants ask what will be best in the long term? Generally, two main strategies for work are possible, depending on what skills and background the immigrant has. First, there is the "ethnic" strategy which relies on the social network of the immigrant. Second, there is the "mainstream" strategy where the immigrant attempts to enroll children in the American educational system, learn English, and enter the mainstream economy.[43] These two assimilation strategies are often dependent on a theory known as forms of capital. Those following the mainstream strategy typically possess what is known as human capital while the ethnic strategy requires what is known as social capital.

Forms of Capital

Human capital is a concept used in the social sciences and refers to a person's high level of education and work experience.[44] These immigrants tend to be professionals and live in the middle class or above in their home countries. They have college degrees at the least and many have masters or doctorates as well. Alba and Nee note that the characteristic feature of immigrants with high human capital is they migrate in families. These families seek a more permanent settlement in their country of

[43]Ibid., 40-41.

[44]Ibid., 47.

destination and desire to re-establish their middle and upper-class lifestyle. Often, they live in the suburbs of major cities. They bring money and skills that allow them to assimilate into mainstream American culture. They avoid ethnic enclaves because they want their children to have the best education, learn English well, and successfully enter the mainstream economy.[45]

Asian immigrants tend to compose the majority of those immigrating with high levels of human capital. Two subgroups include Filipinos and South Asian Indians. These groups come from countries where English is widely spoken and education opportunities are numerous. These two immigrants groups bring a professional class of doctors, educators, and technology specialists. The third major subgroup of Asian human capital immigrants are the Koreans. Koreans often do not speak fluent English prior to arrival but bring high levels of financial capital and business savvy. Koreans typically invest in small businesses and are good at developing an ethnic economy where their native ethnic competence can be most advantageous. All three groups usually raise children that excel in school, earn professional and graduate degrees, and marry outside their ethnic group.[46]

Social capital is the contrasting counterpart to human capital. Those possessing social capital are primarily labor migrants. They lack education and technical skills – human capital. However, they are in touch with a vast network of social relationships that span the gap from their small home villages to larger gateway cities where they leave their home country and then on to their destination in the U.S.[47] These

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[45]Ibid., 48.

[46]Ibid., 47.

[47]For a detailed account of gateway cities around the world, see Marie Price and Lisa Benton-Short, ed. *Migrants to the Metropolis: The Rise of Immigrant Gateway Cities* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008).

immigrants rely on word of mouth as to the right time to migrate, how to navigate a border crossing, finding that first job, and getting by in the States.[48] Such a reliance on social networks produces a dependence on those who have gone before them. These workers are more likely to be exploited, earn low wages, and have little opportunity for advancement. They are not as likely to stay long term in the U.S. as those coming with high levels of human capital. In cities, immigrants reliant on their social capital find themselves living in enclave communities where they do not need to learn English and their possible illegal status can be overlooked when applying for a job.[49]

Social capital migrants primarily come from Mexico and other Central American countries, the Caribbean basin, and a smaller stream from China. It generally takes longer for these immigrants and their children to assimilate and join the mainstream economy. If the second generation only attains a high school diploma, their education has already far exceeded that of their parents. Dropout rates in school are high. Additionally, the reliance on social networking and the enclave environment often means living in hostile areas with higher levels of gangs and violence as groups fight for economic and political power in the enclave environment.[50]

In summary, the forms of capital theory is one to understand and predict patterns of assimilation of peoples from around the world. Immigrants with high levels of human capital coming from educated, professional backgrounds are more likely to live dispersed throughout a city or in the suburbs. They are more likely to remain long-term in the U.S. They are less likely to be dependent on their social networks in order to come

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[48]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 49.

[49]See Victor Nee, Jimy Sanders, and Scott Sernau, "Job Transitions in an Immigrant Metropolis: Ethnic Boundaries and the Mixed Economy," *American Sociological Review* 59 (December 1994): 849-72.

[50]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 48-49.

to the States. On the other hand, those with high levels of social capital are more likely to live in ethnic enclaves, learn little English, and return to their home countries. Their family and social ties should be much more important to them, sometimes to the point where they become obligated to unintended roles in their new community. The assimilation models stemming from the forms of capital theory will be explained in more depth below.

Assimilation Models

In broad strokes, assimilation takes on three major forms. First, ethnic enclaves form when an ethnic group is bound in a dense geographic location. Enclaves often contain the least amount of assimilation, at least with regards to the ethnic group moving toward the mainstream culture. Second, some immigrants do not group geographically in an enclave, but they form tight social networks among themselves that function like cultural threads linking them together over a dispersed geographic area. Third, the urban tribe mentality requires the most amount of assimilation as individuals from multiple groups drop aspects of their culture and form a distinct, new cultural identity. This new group is composed of highly heterogeneous individuals living as a group in the mainstream urban culture or sub-culture of the city.

Ethnic enclaves. Ethnic enclaves may be the most prominent image that comes to mind when most Americans think of immigrant groups. Popular definitions of enclave communities are often broad and not clearly bounded. In general terms, an enclave can be any form of immigrant concentration within a loose geographic boundary.[51] Within the technical field of urban studies, a more precise definition is often

[51]Kenneth Guest and Peter Kwong, "Ethnic Enclaves and Cultural Diversity," in *Cultural Diversity in the United States: A Critical Reader*, ed. Ida Susser and Thomas Patterson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 250.

followed which was provided by Portes and Bach in their landmark study of the Latin enclave community in Miami. These authors define an ethnic enclave as containing immigrant groups which concentrate in a distinct spatial location and organize a variety of economic enterprises serving their own ethnic market and/or the general population.[52] This definition is both geographic and economic.

In some cases, ethnic enclaves and their respective local economy rise out of hostility and discrimination. Such was the case with many Chinatowns prior to World War Two. Only through a local enclave and economy were the Chinese able to survive in the U.S. when they were barred from the mainstream culture and economy.[53] Other times, the ethnic economy is able to provide a niche such as ethnic grocery store, massage parlor, nail salon, or dry cleaning business.

In Louisville, both uses of the term enclave are found. Ethnic groups such as the Nepali are geographically concentrated in apartment complexes and one new housing development. However, the Nepali have not formed their own economic market serving their own community or producing goods for the general population. Portes and Bach's more elaborate use of the term is found in seed form with the Somali population in Louisville. This group lives in relatively close geographic proximity and they have purchased an old warehouse that is now known as the "Somali Mall." This mall contains a variety of shops and services owned by Somalis and targeted to serve the Somali community.

Historically in the U.S., ethnic enclaves were seen as transition zones. Immigrants would arrive, find housing, work, and learn English alongside those

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[52]Alejandro Portes, "Modes of Structural Incorporation and Present Theories of Immigration," in *Global Trends in Migration*, ed. Mary Kritz, Charles Keely, and Sylvano Tomasi (Staten Island, NY: CMS Press, 1981), 291.

[53]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream,* 232-33.

immigrants preceding them.[54] In time the Irish became Irish-Americans and then simply Americans. Portes and Bach present a different narrative where the enclave is the destination rather than a transition period. The enclave community is able to provide better jobs and a better life than dispersion into the American mainstream can for the immigrant. Lack of English skills is not a detriment. Over time, the theory is that immigrants are able to move up the socio-economic ladder and own their own businesses. Is such a utopic image of immigration feasible outside of the Cuban enclave in Miami that Portes and Bach studied?

According to their study, Portes and Bach found three major factors present for the success of the Cuban enclave. First, the first wave of Cuban immigrants came shortly after Castro took over in Cuba. This wave mainly consisted of wealthy businessmen who had the means to willingly leave Cuba and establish themselves in Miami. Second, these immigrants brought a variety of business backgrounds and were able to establish a diverse economy in Miami rather than only driving taxis or owning dry cleaning businesses. Third, successive waves of immigrants continued to come from Cuba that supplied the workforce necessary to profit the economic system that had taken root in the enclave.[55]

Guest and Kwong doubt the Cuban study can be applied to other enclave communities as a model for what can be achieved. They see two main difficulties. Many wealthy, professional, and entrepreneurial immigrants have much more mobility than general immigrants and can succeed in the mainstream economy much more easily than skill-less immigrants. Often, the wealthy are not willing to be stranded in an ethnic enclave and work and live next to unskilled, lower class immigrants. Next, the diversity

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[54]Thomas Sowell, *Ethnic America: A History* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).

[55]See Portes and Bach, *Latin Journey*, 38ff.

of enclave businesses needs to be high and each business cannot grow too large or else individuals will not be able to own their own business. Any form of business monopoly restricts ownership options.

Other researchers have sought to replicate Portes and Bach's findings in ethnic enclaves in other parts of the U.S. Results range from mixed to contradictory to the claims made by the Cuban study in Miami.[56] In some cases, such as a study done by Gilbertson and Gurak, earnings within the enclave community were no higher than what immigrants were able to make in the mainstream economy. In other cases, like the study by Mar, research shows that earnings were actually lower, with higher turnover and less opportunity for advancement within the enclave.

Kwong attempted to replicate the Portes and Bach study with the Fuzhounese enclave in New York's Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn Chinatowns. Their findings were in no way similar to the Cuban study. In this case, Chinese smugglers have set up human importation businesses and bring illegal Chinese to the U.S. In return, the immigrants must pay a $50,000 transportation debt and remain at the mercy of business owners, much like an indentured servant, for years. Compliance is enforced via threats, torture, rape, and kidnapping. Additionally, immigrants are made to work long hours and are paid well below minimum wage. Kwong concludes that this enclave provides an easy entrance into America but seriously questions the long-term benefit of such a system.[57] Guest and Kwong conclude that in their study, Portes and Bach "significantly

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[56]See, for example, Greta Gilbertson, "Women's Labor and Enclave Employment: The Case of Dominican and Colombian Women in New York City," *International Migration Review* 29 (1993):657-70; Greta Gilbertson and Douglas Gurak, "Broadening the Enclave Debate: The Labor Market Experiences of Dominican and Colombian Men in New York City," *Sociological Forum* 8 (1993): 205-20; Peter Kwong, *The New Chinatown* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996); Don Mar, "Another Look at the Enclave Economy Thesis: Chinese Immigrants in the Ethnic Labor Market," *Amerasia Journal* 17 (1991): 5-21; and Min Zhou, *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).

[57]Peter Kwong, *The New Chinatown* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).

overestimate the strength of ethnic solidarity and underestimate the existence of coethnic exploitation."[58]

As a whole, ethnic enclaves are dwindling in the U.S. They rely on a continuous stream of first generation immigrants who lack the human capital necessary to survive without the enclave. Little Saigon, a once prosperous Vietnamese enclave in Orange County, California is declining as the second and third generation are assimilating into the mainstream culture and moving out of the enclave. They now have the human capital of English, education, and skills to support themselves. Over a five year period in the 1990s, more than eight-hundred businesses closed in the enclave.[59] Additionally, research indicates that enclave neighborhoods are not always as mono-cultural as they appear. In fact, neighborhoods Burgess described in several ethnographies as "Czech" or "Polish" in Chicago may not even have had a majority population from those ethnic groups. The neighborhoods were studied afresh and found to have an average of twenty-two nationalities.[60] Inconsistencies like these remind the anthropologist to be careful he does not find what he wants to find in his ethnographic research. Burgess' focus was specifically on ethnic enclaves as "ghetto" while Houston and Wright focus on ethnic intermarriage in immigrant neighborhoods. In both cases, the researchers' divergent findings in the same neighborhood conveniently support their research problem and conclusions.

In summary, ethnic enclaves are those neighborhoods composed of a high

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[58]Guest and Kwong, "Ethnic Enclaves and Cultural Diversity," 263.

[59]Hien Doc Do, *The Vietnamese Americans: The New Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), see chapters 4 and 5 for an overview and assessment of the Little Saigon enclave.

[60]Serin Houston and Richard Wright, "'It's Just That People Mix Better Here': Household Narratives of Belonging and Displacement in Seattle," in *Immigration and Integration in Urban Communities: Renegotiating the City*, ed. Lisa Hanley, Blair Ruble, and Allison Garland (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008), 75.

density population of a singular or small number of ethnic groups. These enclaves contain economies run by and for fellow members of the group. The enclave environment is not a cultural utopia in the midst of the city, but carries its own problems and characteristics.

Cultural threads. A second model of assimilation is what I call the cultural thread model. Immigrants with a high degree of human capital, such as Indians, often place job consideration over the tendency to settle in an enclave environment.[61] Settlement patterns are concerned with localism and an understanding of place. Generally, the idea of community is often rooted in place, as in a geographic nearness. However, community in a broader sense is about what Amit refers to as "forms of collective cultural consciousness."[62] These immigrants share a cultural identity that leads to the idea of community, even though they may live miles apart from each other. The technical term for this connected dispersion, or cultural thread, is heterolocalism. The concept is defined as "recent populations of shared ethnic identity which enter an area from distant sources, then quickly adopt a dispersed pattern of residential location, all the while managing to remain cohesive through a variety of means."[63] Immigrants first prefer to seek out informal networks where they can feel connected, determine their social status in the new environment, and begin their new life. Later, they find or create more formal organizations that serve as a cultural unifier and reinforcer for their ethnic

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[61]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream,* 249.

[62]Vered Amit, "Reconceptualizing Community," in *Realizing Community: Concepts, Social Relationships and Sentiments,* ed. Vered Amit (London: Routledge, 2002), 6.

[63]Wilbur Zelinksy and Barrett Lee, "Heterolocalism: An Alternative Model of the Sociospatial Behaviour of Immigrant Ethnic Communities, *International Journal of Population Geography* 4 (1998): 281.

group.[64]

The organizational means that link the ethnic group together in community may be churches, temples, mosques, community centers, business associations, bars, ethnic grocery stores, ethnic malls, English as a Second Language centers, annual cultural festivals, and so on. For example, the ethnic community in Dallas-Fort Worth lacks the enclave phenomenon. Rather, they attain community through heterolocalism. Indian, Chinese, and Korean groups have bought old shopping centers and converted them into ethnic malls, each with a large grocery store that caters to their peoples' food. The malls contain restaurants, clothing stores, travel agencies, and, with the Indian mall, a Bollywood video rental store.[65]

These centers of cultural exchange provide a place for what Levitt calls "migrant-community affirming events."[66] These events are what anthropologists call cultural intensifiers or rites of intensification. In U.S. urban centers, these events reinforce the cultural identity of the ethnic group in the face of segregated everyday life which pulls the individual into mainstream American culture. In the case of an Indian immigrant, attending a festival helps the person feel more Indian and affirm his place as an Indian in American society.

An additional "place" that needs to be taken into account is the virtual realm.

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[64]Michael Jones-Correa, "Immigrant Incorporation in Suburbia: Spatial Sorting, Ethnic Mobilization, and Receiving Institutions," in *Immigration and Integration in Urban Communities: Renegotiating the City*, ed. Lisa Hanley, Blair Ruble, and Allison Garland (Washington DC.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008), 38.

[65]Caroline Brettell, "Immigrants in a Sunbelt Metropolis," in *Immigration and Integration in Urban Communities: Renegotiating the City*, ed. Lisa Hanley, Blair Ruble, and Allison Garland (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008), 166.

[66]Peggy Levitt, "Migrants Participate across Borders: Toward an Understanding of Forms and Consequence," in *Immigration Research for a New Century*, ed. Nancy Foner and Ruben Rumbaut (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000), 470.

Ethnic groups often produce websites, chatrooms, and discussion boards where they can connect, stray abreast of the latest news from their home country, and provide advice for incoming immigrants on where to live and work. One prominent example is the Ek Nazar website and database for the Indian community in Dallas.[67] The website contains not only information but is an economic entity as well. Travel agencies use the site to market to Indians travelling back home for vacation or for a permanent move. The site is testing the market with Indians living in other cities like Atlanta, Houston, Detroit, and San Francisco.[68]

Interestingly, the general population is often not aware that there is any connection between their Indian neighbor and the thousands of other Indians in the city.[69] Church planters can mistakenly assume that immigrants in a diverse environment lose their individual ethnic identity and take on general characteristics of a multicultural neighborhood. Such was the thinking of missionaries in London who were using a general church planting strategy and English language when attempting to reach neighborhoods with diverse ethnic populations. Ethnographic research revealed that the majority of immigrants there were connected via this cultural thread and had much less in common with other ethnic groups than could be found on the surface.[70] Strategies for reaching ethnic groups living under the cultural thread model will be explored in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

In summary, the cultural thread model of assimilation consists of creating community through establishing habitual places of contact, congregation, worship, and

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[67]The website can be located at http://www.eknazar.com/ (accessed June 12, 2013).

[68]Brettell, "Immigrants in a Sunbelt Metropolis," 169.

[69]Ibid., 170.

[70]Casey, "London Ethnography," 46-47.

ethnic identity confirmation and reinforcement. Groups most likely to assimilate via this model are those with high levels of human capital that have no need to group in an enclave environment. They may live dispersed throughout the city but remain connected through their social thread.

Urban tribe. The urban tribe model requires the highest amount of assimilation to the local culture and context. In some ways, it is a model of its own rather than at one end of a scale of level of assimilation. The concept arises because diversity is one of the markers of an urban area. Hiebert observes that "as societies grow larger, they attract different kinds of people who form their own cultural communities."[71] In small villages, people tend to know and interact with everyone but the city is far too large for any kind of extensive intimate relationships. Hiebert believes that immigrants prefer to relate closely to people in their own groups and view the majority of people they come in contact with as strangers. He sees distinct communities arising based on "ethnic, class, cultural, and residential differences."[72] Hiebert approaches his study of urban anthropology from a classical model where people groups are studied in their own right.

Rynkiewich, a modern anthropologist, argues that such a world no longer exists. He maintains that people groups cannot be studied in isolation. Culture is increasingly marked by hybridity. People are transnational and share components of many cultures.[73] Whereas anthropologists used to study a tribe, they need to increasingly study "the tribe," especially in the city. Tribes in urban centers may be composed of individuals from diverse backgrounds, but now they share a common affinity that

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[71]Hiebert, *Incarnational Ministry*, 267.

[72]Ibid.

[73]Michael Rynkiewich, *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 9.

transcends their ethnic and cultural identity. French sociologist Michel Maffesoli was one of the first to study the phenomenon of these cultural subgroups in urban centers. Maffesoli labels these groups as urban tribes.[74]

Fischer argues that the size of the city encourages the formation of subcultural groups that function like a tribe within the city.[75] In some cases, the communities are based on ethnic or linguistic affinity, while others are based on interest in sports, business, school, and a host of other markers. The urban tribe concept rejects the idea of individualism as it is widely advertised in Western public media. Maffesoli believes that those making claims that cities have moved or are moving toward a further individualism are incorrect and unsupported by any legitimate research. His main thrust is to describe and analyze urban social configurations that seem to go beyond individualism. Cities appear at first to be an undefined mass and a faceless crowd. However, there may be cohesion in that crowd that is unnoticed to the casual observer. There is a "tribalism consisting of a patchwork of small local entities."[76] These entities are made of a shared identification that becomes the basis for community. Maffesoli draws the conclusion that individuals in the city desire to identify with others, and the process in itself creates a diffuse union of seemingly unalike people. A relationship is formed amidst the emptiness of the masses, what Maffesoli calls a tactile relationship. Within an urban mass, "one runs across, bumps into, and brushes against others; interaction is established, crystallizations and groups form."[77]

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[74]Michel Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, trans. Don Smith (London: SAGE Publications, 1996).

[75]Claude Fischer, *The Urban Experience*, 2nd ed. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984).

[76]Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes*, 9.

[77]Ibid., 73.

Urban missiologist Troy Bush attempts to extend the urban tribe concept to people groups living in the city.[78] Bush draws mainly from sociologist Ethan Watters and his book, *Urban Tribes: A Generation Redefines Friendship, Family, and Commitment.*[79] Watters' research focuses on a certain population segment in the U.S., single young adults, who are city dwelling professionals living away from their families. Watters concludes that these individuals have formed an urban "tribe" where they share much in common and even form bonds as strong or stronger than their biological family ties.[80] Bush argues that the people groups concept in missions should be applied to urban contexts and that urban tribes may need to be considered as a people group.[81] He cites an email in his paper from Chris Clayman, a church planter working with immigrant groups in New York City. Clayman declares

> Migration reshapes people group boundaries. Even in their home countries this takes place with urbanization, and many immigrants to NYC came from urban areas that are not considered "their ethnic homeland." So, we have many immigrants here that have been through, or are going through, two or more urban filtering processes in regards to their ethnic identity. Many of these [people] start having a much broader sense of their people group identity and a result.[82]

Clayman appears to be describing a scenario where people are moving "up" a level in their cultural identity. For example, in Nigeria a Yoruba tribesman sees himself as distinct and very different from a Housa, though they live in proximity to each other in the same country. To an outsider, they may even appear to be the same people. After

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[78]Troy Bush, "Urbanizing Panta ta Ethne," *Journal of Evangelism and Missions* 12 (Spring 2013): 3-16.

[79]Ethan Watters, *Urban Tribes: A Generation Redefines Friendship, Family, and Commitment* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2003).

[80]Ibid., 3, 7, 19, 49, and 58. See Watters' repeated statements on the strength of relationship shared within the urban tribe.

[81]Bush, "Urbanizing Panta ta Ethne," 9-15.

[82]Ibid., 12. Bush cites a personal email with Chris Clayman.

immigrating to a city like New York, however, the two peoples may drop their identity as Yoruba and Housa and simply think of themselves as Nigerians or even West Africans.

The implications of this thinking and the urban tribe concept in general inform the level of specificity and contextualization a church planting strategy needs to have for reaching people groups in an urban diaspora context. Does one need to learn Yoruba or will English suffice? Can a Yoruba and a Housa – traditional enemies – be expected to attend the same English class together or even a Bible study together in New York City?

Bush's analogy between Watters' understanding and study of urban tribes and what Bush and Clayman describe as a multi-ethnic urban tribe carries a fatal flaw. Watters describes a group of individuals who, on the surface, seem very different. However, they are much more alike that he alludes to. They are all recent college grads, are at similar life stages, and share many common interests. However, they likely all share a general worldview. They do not come from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds like people groups do. Their distinctions are much more social than ethnic, religious, or cultural. A common worldview is the bond and allows for ease of interaction at the social level. My theory is that the urban tribe concept breaks down at the worldview level, not the social level and people groups bring different worldviews with them, thus any apparent urban tribe type interaction is only surface level.

Another critique of the urban tribe concept is that it can fail to account for surface level cultural accommodation as a means for survival. Hiebert states that first generation immigrants need to develop the skills necessary to survive but rarely procure more than entry level jobs. They suffer what Hiebert calls status shock as they are unable to do the work for which they were trained in their home country.[83] My own ethnographic research on Nepali immigrants in Louisville confers with Hiebert. I

[83]Hiebert, *Incarnational Ministry*, 285.

interviewed immigrants who had been doctors, screen printers, and mechanics prior to their years in a refugee camp. Now in the United States, these immigrants did not have the English skills or the culturally appropriate credentials to find similar work in Louisville. As a means of survival, Nepali, Iraqi, and Caribbean immigrants would come together for classes to learn English, study for the citizenship test, or learn to drive but once their immediate personal benefit ran out, they did not associate with each other.[84] My research in London produced similar findings. Immigrants from a host of Latin American countries and a handful of other people groups would gather together for English club. On the surface, they seemed to be an urban tribe. They lived together in apartments and sometimes travelled together around the city. Once missionaries attempted to use the English club as a launching point for a Bible study, the "tribe" suddenly disappeared.[85] That diverse people lived together could be explained as a result of the visa and housing problems immigrants dealt with in London. It was very difficult for an immigrant to live where he wanted. Often, he had to take the first opening he could find, regardless of the geographic location or current ethnic makeup of the housemates.

Jones-Correa's study of Chinese background immigrants in Washington D.C. also poses a problem for the urban tribe idea. His ethnographic interviews and studies of Chinese groceries, credit unions, schools, parent-teacher organizations, and churches reveal that incoming Chinese rely on contacts from their specific kinship networks and provincial ties. Schools for instance, "are not only Chinese but also more specifically Taiwanese, mainland Chinese (teaching in Mandarin and Cantonese), and Hong Kong

[84]Anthony Casey, "Making It in the United States: A Study of Nepali Refugees at an Apartment Complex in Louisville, KY," http://culturnicity.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/nepali-ethnography1.pdf (accessed September 3, 2013).

[85]Casey, "London Ethnography," 49.

Chinese."[86] These networks provide a place to both bridge ethnic identity but also reinforce personal preferences. Cultural identity in an urban tribe setting is complex. Perhaps, overtime individual ethnic distinctions may blur, but with people coming from diverse places with their own historical and cultural baggage, one should not expect an immediate melting together. There are historical realities between Taiwan and mainland China that are not easily overcome.

Alba and Nee write that those of similar ethnic origin tend to have higher levels of trust and intimacy with each other. As people assimilate into mainstream culture, they tend to extend their trust and intimacy in an increasingly broad circle, past their own people group.[87] However, first generation immigrants are rarely, if ever, fully assimilated into mainstream culture. Gibson's studies reveal that many immigrants will undergo what she calls selective acculturation. Immigrants drop their own cultural identity and acculturate just enough to survive but the acculturation is very superficial.[88] This surface level accommodation does not impede on core worldview beliefs. I believe that in some cases, particularly with college students who are very westernized, the urban tribe theory holds up. However, strategies for church planting should not be developed on the assumption that diaspora populations in general will adhere to the theory. Field research is essential to determine the level of acculturation and assess if the appearance of an urban tribe mentality goes beyond surface level. Chapter 5 presents an approach to conducting the kind of research that will help the church planter determine if an urban

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[86]Jones-Correa, "Immigrant Incorporation in Suburbia," in *Immigration and Integration in Urban Communities,* 38.

[87]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream,* 260.

[88]Margaret Gibson, *Accommodation without Assimilation: Sikh Immigrants in an American High School* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988). Alba and Nee draw the same conclusions about Mexican immigration in the United States.

tribe approach is possible or if ethnic groups must be reached in a more narrowly contextualized manner.

In conclusion, it is true that immigrants from diverse backgrounds do interact with each other to some degree. Hiebert writes that "we must see the city, therefore, not as a homogeneous place, but as hundreds of subcultural groups living and interacting with one another in the same geographic area."[89] However, each subgroup has its own cultural distinctions. Sometimes, people will gather together based on a shared affinity for English, a profession, or a social interest, forming what is called an urban tribe. The validity of this concept is still in question and more research needs to be conducted before a clear conclusion can be reached.

Assimilation Analysis

I have reviewed three models of assimilation above: the ethnic enclave, the cultural thread, and the urban tribe. Each model contains certain characteristics based on immigrant background, forms of capital, and location in the city. Each model requires a varying level of assimilation, but to some degree, all require some form of spanning boundaries between ethnic peoples themselves and the host culture. Alba and Nee report that this boundary spanning the key for assimilation.[90] Boundaries exist in relation to social factors like language, religion, and family structure. Two main distinctions can be made regarding boundaries – boundary crossing and boundary blurring.

Boundary crossing occurs when an individual moves from one group to another without any change in the boundary itself. This type of assimilation is most common with those who change their names, habits, speech, and behavior from the

[89]Hiebert, *Incarnational Ministry*, 271.

[90]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream,* 59.

outgroup patterns to the ingroup or majority culture patterns.[91] In some cases, boundary crossing may take multiple generations but is accelerated through intermarriage that produces offspring who look physically closer to the majority culture.

Boundary blurring, on the other hand, changes the character of the boundary itself. A primary example of boundary blurring happens in a marriage of two people with different religious affiliations. Research shows that in many of these instances, both religions are recognized and religious rituals are shared by the family.[92] In this case, religious boundaries have not disappeared, nor have both parties committed to only practicing one religion. Rather, the boundary is blurred as elements of both religions are practiced. Alba and Nee observe that boundary blurring relies on stable, ongoing social relationships and close contact. In some cases, immigrants following the cultural thread model of assimilation may take on multiple religious identities that blur into cultural identity as well. For example, a Hindu from India may blur his religious identity in the "Christian" U.S. and also view himself as a Christian or even call himself a Christian Hindu. Such a practice is called syncretism and carries serious implications for Christian ministry.

In summary, it is difficult to predict how immigrants will assimilate or make blanket statements on assimilation. However, based on studies of assimilation, several general patterns surface related to the forms of capital the immigrant brings. Those with human capital tend to assimilate easier because their resources allow them greater freedom when finding employment and housing. These immigrants are most likely to follow the cultural thread model of assimilation and adhere to heterolocalism. These

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[91]Ibid., 60-61.

[92]For an example of a common boundary blurring between Christian and Jewish religious practice, see Sylvia Barack Fishman, *Jewish and Something Else: A Study of Mixed-Married Families* (New York: American Jewish Committee, 2001).

immigrants live spatially separate but are culturally connected much more than may first appear. Immigrants bringing social capital are more likely to group into enclaves because they are reliant on their social network to find work and a place to live. Their lack of English and education limit their job selection. In some cases, the enclave environment requires little assimilation because everything needed for life can be found in the enclave neighborhood. Finally, those immigrants that are highly mobile, both geographically and culturally, have been theorized to form a new group, the urban tribe, based on their affinity interests. These immigrants almost over assimilate and take on highly intensified characteristics of a sub-culture within the larger dominant culture. A strategy for reaching immigrants from each assimilation pattern will be developed in chapter 5.

Urbanization and Cultural Identity

So far, this chapter has examined how the city itself pressures immigrants, how immigrants respond to that pressure with regard to geographic dispersion and social construction, and how both factors result in a theory of models of assimilation by the immigrants. The final section of the chapter synthesizes how urbanization and urban living inform the production of cultural identity among immigrant peoples. First, the degree of urbanization impacting immigrants will be explored. Second, the process of forming a new cultural identity will be developed.

Degree of Urbanization

It is clear that urbanization, assimilation, and cultural identity play out in a variety of ways depending on the structure of the city, zoning and housing laws, and the background of the immigrant. People arrive from both extremely rural backgrounds and more urbanized backgrounds. Consequently, the city does not shape all groups equally. Hiebert observes that "not all city folk have an urban mentality. Many are peasants who visit or move to the city but keep their small-town attitudes. They join people from their

hometown and form small village enclaves in the city where they try to maintain life as they knew it in the countryside."[93] In Louisville, Nepali immigrants seek to assimilate to some degree but many families maintain certain aspects of life as they were in Nepal. These people come from agricultural backgrounds and in one apartment complex where large garden plots are available for rent, they still prefer to spend large parts of the day tending their plot and growing foods common in Nepal. The garden functions as a place to reaffirm their Nepali cultural identity and connect them to familiar rituals from their past in the midst of a vastly different cultural context.[94]

Hiebert notes that eventually the city reshapes the mentality and lives of all who live in it. However, such a shift in worldview and cultural identity can take generations to occur.[95] In the meantime, it is difficult to make general assumptions on how urban living shapes the worldview and identity of immigrants. There are so many factors that must be taken into account. The only sure way to begin to understand the dynamics of a particular people in a particular city is to conduct ethnographic research in that setting. Chapter 5 will explain how this research can be carried out. One statement that can be made with certainty, however, is that immigration and urban living does impact the cultural identity of immigrants in some way.

Cultural Identity

Hall writes that instead of thinking of cultural identity as an already accomplished fact, it is better to think of identity as a production and process that is never finished.[96] This understanding is especially important in the diaspora and immigrant

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[93]Hiebert, *Incarnational Ministry*, 268-69.

[94]Casey, "Making it in the United States," 13.

[95]Hiebert, *Incarnational Ministry*, 269.

[96]Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* (Malden,

context where pressures of the city itself couple with the multi-cultural nature of urban life and constantly challenge understandings of identity and belonging. In the diaspora, Hall writes of two primary ways to think about cultural identity. The first understands cultural identity in terms of one, shared culture with a collective understanding of common historical experiences and shared cultural codes.[97] This collective culture arises from the level of worldview and is the deep and subjective culture of the group.

Hall identifies another expression of culture production among immigrants. This is the culture of micro-identities in the midst of the larger mainstream culture. This sense of culture carries the idea of both becoming and being as the immigrant struggles to reconcile past, present, and future understandings of cultural identity.[98] Families have a shared past but are adjusting and assimilating to a new culture in a new geographic location. Hiebert writes that "families and kinship groups persist in urban life, but they take new shapes under the pressures of the city."[99] A child asks his father, "Am I Indian or American?" and is given the answer that he is both.[100]

Radhakrishnan observes three general stages in an immigrant's understanding of ethnic identity. First, in order to be successful in the U.S., immigrants are sometimes forced to hide their distinct ethnic identity and assimilate. Second, after immigrants become more secure financially and socially, they look for a reaffirmation of their ethnic identity. This stage is described above in the section on cultural threads where immigrants assert their "right to be different." Third, Radhakrishnan finds immigrants

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MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 234.

[97]Ibid.

[98]Ibid., 236.

[99]Hiebert, *Incarnational Ministry*, 276.

[100]Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan, "Ethnicity in an Age of Diaspora," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 119.

using a "hyphenated integration of ethnic identity with [U.S.] national identity."[101] These immigrants, by their very assimilation and citizenship in the U.S., are forced to make a decision: Are they, in the case above, Indian-Americans or are they Americans who happen to be Indian by ethnicity? The former retains a bit of ethnic pride and identity. The latter relegates ethnicity to secondary status behind new found American nationality.

Public-private identities. Often, these dynamics of identity vary in public and private life. Hiebert explains that in the city, no group can live totally as it wishes.[102] Publically, immigrants often must play the role assigned to them by their employer and follow the general cultural norms and mores or else risk constant friction. Privately, people can be themselves. This behavior is similar to what linguists describe as code switching, the concept that individuals will speak one language or dialect in some instances but shift to another language or dialect when it is more appropriate given the social setting. Immigrant identity requires a type of cultural code switching that occurs between public and private life.

Cycle of cultural identity. The path of immigration, choices made regarding level of assimilation, and then an understanding and expression of cultural identity is a difficult process. Identity is not static but moves along a spectrum, and moves at different paces for different people. A common scenario plays out with four steps on the path to assimilation and cultural identity. First, the immigrant leaves the home country because of all that is wrong there – the political corruption, poverty, the war, ect. Second, the immigrant embraces the new country for all of its idealism. The myth of the American Dream draws people to the U.S. more than any country in the world.

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[101]Ibid., 121.

[102]Hiebert, *Incarnational Ministry*, 316.

Immigrants come with hopes of becoming wealthy.[103] Third, life does not go as the immigrant desires. He becomes disillusioned with the U.S. and begins to look back at the good of the old ways from the home country. Fourth, the immigrant must decide to either live a balance of the old identity coupled with the new, abandon the old ways, or embrace and intensify the old ways but now in an idealized way.[104]

The dominant culture of the U.S. plays a role in immigrant identity as well. Radhakrishnan finds that "in the diasporan context in the United States, ethnicity is often forced to take on the discourse of authenticity just to protect and maintain its space and history."[105] In essence, racial and ethnic prejudice can force minority groups to gather together and intensify their ethnic identity. Blacks become "more black" in order to distance themselves from white mainstream America. Indians become "more Indian" for the same reason. Depending on where the immigrant and his immediate community are on the scale of assimilation, the ethnic identity may be very strong, to the point of rejecting identification as an American who happens to be ethnically Indian.

Transition from first to second generation. The scope of this dissertation is primarily focused on first generation immigrants. However, the transmission of cultural and ethnic identity to successive generations is important to describe briefly. Hiebert finds commonalities among first and second generation immigrants regarding worldview and cultural identity. He states that "first-generation immigrants are foreigners in a new

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[103]Economic migrants constitute the vast majority of the rise in global migration. At least ninety-one percent of all migrants do so for economic reasons. See Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 48-49.

[104]Radhakrishnan, "Ethnicity in an Age of Diaspora," 125-26.

[105]Ibid., 127.

land, but they know who they are."[106] This class of immigrants is closely shaped by their old culture and may bring as many of their practices with them as possible. Many first generation immigrants I interviewed expressed longing for the rural life, farming, and freedom they experienced prior to coming to Louisville. Growing familiar crops in local urban gardens reinforced the old cultural identity and provided a place to reminisce about the past.[107]

Second generation immigrants often experience a significant identity crisis. Hiebert writes that at home, they learn the values and beliefs of their parents but at school and in the city, they are enculturated to the surrounding values. The result can be a rejection of the old ways and pressures of the parents and an embrace of the new culture. In this case, parents often try to force the old ways on their children as they try to manage the rebellion. Unfortunately, in the midst of great difficulty, some parents give up and their children descend into a life of gangs, drugs, and alcohol as they try to manage the pain resulting from a crisis of identity.[108]

The children and grandchildren of first generation immigrants must learn aspects of American culture, especially the English language if they have any hope of success outside of an enclave environment.[109] Linguistic change is one marker of entrance into mainstream culture. Sociolinguists Fishman and Veltman identity a three generation transition immigrant groups often undergo from their mother tongue to English monolingualism.[110] Their theory states that in general, some individuals from the

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[106]Hiebert, *Incarnational Ministry*, 286.

[107]Casey, "Making it in the United States," 13.

[108]Hiebert *Incarnational Ministry*, 286.

[109]Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 218.

[110]See Joshua Fishman, *The Sociology of Language* (Rowley, MA: Newbury, 1972), and Calvin Veltman, *Language Shift in the United States* (Berlin: Mouton, 1983).

first generation learn English, but prefer to speak their mother tongue, especially at home. Their children grow up as bilinguals, but often prefer English. By the third generation, English monolingualism is the norm with only fragmentary knowledge of the original mother tongue.

Language is tied to worldview and social construction so the loss of the mother tongue carries implications for cultural identity as well. For example, if the mother tongue has a large number of distinctive words for various relations of aunts, uncles, and cousins, each with its respective role in the society, a loss of language can result in a loss of ability to describe kinship roles and thus lead to a loss of the kinship role itself.[111] Many other factors related to identity of the 1.5, second, third generations and beyond are important but beyond the scope of this dissertation. A discussion of the necessity of a different church planting strategy for reaching the first and second generation will be discussed in chapter 5.

This section has shown that urbanization and its relation to cultural identity is complex. Factors need to be accounted for such as the degree of urbanization immigrants undergo, where they are in the cycle of cultural identity and the degree they value their old culture versus aspects of the new culture. Additionally, immigrants often live and view themselves differently in the public and private spheres of their lives. Finally, a brief overview of the transmission of culture and language from the first to the second generation showed the importance of the mother tongue in order to retain ethnic cultural identity. By the third generation, most immigrant children no longer speak their mother tongue and are completely assimilated into the majority culture.

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[111] Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream,* 219.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to explore how urbanization and urban living affect the worldview and cultural identity of immigrant peoples. Several factors are at work including how the city itself exerts pressure on immigrants to live in either segregation or in diverse communities. Multiethnic cities result in a contested environment where groups vie for economic and political power and the right to exist. There is somewhat of a stabilizing nature to the city in that cities force contact with diverse peoples and require them to find a way to coexist.

Assimilation is a key factor in immigrant identity and plays out in three major scenarios in the city. Groups with cultural capital often group into enclave environments because of their reliance on social networks for jobs and their lack of English skill. Those groups with high levels of human capital have more freedom to choose where they work and live but still remain connected through cultural threads and heterolocalism. These groups reinforce their ethnic identity through cultural gatherings at places of worship, ethnic grocery stores, and internet chat rooms. A final perspective on assimilation is the urban tribe mentality where diverse people find commonality over a shared affinity and lower their cultural identities in order to form a new "people group" in the city. The legitimacy of the urban tribe theory is in question.

Finally, this chapter explored the difficulty of defining ethnic identity in the urban setting. Immigrants struggle with who they are publically and privately and often change their own understandings of who they are. The city eventually reshapes the worldview and identity of immigrants, however, markers of diversity remain as assimilation is not a one way endeavor. Immigrants contribute to the culture of the city just as they are shaped by it. Chapter 5 will explore how to identify and reach ethnic groups in the city based on theories of immigration and cultural identity proposed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

THE ORAL WORLDVIEW

This chapter explores the oral worldview in depth with the aim to answer questions relating to four major domains: (1) What is the nature of oral cognition and the reliability of the oral memory, (2) What does the impact of the oral community have on message transmission and interpretation of information, especially new information within oral contexts, (3) What are the major forms of communication oral peoples employ, and (4) How does the introduction of literacy effect the oral worldview? These four questions are important for the broader purposes of this dissertation because oral peoples bring their worldview with them when they immigrate to urban contexts. Church planters must understand the intricacies of this worldview in order to develop appropriate strategies for reaching oral peoples.

It has been written that "the gospel is being proclaimed now to more people than at any other time in history, yet many of those are not really *hearing* it."[1] Missions and evangelism involve the work of proclaiming the truths about God as revealed through the Scriptures, after all, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.[2] The problem is, not everyone is hearing the message in a way that is understandable and applicable. Some in the western world do not realize that many people, possibly up to two-thirds of the world's population, prefer a style of learning that leans away from the

[1]David Claydon, ed., *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* (Lima, NY: Elim Publishing, 2005), 3; emphasis in original.

[2]See Rom 10:17.

highly literate model often used in western contexts.[3] Klem notes that "we generally assume that people who hear our message should go on to read the Bible for themselves and thus be responsible for their own Christian development. Our plans to produce growing churches and mature Christians usually are dependent on studious, Bible-reading people."[4]

The model Klem describes is often driven by printed Bible studies, discipleship curriculum, fill in the blank workbooks, and a host of Christian growth books.[5] Klem assumed everyone wanted to learn to read when he began his work as a missionary. It was not until some years later that he realized "many of them did not want a religion that would require them to learn to read, because they valued personal, memorized, oral communication."[6] Such a statement carries far reaching implications. It seems that Africans Klem ministered to equated Christianity with literacy. This equation may have caused some to reject the gospel because in their minds, it had become intertwined with foreign elements that were not desirable in their culture.

Tom Steffen writes that "people's assumptions about God impact their perception of Scripture. Those who define the Supreme Being as a God of love often approach Scripture as devotional literature. People who view God as logical and linear often view the Bible as a book of verifiable propositions."[7] Steffen recounts that as a

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[3]Claydon, *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, 3.

[4]Herbert V. Klem, "Bible as Oral Literature in Oral Societies," *International Review of Mission* 67 (1978): 479.

[5]See as one example the vast array of resources Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ) uses for its evangelism and discipleship, http://www.campuscrusade.com/ (accessed November 20, 2012). Cru has available a three year weekly discipleship curriculum called "The Compass" that is totally driven by a requirement for literacy, http://crupressgreen.com/compass/ (accessed November 20, 2012). Klem's point is that many believers go on to use the same approach that they were first exposed to by those who won them to faith and disciple them.

[6]Klem, "Bible as Oral Literature in Oral Societies," 479.

literate westerner he brought the same approach to theology as he had received. Steffen brought systematic theology, his people wanted stories. He gave reasons, they wanted relationship. He gave categories, they wanted characters. He gave explanation, they wanted exploration. He gave definitions, they wanted descriptions.[8] Essentially, there was a disconnect between the approach Steffen was using and that to which his target audience was accustomed.

For the most part, the western approach to missions involved a literate approach. Thomas finds a different picture in the Scriptures and writes, "God is a storytelling God. Deeper than this, God is the creator of story, and it is in the context of story that God calls us into mission."[9] Modern missions practitioners are beginning to realize the truths of Scripture can be communicated in a variety of contextualized manners. Even the language used by missiologists is changing. Terms like "orality," Chronological Bible Storying," and "narrative theology" are much more common today in missions journals and books than fifty years ago.

This new vocabulary is a result of what Klem, Steffen, Thomas, and many others encountered on mission fields worldwide: what are today described as oral learners. Oral learners can be simply described as those who rely on spoken, rather than written, language for communication.[10] Orality is about much more than reading and writing, however. Oral peoples have a distinct approach to life played out through

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[7]Tom Steffen, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry: Cross-Cultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2005), 1.

[8]Ibid., 2.

[9]Nancy Thomas, "Following the Footprints of God: The Contribution of Narrative to Mission Theology," in *Footprints of God: A Narrative Theology of Mission*, ed. Charles Van Engen, Nancy Thomas, and Robert Gallagher (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1999), 225.

[10]Grant Lovejoy, "The Extent of Orality: 2012 Update," *Orality Journal: The Word became Fresh* 1 (2012): 12.

cognition, community, and communication that differs greatly from literate peoples. This chapter will explore the oral worldview in general and will then examine the residual orality preferences retained by many immigrants to North American cities.

Literacy background of immigrants. Most current research on immigrants and linguistics focuses on the process of learning to speak, read, and write English. For example, in 2000, about 17.8 million U.S. adults, or 8.5 percent of the population, had limited English proficiency (LEP). Today, there are roughly 22.5 million LEP adults, accounting for 10 percent of the US adult population and 9 percent of the labor force.[11] The overwhelming majority of LEP adults are immigrants. Agencies in the U.S. often focus on teaching immigrants English and literacy and rarely consider the cultural background of the student.[12]

Even as immigrants gain familiarity with English and the written word, they tend to retain their preference as oral learners. Ito notes that in many societies, "even after literacy has become common, oral mentality and preference for orality have persisted."[13] Orality expert Walter Ong concurs that "even after the development of writing, the pristine oral-aural modes of knowledge storage and retrieval still dominate."[14] Immigrants' retention of an oral learning preference poses significant

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[11]Chhandasi Pandya, **"**Limited English Proficient Workers and the Workforce Investment Act: Challenges and Opportunities," http://www.migrationinformation. org/Feature/display.cfm?ID=900 (accessed August 29, 2012).

[12]Dana Lindgren, interview by author, Louisville, KY, August 24, 2012. Lindgren teaches ESL for two refugee organizations in Louisville and expressed a lack of training to handle the cultural traits immigrants bring with them. Of particular challenge are those immigrants coming from oral preference backgrounds who, consequently, are the majority of immigrants needing ESL services.

[13]Akio Ito, "The Written Torah and the Oral Gospel: Romans 10:5-13 in the Dynamic Tension between Orality and Literacy," *Novum Testamentum* 48 (2006): 244.

[14]Walter Ong, *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 214.

problems for not only teaching English, but for reaching them with the gospel in an understandable way. People shaped by an oral culture possess a unique worldview which must be understood in order to effectively plant churches among them.

Oral Cognition

Orality is much more expansive than simply preferring to communicate verbally rather than through writing. Giving a speech or sermon is oral communication but Sheard notes that orality is more than oral performance. Writing with preaching in mind, Sheard states that "oral performance is prepared delivery."[15] What Sheard is getting at is in the west, pastors prepare sermons like they are putting on a performance. Sheard does not think of a show when he refers to performance; the message and intent are genuine. Sheard has in mind the careful attention pastors give to delivery, voice inflection, posture, pause, eye contact, and so on.[16] The pastor is communicating orally, both verbally and non-verbally. However, this type of oral performance is not in line with fully orbed orality because the thinking, reasoning, structuring, and arguing of the sermon message is still organized in a highly literate fashion. Similarly, successfully reaching oral peoples involves more than teaching the same material as one would in a literate environment but simply pointing to a story cloth while teaching.[17]

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[15]Daniel Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries* (N.p.: Self-published, 2007), 29.

[16]See, for example, part 3 of Herschael York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003), 199-260.

[17]I recently spoke with the president of a ministry focused on teaching doctrine to under trained pastors around the world. The ministry uses a set curriculum prepared largely according to how literate Bible schools teach doctrine. When asked how the ministry deals with oral learners or preliterates, the man mentioned that they use a story cloth to help the pastors understand the message. A story cloth is simply a sequential pictorial depiction of the major events of the Bible like creation, the exodus, Abraham's calling, and so on.

Oral peoples approach life in a different way than literate peoples. Such an approach to life is categorized as worldview. Willis and Snowden define worldview as "what is real to us" and note "your perception of reality is reality to you. Worldview is formed early in life and is difficult to change."[18] Oral peoples grow up in a society that is oriented to life differently than those growing up in a literate society. From the beginning of life, those nearest and dearest to an individual pass on the unique features of their culture. They share their stories of creation, cultural history, societal roles and relationships, and explain things like marriage, death, sickness, sin, and the spiritual world. People in the culture essentially teach the next generation what to think about life but also *how* to think about life. For example, youth are taught what to think with regards to what is right, wrong, good, and bad. With regard to how they are taught to think, oral peoples' worldview teaches them why something is good or bad, right or wrong. Cognition in oral cultures is experience based and shaped by the physical and spiritual context the culture lives in.

Oral Language Structure

Oral peoples need to taste, feel, see, or use something in order for it to "exist." Words themselves, as Ong suggests, are understood as occurrences and events in oral cultures.[19] Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss cites dozens of ethnographies from around the world and concludes that for an oral person, something must be known or experienced to be real. Levi-Strauss records oral peoples using precise words to distinguish subtleties of plants, animals, and weather phenomenon but he noticed that in

[18]Avery T. Willis and Mark Snowden, *Truth that Sticks: How to Communicate Velcro Truth in a Teflon World* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2010), 148.

[19]Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Methuen and Company, 1982), 31.

most cases, the object being described is useful to the people. For example, chewing slightly narcotic nuts is an important cultural practice among the Hanunoo of the Philippines. The Hanunoo have words for four varieties of areca nut along with eight substitutes for that nut. Of the betel nut they speak of five varieties and five acceptable substitutes. Betel nut chewing is an important community experience in that culture and the Hanunoo have precise words to describe and distinguish sub-species of the plant. The Hanunoo have no distinct words for other fauna that is not useful, however. Though many other species of plant exist in the jungles surrounding their villages, the Hanunoo simply leave them unnamed or categorize them broadly under their generic word for plant.[20]

The Inuit language, Inuktitut, further illustrates an oral culture's preference for descriptive and functional words rather than abstract categories. A language informant pointed to a coffee cup on his desk and explained that in English, the word for the substance covering the cup is "enamel." He said, "'Enamel' doesn't mean anything to us. The word doesn't tell us what the thing does. In Inuktitut, the words describe the function of the thing rather than some abstract word like 'enamel' where the meaning must be filled in separate from the word"[21] He went on to give several other examples including their word for "seal" which meant "that which comes up through the ice to breathe." "Seal" by itself is an abstract word. The word does not bring an image to mind

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[20]Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. George Weidenfelf (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 2-3. See also Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages," in C. K. Ogden and Ivor Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1936), 296-336.

[21]Interview by the author with Lazarous Otuk in Iqaluit, Nunavut. July 2009. Lazarous is the government language expert on the native Inuit language, Inuktitut. The ethnography containing this interview can be found at http://reachingandteaching.org/downloads/NunavutIqaluit.pdf (accessed September 2, 2013).

of a specific function in real life. The vocabulary of the language functioned according to the oral worldview of the Inuit which focused on concrete, practical life experiences.

Oral peoples' approach to thinking about religion is also tied to their experience of god or the spirits acting in their lives. Naude understands oral peoples' approach to religion to be expressions of the community's underlying faith experiences.[22] Thinking about god in an oral context is developed from an emic perspective. Theology is applied and context based, answering the most important questions about life in that particular culture. Rather than being expressed in books, oral theology is stored in the mind and is delivered via community experience through dancing, singing, chanting, storytelling, poetry, and so on.[23]

Categorization in Oral Cultures

A classic study on the cognitive processes of oral peoples is contained in *Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundations* by Aleksandr Luria.[24] Luria conducted fieldwork with oral peoples and those with very low levels of literacy in Uzbekistan and the former Soviet Union. His findings provide insight into the experiential cognition of oral peoples. Luria states that "structurally, perception depends on historically established human practices that can alter the system of codes used to process incoming information and can influence the decision assigning the perceived objects to appropriate categories."[25] Essentially, Luria is speaking of worldview.

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[22]Piet Naude, "Theology with a New Voice? The Case for an Oral Theology in the South African Context," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 94 (1996): 22.

[23]Randall Prior, "Orality: The Not-So-Silent Issue in Mission Theology," *International Bulletin for Missionary Research* (2011): 145.

[24]Aleksandr Luria, *Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundations*, ed. Michael Cole, trans. Martin Lopez-Morillas and Lynn Solotaroff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976).

[25]Ibid., 21.

Worldview shapes reality for the holder. Luria's findings are of particular import to understand the oral worldview.

Luria confirmed that categorization is a skill much more refined in literate societies than in oral ones. In the literate west, colors are intricately categorized and clearly distinct. Red, yellow, orange, blue, green, black, white, and purple are words used to separate colors that are more or less closely related. Luria cites several studies that conclude "the wealth of expressions for certain colors and the linguistic poverty of such terms for other colors result from differences in the practical importance that different colors have in different cultures."[26] For example, many Arctic languages have dozens of terms for shades of white because each refers to a different type of snow or ice which is of vital practical importance in that culture. The same language lacks any word for red and green because nothing of practical value in that region exists.[27] Luria found that the Ichkari women he studied classified colored yarn according to what the color represented in their everyday life. Unable to assign a general categorical color name, the women would say, "This is like calf's dung, and this is like a peach."[28]

One part of the study involved asking oral peoples to identify geometric figures like a circle, square, and triangle. Luria records in every instance, oral peoples named the figure as a representation of real objects they interacted with and never according to abstract categories like circle or square. Circles were identified as a plate, sieve, bucket, watch, or moon. Even an incomplete circle was identified as a bracelet because of what it resembled. Triangles were called *tumar*, an Uzbek word for amulets, which are often designed in a way that looks like a triangle. Squares were called a door,

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[26]Ibid., 23.

[27]Ibid. See also E. B. Hunt, *Concept Learning* (New York: Wiley Press, 1962).

[28]Luria, *Cognitive Development*, 27.

house, or apricot drying board. Luria concludes that the oral people's "evaluation of abstract geometrical figures was decidedly concrete and object-oriented."[29]

A final test of oral cognition involved presenting four objects, three of which could be grouped together according to a taxonomic category or by their use in a practical situation. One set included a hammer, saw, ax, and log. The taxonomic category would group the tools together (hammer, saw, and ax) and exclude the log as a non-tool. Grouping the items according to practical value, the saw, ax, and log would go together and the hammer would be excluded because the hammer has no practical value to work the log. Luria found that the oral peoples he studied would group items according to their practical value for use in real life situations and not according to an abstract taxonomical category.[30] Luria concludes

> The majority of our subjects were members of a society in which rudimentary practical functions constituted the fundamental human activity. Lacking the formal education that would have allowed for systematic intellectual development, these people regarded the logical procedures of categorization as irrelevant, of no practical value. Hence they substituted procedures that were more meaningful to them, analyzing an object according to its relevance to a functional situation. This approach took precedence over the verbal logical operations typical of abstract thinking.[31]

Such a practical approach to cognition, rejecting abstract categorization and operating according to tangible objects in the culture has massive implications for how missionaries might present the gospel. Many times, the approach to evangelism a missionary uses includes referring to abstract categories like holiness, sin, forgiveness, and so on. Missionaries must learn how to present the gospel in a tangible way that

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[29]Ibid., 32-33.

[30]Ibid., see pp. 46-99 for results from the full study.

[31]Ibid., 98.

meshes with the oral cognition process. Such implications will be explored in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

Memory in Oral Cultures

Memory functions differently in an oral culture as well. Even the ability to study requires the written word.[32] Literate cultures often have the entire Bible and sometimes dozens of biblical commentaries to aid in their reflection on and study of Scripture. Many word studies, theological categorizations, comparisons, and analysis can be performed based on written texts. Such activities are not possible in an oral context. One can only study a text because the words are permanently available for reflection and memorization.

In a literate culture, verbatim memorization is valued and is possible because a message can be checked against a written text continually until total accuracy is achieved. Ong notes that historically, many literate researchers wrongly assumed that oral people must also value verbatim memory. Ong suggests that "literates were happy simply to assume that the prodigious oral memory functioned somehow according to their own verbatim textual model."[33] Once means to record and analyze oral deliveries were available, researchers discovered that in many cases, verbatim memory did not happen. In fact, such precise memory was not expected or attempted by oral peoples.

Some of the greatest works of literature are Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. For many years, these works were thought to have been written by Homer, but in depth studies on their poetic structure have revealed that they were almost certainly oral works that were memorized.[34] These poems were found to be carefully arranged in strict

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[32]Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 8-9.

[33]Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 58.

[34]See Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse*, ed. Adam Parry (Oxford: Clarendon Press,

metrical patterns. Parry discovered that the hexameters were not just word units based on their respective syllables. Rather, Homer had arranged the works based on common formulas that contained the same groups of words every time. These word groups served to introduce segments of the poems, similar to an acrostic, so all that had to be memorized were the word groups that were already made into the correct metrical structure for the poem. Homer was then free to slightly alter the actual content for each section of the poem and not change the overall structure or storyline. Key characters were assigned characteristics such as "clever Odysseus" to remind Homer of the plot of that particular segment of the poem.[35] In summary, Parry's extensive study of Homeric poetry revealed that it was not necessary for Homer to have memorized the poem verbatim in order to tell it with reasonable accuracy.

Parry's understudy, Albert Lord, continued Parry's work with Homeric poetry but also tested modern epic oral poets to attempt to confirm the hypothesis that these poets did not memorize their stories verbatim but rather memorized thematically. Lord studied Yugoslavic oral poets who also used a metrically governed, formulaic style to compose their works. He recorded the bards' songs and found that, though they were metrically and thematically the same, they were never sung the exact same way twice. Lord concludes that the memory feats of these singers are remarkable but are unlike the kind of memory that is expected from those with a written text.

Interestingly, the singers themselves think they are singing the same song or reciting the poem verbatim but they are not. Lord records a conversation with a poet where the poet continually affirms that he can memorize a new song right away and sing it without changing a word. He even swears by Allah that it is not good to add or take away from a song. However, when the poet is recorded singing the song several times, it

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1971).

[35]Ibid., 51.

is easily discovered that he does change the wording every time. He just does not realize he is doing so because oral peoples do not think of memorization as having to be verbatim. To them, thematic memorization is the only kind they know.[36] Lord notes that literates often think of memorization of a poem as needing to be "word for word and line for line." However, these oral poets do not know what "words" or "lines" are. Goody has identified oral languages that often have a word for speech in general, or for a rhythmic unit in a poem or song, or for a theme, but have no word for "word" as in an isolated and singular bit of speech.[37] Ong adds that the "sense of individual words as significantly discrete items is fostered by writing" and then gives the example that it makes no difference to an oral person if "text-based" is considered one word or two.[38] Since the concept of "words" does not exist in the oral mind, word for word and line for line memorization simply mean "alike" and not "exactly alike" as a literate person might define word for word memorization.[39] Such an approach to memory must be considered when introducing the Bible to oral peoples. Should the missionary expect word for word memorization of the Scripture or Bible story? Does the oral person have liberty of slightly alter the message when he retells the story? An ignorant understanding of how oral memory works may lead to a false sense of security regarding the abilities of oral peoples to remember Bible stories over time. Such implications will be explored in chapter 5.

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[36]Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 26-28.

[37]Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 115.

[38]Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 61.

[39]Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 28.

The Concept of Homeostasis in Oral Memory

Ong describes oral societies as being homeostatic, meaning that they live in the present and slough off memories that no longer have current relevance.[40] Ong contrasts the oral homeostatic feature with literate cultures. He notes that dictionaries, for example, allow quite archaic uses of words to remain available in modern vocabularies. Words in literate cultures can have many layers of meaning depending on the era one is referring to and dictionaries carry a list of semantic discrepancies to cover the range of use. Ong observes that oral cultures have no dictionaries and thus have fewer semantic discrepancies. Word meanings come continually out of the present context. Goody and Watt give depth to Ong's point when they write,

> What the individual remembers tends to be what is of critical importance in his experience of the main social relationships. In each generation, therefore, the individual memory will mediate the cultural heritage in such a way that its new constituents will adjust to the old by the process of interpretation . . . and whatever parts of it have ceased to be of contemporary relevance are likely to be eliminated by the process of forgetting.[41]

Goody and Watt refer to a study examining the homeostatic nature of oral societies and the passing on of tribal genealogies.[42] The study researched the Tiv of Nigeria as they used oral genealogies to settle court disputes over land possession. The Tiv were convinced their oral version of the genealogy was accurate to the original land owners more than forty years past. The British government, for their own legal purposes, had also recorded Tiv genealogies forty years back and their printed records showed variance with the oral genealogy the Tiv were presenting. The researchers discovered that the genealogies had changed slightly over time based on which family was in power

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[40]Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 46.

[41]Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 30.

[42]Ibid., 27-68.

at the moment. The genealogy would reflect the family lineage of whatever leader was currently in power, even if it varied from the overall tribal heritage.

Goody and Watt describe this shift in memory according to current realities of power as structural amnesia. The authors note three basic structural shifts in a society which often lead to a reordering of the oral memory. First, people are added through birth and depart through death, expanding and contracting the personnel roster of the people. Second, tribal segments migrate and fade away from memory or others merge and bring new families and leaders into the society. Third, changes within the social system itself affect the memory of the people. New leaders come to power and depose other leaders.[43] Goody provides an example from the Gonja tribe in Ghana. The area is divided into smaller chiefdoms and a system is in place for certain of those chiefdoms to provide the ruler for all of the Gonja. The oral tradition of the Gonja lists a man named Ndewura Jakpa as the original conqueror of the area along with his seven sons who were eligible for future inheritance and rule. At this same time, the British were extending their rule over the area and they also recorded the local chiefs and their lineages. Over the next sixty years, one of Jakpa's sons was driven away because of a bad alliance with an enemy people and another son was essentially cut off from his family's land because of British political restructuring. When the Gonja were asked again for their oral history, there was no memory of those two sons who were deposed. The ancestral leader, Jakpa, was only credited with ever having five sons.[44]

Goody, Malinowski, Boas, Levi-Strauss and others explain that these genealogies serve the same function as creation myths and stories about local deities in oral cultures: they regulate the social construction of the present, giving "historical"

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[43]Ibid., 32.

[44]Ibid., 33.

support to those gods and rulers who currently have a prominent role in the society.[45] Myth and history merge together and "elements in the cultural heritage which cease to have a contemporary relevance tend to be soon forgotten or transformed" as old elements that have served their purpose quietly drop out of usage and memory and new elements impacting the present take their place.[46] Oral peoples see no contradiction between genealogies and stories that do not match those given in years past. The social pressure and context driven needs of oral societies shape the way memory works in the society.

The implication of this process of homeostasis and structural amnesia is that the likelihood of any new information introduced to the oral society being retained is directly related to the usefulness of the information to the present realities of the society. A problem arises when, as Klem, Steffen, and others experienced, a missionary or church planter approaches the culture with new information that is presented in a way unfamiliar or irrelevant to the oral peoples. Such information is unlikely to be understood or seen with any practical value and thus, very likely to be forgotten or syncretized with local traditions once the missionary moves on.

Oral Community

The presence of the local community is much more important in oral cultures than in literate cultures. In many cases, known local leaders carry the authority in the community in contrast to literate cultures where authority often rests with unknown government officials or books written by Ph.D holding experts that have no relationship with anyone in the local community. Thomas Boomershine notes that the root meaning

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[45]Goody, "The Consequences of Literacy," in *Literacy in Traditional* Societies, 33-34; Bronislaw Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, 1926), 23, 43; Franz Boas, "The Folklore of the Eskimo," *Journal of American Folklore* 64 (1904): 2; and Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, 245-69, where Levi-Strauss compares the concept of history in literate and non-literate cultures.

[46]Ibid., 34.

of the word authority comes from the word author. He reasons that the authority of the Scriptures is based on their author, God.[47] Drawing out Boomershine's thought, the source of authority in an oral culture is tied to the author or speaker in that community. Ong states that "writing fosters abstractions that disengage knowledge from the arena where human beings struggle with one another. It separates the knower from the known."[48] Havelock agrees with Ong and Boomershine when he writes that "for an oral culture learning or knowing means achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known."[49]

In contrast, the mindset of western literates commonly found over the past two centuries is that if anything is truly important, it must be in writing, documented, signed, and sealed. According to this mindset, no merely oral word can carry the kind of legal, scholarly, or administrative authority compared to what a written and published document can.[50] Western missions practitioners historically came from cultures steeped in written history. Graham states that it is difficult to overemphasize the perceived significance of writing. Noted authorities in years past have made statements along the lines that purely oral communication is unable to provide for progressive cultural development and that only writing can bridge a man from the tribal to the civilized realm.[51] Official papers with signatures of those in positions of authority are common in

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[47]Thomas Boomershine, *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 20.

[48]Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 44.

[49]Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 145-46.

[50]William A. Graham, *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 9.

[51]Ibid., 12. Walter Ong also discusses the power and importance that writing can bring to a culture and his argument will be examined later in this chapter.

literate societies. The authority resides not in the document or in the one bringing the document but in the one whom the signature represents. Such external sources of authority and enforcement are not as powerful in an oral culture.

Community Control of Message Transmission

The oral community itself serves as the enforcement agency for accuracy in oral communication. Bailey suggests there are three types of oral transmission, each with a varying level of expected and enforced accuracy.[52] First is the uncontrolled, informal oral tradition. An example would be a rumor passed around an office. There is no known author or specified audience. Details of the rumor change often and no one is surprised if the version he or she heard varies significantly from earlier versions. Little community enforcement of accuracy is applied.

Second is the controlled, formal oral tradition. This method is the one Islamic Sheiks use to rotely memorize the Koran. There is a clear, identified teacher, student, and block of information to be learned and passed on. The message content is expected to be rigidly fixed and there is no room for personalization or variation of the message. Few types of oral transmission follow this strict model, as the memorization necessary is intensive and reliant on a fixed, written source that is often not available in oral cultures.

Third, there is a more balanced transmission method called the informal, controlled oral tradition. This method is most common in oral societies. Within this tradition, there are three levels of community control and expectation enforced on the material transmitted. In some cases, there is little control and total flexibility in the message. An example is telling a joke. The general flow and punch line remain the same but characters may be altered to fit the context. At the other end, the community exerts

[52]For the full explanation of what is summarized below, see Kenneth Bailey,"Informal Controlled Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels,"*Asia Journal of Theology* 5 (1991): 34-54.

near total control and the message is allowed little to no flexibility. An example is an epic poem or proverb key to the identity of the culture. In the middle is a method allowing for some flexibility and interpretation, but still falling under the control of the community at large. Parables, stories, and historical narratives fall within this arena, with the community controlling conformity of the message in general, but allowing for slight changes with regard to characters or specific incidents depicted in the story. The method of transmission and control are the most common in oral societies, as will be shown below.

The Lomwe of Africa house their theology in their songs, not in written texts as literates might. Laryea writes of "the many ordinary Christians whose reflections on the gospel can be discerned in their prayers, songs, testimonies, thank offerings, and sermons. They are the ones who are now beginning to set for us the parameters and framework for doing theology in a new key."[53] Laryea recorded and analyzed two-hundred sixty three songs to discern the theology of the tribe. Themes that emerged were deemed most important and found to be most contextual to the people. Prominent themes were judgment, the return of Christ, sins, repentance, death, and life described as a journey.

These Lomwe songs were developed in the community of the tribe and were direct expressions of their understanding of God. The oral community expresses itself in a personal and contextual way. Theology in oral societies is emic theology. Speaking of Pentecostal oral theology, one author notes

> The theology of the oral Church is automatically more pragmatic, more experiential, less critical, less logical, and more personal. It relies, if you will, more on testimony, and less on written texts. Written texts – even the Bible itself – are judged according to this

[53]Quoted in Stuart Foster, "Oral Theology in Lomwe Songs," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 32 (2008): 130.

different set of expectations, and they play a fundamentally different role in the daily life of the Church than they do in the technical world of scholarship.[54]

Oral theology in the context described above requires a community because the people's expression of theology is personal to their tribe and is closely tied to the perceived ways God has worked in their lives.

Interpretation Methods in Oral Contexts

The community aspect of oral cultures informs how they approach and understand "truth" as well. An understanding of truth, even the truth of the Scriptures often involves the entire community or body of believers in the culture. The presence of a local prominent societal figure plays a crucial role in the community's willingness to accept something as true. The relationship of the community with the teacher or speaker is as important as the actual features of the message itself.[55] Consider the following example:

> Just as oral people distrust experts, so also oral Christians tend to measure theological competence against a more pragmatic yardstick. Consider this comment, which I once overheard at an Assembly of God district council: "He may have a string of degrees, but he can't preach his way out of a paper bag." What matters here is not what is said, but the assumption upon which the claim is made: The ability to preach one's way out of a paper bag is surely more important than a Ph.D behind one's name. In an oral community, "them as can, does; them as can't teaches." Practice trumps theory every time. It is not that the experts know something that the oral preacher cannot find out. It is that that expert knows something the oral preacher thinks is irrelevant.[56]

Davis confers that oral cultures "demonstrate a certain pattern of thought and behavior. Characteristics of such cultures include lack of concern for original forms and authorship, extreme respect for rhetorical skills, placing greater value on interpersonal

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[54]Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, "The Word of God from Living Voices: Orality and Literacy in the Pentecostal Tradition," *PNEUM* 27 (2005): 249. See also Kenneth Archer, "A Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology: Method and Manner" *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9 (2007): 306.

[55]Michael A. Rynkiewich, "Mission, Hermeneutics, and the Local Church," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 1 (2007): 50-51.

[56]Camery-Hoggatt, "The Word of God from Living Voices," 248.

interaction than on abstract sets of values and logical deductions, and stress on the community rather than on individualism and individual thought."[57] When Davis refers to original forms and authorship, he is referring to outside forms and authors. The authority in an oral society does not come from the outside, no matter how reputable that individual may be. As Ong and Levi-Strauss have noted above, the connection between the knower and the known is crucial. Again, the community aspect of understanding truth is crucial for those ministering in oral contexts. If the missionary is seen as an outsider, the message carries must less weight than it might otherwise. Hiebert has devised a model called critical contextualization that blends the background, education, and experience of the missionary with the insight and authority of the local culture. The result is that the missionary empowers the locals to take ownership of the message and helps ensure that syncretism is less likely to occur.[58]

Oral Communication

Sheard describes oral communication through the embodiment principle where voice is more than just an audible frequency. Speech is created and clothed by the speaker, dressed to fit the occasion. In contrast to print communication, Sheard writes, "The genuineness or shallowness of the [message] is communicated by a speaker in inflection, tears, smiles, rhythm, cadence, and intensity. Books don't do that."[59] Furthermore, oral communication conveys para-messages such as tone, gesture, and spatial distance – all things that "speak" as clearly as words do. Hiebert notes that

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[57]Casey Wayne Davis, "Hebrews 6:4-6 from an Oral Critical Perspective," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51 (2008): 754.

[58]For more on critical contextualization, see Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 75-92, and M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 194-213.

[59]Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries*, 21, 24.

delivery mechanisms like proverbs, parables, and stories do not just supplement a logical argument as in a western sermon, they are the very storehouses that contain knowledge in an oral society.[60]

In this way, the people own their speech in a way unique to oral peoples. Klem provides an example of this kind of speech ownership. He had been using recorded Bible stories with a Yoruba tribe, coming each week to share the message with the people. One day, a local man challenged Klem to a test of ownership of the message on the tapes; the man who could sing the largest portion of the message from memory was allowed to stay and keep the message. The one who could sing the least had to stand at a distance. Klem records that such oral communication feats were the indigenous method of proving cultural ownership of knowledge. The Yoruba man boasted that only a wise man could compose and sing that kind of poetry.[61]

Oral cultures often have unique rites of passage connected to their oral tradition. Bruce Olson encountered such a situation with the Motilones in Columbia where the people had great "sing-offs" that a boy must participate in to enter manhood. A youth would spend an entire night reciting the people's cultural history through song and would never be viewed as a boy again.[62] These communication methods tell a story central to the realities of life for the people. In fact, "oral learners 'enter' the story and as they absorb sensory data they live the story in the present tense – seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and feeling what the persons in the story are experiencing."[63]

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[60]Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 116.

[61]Herbert Klem, "Dependence on Literacy Strategy: Taking a Hard Second Look," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 12:2 (1995): 63-64.

[62]Bruce Olson, *Bruchko* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 1995), 144-45.

[63]Claydon, *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, 22.

Hesselgrave adds additional communication means such as drama and dance. He states that certain forms of drama are a primary means to communicate religious and cultural values throughout Asia.[64] In China, music was thought to have a power of its own and Confucian and Taoist teachings were common themes in Chinese opera. Similarly, in India, dance and drama are used to communicate the Jataka Tales, or birth stories about the Buddha.[65] These art forms are more than mere entertainment. They are used to shape and reinforce the worldview of the people, bringing together the seen and unseen worlds and explaining the mysteries of origin, birth, sickness, death, good, evil, truth, and beauty.[66]

Even after the introduction of literacy, oral communication methods still prevail. For example, Chinese immigrants to cities in Malaysia bring their dance and theatre traditions. Chinese street opera is commonly found and often feature classics such as Romance of the Three Kingdoms, The Water Margin, and Madam White Snake.[67]

Introduction of Literacy

I have labored to describe the intricacies of a purely oral worldview because, as Ong states, "A deeper understanding of pristine or primary orality enables us better to understand the new world of writing, what it truly is, and what functionally literate human beings really are . . . . Without writing, the literate mind would not and could not

[64]Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ*, 550.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Chandu Ray, "The Use of Dance-Drama in Evangelism," *Effective Evangelism* 1 (1971): 8.

[67]Jaime Koh and Stephanie Ho, *Culture and Customs of Singapore and Malaysia* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2009), 64.

think as it does."[68] Introducing literacy to an oral people involves much more than simply teaching them to read. The shift often requires an upheaval of society. Ong notes that

> Oral cultures indeed produce powerful and beautiful verbal performances of high artistic worth. Nonetheless, writing gives the human consciousness fuller potentials and the ability to produce other beautiful creations. Literacy is necessary for the development of science, history, and philosophy, and indeed for the explanation of language itself. There is hardly an oral culture left in the world that is not somehow aware of the vast complex of powers forever inaccessible without literacy. This awareness is agony for persons rooted in primary orality, who want literacy passionately but who also know very well that moving into the world of literacy means leaving behind much that is deeply loved in the earlier oral world. [They] have to die to continue living.[69]

Such language sounds strong, but the reality is that the introduction of literacy affects the entire worldview of oral peoples. Hiebert explains that even something as seemingly innocuous as a written calendar can have far reaching consequences. The calendar introduces days, weeks, months, and years that often do not match the seasons or agrarian lifestyle of many oral peoples. The solar and lunar solstices no longer govern the year, rather, marks on a paper now tell people what to do and when to do it.[70]

Additionally, the printed word disconnects ideas and information from a known source. Ong calls this phenomenon "autonomous discourse."[71] The message of a book is no longer connected with village leaders who hold real and perceived authority. There is no immediate context for the passing of written information. Further, writing

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[68]Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 78.

[69]Ibid., 15.

[70]Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 138-39.

[71]Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 78. Ong concedes that oral cultures often have a form of autonomous discourse such as formulaic sayings and rituals that have been passed down through many generations. The difference is that in these cultures, the sayings are often attributed to a respected ancestor, leader, warrior, deity, or otherwise highly respected cultural insider. The printed word, in contrast, can have for its author someone completely unfamiliar to the culture.

requires interpretation since the speaker is not present to explain him or herself. Ong notes that it is not possible to "dispute" the written word because the author cannot engage in a dialog. Someone can disagree all he wants with the author but at the end of the day, the same contested information still remains in the book.[72] As noted above, oral cultures prefer a communal interpretation process tied to a local and known authority. Books written by highly educated experts carry little weight because context and relationship are so important for an oral culture to accept something as true.

Books require a move away from this centralized authority present in oral cultures. Those bringing knowledge are now outside of the culture, have no relationship to the people, cannot defend their argument, and have little weight in the culture. As noted above, oral cultures tend to slough off memories and information that is not presently useful to their people. If outside authorities like authors of books are seen as foreign to the ways of the oral culture, there is a higher likelihood that the new information will be dismissed.

Preaching and Education Models in Early Missions

Several historical examples illustrate the difficulty of missionaries working from their literate background in the midst of oral peoples. Some missionaries were at a loss if they could not use the written word. The two hallmarks of early mission work, preaching and education, became literate affairs. Preaching was often modeled after the style used in western churches where the sermon was logically argued through syllogisms, propositions, and points until an inevitable conclusion was reached. "Preachers" were men of a certain mold and training, modeled after Western ecclesial

[72]Ibid., 79.

structure.[73]

Regarding education, one of the first things many missionaries did was gather materials to build a school so that indigenous peoples could learn to read and write. Rufus Anderson, a man ahead of his time as far as raising up the indigenous church, still succumbed to the anti-orality ignorance of past centuries. He states that without education it is not possible for mission churches to be in any proper way sustained according to the three-self model he developed.[74] Anderson understood a Western form of schooling when he referred to education. Unlearned, illiterate natives are seen as having a

> degraded mental condition of the heathen world, as compared with the field of the apostolic missions. Scarcely a ray of light reaches it from sun, moon, or stars in the intellectual and moral firmament. Mind is vacant, crushed, unthinking, enslaved to animal instincts and passions . . . . The common school, therefore, is a necessity among the degraded heathen, to help elevate the converts, and make the village church an effective agency.[75]

To Anderson, illiterate pagans had little capacity for knowledge or learning until they came under care of the western school. He required a shift out of orality in order for a native man to be deemed a successful pastor.

John Nevius followed a similar model where his method of teaching required

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[73]See, for example, the letters of Southern Baptist missionary Lottie Moon describing the kind of preaching found in China in the 1880's: Lottie Moon, "Correspondence with Henry A. Tupper on 17 July 1885," http://solomon.3e2a.org/public/ws/lmcorr/www2/lmcorrp/Record? upp=0&m=20&w= NATIVE%28%27text+ph+is+%27%27preaching%27%27%27%29& r=1&order=native% 28%27corr_ date%2FDescend%27%29 (accessed November 18, 2010); and Lottie Moon, "Correspondence with Henry A. Tupper on 10 October 1878," http://solomon.3e2a.org /public/ws/lmcorr/www2/lmcorrp/Record? upp=0&m=22&w=NATIVE%28%27text+ph+is+%27%27 preaching%27%27%27%29&r=1&order= native%28%27corr_date%2FDescend%27%29 (accessed November 18, 2010). Confer also Jonathan Edwards, ed., *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2005), 241, and Ruth Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 92.

[74]Rufus Anderson, *To Advance the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Rufus Anderson*, ed. R. Pierce Beaver (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), 99.

[75]Ibid., 99-100.

converts to learn to read, follow traditional western Bible study methods, and learn to sing Western hymns. Nevius only selected the more advanced church members for his pastoral training classes.[76] The classes were taught to analyze the arguments of such books as Romans. Nevius goes on to explain that only one in twenty Chinese could read and not more than one in a thousand women.[77] Regarding music, Nevius imposed western hymns and music scales. He notes that "some have learned to read music but have great difficulty with the half tones because the indigenous music scale is vastly different from the Western one."[78] The great oral history, singing, and identity of the Chinese was displaced as the Western model of singing was introduced.

These missionaries were ill-equipped to meet the needs of oral based cultures, largely because the West was so immersed in Enlightenment driven literacy and logic at that time. Anderson and Nevius, men ahead of their time in calling for the three-self church unwittingly produced a dependency of a different kind, that of required literacy.

Bridging the Transition to Literacy

There exists a tension when oral peoples encounter writing, as Ong notes above. The people know something of the value and opportunities literacy can bring. There will be some that desire to learn to read and there will be some who reject literacy and prefer the oral ways. Missionaries and others who introduce literacy to an oral people must be aware of the implications on the society. Historian Stephen Neill records that pastors and leaders who become literate and are trained in institutions using books and western theology often have great difficulty transferring what they have learned back

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[76]John L. Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (Hancock, NH: Monadnock Press, 2003), 51.

[77]Ibid., 52.

[78]Ibid.

to their people in their home village.[79] Once the pastors have been trained by an outside literate approach, they have difficulty approaching the Scriptures in an original fashion and can only regurgitate what they have read. Additionally, Klem has observed in Africa that some people began to believe that the ability to read the Bible was a necessary requirement for salvation. Some missionaries had enforced literacy so much that people equated being a Christian with knowing how to read so they were rejecting Christianity, not because they rejected the gospel, but because they did not want to learn to read.[80]

Klem also observed that missionaries who required emerging leaders to learn to read and use literacy methods for church planting often distorted the social structure of the society.[81] In those societies, the recognized leadership was often older folks who were not the first to learn to read and thus be discipled by the missionary. It was the younger people that wanted to learn to read so they were more likely to be put in leadership roles in the new church, against the norms of the society. The missionaries were attempting to introduce literacy so they could produce indigenous leadership, but the process actually led to a foreign leadership structure composed of young and immature, albeit literate, members of the society.

Orality – Literacy Spectrum

All peoples in the world fall on a spectrum between primary orality and highly literate. A description of the spectrum is helpful, especially for those working with immigrants from oral backgrounds. Jim Slack has created a categorization that is commonly found in evangelical works on orality today.[82]

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[79]Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin Group, 1990), 386.

[80]Herbert V. Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1982), 37.

[81]Ibid., 39.

Illiterates are those who cannot read or write. They have never been introduced to writing at all. To these people, words do not exist as letters, but as sounds related to images of events they are seeing or experiencing. *Functional Illiterates* are those who have been to school but do not continue to read or write regularly and have lost the ability to write more than their name or basic words. They prefer to get all of their information orally. Their functional illiteracy determines how they learn, develop their values and beliefs, and how they pass on important aspects of their culture like religious beliefs. *Semi-literates* may have attended school for many years but still prefer to learn by narrative means. These folks can read newspaper headlines but have trouble understanding and summarizing the article to someone who has not read it.[83] *Literates* prefer to learn through reading and grow bored by the repetition oral peoples thrive on. Literates easily and often use printed materials to verify facts and aid their recall of information. Finally, *Highly Literates* are those with the highest levels of education. They are thoroughly print oriented and trust written over oral communication.

Ong distinguishes only between primary and secondary orality. He explains primary oral cultures as those with no knowledge at all of writing and secondary oral cultures as those exposed to literacy but still preferring various means of oral communication styles.[84] He uses the term residual orality to describe the persistence of

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[82]This spectrum is succinctly described in Claydon, *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*, 20-21. In some situations, the word *illiterate* is changed out for *pre-literate* because the latter does not sound as offensive. However, the term *pre-literate* supposes the individual desires to learn to read and will do so one day. As Klem and others have found, such a desire for literacy is not always the case.

[83]Tex Sample refers to the concept of functional illiteracy as "traditional orality," meaning people who can read and write but whose appropriation and engagement with life is oral. Sample does not contribute anything new to the discussion of functional illiteracy and borrows heavily from Ong so I will not engage his position here. See Tex Sample, *Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994), 6.

[84]Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 11.

oral learning and communication models after the advent of literacy. Residual orality is an important concept and will be explored in depth later in this chapter.

I prefer to conceive of the orality – literacy spectrum through a combination of Slack and Ong's treatments. Many have a tendency to over generalize the nature of oral cultures and place anything related to orality under the category of primary oral learner. Such a generalization is unhelpful. Primary oral learners occupy an extreme end of the literacy spectrum. Those living in this culture have little to no exposure to print materials. The spoken language may not have been reduced to writing at all. Primary oral cultures house all of their cultural knowledge in their minds. Information is delivered through speaking, singing, dancing, proverbs, oral poetry, and art simply because no other media exists to transmit information.

Further along the literacy spectrum is the secondary oral culture. The written word is familiar to those in this culture but is not the preferred means of communication. People may know how to read but may not have read a book since elementary school. Those in a secondary oral culture may use writing on occasion, such as for legal documents, but information is usually transmitted via story, poem, or song. Many of the unreached people groups today are secondary oral learners.

Closer to the literate end of the spectrum are the residual oral learners. These people use reading and writing every day. They attain most of their information from reading or following highly structured news broadcasts. Written historical records may exist chronicling their culture. Literacy is familiar and common. However, the deepest cultural values may still be communicated orally through epic poems, songs, or ritual dances. Rites of intensification and other cultural signposts are performed rather than written and read. It takes a long time for a culture to completely move away from its oral roots.

Finally, there is the highly literate end of the spectrum where the preferred

medium for communication is the written word. People are more comfortable writing an essay about a topic than acting it out through a drama. The vast majority of learning takes place through reading and little cultural history is stored in oral form. Few people in the culture can recite their history without first brushing up through reading. Few people in the world fall into the highly literate category.

Since people fall somewhere on this spectrum, there can be no one size fits all approach to ministry. Some strategies take approaches intended for primary oral learners and use them in all situations. Immigrants to North America bring their culture with them, including their learning preferences. Many enroll in ESL classes after arrival in this country. As noted above, though they may know how to read, oftentimes, secondary oral learners still prefer an oral method of communication for things most dear to them like cultural values and religious beliefs. These preferences and strategies will be explored more fully in chapter 5.

Residual Orality

The oral worldview and accompanying communication preferences do not immediately disappear once writing is introduced. Ong notes that "today primary oral culture[s] in the strict sense hardly exist, since every culture knows of writing and has some experience of its effects."[85] Still, many cultures preserve much of the mind-set of primary orality. This concept is what Ong calls residual orality. He goes on to write, "Long after a culture has begun to use writing, it may still not give writing high ratings. A present-day literate usually assumes that written records have more force than spoken

[85]Ibid., 11. Ong perhaps slightly overstates his case when he writes that every culture knows of writing.

words. . . .Earlier cultures that knew literacy but had not so fully interiorized it have often assumed quite the opposite."[86]

Ong includes a historical study of the use of Latin to make his point. After the fall of the Roman empire, and even during its reign, Latin fell out of use as a primary language. Between AD 550 and 700, Latin evolved into early forms of Italian, Spanish, French, and other Romance languages. Over time, Latin was no longer anyone's first language and was always a "learned language" directly tied to writing since it was only taught in schools. An interesting phenomenon occurred, however. Despite the fact that Latin was completely equated with literacy, the oral driven rhetoric roots of the language persisted. Because Latin was no longer spoken, it did not continue to evolve; the language was essentially frozen in its fourth century usage, a time when oral persuasion was highly valued. Even though Latin was no longer spoken, it remained the language of choice for matters of rhetoric and law because of its perceived persuasive power.[87]

Even into the Middle Ages as texts were used more widely in education, teachers never tested via the written word. Knowledge and intellectual prowess were measured by the students' ability to defend themselves orally, a practice still used today at the highest levels of academia – the doctoral dissertation defense.[88] In the court room today, the spoken word still rules, complete with all of its accompanying powers for persuasion in a way that writing cannot match.

The tenaciousness of orality carries on, even in highly literate societies. In societies that are closer to the primary oral end of the spectrum, the oral preference is even stronger. Charles Kraft notes that people frequently "turn away from literacy

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[86]Ibid., 96.

[87]Ibid., 112-15.

[88]Ibid., 115.

because they *prefer* other forms of communication."[89] Klem noticed in his own research and the research of others that reversion back into oral communication preferences is common. He notes that oral peoples could be taught to read quickly, but in less than a year, they had reverted back to orality. Why? Because they have no use for reading, do not practice it, and lose the ability to read and process information via print.[90] Such a tendency might lead one to conclude that oral peoples do not value knowledge. To the contrary, knowledge is highly valued and is often one of the central values of the community. It is just that oral peoples do not associate their value of knowledge with books. On occasion, westerners wrongly assume knowledge is not valued. This idea of reversion carries implications for church planting strategies among immigrants from oral backgrounds who are taught to read, either in a refugee camp or English as a Second Language center upon arrival in North America. This idea will be further explored in chapter 5.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the nature of the oral worldview, especially through analysis of four key categories 1) the nature of oral cognition and memory, 2) the nature of the oral community for message transmission and interpretation, 3) the nature of oral communication methods, and 4) the effect of literacy on the oral worldview. One can find several insights from this study into each of these four areas.

First, oral cognition is primarily experiential, and is reliant on the immediate usefulness and importance of information for day to day life. Oral peoples often need to be able to taste, feel, or touch something in order to conceptualize it. The majority of

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[89]Charles Kraft in the preface to Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture*, x. Italics in the original.

[90]Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture*, 14-17.

purely oral languages identify an object by its function rather than via a descriptor that is more abstract. Moreover, if new information is introduced to an oral culture and not clearly linked to their everyday life, it will soon be forgotten.

Oral memory is primarily thematic, and in some cases, there is no concept of verbatim or word for word memorization. Lord's study of Yugoslavian oral poets revealed the poets structured their works thematically, and though the structure, meter, and rhythm remained the same, every delivery changed small features of the story bit by bit. Additionally, studies find that oral peoples require time and repetition to properly memorize information. It is rare for an oral person to clearly grasp something the first time it is heard.

Second, information is always delivered and interpreted in the midst of community in oral cultures. The community exerts pressure in order to ensure accurate delivery of information. However, there is a range of accuracy that is expected, depending on the nature of the information. Even important genealogies were found to have changed over time, depending on the relevance of the lineage to current community needs. If previous rulers had turned on the community, they were sometimes left out of future genealogies and forgotten by the community. In this case, the community pressure was such that the message was intentionally changed.

Third, oral peoples communicate information through a variety of performance based delivery methods. Songs, stories, poems, proverbs, and rituals are used to deliver the message. These communication methods fit well with the need for oral peoples to store their information in a way that can be repeated and delivered during important community events. People can sing songs reinforcing their worldview while they work in the fields. Dances and drama are used during key rituals to remind the people of their gods and ancestors and prepare them for a successful hunt. These communication

methods link the message to daily life and important events, a mechanism noted above to be crucial for the retention of information in oral societies.

Fourth, this chapter shows that even after the introduction of literacy, oral peoples long prefer their oral methods of communication. Ong calls this feature residual orality. Oral peoples are not stupid. They are able to quickly learn to read and write. However, these skills are soon forgotten if they are not crucial for day to day living. Oral peoples may use literacy skills for their job, but communicate orally otherwise. Additionally, the closer one gets to core worldview issues like religious beliefs, the more important the oral worldview becomes. Core worldview beliefs are often taught and reinforced through songs, stories, and dramas in many oral cultures so it is best to continue to use these delivery methods when addressing worldview issues.

Finally, there is a clear need for further studies on orality and the oral worldview. Many of the key studies that modern literature, especially evangelical works on orality, draw on are decades old. Oral memory functions differently that literate memory. Literates can deceive themselves through an overestimation of the abilities of oral peoples to memorize verbatim. Missionaries must study afresh current realities of oral peoples, especially in today's globalized world where almost every culture has some exposure to literacy. This dissertation focuses on oral peoples who come to the city where they are almost certainly required to learn English. These immigrants often enroll in English as a Second Language courses in the United States where literacy is taught alongside the English language. It is especially important in this context for missionaries to understand the nature of secondary or residual orality, especially at the worldview level and develop appropriate methods to reach these people with the gospel. Chapter 5 of this dissertation draws out implications and strategies for reaching oral peoples who have come to the city.

CHAPTER 5

INDENTIFYING AND REACHING ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE CITY

This chapter draws on and applies the findings presented in previous chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 revealed that theories regarding cultural identity of immigrant groups are in flux. Chapter 4 concluded that orality is a complex subject and the majority of immigrants from oral backgrounds fall anywhere along a spectrum of primary oral to residually oral. While certain patterns are predicable regarding cultural identity, assimilation, and orality, church planters need the tools to conduct their own ethnographic research on their people in order to understand key dynamics in their own city. The first part of this chapter details how to identify a people group or groups in a complex urban environment. This section concludes with a discussion of theory building that can give the church planter insight into the specific beliefs, identity, and needs of the target people.

The second section of this chapter applies findings from previous chapters and presents methodologies for reaching people groups in the city. Attention is given to the major assimilation patterns presented in chapter 3 as well as strategies for reaching immigrants from oral backgrounds. A church planter who understands the foundational research presented in chapters 3 and 4 and grasps the research strategies presented below should be able to formulate an appropriate model to reach ethnic groups in the city.

Identifying Ethnic Groups in the City

The first step to reaching ethnic groups in the city is finding representatives

from that people group and learning as much as one can about them. This section explores three major areas that need to be considered in order to have the greatest understanding of a target people group. First, conducting demographic research helps the church planter physically find people or areas of the city thought to house the group and determine if immigration is growing or declining. Second, ethnographic research must be conducted in order to learn about the group's specific and current worldview, assimilation strategies, cultural gatekeepers and leaders, and many other important categories. Finally, the church planter must develop a theory grounded in research, which describes what the people are like here in the United States so as to develop an effective strategy to reach them with the gospel, plant churches, and develop leaders.

Demographic Research

Research at the national level. It is helpful to begin this complex research process with demographic research. Such research can help the church planter save time by finding specific states, counties, and even zip codes where his people live. Every year the Department of Homeland Security is tasked to provide documentation for all people granted legal immigration, refugee, asylum, naturalization, and non-immigrant admission status.[1] The document they produce breaks down immigration by the immigrants' country of last residence, country of birth, state of current residence, gender, age, marital status, occupation, and so on. These categories are helpful for narrowing the search for a target people. The document does not classify immigrants by people group so its usefulness is limited in some cases. However, a general estimate of the likelihood of particular peoples can be made by searching the document for their country of origin.

[1]United States Department of Homeland Security, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2009* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2010), 5, http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook/2009/ois_yb_ 2009.pdf (accessed August 7, 2013). Definitions for each of these categories of immigrant are found on page 1.

Field level research is required to identify the people group and is explained later in this chapter. National level demographic research is useful to find large concentrations of immigrants from a particular country in various U.S. states or identify certain types of immigrants by category, such as university students.

Missions strategists in particular can use the national report for fund raising or mobilization efforts. For example, it is difficult for Americans to get a visa to enter Iran for missionary purposes but nearly 20,000 Iranians legally immigrated to the U.S. in 2009 so efforts can be launched to reach them here. The national report is a good place to begin because a vast amount of information is located in one place. The report narrows the search for a particular people to a particular state or type of immigrant and further research can be done at lower levels to focus the search even more.

Research at the state level. Individual states do not all keep a high level of statistical information on immigrants. My state of residence, Kentucky, maintains no accessible database. I called several departments in the capital city trying to obtain a breakdown of immigration by county or city. My inquiries resulted in no further information. Happily, not all states follow Kentucky's unhelpful model. There is a refugee database available that lists admissions by every state in the U.S. and includes a contact phone number to get more detailed information.[2] These offices are usually connected with local level governments, social services, and ministries that can provide much more detailed information about internationals in a specific city. In addition to the refugee database, many state government offices keep a record of immigration statistics and can offer help to the researcher in locating specific peoples in the city or county of choice.

[2]http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/data/state_profiles.htm (accessed August 7, 2013).

Research at the city level. Smaller cities may not keep immigration statistics at all but this does not mean one cannot find valuable local information about ethnic groups in the city. A good place to begin at the local level is to do an internet search or scan the phonebook for Catholic Charity Services, English as a Second Language centers, refugee centers, and neighborhood ethnic business associations. The city of Louisville has a government webpage specifically for internationals living in the city.[3] From this page, I can find information about ESL classes, translation services, and social services all designed to meet the needs of immigrants to Louisville. A phone call or visit to any one of these organizations will no doubt yield contact information and provide practical ways to meet internationals. Louisville also has an organization called Kentucky Refugee Ministries that provides many services to refugees including helping them find housing, jobs, learn English, and provides money to help with the transition to the U.S.[4] Finally, local census offices can be of great help. Certain cities have planning commissions that organize census data collection.[5] A visit to their office may yield detailed information for specific neighborhoods or boroughs in the city. Since many cities already have services in place designed to find and help immigrants, the researcher need not perform redundant research when he or she can take advantage of work that has already been done.

Additionally, The North American Mission Board has compiled a website devoted to listing statistics and information on as many people groups in North America

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[3]This webpage is found at http://www.louisvilleky.gov/Globalization/ (Accessed August 7, 2013).

[4]Kentucky Refugee Ministries, http://kyrm.org/ (accessed August 7, 2013).

[5]See Harvie Conn, ed., *Planting and Growing Urban Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), specifically chapters 1-3 for detailed information on the intricacies of urban research.

as possible.[6] This website allows the researcher to view statistics for every state and Canadian province. All nationalities, languages spoken, and ancestries found in the state are listed. By registering and obtaining special login information, the researcher is able to further find a breakdown of specific people groups in each major city within the state. A profile is provided of each people group. These profiles are user entered so some cities have more detailed information than others. In Louisville, for example, I can find detailed information about the Bosnian population. The page lists their heart language, primary religion, population, zip codes where they live, and paragraphs describing their daily life in Louisville, needs, beliefs, gospel barriers, current efforts to reach them, and prayer guides. As noted, most of this information is user entered and there is a need for church planters to continually update the site as new information is discovered. Information of this level of detail can only be found through conducting personal field research.

Ethnographic Research

Reports and statistics are helpful for ascertaining demographic information and the general location of ethnic peoples in a city but at some point, fieldwork needs to be done. There are many excellent works on conducting ethnographic research.[7] There is

[6]See "People Groups", http://www.peoplegroups.info/ (accessed August 7, 2013).

[7]For an excellent and thorough treatment of the entire ethnographic research process, see Margaret LeCompte and Jean Schensul, eds., *Ethnographer's Toolkit*, 7 vols. (Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press, 1999). See also Pertti Alasuutari, *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1996); Michael Angrosino, *Projects in Ethnographic Research* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2005); Shane Bennett and Kim Felder, *Exploring the Land: Discovering Ways for Unreached People to Follow Christ* (Littleton, CO: Caleb Project, 2003); H. Russell Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*, 3rd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2002); John Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998); David Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step by Step*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998); Bryan Galloway, *Traveling Down Their Road: A Workbook for Discovering a People's Worldview* (self published, 2006); Carol McKinney, *Globe-Trotting in Sandals: A Field Guide to Cultural Research* (Dallas: SIL International, 2000); Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications,

not space, nor need, in this chapter to cover the research process in depth. I will, however, provide a short introduction to ethnographic research, its importance for the goal of this dissertation, and then focus on key skills specifically needed for urban research relating to this dissertation.

Fetterman defines ethnography simply as "the art and science of describing a group or culture."[8] It is a science in the sense that ethnography is driven by standardized research methods, careful note taking, and analysis of gathered data that is not haphazard. On the other hand, the laboratory of the researcher is not sterile, controlled, and artificial. Ethnographic research takes place in the midst of real everyday human interaction and not in a created environment. The goal of the researcher is to see the world through the eyes of the culture under study.

Ethnographic research is both a process and an outcome.[9] As a process, the researcher is able to become a participant observer, learning the culture from an emic perspective.[10] This insider's approach allows for exploration of culture and worldview issues and often raises many new questions that need to be answered. Additionally, participant observation allows for the building of deep relationships during the research process. Ethnographic research makes use of key informants, those cultural insiders who

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1995); James Spradley, *The Ethnographic Interview* (Orlando: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1979); idem., *Participant Observation* (Orlando: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1980); and Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998).

[8]Fetterman, *Ethnography*, 1.

[9]Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 58.

[10]There are various levels of participant observation, such as nonparticipation, passive, moderate, active, and complete participation. At times, ethical and biblical convictions may limit the researcher's level of participation. For example, when studying drug use in a neighborhood, the researcher would not actively buy, sell, or use drugs in order to gain insider information. In a U.S. context, the researcher will likely maintain moderate participation, where a balance is set between insider and outsider status. The church planter may function more as a loiterer than as an active participant. See James Spradley, *Participant Observation* (Orlando: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), 58-62.

aid in the research process by providing the researcher credibility and insight into the community. Relationships are essential for effective church planting but even more so when the target population comes from a communal, relational culture like many of the immigrant groups in the U.S.[11] Along the way, the researcher will learn valuable vocabulary, idioms, habits, community gatekeepers and leaders, degree of people group networking and connectedness, and places of residence that will be essential for the church planting process in the future. The time given to the process of thorough ethnographic research is not wasted time.

Ethnographic research is also an outcome of the process. The end goal is a cultural portrait that paints as close to a native's view of the culture as possible. The document will describe daily life and contain names, places, and observations from religious and cultural rituals. Ethnographies also contain analysis and interpretation of behavior that is vital for a contextualized church. Qualitative research looks at culture below the surface, rather than merely describing observable details.[12] Such reports are useful tools for creating a strategy for effective ministry. Additionally, write ups are useful for training perspective workers and also for presenting in various churches and meetings for mobilization purposes.

Hiebert recommends researchers follow both a synchronic and diachronic analysis of people groups.[13] The former is like a snapshot in time and identifies the current community structure both as a whole and how each cultural category like family

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[11]For a basic model helpful to determine the likely level of relational character of a certain culture, see Richard Lewis, *The Cultural Imperative: Global Trends in the 21st Century* (Boston: Intercultural Press, 2007).

[12]Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry,* 152-53.

[13]Paul Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 127-28.

life, religion, economics, and relation to others work together and inform one another. Synchronic analysis is useful to gain the big picture of what is going on with a certain people in a certain neighborhood. However, the findings are rooted in time and place and are not accurately transferrable to other locations, even when following the same individuals from one city to another. Chapter 3 of this dissertation reveals the limitations of synchronic analysis where findings from studies on ethnic enclaves were projected onto other enclave communities in the United States. Researchers found that enclaves were very different from one another and conclusions drawn from one study could not be wholesale applied to other areas.

Diachronic analysis is done over time and includes studying how people and cultures have changed and adapted to either change forced on their people or change through immigration. Here, "we see humans as real people with all their particularities and idiosyncrasies, and we hear the stories that give meaning to their lives."[14] Diachronic study helps the researcher understand the importance of why people are as they are. Learning of historical events in people's lives can explain their dislike for certain people groups and their stereotypes and prejudices. Such information is crucial when planting a new church. Hiebert helps the researcher in explaining that both synchronic and diachronic study are needed to gain the proper perspective on a people. It is true that the gospel can break down social barriers but at the evangelism stage, cultural and social patterns can create unnecessary barriers to church planting. This concept will be explored more fully later in this chapter. Now that a general introduction to ethnographic research has been given, it is important to discuss how to actually locate members of the people group one is attempting to reach with the gospel.

Locating specific members of the target people group. Chapter 3 revealed

[14]Ibid.

that immigrants and refugees often congregate in apartment complexes in the city, many of which are part of a government housing program designed to help internationals transition into the U.S. There are multiple complexes in Louisville that are connected with Kentucky Refugee Ministries, a local social service organization, and house large numbers of ethnic peoples. Finding a contact person in one of the apartment complexes will often lead the researcher to many more people within the group. A listing of apartments housing immigrants and refugees may be obtained through a visit to the local immigrant social services facility.

Many large cities have international festivals every year. Louisville has several and the events are excellent places to meet scores of internationals. Ethnic communities have booths set up to showcase their food and culture. Those hosting the booths are usually excellent resources for introducing the researcher to the culture. Appointments can be made for the researcher to visit homes or places of worship of the host and these appointments can result in many opportunities for ministry.

Another place to meet internationals is an ethnic grocery store. One can simply open the phone book and look for ethnic food stores and make a visit. There are many such stores in Louisville and the owners and employees are often friendly and enjoy a visit from an American. Genuine interest in the food can lead to good conversation with the workers. A good idea is to invite an employee to your house in order to learn how to cook a dish from their country of origin.

Many cities are home to colleges and universities. These schools have various international clubs and cultural events that draw many ethnic peoples. A researcher may scan the website of a school in town and find contact information for someone leading one of the international clubs. Additionally, many schools have some kind of program designed to connect internationals with Americans for language and cultural instruction. The University of Louisville has such a program run by both the university and a local

campus ministry. Many colleges also have a TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) or ESL (English and a second language) program for students who are accepted on a provisional basis, that they might learn enough English to enroll in an academic program. Such language programs are often looking for volunteers from the community to befriend internationals and help them with their English.

Apartment complexes, international festivals, ethnic grocery stores, and college campuses are all good places to meet internationals. The researcher should make a habit of conducting informal interviews whenever he or she encounters an international.[15] Immigrants are often highly connected with others from their ethnic group so interviews can lead to many more contacts. Taking the time to have a good conversation begins to build the relationship and many internationals are open to having American friends. The researcher should not be afraid to be bold in asking to visit the international at his house or inviting him to visit the researcher's house.

One nuance germane to this dissertation is that some immigrants are either illegal or for various reasons prefer to remain hidden in the city. I have spoken to a number of immigrants from Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia who told me they kept their cultural identity a secret for several years after the World Trade Center bombings. Many immigrants from these countries are light skinned and can remain unnoticed in a neighborhood. Merrill Singer provides a helpful chapter on finding and studying hidden peoples.[16]

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[15]For detailed information on ethnographic interviewing, see Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1995). Chapter 5 is especially helpful for building conversational partnerships. The researcher approaches the interview with a loose structure in mind but oftentimes the interviewee will alert the researcher to further topics to be explored.

[16]Merrill Singer, "Studying Hidden Populations," in *Mapping Social Networks, Spatial Data, and Hidden Populations*, vol. 4 of *Ethnographer's Toolkit*, 125-92.

Singer describes a model utilizing a mixed methods approach to locate hidden populations in a city. Researchers begin with census or other demographic data to identity general areas of the city one is likely to find the target population. The researcher then conducts "street ethnography" focused on likely congregation sites of the target population.[17] Walking the area helps the researcher find shops, libraries, and parks where the target population frequent. In past personal research, I have found that there are people in every neighborhood who seem to know quite a bit about what goes on and can help me answer key questions and point me to more productive areas to find what I am looking for.

Key informants are needed, especially in the early stages of research. These informants are crucial to the success of research among hidden populations for two reasons. First, informants are insiders who can provide information about the locations, behaviors, suspicions, and necessary approaches to speaking with immigrants. Second, informants provide the researcher access and credibility in the community. Key informants were critical for my research of immigrants in London. Having a Portuguese speaking cultural insider clearly eased suspicion with those I interviewed. The importance of language and trust was further emphasized as I interviewed an Afghani who spoke fluent English. I had with me a Pakistani informant who spoke English and Urdu. We were conducting the interview in English and good information was slow in coming. At one point, the Afghani said something to my informant in Urdu and from then on, the conversation was much more open and helpful. After leaving, I asked my informant what the Afghani asked him in Urdu. He said he had asked if we, as outsiders, were to be trusted. My informant assured him we were trustworthy. This interaction, and many like it, showed me the value of not only a key informant, but one who speaks the

[17]Ibid., 137.

local language as well.[18]

Another approach to locate and build relationships with ethnic peoples is to recruit members of the population to a specific geographic location in the neighborhood. Singer suggests two ways to conduct the recruitment.[19] First is the use of a van that functions as a mobile research station. Researchers can drive a clearly marked van around the neighborhood and pass out needed items like warm clothes, maps, bus tickets, and information about events that can help immigrants. Over time, people become familiar with the presence of the van and recruitment can increase. A second recruitment method, perhaps after beginning with a mobile van, is to rent a storefront shop and use it as a field station for research. Such a practice places the researcher in a known location in the neighborhood long term and builds familiarity and rapport. These temporary field stations can be places were immigrants can stop by for coffee, tea, snacks, and information or classes for English as a Second Language, practice driving cars and preparing for a licensure examination, citizenship preparation classes, or other research identified needs in the community. Providing these practical helps increases the likelihood of immigrants coming to the research station where the researcher can then learn about the community.

Finally, the researcher should conduct an ethnographic mapping project of the community.[20] This map should list the geographic disbursement of the target people, their places of employment, highly frequented shops and restaurants, places of worship, and locations of key informants. Such mapping helps the researcher identity geographic boundaries of the target people and can be useful to determine the most strategic

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[18]Casey, "London Ethnography," 44-45.

[19]Singer, "Studying Hidden Populations," 166-68.

[20]Ibid., 157.

locations to start churches. Modern technology such as smart phones and computer tablets make mapping an easy process. For example, one can download the app *FieldNotes*. This app allows the researcher to mark the global position (GPS) of the site, record field notes audibly and textually, take a picture of the interviewee or site location, and record a video of the interview or location. This data can be saved in a variety of formats compatible with geographic information systems programs like Google maps and Google Earth. The researcher can export the data to these web programs and generate a map of all data points recorded with the *FieldNotes* app. Data can then be sorted according to any number of categories determined by the researcher such as language family, religious affiliation, informant, and various needs like ESL class, driving school, or citizenship test preparation.

The above process is helpful for finding members of the immigrant or target people group community. Chapter 3 of this dissertation showed that immigrants to North America are found in a number of settlement patterns, from highly dense enclaves to loosely connected social networks. Additionally, the political and governments dimension of the city will play a role in the dispersion of immigrants, at times making it easy to locate them and at times making if very difficult. Since no settlement pattern is universal, and I can at best present predicable patterns based on a study of the anthropology of the city, field research is essential. Once the target people have been located through the research methods mentioned above, one can begin to survey their worldview and cultural identity.

Identifying worldview and cultural identity. It is important to understand as best as possible how the people identify themselves in their diaspora setting. A short survey can begin the process, which in its entirety, often takes several months to compile a credible understanding of the people group. The researcher needs to ask the people several questions to develop a framework from which to conduct further research. As the

researcher encounters willing participants from the target group, he or she can ask the following questions: (1) what do the people call themselves? (2) what language do they speak in the home. (3) what is their estimate of the number of their people group living in the city. (4) where do their people primarily live and what kinds of jobs do they do? (5) what religion do they primarily practice and are there local places of worship? (6) are there local print or web resources in their language they use?

These basic questions can help the researcher know where to go next. For example, when speaking with people, it is best to refer to them by the name they refer to themselves so as not to cause offense. Knowing their home language might dictate which language is most appropriate for in-depth research and future ministry. Knowing the area or areas of the city and what jobs they typically do can help the researcher find more people from that group. If there are print and web resources the people commonly use, the researcher can place ads for English class, Bible studies, or other activities in a place he or she knows locals will see. For example, when I conducted field research in London, I noticed that many Brazilian stores and butcher shops had a bulletin board where other Brazilians advertised services. These stores were a common place for Brazilian immigrants to connect with their community network and thus were a key place to advertise.

Ethnographic interviews can be planned or occur spontaneously. Either way, the researcher needs to be prepared to make the best use of the time and find out as much as possible about worldview and cultural identity. I have adapted a basic worldview identification worksheet that is easily remembered for these types of interviews.[21] The sheet is based on five domains or categories key to worldview, each beginning with the

[21]See Appendix 1. The concept of using the "Five Fs" was originally introduced to me in a conversation with Bryan Galloway several years ago. I have extended Galloway's concept and created the interview questions listed in the appendix worksheet.

letter F – Family, Friends, Food, Festivals, and Future. The sub-questions under each domain are examples of what to ask in order to begin to draw out core beliefs regarding family structure and home life, levels of assimilation based on the diversity of the individual's friendship network, level of ethnocentrism toward the immigrant's home culture and level of prejudice against the host culture, importance of ethnic foods in daily life and for religious and cultural festivals, practice of religion in a diaspora setting, and views of the spiritual realm and the afterlife.

This questionnaire is designed to help the researcher both begin to understand worldview but also to build rapport and relationship. The researcher will become aware of bias toward Americans, needs, bridges, and barriers that are in place that need to be addressed in the evangelism and church planting process.

Several of the questions are designed to determine the level of assimilation and cultural identity of the individual, his or her family, and the community at large.[22] Those indicating family structure similar to the home country including enforcement of social norms, religious requirements, and use of heart language may mean less assimilation and a stronger ethnic identity. Results indicating significant drift from home social norms, intermarriage between ethnic groups, predominant use of English in the home, and abandonment of traditional religious practices may indicate more assimilation. The researcher needs to carefully analyze findings after interviewing as many individuals from the target group as possible before drawing any conclusions about cultural identity. It may be that the researcher has only encountered fringe members of the culture that strongly prefer to assimilate but whose views are not shared by the majority of the community.

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[22]For additional questions targeted at determining level of assimilation, see Bryan Galloway, *Traveling Down Their Road: A Workbook for Discovering a People's Worldview* (self published, 2006), 99-100.

Identifying orality preference. Since this dissertation focuses especially on those immigrants that come from more oral backgrounds, it is important to discuss how to access the oral preference of these immigrants in U.S. cities. Thankfully, Lynne Abney has created an orality assessment tool.[23] This tool is a forty question survey designed to place interviewees on a scale somewhere between primary oral communicators and primary print based communicators. The advantage of this survey is that is includes assessment in multiple categories such as learning preference, importance of life experience, communication style, and importance of context. These important fields help the church planter to see that orality is about more than simply having the skills to read and write. As chapter 4 of this dissertation showed, the oral worldview values relationship and experience to provide credibility and believability to the message. A church planter using this orality assessment survey will be able to identity a need for an oral or hybrid approach to ministry even among those immigrants who are able to read and write.

The difficulty with this particular survey is that results can be skewed through the interpretation of the researcher. Also, the survey is in English and interviewees may have difficulty understanding the meaning of some of the questions. The researcher must take these difficulties into account and perhaps modify the survey to be more effective in his or her context. Some versions of the survey include two columns, oral communicators and print communicators. An interviewee seeing these extremes may desire to be identified as a print communicator for status reasons so it is wise to change the names of the columns to something more generic like column one or column two, as

[23]This survey is available in a number of places and in various formats. One version is accessible at www.orality.net/sites/default/files/Orality_Assessment_Tool_Worksheet.pdf (accessed August 28, 2013). A similar version of the survey is included in Appendix 2 of this dissertation. See also an excellent resource for an overview and analysis procedure for oral traditions in McKinney, *Globe-Trotting in Sandals*, 229-62.

some versions of the survey have already done.

Theory Building

Effective field research leads to the construction of a theory or theories about immigrant assimilation models, worldview, and cultural identity. In ethnographic research, theories are built from facts and not mere conjectures. Theory can be described as that which "makes sense of a series of observations, statements, events, values, perceptions, and correlations. It is the glue that aggregates facts into a hypothetical description of a given time and place, which then can be used to predict/explain events in another time and/or place."[24]

Anthropological researchers often build a grounded theory, which is a theory "that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. . . . One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge."[25] The grounded theory approach is especially important for diaspora and immigrant research because the target population is living in a distinctly different setting than their home culture and the researcher must be careful not to make assumptions about what the people believe. Additionally, chapter 3 revealed the discrepancies between research projects and their subsequent theories for the nature of ethnic enclaves in various cities across the United States. There is no substitute for personal field research in order to understand the specifics of the target people.

This section has shown the necessity for conducting ethnographic field

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[24]Stephen Schensul, Jean Schensul, and Margaret LeCompte, *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews, and Questionnaires*, vol. 2 of *Ethnographer's Toolkit* (Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press, 1999), 10-11.

[25]Strauss and Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research*, 23.

research in order to understand the assimilation patterns and cultural identity of a target ethnic population in the United States. Proper research will lead to a grounded theory describing the nature of the people, their worldview, cultural preferences, relations to other peoples in the city, and general cultural identity. The researcher will then use this theory as a base from which to develop specific church planting strategies to reach ethnic groups in the city.

Reaching Ethnic Groups in the City

Urban ministry is very complex and each situation carries its own contextual issues, hence the importance of the preceding section focusing on ethnographic research methods. Once an understanding of the target people is reached, the church planter can begin to move toward specific strategies for evangelism and church planting. There are five primary areas that I want to address related to ethnic church planting in the U.S. The first is both a philosophical and practical issue. Church planters must decide whether to plant a mono or multi-ethnic church. Second, I will describe specific approaches for reaching oral learners along with discussion limitations of orality strategies according to research presented in chapter 4. Third, I will discuss strategies likely to be effective for each of the three assimilation patterns described in chapter 3 of this dissertation. Fourth, I will discuss the issue of contextualization. Fifth, I will discuss the importance of developing church partnerships in the city for more wide spread and effective ministry among the diversity of people groups found in most urban contexts.

Decide Whether to Plant a Multi or Mono Ethnic Church

Chapter 3 showed that immigrants primarily follow three patterns for assimilation – the enclave community, the connected cultural thread, and the urban tribe model. Two of these assimilation theories describe communities that are multi-cultural to

some degree. In some occasions, immigrants from different backgrounds are forced by the government or intentionally gather in the same neighborhood or apartment complex in order to maintain relationships and ease the tensions of culture shock. Some church planters may view such an apartment complex as an easy place to begin a ministry to ethnic peoples. This convenience also brings several inherent challenges. For example, there are Nepalese, Iraqis, Haitians, Chinese, South Asian Indians, and several African peoples living in the complex I minister at. In situations like this one, church planters are faced with the decision of whether to plant a mono or multi ethnic church.

The first question to be settled is whether there is a biblical command that a church be mono or multi ethnic. Once the biblical issue is settled, a strategy can be implemented to reach the target population. Three passages come to mind as potential support for the essentiality of a multi-ethnic church: Galatians 3, Ephesians 2, and Revelation 5:9.

Galatians 3. One verse cited to support the mandate of a multi-ethnic church is Galatians 3:28-29 which states that "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise." The question is, what does it mean to be one in Christ? Is this a mandate for multi-ethnic church or is Paul making the point that all have access as one people, humanity, to Jesus Christ? I believe the latter is what Paul is getting at. He just finished a discussion of the purpose of the law, which was a guardian for the Jews as the people of God. Now that Christ has come, the law is no longer the guardian. As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, by faith and apart from the law (Gal. 3:26).

Ephesians 2:11-22. Here, Paul is speaking to the Gentiles stating that at one time they were separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and

strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. Now they have been brought near by the blood of Christ, who have made both Jew and Greek one by breaking down the dividing wall of hostility, which he refers to as the law, and creates in himself one new man in the place of the two, so making peace. Again, this passage can be read to refer to hostility, not between Jews and Greeks, but between Greeks and God. Christ has broken down that dividing wall in Himself and made access through the cross to true peace with God for both Jews and Greeks. There is not clear enough evidence from this passage to support the conclusion that a church *must* be multi-ethnic as DeYmaz claims.[26]

Revelation 5:9 and 7:9. In these two verses, Christ is praised for his worthiness to be slain so that a multitude from every tribe, tongue, nation, and people might be found in Heaven worshiping God. Some might argue that because Heaven will be multi-cultural, so should the church on Earth. I have two issues with this line of reasoning. First, these verses are describing a future reality. They make no mention that such a reality must be strived for today. They praise Jesus that His blood is enough for all. Second, there are many other realities that will be so in Heaven but are not attainable on earth. I think of the removal of all sin and the healing of all diseases. Just because these will be future realities for our glorified bodies does not mean we can expect to or must experience these realities now.

The author's position. There is a vast amount of writing and debate on the homogeneous unit principle and church planting. In light of space constraints, I will state where I stand on the issue. I fully believe the gospel breaks down barriers that are the

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[26]Mark DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 29-30. The very title of DeYmaz' book, using the word mandate, betrays his position on the multi-ethnic church.

result of sin. I also believe that God delights in the diversity He has allowed to flourish on the earth. However, there is not sufficient biblical evidence to prove definitively that either mono or multi ethnic churches are the sure biblical model. Some go so far as to claim that it is sinful to plant a mono ethnic church. I do not agree with this assertion.

I believe that God has given us the freedom to examine the cultural context and plant a church that will reach the greatest number of people within a given ethnic group. Sometimes this goal is accomplished by planting a multi ethnic church, other times a mono ethnic church will reach the greatest number within the target people. In light of my position, I want to introduce a number of questions that need to be dealt with when considering whether to plant a mono or multi ethnic church.

The city is diverse; there is no doubt about that. While large cities like Chicago, New York, and San Francisco have distinct ethnic communities like Chinatown, Little Italy, and so on, many cities have no clear ethnically geographic boundaries. Cities like Louisville have sections of town where immigrants and refugees tend to live but many ethnic groups are represented in the same geographical area. Functionally, distinct people groups sometimes come together in the city to form a an urban tribe community such as that described in chapter 3. Refugees in parts of Louisville share refugee status, they are all trying to find jobs, they attend the same ESL classes, they shop at the same grocery store, and they live in the same apartment complex. But do they have more in common with each other than with their individual ethnic identity? If so, it makes sense to plant a multi ethnic church since a new homogenous group has arisen – those sharing refugee status. Immigrants try to take advantage of their situation in order to find stability and jobs. If mixing with other ethnic groups allows a sense of stability, they might set aside their cultural distinctions based on current affiliations. However, if given the chance, would these people revert to their respective mono ethnic communities?

Some research indicates that multi ethnic communities that originally group

around a common affinity will indeed revert to mono ethnic and mono linguistic communities once a sufficient number of their ethnic group arrives in the city. For example, historically, immigrants to Mumbai, India lived in ethnically diverse communities upon arrival. The northern part of the city was the industrial center and immigrants would cluster in neighborhoods within walking distance of the factories where they worked. At first, the immigrants had more in common with each other than they did with the ethnic villages they left. In fact, the caste system was not able to be enforced as strictly because of the ethnic diversity. In time, though, as more and more immigrants arrived, mono ethnic and mono linguistic communities formed around the factories and the caste system was again enforced.[27]

Grant Lovejoy, International Mission Board orality expert, is finding that some multi ethnic churches experience splits once a critical mass of mono ethnic peoples arrive in town. Even church plants focused on East Africans as an urban tribe have split as a sufficient number of ethnic tribals arrive. The church service had been in Swahili, the trade language of Eastern Africa, but after the split, the individual mono ethnic churches worshipped in their home/heart language.[28] Such splits do not always occur but as multi ethnic church planting becomes more popular and the congregations are given enough time to gain a larger number of people from the same ethnic background, more mono ethnic groups are leaving the multi ethnic church context to form their own church.

An important question is whether the church planter will be prepared for such a split or not. Will he insist on a multi-ethnic church as the only true expression of gospel unity? Or will he allow the gospel to reach the largest number of people possible within

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[27]Anthony Casey, "A Missiological Portrait of Bombay, India," http://culturnicity.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/bombayfinal.pdf (accessed September 3, 2013).

[28]Interview by the author, Louisville, KY, February 23, 2011. Specific names, cities, and churches are omitted because of the sensitive nature of the effects of church dysfunction.

each ethnic group? Such questions must be settled on the front end of church planting in order to avoid unnecessary heartache later. The mono or multi ethnic church planting discussion leads to the next issue. Many immigrants and refugees come from primary or secondary oral cultures so church planters need to be prepared to minister accordingly. Chapter 4 described the oral worldview in depth and the section below will discuss the application of oral strategies for church planting in urban areas.

Consider Orality Issues

Oral communicators are found in every cultural group in the world. If the source is correct, sixty to seventy percent of the world's population prefers a non-literate approach to learning.[29] In the recent past, many churches welcomed immigrants and ethnic peoples but did nothing to accommodate their oral preference. The pastor preached his same three-point sermon and used linear logic and reasoning to argue someone into seeing that they were a sinner in need of the gospel. More recently, however, church planters, especially, are utilizing CBS and orality based discipleship methods to reach ethnic groups in the city.[30]

There are many existing resources, both print and online that talk about specific ways to develop and deliver story sets and other oral strategies.[31] The purpose of

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[29]David Claydon, *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* (Lima, NY: International Orality Network, 2005), 3.

[30]See for example Soma Church in the northwest at www.wearesoma.com.

[31]See Hayward Armstrong, ed., *Tell the Story: A Primer on Chronological Bible Storying* (Rockville, VA: International Centre for Excellence in Leadership, 2003); Thomas Boomershine, *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988); David Claydon, ed., *Making Disciples of Oral Learners* (Lima, NY: Elim Publishing, 2005); Tex Sample, *Ministry in an Oral Culture: Living with Will Rogers, Uncle Remus, and Minnie Pearl* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1994); Daniel Sheard, *An Orality Primer for Missionaries* (N.p.: self-published, 2007); Tom Steffen, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry: Cross-Cultural Storytelling at Home and Abroad* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2005); Avery T. Willis and Mark Snowden, *Truth that Sticks: How to Communicate Velcro Truth in a Teflon World* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2010); and an excellent online resource at www.oralitystrategies.org.

this section of this dissertation is not to provide a step by step process for using orality strategies. Rather, I want to discuss three issues within orality germane to the overall purpose of this dissertation. First, I will discuss chronological Bible storying and its uses in urban ethnic contexts, focusing specifically on issues relating to worldview and language. Second, I will discuss the issue of secondary orality among immigrants who are very likely learning to read and write English, perhaps even in a formal ESL class. Third, I will discuss the limitations of orality strategies for sustaining healthy, reproducing churches.

Chronological Bible storying. Tom Steffen notes that Bible storying is not just for those outside of urban areas. He finds features of orality and storying present in popular reality TV shows, soap operas, and talk shows, mainly the power of story.[32] These stories, even so called reality TV, are often made up and are not intended to convey any measure of truth. Rather, they are used for entertainment. Stories command the attention of the hearer. While those in ministry are not in the entertainment business, stories can still be used to command attention. Chronological Bible Storying (CBS) is a method of teaching the Bible that uses sequential narrative stories to reshape a people's faulty worldview with the truth of the biblical worldview. The key word in that sentence is worldview, which is the core framework for understanding and interpreting the world.

There are four essential steps to selecting which stories from Scripture to use in what is called a story set – a collection of biblical stories contextualized to the target people.[33] First, the church planter must identify which stories from Scripture are

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[32]Steffen, *Reconnecting God's Story to Ministry*, 19.

[33]See *Tell the Story* for a more in depth explanation of these four steps. See also David Sills' treatment of the storying process in M. David Sills, *Reaching and Teaching: A Call to Great Commission Obedience* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2010), 173-92.

essential to communicate salvific truth. Second, a worldview survey must be conducted to determine major bridges and barriers that exist in the people group's worldview. Additional stories are selected and added to the story set to address the specific worldview of the audience and help avoid syncretism.[34] Third, the stories are crafted and delivered, often over a period of time. Fourth, hearers are asked to retell the story and the church planter can check for and correct errors and guide a discussion to aid the hearer's understanding and application of the story to their life.

A major issue for storying in the urban context is choosing which language to tell the stories in. Many agree that a native speaker using the group's heart language is best. But what if there are no believers in the target group and the church planters do not speak the language? Is English an acceptable substitute? After all, many immigrants are desperately trying to learn English already. Why not help their efforts by storying in English?

There are situations where there is little choice but to use English. When I was ministering to Nepali refugees in Louisville several years ago, there were no evangelical Christians in our Nepali community. None of us involved in church planting spoke Nepali. In another part of town there was a South Asian Indian storying group meeting. The stories were initially told in Hindi because it was assumed the majority of the people attending understood Hindi. It was discovered later that many of the Indians were straining to fully understand Hindi and more people actually understood English better than Hindi. The storying language was changed to English. In both cases it would be best to story in the heart language but in the first example, no believer knew Nepali and in the second example, there are so many heart languages represented in the group that it would not be feasible to story in them all. Such is the case in the multi-cultural urban

[34]See www.oralitystrategies.net for numerous story sets already contextualized to various worldviews and religious contexts.

context.

My team had a storyset recorded audibly in Nepali and transcribed in both Nepali and English. We told the story in English and the Nepalese read along. Then we played the story in Nepali so everyone could hear it in their own language. We told the story in English in addition to Nepali for two reasons. First, we could be better ensure the story was biblically accurate because we had a literal translation in English. Some groups will have a native speaker translate and tell the story but in that case, the church planters can never be certain the story remains faithful to Scripture. Syncretism can occur if incorrect words are substituted for biblical concepts and the planter will be the last to know about it. The second reason we told the story in English is because the Nepalese wanted to learn English. Using the story in English helped them read along and hear American pronunciations.

This method was not without its problems, however. The Nepalese had a hard time remembering the story in English because their English skills were not very good. They could remember the story much better in Nepali but we had no believer equipped to follow up on the story in that language. We resorted to using the Nepali/English hybrid as a temporary solution. Our goal was to eventually bring in a Nepali believer to reinforce the story in Nepali and ask follow up comprehension and application questions.

The second issue for storying in diverse urban context is how to address worldview issues. In a mono-cultural setting, it is a matter of doing adequate field research to discover the worldview issues and then contextualize the story set to address needed issues. The same approach is necessary in the city, but issue is vastly complicated by the diversity encountered in some neighborhoods or apartment complexes. My team sought to primarily plant a church among Nepalese who are Hindus. However, we often had Iraqi Muslims attend the conversation club because it

was in the community room of their apartment complex.[35] We had a hard time turning the Iraqis away. If both groups were present, we had to decide how to address polytheistic Hindus and monotheistic Muslims at the same time. When we showed that God is one, the Muslims cheered and the Hindus were offended. When we showed that God is three persons, the Hindus cheered and the Muslims were offended. Such dilemmas went on and on.

The convictions of the church planter can bring clarity or confusion to situations like the one just described. Those who are comfortable starting mono-ethnic churches and story in the language and cater to the worldview most suited to the target people. Those attempting to plant multi-ethnic churches will have a more complex situation to address. One possibility is to story to the group using essential stories from Scripture[36] in the common trade language but then to split the large group into smaller groups by language for the discussion time. This approach does not easily solve the issue, but may be one step in the right direction.

ESL and secondary orality. As stated numerous times throughout this dissertation, immigrants to the United States are often exposed to or seek out ways to learn English, including learning to read and write. However, introducing literacy to an oral people involves much more than simply teaching them to read. The shift often requires an upheaval of their worldview. Ong notes that

> Oral cultures indeed produce powerful and beautiful verbal performances of high artistic worth. Nonetheless, writing gives the human consciousness fuller potentials and the ability to produce other beautiful creations. Literacy is necessary for the

[35]Paul Hiebert suggests that urban ethnic peoples are most easily evangelized by starting different churches for each sociocultural group. However, no church can keep people out for not being in the "right" group. See Paul Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 351.

[36]See a suggested list of thirty-one stories in *Tell the Story*, 26-27.

> development of science, history, and philosophy, and indeed for the explanation of language itself. There is hardly an oral culture left in the world that is not somehow aware of the vast complex of powers forever inaccessible without literacy. This awareness is agony for persons rooted in primary orality, who want literacy passionately but who also know very well that moving into the world of literacy means leaving behind much that is deeply loved in the earlier oral world. [They] have to die to continue living.[37]

Such language sounds strong, but the reality is that the introduction of literacy affects the entire worldview of oral peoples. Many first generation immigrants are caught between two worlds, especially regarding literacy. There are four areas that I will discuss to help church planters think about ministering to oral or oral preference learners who have come to the U.S.: residual orality, an oral worldview core, orality as a credible source for new information, and a hybrid approach to ministering to those who are residually oral.

First, Ong notes that the oral preference and key facets of the oral worldview do not immediately disappear when the people are exposed to literacy. He uses the term residual orality to describe the persistence of oral learning and communication models even after the advent of literacy.[38] Charles Kraft notes that people frequently "turn away from literacy because they *prefer* other forms of communication."[39] Klem noticed in his own research and the research of others that reversion back into oral communication preferences is common among people just having learned to read and write. He notes that oral peoples could be taught to read quickly, but in less than a year, they had reverted back to orality. Why? Because they had no use for reading, did not practice it, and lost the ability to read and process information via print.[40] This idea of reversion means that

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[37]Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Methuen and Company, 1982), 15.

[38]Ibid., 11.

[39]Charles Kraft in the preface to Herbert V. Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1982), *x*. Italics in the original.

[40]Klem, *Oral Communication of the Scripture*, 14-17.

even immigrants from oral backgrounds who are taught to read, either in a refugee camp or ESL center upon arrival in North America still prefer oral means of communication. The oral wordview is tenacious and will likely never go away, especially among first generation immigrants.

Second, as alluded to above, even after learning to read and write, core worldview beliefs are often still reinforced through culturally informed oral means. Hesselgrave states that in literate Asian societies, certain forms of drama are still a primary means to communicate religious and cultural values – worldview issues.[41] In China, music is thought to have a power of its own and Confucian and Taoist teachings are common themes in Chinese opera. Similarly, in India, dance and drama are used to communicate the Jataka Tales, or birth stories about the Buddha.[42] These art forms are more than mere entertainment. They are used to shape and reinforce the worldview of the people, bringing together the seen and unseen worlds and explaining the mysteries of origin, birth, sickness, death, good, evil, truth, and beauty.[43] Furthermore, Chinese immigrants to cities in Malaysia bring their dance and theatre traditions. Chinese street opera is commonly found and often feature classics such as Romance of the Three Kingdoms, The Water Margin, and Madam White Snake.[44] These examples show that even in diaspora contexts of literates living in urban centers, oral means of reinforcing worldview still prevail. Church planters in North America need to take advantage of the

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[41]David Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 550.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Chandu Ray, "The Use of Dance-Drama in Evangelism," *Effective Evangelism* 1 (1971): 8.

[44]Jaime Koh and Stephanie Ho, *Culture and Customs of Singapore and Malaysia* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2009), 64.

continued openness of immigrants to oral means of communicating worldview truths, which is the primary purpose of Chronological Bible Storying.

Third, oral communication adds credibility and authority to the message, even in secondary oral contexts. Thomas Boomershine notes that the root meaning of the word authority comes from the word author. He reasons that the authority of the Scriptures is based on their author, God.[45] Drawing out Boomershine's thought, the source of authority in an oral culture is tied to the author or speaker in that community. Ong states that "writing fosters abstractions that disengage knowledge from the arena where human beings struggle with one another. It separates the knower from the known."[46] Havelock concurs that "for an oral culture learning or knowing means achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known."[47] The relationship of the community with the teacher or speaker is as important as the actual features of the message itself.[48] For the urban ethnic church planter, choosing to use an oral delivery method when preaching and teaching packages the information in a way that is credible for the people. It is essential he have a prolonged and close relationship with the people as well. For oral peoples, even residually oral peoples, relationship and communication style is what give credibility to the message, not the academic background of the church planter.

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[45]Thomas Boomershine, *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 20.

[46]Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 44.

[47]Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 145-46.

[48]Michael A. Rynkiewich, "Mission, Hermeneutics, and the Local Church," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 1 (2007): 50-51.

Fourth, a hybrid approach using both oral and literate means of evangelism, teaching, and training is likely the best overall approach when ministering in a secondary oral context in the United States. Church planters should begin using storying to gain credibility and start addressing worldview barriers to the gospel. Storying is a natural way to communicate information to oral peoples so they may be more receptive to a storying approach to the gospel than the use of gospel tracts or a syllogistic approach to evangelism where the evangelist attempts to logically reason the need for Jesus. The reality in the U.S. is that immigrants often do want to learn to read and write so, as I illustrated above, storying can be mixed with teaching ESL. Storying alone is not sufficient to plant a church that is healthy and reproducible. I will next explore the limitation of oral strategies for church planting.

Limitations of oral strategies. Oral strategies for ministries carry certain limitations that must be discussed in an honest manner. Noted African theologian John Mbiti does not mince words when he says,

> Oral theology cannot sustain a long theological argumentation of discourse. The audience of oral theology is generally very limited, very confined to local groups and situations, as well as occasions to which it addresses itself. It is difficult, if not impossible, to transport specific formulations of oral theology from one place to another, from one period to another, without changes and alterations that go with oral transmission.[49]

The structure of this section largely follows that of Mbiti's thoughts in the quote above. In discussing the limitations of oral theology in modern contexts I will first note the limited audience to which oral theology is disseminated. Next, the specific and localized expressions of oral theology are difficult to accurately transport cross-culturally when planting churches. Finally, I will make the argument that the Scriptural connection for

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[49]John S. Mbiti, "Cattle are Born with Ears, their Horns Grow Later": Towards an Appreciation Of African Oral Theology," in *All African Lutheran Consultation on Christian Theology and Christian Education for the African Context* (Geneva: LWF, 1978), 50.

oral theology is remarkably shallow in many oral communities.

First, oral cultures are highly relationally based. Chapter 4 of this dissertation showed the community context necessary for authoritative transmission of ideas in oral contexts. Personal interaction is required to enforce the informal, controlled method used to safeguard the reliability of the message. The communal, relational culture used to ensure the accuracy of the message also limits the use of the message. Ethnic populations may be small. Oral segments that have sustained interaction within urban centers are small. The small, tight knit community of oral cultures often calls for house churches rather than large buildings. The limited size of a house church congregation also limits the breadth of the message. The further one moves from the relational network that provides credibility for the message, the less likely the message is to be received.

Second, there is some difficulty in transmitting oral theology across cultural contexts. Purely oral theology is housed in the songs, dances, poems, and stories of the culture. The personal and contextual nature of the theology does not carry well cross-culturally. A Muslim background community may have theology tied to purity, the obedience of Christ before the Father, and focus on Christ fulfilling the law. An animistic society may focus on themes such as Christ's power over demons, healing, and Christ as ancestor or older brother. A group of believers from either culture would have great difficulty transmitting their theological themes to the other culture. The question becomes, can an oral culture abstract their theology out of their local context in order to transmit it to a completely different context? Such contextualization may indeed be possible but it would come as a great challenge.

Third, a group's theological depth is only as deep as the amount of Scripture they have access to. Oral cultures are usually reached through Chronological Bible Storying (CBS) methods of evangelism and discipleship. One must remember that an oral culture does not have the luxury of reflecting on the entirety of Scripture. What they

hear is all they know of the Bible. If the church planters develop a twenty four story set, then the theology derived from within those twenty four stories constitutes the entirety of what is available for further theological reflection. The largest story sets often do not contain more than one hundred stories. Again, the theological reflection and growth available to the people is directly tied to the body of Scripture they have access to. Apollos provides a good example of the limitation one encounters from not being able to access all of Scripture. Apollos knew the Scripture well and taught accurately, but he only had knowledge up to the baptism of John. Later, Apollos was instructed further in the Scriptures by Priscilla and Aquila.[50] If there were no Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos and, similarly, oral cultures would be left with a void in their theology.

What are leaders in an oral culture to do when they are left with a limited story set and they encounter theological issues their stories do not address, such as the beliefs of cults like Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons? Hopefully, they have access to other, more mature believers but if not, the situation could lead to syncretism. These limitations of oral theology are just that, limitations. Orality strategies are essential for reaching oral and secondary oral people with the gospel. I believe they should be used as a bridge to written Scripture, however. I showed in chapter 4 that orality alone does not allow for sustained reflection on the whole of Scripture. Furthermore, the memories of oral peoples are not as reliable as some believe. The work of Lord, Parry, and Goody show that oral peoples memorize thematically rather than verbatim and have great difficulty retelling stories in the exact same way every time.[51] Additionally, we rob people from

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[50]Acts 18:24-26.

[51]See Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964); and Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse*, ed. Adam Parry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

other cultures of the full means for them to contribute to the growing field of global theology if we do not give people access to the full Scriptures.[52]

Nonetheless, church planters must begin where the people are. Since two-thirds of the world's population prefer an oral approach to learning, we must take seriously the oral worldview. Storying and other orality strategies are the most appropriate way to begin ministering to oral peoples. The lost can hear and respond to the gospel and be gathered into churches. The ability of oral theology alone to sustain a healthy, reproducing church is to be questioned, however. More research needs to be done on the theology of congregations that have been exposed to limited story sets. CBS is, for good reason, the preferred method for reaching oral peoples today. CBS can be uncritically applied, however. In the preceding section, I attempted to provide an overview of the methods and difficulties for reaching oral peoples who have come to U.S. urban centers. The church at large must live in the reality of the oral worldview, its limits, and the limits of our strategies in order to plant healthy churches. Failure to be honest about the limits of orality will inevitable result in a syncretized church. In order to further combat the encroachment of syncretism, I will now discuss the need to seat all that is done within the context of Hiebert's model of critical contextualization.

Critical Contextualization in the Urban, Ethnic Environment

Contextualization for the purposes of this dissertation is defined as transmitting the truths of the Bible in a way that is biblically faithful and at the same time, culturally understandable. Hiebert asks the question, "How do missionaries respond to the

[52]See for example Craig Ott and Harold Netland, eds., *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006); Timothy Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church in Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007); and Jenkins' overview of the growing global church in Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

traditional beliefs and practices of new converts?"[53] Essentially, how should a people marry, name their children, bury their dead, find spiritual fulfillment, and so on? Conversely, Hiebert explains that "the heart of the gospel must be kept by encoding it in forms that are understood by the people, without making the gospel captive to the [cultural] contexts."[54] Urban, ethnic church planting faces the issue of contextualization head on. Immigrants come with their cultural and religious history and encounter the gospel in the United States. As chapter 3 showed, they are caught in the middle of two worlds and must determine how and to what extent they will assimilate. Church planters equipped with Hiebert's four step model for critical contextualization can help new believers think biblically about their old culture and how they can express their identity in a biblically faith manner that preserves the God-given traits of their culture.

Step one requires what Hiebert calls an exegesis of the culture of the target people.[55] The ethnographic research process described at the beginning of this chapter will aid the church planter in working with key informants from within the culture to best understand cultural identity and values here in North America. The worldview identification questionnaire is designed to address major cultural categories that are essential for helping plant a church that is not syncretized.

Step two requires the church planter and members of the new church to study the Scriptures together. The church planter must guide the process so that the church can read the Bible as it was originally intended, or else the people will have a culturally distorted view of the Bible. The Scripture must be held in authority over the culture and

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[53]Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 75.

[54]Paul Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 29.

[55]Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections*, 88.

function as the grid through which cultural practices are measured, or else biblical meanings will be forced to fit local cultural categories and distort the message.[56]

Step three involves a critical response where both the church planter and the local believers critically evaluate their past customs in light of new biblical understandings and make decisions about the appropriateness of their cultural practices. Here, it is important for the church planter to let the local believers identify and admit to sinful cultural practices in light of the Scriptures. Such a process allows the people to grow in their ability to understand and apply the Bible to their lives. Additionally, if they themselves call for a change of cultural practices, the change is more likely to be accepted than if a foreigner demands the change. Syncretism is less likely to occur when the believers themselves identify sinful practices.[57] The result of this critical study of cultural practices in light of the Scriptures is that many cultural practices will be retained because they are not inherently sinful. Other practices will be outright rejected because they are clearly sinful. Some practices may be seen as permissible, with slight modification. Finally, the people may need to create or adopt new customs to express biblical realities such as baptism that may not have been inherent to the old cultural ways.

Step four involves the process of adopting and practicing the new contextualized rituals.[58] The intended goal is for the church's practices to be both biblically faithfully and culturally relevant. As the church lives and worships, both the church planter and the local believers need to provide ongoing checks against syncretism. Perhaps a new event occurs that the church has not thought of biblically yet. One example from my experience is the baby naming ceremony that Nepali Hindus have here

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[56]Ibid., 89.

[57]Ibid., 89-90.

[58]Ibid., 90-91.

in Louisville. The traditional practice is to consult the local priest who follows Hindu tradition and astrology to choose a name that gains the most favor from the gods. Nepalese who have become believers are often troubled about whether they can name their children in this fashion. Walking them through Hiebert's model of critical contextualization provides biblical insight into this cultural practice.

Hiebert describes the value of his approach to contextualization in five points.[59] (1) It takes the authority of the Bible seriously as the rule for faith and life. (2) It recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all believers to discern truth. (3) The church acts as a hermeneutical community rather than the pastor or church planter making all of the decisions. This point is especially important in oral cultures, where the community is regularly involved in the decision making and enforcement process. (4) This model allows for a global discussion of theology where those from other cultures are afforded the opportunity to see Scripture through their cultural lens. However, those trained in theology and hermeneutics are also present to guide the process. (5) It views contextualization as an ongoing process where the community is continually evaluating its practices according to the authority of the Scriptures and the Lordship of Christ.

One can see the difficulties of doing critical contextualization in a completely oral context. As noted above, one limitation of CBS is a limited storyset. How are believers able to evaluate all of their cultural practices against the Scriptures if they do not have access to the entirety of the Bible? The church planter can help in this situation, but too much outside assistance in theologizing can begin to create a dependency issue. However, if church planters do not have a deep enough understanding of the culture or a keen enough understanding of the Scripture, syncretism may creep in. I know of one ethnic church plant in Chicago that retained many cultural practices of the target people.

[59]Ibid., 91-92.

So much so that other pastors in the community from the same ethnic group were suspicious that people were being led astray. Eventually, those other ethnic pastors came and persuaded the members to abandon the church because it had become syncretized.[60] Church planting in urban, ethnic contexts is complex. I have described key issues related to the task, including deciding whether to plant a mono or multi-ethnic church, handling orality issues in an urban context, and critically contextualizing the gospel. I now turn to the application of these methods in a strategic way in each of the three patterns of assimilation that were presented in chapter 3.

Assimilation Pattern Strategies

Chapter 3 revealed that immigrants primarily settle into one of three patterns of assimilation in North America. One model is the ethnic enclave where immigrants of the same or similar cultural backgrounds group into a geographically dense section of the city and rely on an ethnically driven local economy.[61] In the enclave, little assimilation is required because immigrants are able to speak their native language in both the home and the workplace. Ethnic enclaves are primarily composed of immigrants with high levels of social capital rather than human capital so they are more dependent on the enclave environment for survival in their new setting.

A second model of assimilation is the cultural threads model where immigrants of the same ethnic group do not live in close geographic proximity but are closely linked

[60]Interview by the author of a member of that people group, Louisville, KY, August 28, 2013. The name will remain anonymous due to the nature of the issues described.

[61]For a detailed explanation of the requirements necessary for a settlement to be deemed an ethnic enclave, see Kenneth Guest and Peter Kwong, "Ethnic Enclaves and Cultural Diversity," in *Cultural Diversity in the United States: A Critical Reader*, ed. Ida Susser and Thomas Patterson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 250; and Alejandro Portes, "Modes of Structural Incorporation and Present Theories of Immigration," in *Global Trends in Migration*, ed. Mary Kritz, Charles Keely, and Sylvano Tomasi (Staten Island, NY: CMS Press, 1981), 291.

through a variety of social networks. This phenomenon is described as heterolocalism, defined as "recent populations of shared ethnic identity which enter an area from distant sources, then quickly adopt a dispersed pattern of residential location, all the while managing to remain cohesive through a variety of means."[62] These immigrants have high levels of human capital such as financial, educational, and business resources and often place job consideration as a higher priority than geographic location near members of their own ethnic group. However, they remain closely connected through internet communities, ethnic business associations, ethnic shopping malls, food stores, and restaurants, places of worship, and cultural festivals that serve as worldview and cultural intensifiers in the community.[63] The cultural threads model requires more assimilation than an enclave environment but most immigrants continue to possess a deeper ethnic identity than is immediately visible at the surface level.

A final model of assimilation found in North America is what I describe as the urban tribe model. Some cultural anthropologists state that as globalization increases and cities become more multi-cultural, people need to find their identity in smaller communities.[64] In a diverse urban setting, some people group according to affinity rather than ethnic identity. For example, an ethnically diverse group of college students in New York City share similar socio-economic background, the English language, and all study

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[62]Wilbur Zelinksy and Barrett lee, "Heterolocalism: An Alternative Model of the Sociospatial Behaviour of Immigrant Ethnic Communities," *International Journal of Population Geography* 4 (1998): 281.

[63]See Caroline Brettell, "Immigrants in a Sunbelt Metropolisk," in *Immigration and Integration in Urban Communities: Renegotiating the City*, ed. Lisa Hanley, Blair Ruble, and Allison Garland (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2008).

[64]See Paul Hiebert and Eloise Hiebert Meneses, *Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 267, and Michael Rynkiewich, *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 9.

anthropology so they find more in common with each other than perhaps with other people in the city from their ethnic group whom they have little contact with. Some missiologists are proposing that urban tribes can be reached as a distinct "tribe" in the city and church planters do not have to take into account the unique ethnic and cultural background of each individual in the group.[65] In some regards, the urban tribe model requires the highest level of assimilation because individuals are thought to drop or severely downplay their cultural identity and form a new identity in a multi-cultural setting. The urban tribe concept is a relatively new idea within missiology and the validity of the theory, especially at the worldview level needs to be further explored. Nonetheless, missionaries are attempting to carry out ministry according to this model in places like New York City so attention must be given to the urban tribe model of assimilation.

Each of these three models of assimilation requires a different approach for evangelism and church planting. The addition of orality further complicates the task of the church planter. Drawing from research presented in previous chapters of this dissertation, I will propose church planting strategies for each model that should be effective based on the specific dynamics present in each model. For each model, I will describe five areas the church planter will need to address: (1) entry into the community, (2) language most essential for ministry, (3) common felt needs used to build relationships and bridge to church planting[66], (4) importance of using orality strategies,

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[65]See for example Troy Bush, "Urbanizing Panta ta Ethne," *Journal of Evangelism and Missions* 12 (Spring 2013): 3-16.

[66]Craig Ellison lists three reasons why addressing felt needs is of particular importance for urban ministry: (1) it provides a point of redemptive connection with lost people, (2) it adds credibility for the gospel and the church planter, and (3) the Bible commands a holistic ministry. Craig Ellison, "Addressing Felt Needs of Urban Dwellers," in *Planting and Growing Urban Churches: From Dream to Reality*, ed. Harvie Conn (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 94-97. For a biblical theology of the mission of the church, specifically the relationship of social ministry and evangelistic priority, see Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church: Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the*

and (5) model of church.[67] As stated above, each church planter must also have the skills to conduct field research to ascertain the specific worldview and cultural identity of his target population.

Reaching the ethnic enclave community. In some ways, enclaves are as close as an immigrant can get to replicating his or her home culture. Enclaves are composed of a high density ethnic population often generating some kind of niche economy in the city. These communities are small cities within the larger city. For these reasons, finding an enclave of immigrants is not difficult in a city. Gaining access to those in the enclave will be more of an issue, however. The dynamics of an enclave may create a suspicion of outsiders. Additionally, as shown in the case studies and ethnographies described in chapter 3, enclaves typically have a hierarchically structured leadership system that governs decisions for the community and enforces protocol. Many enclaves make it unnecessary for members to learn English so the immigrant's native language is likely to remain dominant. These features of enclaves must be taken into account when attempting to plant churches in these unique communities.

First, because of the closed nature of the enclave community, it is essential that the church planter find cultural insiders to work with. The ethnographic research process described earlier in this chapter should reveal a number of key informants who could then become the gateway for the entry of the gospel. Additionally, the church needs to be located inside the community since enclaves often contain everything the community needs for survival such as grocery stores, banks, and schools.

Second, ministry ought to be done in the native language if possible. For

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Great Commission (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011).

[67]For an overview of various models of church, see J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: an Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009), 309-24.

example, Kwong found a high level of ethnic and linguistic solidarity in the Fuzhounese enclave in Manhattan.[68] The Fuzhounese dialect was used across the enclave both in the home and in public. The very draw of the enclave for immigrants is that they do not need to assimilate or learn English in order to find jobs and survive in the United States.

Third, felt needs will be different in the enclave. Learning English may not be essential so English as a Second Language clubs might not be an effective means to draw people. There is often a high level of illegal immigrants in the enclave so some individuals will not want to be identified and work toward citizenship. Effective strategies may include helping immigrants adjust to the new environment through temporary housing. If a church can rent several apartments inside the enclave neighborhood, they can advertise the space as a transition for new arrivals. Church planters can then use the apartment as a place to begin ministry, connect with others in the enclave, and provide a needed service to the community that builds report. Furthermore, church planters can either provide space or help immigrants find space to develop community gardens where native foods can be grown. My study of Nepali refugee living in a loose enclave in Louisville found that the community gardens in their apartment complex provided a place for cultural reinforcement in the midst of pressure to change. The gardens were a good place to meet with and talk to refugees about their lives and use the worldview identification worksheet listed above.

Fourth, because enclaves require little assimilation or change from the old worldview and way of life, it is likely that immigrants will be much closer to the pre-literate end of the orality spectrum. Chronological Bible Storying will be a necessary and helpful approach to begin ministry, as enclave immigrants are more likely to retain their worldview.

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[68]Peter Kwong, *The New Chinatown* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996)

Fifth, a house church model may be more effective in an enclave environment for several reasons. One may be the cost of renting or buying a standing church building in the larger cities in the U.S. that house true ethnic enclaves. Additionally, the highly relational nature of many immigrants means that a house church could be more inviting and less threatening and foreign than a free standing church building. Finally, the house church model is more easily reproducible and may be able to spread more quickly in a densely populated enclave neighborhood.

Reaching the cultural thread community. The key dynamic of the cultural thread model of assimilation is its heterolocality. Individuals from the ethnic groups live in a geographically diverse area but remain culturally connected. They possess a collective cultural consciousness that binds them together with other members of their people group.[69] Members of these communities remain connected through ESL classes, business associations, cultural festivals, places of worship, and through internet communities. These centers of cultural exchange provide a place for what Levitt calls "migrant-community affirming events."[70] The community comes together many times a year to reinforce their worldview and cultural identity, along with their right to be different in the midst of American mainstream culture.

First, the difficulty in reaching these types of communities is that they do not appear to be connected and it can be difficult to access members within the community.[71] The research methods presented above for finding "hidden peoples" are likely to be

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[69]See Vered Amit, "Reconceptualizing Community," in *Realizing Community: Concepts, Social Relationships and Sentiments,* ed. Vered Amit (London: Routledge, 2002), 6.

[70]Peggy Levitt, "Migrants Participate across Borders: Toward an Understanding of Forms and Consequence," in *Immigration Research for a New Century*, ed. Nancy Foner and Ruben Rumbaut (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2000), 470.

[71]Brettell, "Immigrants in a Sunbelt Metropolis," 170.

necessary to local individuals from the target people group. Church planters should identify and follow the network threads to gain relationships and access to the community. Immigrants assimilating in the cultural thread model often have high levels of human capital so they may be more receptive to ESL classes and other classes that help them prepare to become fully integrated U.S. citizens. Church planters should visit the local ethnic stores, restaurants, and cultural festivals to build relationships. One could post advertisements for ESL and other classes in these establishments, as was common in the Brazilian ethnic stores I visited during my research in London. In some U.S. cities, ethnic communities have begun publishing newspapers in their language. These papers are also key places to both find when and where people are meeting and to advertise classes.

Second, the language ministry should be conducted in would depend on the needs of the people as discovered through research. If important cultural reinforces like worship, festivals, and celebrations are done in the native language, it is likely the church planter would need to share the gospel in the same language. These events reveal issues at the worldview level and language is often key to changing worldview. It may be that English is preferable if immigrants are fluent and use the language in their everyday lives and interactions with both insiders and outsiders. However, one must be cautious to avoid making the assumption that since English is commonly used, it is appropriate for ministry and address worldview level beliefs. It may be that there is a distinct split between cultural identity in the public and private life of these immigrants where English is used in public but the mother tongue is used in the home.[72]

Third, felt needs for immigrants linked via the cultural thread model often

[72]See Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan, "Ethnicity in an Age of Diaspora," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 119, for an example of the public and private identity crisis within the Indian community in the U.S.

center on tools needed for assimilation into mainstream culture, at least publically and for children. Approaches that may be successful based on the dynamics of these communities include programs to help immigrants learn three essentials for success in the United States: learning English, learning to drive, and passing the citizenship exam. Additionally, church planters could host workshops to help new immigrant businessmen learn the specific tax laws and approaches to starting a business in the United States. Furthermore, tutoring services targeted at the children of these immigrants can help them excel in school and gain access to quality colleges and universities in the U.S.

Fourth, many of these immigrants are likely to be literate so a fully oral approach to ministry may not be effective. A hybrid approach such as one of the models proposed by Soma Community Church may be more appropriate.[73] Soma describes six models of preaching that can be adapted for evangelism or storying groups with immigrant communities. The models provide varying amounts of pure story mixed with exposition and application of the text, depending on the needs of the target community. Storying provides a non-threatening approach to begin talking about spiritual matters so it could be useful as a bridge with those closer to the literate end of the orality spectrum. However, businessmen will be more familiar with and used to literate means of communication.

Fifth, the style of church most appropriate for a dispersed immigrant community would depend on research findings within the community. Perhaps many from this community would prefer to attend church with other Americans at an established church that has programs for their children. One must not force the house church model on all immigrant peoples because in some cases, such a model could

[73]Available at http://wearesoma.com/ (accessed August 27, 2013).

actually repel people who would be more comfortable in an established church building.

Reaching the urban tribe community. The theory of the urban is tribe is based on diverse individuals who find a common affinity that provides identity and community in the midst of a "faceless" urban environment. The linking affinity can be status as a refugee, students in an ESL class, parents of children attending the same school, ethnic business entrepreneurs, college students, and many more. Some research may indicate that tribal groups will move "up" a level in their ethnic identity when they immigrate. Yorubas are willing to identity just as Nigerians or even West Africans in the United States and may affiliate with other Nigerian tribal groups that may have been traditional enemies in Nigeria.[74] In some ways, the urban tribe model is an over assimilation as individuals go beyond mainstream culture and form a new and distinct identity revolving around affinity and sub-culture.

First, entry into the urban tribe community may be difficult. Unless individuals live in college housing or a refugee dominated apartment complex, finding individuals will be a challenge. Those desiring to reach ethnic peoples in the urban tribe assimilation model probably do not have a single ethnic group as their target people since the very nature of the urban tribe theory is to drop core ethnic identity and find identity in an affinity. Entry into the community would likely come through entering the affinity that bonds the group together. Since the group is already diverse, suspicion of outsiders may not be strong, as long as the outsider has a legitimate reason to seek entry into the "tribe."

Second, the ministry language by nature must be one shared by all members of the group. This may be English in the United States. However, it may also be a trade

[74]See Bush, "Urbanizing Panta ta Ethne," 12.

language of the country of origin if the "tribe" is composed of individuals from the same country. For example, many immigrants to the U.S. from Mexico are actually tribal peoples from southern Mexico.[75] Their preferred language may be their respective tribal language but in the U.S., they speak Spanish with each other and have formed an urban tribe. Similarly, there are many Nepali and Bhutanese refugees in the United States. There are more than one hundred and twenty languages in Nepal, though most also speak Nepali as the trade language. Nepali refugees in the U.S. speak Nepali with each other, but if they find speakers of their tribal language, they prefer to use that language.[76] Pastor Lama recommends ministering in the heart language if possible but notes that the most important thing is the sincerity of the church planter and time spent building relationships with the people, regardless of the language.

Third, felt needs vary depending on the nature of the "tribe." Refugees living together in an apartment complex often desire to learn English, gain job skills, learn to drive, and eventually become U.S. citizens. For example, I conducted a research project to determine why Nepali refugees were having trouble getting jobs. I discovered that in Nepali culture, it is rude to "put one's self forth" in an interview setting. In U.S. culture, job employers expect interviewees to prove why they are ideal for the job. Essentially, there was a clash of cultural values. I then conducted a resume building and interview skills workshop at the apartment complex where I had the Nepalis role play job interviews to become more comfortable in that setting. Internationals in a college urban tribe setting would have different felt needs so individual research must be conducted to determine the best ministry approach.

Fourth, the need for an orality based ministry will also vary widely depending

[75]International Mission Board missionary, interview by author, Denver, CO, May 3, 2013.

[76]Nepali pastor, interview by author, Louisville, KY, August 28, 2013.

on the background of those in the urban tribe. I used a mixed approach when ministering to refugees who were in the process of learning to read and write English. I began a class by telling a Bible story in English so the refugees could hear native pronunciation. They could also read along with the story to improve reading skills. I had the same story set recorded in Nepali and would then play the story in Nepali. Someone would attempt to retell the story in either English or Nepali. Next, I would teach an English lesson based on vocabulary from the story. Finally, I broke the group into smaller groups and would have a conversation and discussion time of the story to help with story comprehension and also to give the refugees time to practice English. College students or businessmen with advanced levels of English may not respond as well to an orality based ministry. Church planters should use the orality survey tool mentioned above to determine the most appropriate approach in their specific ministry context.

Fifth, model of church will also vary depending on the context. Refugees may not have a car, or feel comfortable traveling to other areas of the city. In my case, we used the community room at the apartment complex because the area was neutral, easily accessible, and free of charge. Church planters must conduct research to discover the best location and venue for the church to meet in, taking into account cost, group dynamics regarding insider and outsider mentality, and accessibility.

Conclusion. The overarching theme regarding strategy in each of the three assimilation models is the need for specific research. General patterns and predictions have been made and strategies suggested that will likely fit the models, but as this entire dissertation has shown, there is no one size fits all strategy for reaching ethnic groups in the city. Church planters can use research from this dissertation as a framework to conduct their own research and create the most appropriate and contextualized approach for ministry.

Train Churches and Develop Partnerships

Cities are diverse ethnically and culturally. Most cities, especially in the U.S. are also diverse ecclesiologically. Large cities have large numbers of churches. Some of these churches desire to reach the ethnic groups that are at their door steps. The task is far too large for one church. Churches must work together to share resources, strategies, and people to accomplish the Great Commission.[77] However, mobilizing and training churches to reach ethnic groups in the city requires that a number of important issues be addressed, specifically those cross-cultural issues inherent to ethnic church planting. Another important issue is how to develop partnerships within the city.

Horror stories abound where well-meaning churches made serious cultural faux pauxs while attempting to reach immigrants. I know of a recent cultural festival put on by the city of Louisville. The event attracted thousands of immigrants and refugees. One well-meaning church sent a team to the event to share the gospel. The church's evangelism van pulled up and six members emerged and gathered a group of Nepalese around them. The team began telling the Nepalese they must believe in Jesus right now or else they would go to Hell. Much to the church members' delight, all of the Nepalese professed faith and signed a card indicating their decision. The team moved around the festival using similar evangelistic methods all day, and with similar results. A few weeks later several members of that church attended a Nepali story group where ethnic church planters had been faithfully laying a foundation for the gospel for months. The visiting church members derided the church planters and told them all they need to do is preach about Hell and the Nepalese will repent, just as they had at the cultural festival. Little did

[77]For general support for and challenges to urban collaboration, see Noel Castellanos, "Working Together to Restore Our Communities: Networking and Collaboration," in *A Heart for the Community: New Models for Urban and Suburban Ministry*, ed. John Fuder and Noel Castellanos (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 51-66. See also Robert Linthicum, "Networking: Hope for the Church in the City," in *Planting and Growing Urban Churches*, 164-81.

these church members realize, but none of the "decisions for Christ" the Nepalese made were genuine. They had only gone along with the show in order to not be embarrassed by saying no to the evangelists who obviously wanted a certain response.

Without training, churches will begin reaching ethnic groups on their own initiative and according to their own perceived best method. These churches can sometimes do more harm than good, however. It is crucial that those trained in cross-cultural ministry provide training sessions for other churches in the city. In Louisville, we have workshops on worldview identification and Chronological Bible Storying every few months. We offer training to individual churches who desire to reach ethnic groups in their neighborhoods. We attend associational meetings and ecumenical gatherings in order to find out which churches want to reach ethnic groups and to offer cross-cultural training to these churches. Just as missionaries preparing for the field receive in depth training, so must local churches that are crossing cultural boundaries with the gospel. Providing cross-cultural training also begins to address a second question – that of how to develop city wide partnerships between churches reaching ethnic groups.

Even in a relatively small city like Louisville with a metro population of around one million, it is difficult to know of all the efforts being made to reach ethnic groups. Many resources are not being used efficiently because churches are not connected. Some churches have no access to helpful resources while others are targeting the same neighborhoods unaware of each other's efforts. Recently there was a Nepali dinner fellowship in another part of the city that I was unaware of until the day it happened. I had no time to invite my Nepali friends who live in a different part of the city. In order to avoid such situations, a networking system has been developed on Facebook called "people groups Louisville" in order to provide information and resources for those in the city doing ethnic church planting. In addition, a new

interdenominational networking group has been formed that meets bi-monthly.[78] We have only had one meeting so far but over fifty people attended. Several of us were surprised to hear of others who were attempting a similar ministry to Nepalese in town that we had never heard about. These meetings are intended to provide prayer, encouragement, opportunity, and resources for anyone reaching ethnic groups in the city. We passed a sheet around that asked each person to name one other person who might be interested in a partnership. We hope to slowly build a base that will allow for healthy networking, training opportunities, and partnerships.

One major benefit of a network is the ability to share resources. For example, the Nepali story set my team is using originated with a missionary in Nepal. A student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary knew the missionary and asked for the story set to use with a Nepali ministry in Louisville. I found out about this ministry and asked for the story set to use in the community I minister in. At the networking meeting mentioned above, I discovered another church who is attempting to reach Nepali refugees in their neighborhood but do not have a story set and are not familiar with CBS. The networking meeting allowed me to both pass on the story set and also to offer training to use it properly. There are several groups in Louisville reaching out to Iraqi refugees. No one has a Creation to Cross story set in Iraqi Arabic. We have emailed missionaries on the field and have not found a complete story set either. We have agreed to combine resources and personnel in Louisville and write and record an Iraqi Arabic story set. Once the story set is finished, we can offer it to other groups in town doing a similar ministry.

It may seem obvious that churches need training in cross-cultural ministry and that networking and partnerships are helpful. Many cities have no such partnerships,

[78]Much of these efforts are coordinated by a ministry called Refuge Louisville. See refugelouisville.com.

however, or they are ineffective. We all need to be reminded and challenged to give time and resources to developing training and other tools to help the gospel reach more people in our cities. Creating a Facebook page is a simple first step. Hosting multiple networking and training sessions throughout the year is even better. Sometimes all it takes is one or two people to step forward and organize an event and good follow up can ensure future effectiveness.

Conclusion

Identifying and reaching ethnic groups in the city is a complex issue. This chapter has shown the need for church planters to have the skills to conduct ethnographic research on their target people in order to understand their worldview, cultural identity, assimilation pattern, and create a strategy most likely to be effective in their specific context. Specific issues in the urban, ethnic context include deciding whether to plant a mono or multi-ethnic church, how to appropriately minister to oral or residually oral people, the difficulties and limitations of orality strategies, the essential need for critical contextualization, and the need to develop church partnerships within the city. In many cases, the size and complexity of the city is overwhelming. Just getting started is often the hardest part. It is my hope that this chapter will provide the tools necessary to plant healthy, reproducing ethnic churches in the city.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter is to conclude the dissertation. I will begin with a brief summary of each chapter, highlighting the major topics discussed in this dissertation. Second, I will discuss the applicability of this research to other urban settings and determine which features are generalizable. Third, I will discuss the limitations of this dissertation. Fourth, I will provide rationale for encouraging others to read broadly from the fields of urban anthropology and sociology to help inform missions strategies. Fifth, I will suggest areas for further study related to this dissertation.

Summary

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the dissertation as a whole. It presents the research problem, which is how does immigration affect the worldview and cultural identity of immigrants, particularly from rural to urban settings? I examined the context from which this dissertation arose, particularly that of recent trends of globalization and immigration to urban settings. The United States ranks number one in the world in receiving immigrant peoples[1] so diaspora missiology is an important area of study for those living in North America. I define the terminology necessary for the discussion of the topic. Next, I provide my personal background and experiences that led me to select this dissertation topic. I outline limitations and delimitations for this research project and then present my research methods for conducting research necessary for this dissertation.

[1]United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision* (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev, 2008), http://esa.un.org/migration/p2k0data.asp (accessed April 4, 2012).

Chapter 2 reviews the literature necessary to seat the dissertation within the broader spectrum of urban anthropology, assimilation theory, orality, and urban, ethnic church planting. Because of those views held by Rynkiewich and others, I primarily review secular urban anthropological theory in order to glean the best research from professional anthropologists to infuse into current evangelical writing on urban ethnic church planting.[2] I discovered that there is little overlap between the disciplines of urban anthropology, orality studies, and urban church planting. Furthermore, much of what evangelicals have written on orality does not reflect broader social science research on the topic. Clearly, further research was necessary on the oral worldview in order to have a balanced understanding of its dynamics. My research revealed that while general patterns are predicable regarding assimilation theory and church planting strategy, church planters must have the skills to conduct their own ethnographic research to understand the specific dynamics of their target people.

Chapter 3 presented research on urbanization and cultural identity of immigrant peoples. I followed two anthropological approaches to describe the city and its effects on immigrant peoples. First, I studied the anthropology of the city and discovered several helpful metaphors to describe how city planners, laws, politics, and urban space in general shape where immigrants live and how they interact with one another. Next, I studied anthropology in the city, specifically how immigrant groups respond to the pressures of the city and urbanization. I described three assimilation

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[2]Rynkiewich claims that current missiologists are teaching anthropology in the classroom as the discipline was conceived thirty years ago. He believes that anthropology has made a turn to follow the great changes occurring in the world over the past three decades but missiology has not. See Michael Rynkiewich, *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 8. See also Darrell Whiteman's chapter, "Anthropological Reflections on Contextualizing Theology in a Globalizing World," in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold Netland (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 52-69.

models that are common in U.S. cities – ethnic enclaves, cultural threads, and the urban tribe theory. Finally, I synthesized the data and theorized formation of cultural identity according to the degree of urbanization, public and private identity, and cycle of cultural identification of immigrant groups.

Chapter 4 surveys the oral worldview. I looked at oral cognition, including discussing key features of oral language structure, how oral peoples categorize according to function rather than abstraction, and the nature of oral memory. I discovered that oral peoples need to tie memory to experiences or else memories slough off as the information no longer relates to their current needs. Oral peoples memorize thematically rather than verbatim and several studies showed that oral peoples make small but continuous changes to their message over time. Next, I discussed the nature of the oral community, including how the community controls the transmission of the message. Additionally, oral peoples rely on their community and trusted leaders to guide the acceptance and interpretation of new information. There are gatekeepers in each community that are necessary to give credibility to a message, as oral peoples do not place value in the academic credentials of a messenger if they have no relationship with him or her. Finally, I explored what the introduction of literacy does to the oral worldview. Ong and others note the tenaciousness of the oral worldview and describe the residual nature of an oral preference for learning long after a people has learned to read and write. All peoples of the world are somewhere on a spectrum between primary orality and high literacy. Understanding the placement of a target people on the spectrum should inform church planting strategy when working with people from oral backgrounds in urban contexts.

Chapter 5 draws together conclusions from the research base presented in chapters 2 through 4. I described the need for church planters to have the skills to use ethnographic research to understand the specific dynamics of their target people in their city. I suggested an approach to conduct demographic research in order to generally

locate members of the target people in the city. Next, I provided a specific approach to carrying out field research, including presenting tools to identify the worldview, cultural identity, and orality preferences of the people. The second half of chapter 5 applies research to inform church planting strategies for several scenarios commonly found in the city. I discussed the question of whether to plant a mono or multi-ethnic church. I discussed key issues related to orality strategies, including the limitations of purely oral methods for church planting. I surveyed Paul Hiebert's model of critical contextualization as a means for church planters to help their people view their culture biblically as they work through the assimilation process. I presented a general strategy for planting churches in each of the three models of assimilation found in the city. Finally, I wrote of the need for churches to partner together to share resources and carry out the great commission in the city.

Applicability and Generalizability of Research

It is my hope that this dissertation be as applicable and far reaching as possible for those working in cities around North America and the world. Certain facets of the research I presented are more likely to be generalizable than others. There are four areas in particular that can be expanded and applied to those working in other contexts.

First, the ethnographic research methods presented in chapter 5 are useful for urban areas in any context. Field research is the basis for anthropological study and should be the foundation from which missiological strategies are formulated. Unfortunately, Hiebert notes that there is a great lack of theoretically based research in missions. He makes his point by stating that most missiological practice either imitates the practices of those who have gone before[3] or simply follows current trends based on

[3]Perhaps one basis for Rynkiewich's complaint mentioned above.

anecdotes and untested hypotheses.[4] My examination into the foundations for orality strategies discussed in chapters 2, 4, and 5 is an example of claims made based on anecdotes and not supported by any discernible research. I suggest two tools in this dissertation, the worldview identification worksheet and the orality assessment tool, that church planters can use to conduct research in their particular setting.

Second, chapter 4 describes the oral worldview in general enough terms to be helpful for anyone working with oral peoples around the world. Oral peoples think in more concrete ways, often needing to use their senses of touch, taste, or sight in order to categorize objects. They certainly can understand abstract thinking to a degree, but have trouble remembering information presented abstractly because it does not functionally relate to their everyday life. Additionally, they rely on their communities to reinforce important concepts of their cultures. The community setting reveals the importance of relationship and experience to provide credibility to the message and is a common feature among oral peoples. Furthermore, oral peoples all around the world are coming into contact with literacy so all who work with oral peoples need to be prepared to bridge the gap between orality and literacy and be aware of the residual nature of orality as a preference for learning.

Third, anyone working with oral peoples who have come to the city will need to consider how to apply oral strategies like Chronological Bible Storying to their context. The issues I describe in chapter 5 regarding language and worldview contexts for storying in a multi-cultural setting are helpful in a variety of contexts outside of North America. For example, my research in London revealed the same concern of choosing a trade language for storying and the difficulties inherent with that approach. How does a church planter work with those who desire to learn to read and write, either out of

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[4]Paul Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 160.

personal interest or for survival in their new setting, but also retain remnants of their old oral preference for learning? There are not extensive examples of using orality strategies in a hybrid context, but the training developed by the Soma Church network is helpful in a variety of settings.[5]

Fourth, some claim that the largest global cities have more in common with each other than they do with other small cities and villages in their own country.[6] If this statement is true, church planters need to share research and strategy with each other. Globalization levels the ground, to some extent, so that culture can be bridged to conduct business between cities like New York, London, Paris, Mumbai, Tokyo, and Shanghai. These major cities are often hubs for immigration so much of the urban anthropological theory presented in chapter 3 will apply to other global cities. I cite examples from cities like Sao Paulo, Lima, and London to show how urban planning, zoning laws, and politics impact settlement and shape the production of culture. The metaphors suggested by urban anthropologist Setha Low, including the divided city, the contested city, the city as power, and others are a helpful framework to begin understanding the nature of urban centers in general.[7]

Limitations

Research presented in this dissertation carries certain limitations for global application as well. The section of chapter 3 discussing assimilation theory is greatly confined to the United States. A primary reason is that my research mainly focused on

[5]See www.wearesoma.com/resources.

[6]Robert J. Schreiter, "Globalization and Reconciliation," in *Mission in the Third Millenium*, ed. Robert J. Schreiter (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 2001), 126-27.

[7]See Setha Low, ed., *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999).

those researchers practicing in the U.S. Their ethnographies are set in a particular time and cultural setting that is unique to their respective cities. As Kwong and others have shown, even studies of the characteristics of ethnic enclaves do not present a unified theory for assimilation in cities across the United States.[8] Portes' idealistic image of the Cuban enclave in Miami is not shared in the Chinatowns of Manhattan and San Francisco.[9] One may find similarities in enclave environments in other global cities, but, just as in the United States, one must be careful not to generalize findings too broadly without conducting research in the context under study.

Furthermore, assimilation theorists in the U.S. generally agree that assimilation is now a two-way process.[10] Early theories proposing that immigrant peoples completely assimilated because they both desired to do so and could not help but do so were proven false.[11] The U.S. has moved toward a much more multi-cultural environment where cultural distinctives are often valued and celebrated. Not all global cities view assimilation the same way. For example, many indigenous immigrants in Latin American countries face severe discrimination and are forced to live in fringe shanty towns and receive no assistance from the government.[12] Often, these indigenous

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[8]See Peter Kwong, *The New Chinatown* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996); Don Mar, "Another Look at the Enclave Economy Thesis: Chinese Immigrants in the Ethnic Labor Market," *Amerasia Journal* 17 (1991): 5-21; Min Zhou, *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); and Kenneth Guest and Peter Kwong, "Ethnic Enclaves and Cultural Diversity," in *Cultural Diversity in the United States: A Critical Reader*, ed. Ida Susser and Thomas Patterson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001).

[9]See Alejandro Portes and Robert Bach, *Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the U.S.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) for a comparison with other enclave ethnographies.

[10]Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[11]See, for example, W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1945).

[12]Interview with Brent Waldrip, International Mission Board director of research for the Americas Affinity, via Skype, August 29, 2013.

immigrants will attempt to hide their ethnic identity and avoid discrimination. These examples show that assimilation theory cannot be wholesale applied without discernment and further research must be conducted to confirm theories.

Encouragement to Read broadly from Urban Anthropology

This dissertation has both challenged and encouraged me to read more broadly from the secular social sciences. The work of Low, Victor, and Nee was of tremendous help in my understanding of urban dynamics and assimilation theory. Past leading missiologists and missionary anthropologists have always read broadly and many were trained in anthropology from secular universities.[13] It is true that many of these universities teach a type of cultural relativism that is in opposition with the authority of the Bible.[14] However, these anthropologists contribute much to our understanding of immigration and cultural identity. These universities and their anthropologists provide and use professional research methods when conducting ethnographic research. Such training adds credibility to research findings. Additionally, these schools expose students to the full range of anthropological theory that helps one think critically about the social dynamics in the city. Such thinking helps the researcher avoid making false assumptions and should ground strategy in theory that is formed from field research. Missiololgists and church planters need to understand both the Bible and the people they minister to, including the cultural context the people live in. Both theology and anthropology are

[13]See a great example of Paul Hiebert's journey in Philip Barnes, "Missiology Meets Cultural Anthropology: The Life and Legacy of Paul G. Hiebert" (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011).

[14]I recently heard an indigenous Columbian man tell the story of how he was accosted by a secular anthropologist for receiving pastoral training with hopes to strengthen the church in his home village. The anthropologist went so far as to say that this man's people have always used drunken rituals to reinforce key cultural values so who was he to tell them that drunkenness and the beatings and raping that went along with it were sinful just because the Bible said so.

needed to best accomplish the task and the two disciplines do not need to be considered in opposition to one another.

Areas for Further Study

When writing a dissertation, one often discovers interesting and helpful areas of study that are beyond the scope of the dissertation. I have found at least four areas that need further attention, perhaps in other dissertation length works. First, there needs to be many more studies conducted on the memories of oral peoples. The majority of the studies cited in current literature are decades old.[15] However, primary oral peoples without any exposure to literacy whatsoever are increasingly difficult to find. Luria's landmark study was part of a research project conducted by Russians shortly after their takeover of the peoples of Central Asia. Russians introduced literacy to the people shortly thereafter. The period of colonization, which only ended in the mid to late twentieth century, also brought literacy to many places of the world which were previously oral. As Klem's study revealed, however, people did not always fully adopt literacy.[16] Many assumptions about the nature of oral memories are made. Interestingly, Lord's study of Yugoslavian epic oral poets was one of the first to audibly record the poems so they could be analyzed for change. Prior to his study, people had merely

[15]See Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages," in C. K. Ogden and Ivor Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1936), 296-336; Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, trans. George Weidenfelf (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966); Bronislaw Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, 1926); Franz Boas, "The Folklore of the Eskimo," *Journal of American Folklore* 64 (1904); Aleksandr Luria, *Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundations*, ed. Michael Cole, trans. Martin Lopez-Morillas and Lynn Solotaroff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976); Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964); Milman Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse*, ed. Adam Parry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); and Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Methuen and Company, 1982).

[16]See Herbert V. Klem. *Oral Communication of the Scripture: Insights from African Oral Art* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1982).

assumed the poems were not changed over time since the poets thought they always sang the poem in the same way. More of these kinds of studies need to be conducted today to so that we have a fully informed understanding regarding the nature of oral people's memories.

Second, retention of oral learning preferences needs to be further studied in diaspora settings. Some research indicates that especially at the worldview level, oral preference is strongest.[17] If this statement is true, church planters to be sure they are using the most appropriate ministry methods because the gospel is focused first and foremost at the worldview level. The orality assessment tool developed by Abney can be used to study immigrants from oral backgrounds in cities.[18] These new studies will greatly aid development of the theory of residual orality, especially in settings where immigrants are learning a new language such as English. ESL centers in the United States would be an ideal place to conduct such studies as they contain bounded sets of immigrant populations.

Third, there needs to be more studies conducted on the health of churches and church planting movements that are solely based on orality strategies such as CBS and Training for Trainers methodologies.[19] Are successive generations of churches free from syncretism? As Hiebert warns, are these strategies and their reported effectiveness grounded in objective research or are they based on assumptions and anecdotes? As noted in this dissertation, I am in favor of using tools like CBS when working with oral

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[17]See Jaime Koh and Stephanie Ho, *Culture and Customs of Singapore and Malaysia* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2009), 64, and Chandu Ray, "The Use of Dance-Drama in Evangelism," *Effective Evangelism* 1 (1971): 8.

[18]The assessment can be accessed at www.orality.net/sites/default/files/Orality_Assessment_Tool_Worksheet.pdf.

[19]See the website for Training for Trainers, which is described as the most powerful church planting tool in the world today at http://t4tonline.org/.

peoples. However, I want to have an informed and balanced approach and not naively believe that a set of stories is all a church needs to safeguard against heresies, cults, and general memory drift that changes the context of the stories over time.

Fourth, I encourage others to use the three assimilation theories presented in this dissertation and apply them to other cities around the world. Do the theories of the ethnic enclave, cultural thread, and urban tribe hold up in other contexts? I am particularly interested in the urban tribe phenomenon. I have seen the theory used as a basis for ministering to a diverse group of people in English and using an ESL club as a launching point for Bible studies and church planting. In some of these instances, the "tribe" fell apart because it seems people were coming for the functional reason of learning English. They were willing to set aside cultural differences in order to gain survival skills but once their worldview began to be confronted, their individual cultural values rose to the surface again. I would like to see studies of storying and ESL groups from around the world that attempted to determine if the tribe mentality was merely for functional purposes.

Conclusion

This dissertation was a long, challenging, and fruitful process. I was once told to be sure to choose a dissertation topic that I was excited about, one that I would not mind having to think about at all hours of the day and night. I took that advice seriously. These warnings from students who went before me proved to be true. It has been the case that I have woken up often in the middle of the night thinking about the chapter I was working on, a source I needed to track down, or some revision I needed to make. However, the longer I researched, the more interested I became in my topic. I thank the Lord for that.

Even as I conclude, I am thinking of future research projects I might work on related to this dissertation. Some finish their work, set it down, and do not want to give

another thought to their topic for six months. This is not the case for me. I cannot escape the realities of my research. Over the course of time, I have seen issues related to urbanization, immigration, diaspora missiology, and urban church planting come up continually on the news, in recent books, and at societies like the Evangelical Missiological Society where I have presented papers. I am pleased that my research matters for the world the church is facing today. The world is urbanizing. Peoples are on the move. Many times, we have better access to unreached peoples in a diaspora setting than in their home countries. God is at work. It is his mission. He moves the nations.[20] The world is at our door. Let us find our place in the Great Commission as we do our part to make disciples of all peoples for the glory of our Creator and our King.

[20]Jer 31: 7-14.

APPENDIX 1

WORLDVIEW IDENTIFICATION WORKSHEET

Family	Friends	Food	Festivals	Future
What does your household look like, who lives with you? What language do you speak at home? Can you marry outside your culture? What does a wedding look like? Who makes major decisions in your household? What responsibilities do your children have related to the family? What role do ancestors have in your family?	What is it like living here? Are there many people from your culture? What parts of town do most people from your culture live in? What work do they do here? Where do you spend time with friends, what do you do? What has been your experience with Americans? How are friendships different here from your home country?	What are your favorite foods? What do you think of American food? Does your culture have a famous dish? Are their drinks, foods or animals you avoid eating? Why? What special meals do you have at religious events? Does your culture have guidelines for who prepares food, how it is served, or what order family members eat?	What religion is most common in your culture? Do you practice that religion? Are their special days of the year or major festivals or holidays you observe? What is the significance of each one? Are the festivals different here than in your home country? How so? Could I attend one of your festivals sometime? Have you heard of Jesus? What do you know about him?	What happens after we die? How do you best prepare for death and beyond? How do you relate to your ancestors who have gone to the afterlife? Do they have influence in your life? How do you relate to god/creator? Are time and history moving from point to point or are they cyclical or circular? What are you most excited about? What are the biggest challenges and needs?

APPENDIX 2

ORALITY SURVEY TOOL

By Lynne L. Abney (from Walter Ong, Orality & Literacy) / Each set of statements, left and right, describes the ends of 40 communication style "poles". Choose a person you know well. Thinking specifically about that person, circle the number that best represents his or her behavior in each learning situation. (Example: For #1, if you were evaluating yourself and "have to see the word written down to remember it", you would circle 3 or 4.) Follow the directions to score. The result helps you know how to communicate truth most clearly to a listener with that learning preference.

Basic learning preferences: My friend's name is: _____ ORAL COMMUNICATORS	**scale**	**PRINT COMMUNICATORS**
…learn by hearing ("I'm an aural learner.")	0 1 2 3 4	…learn by seeing ("I'm a visual learner.")
…learn by observing and imitating, by listening and repeating, by memorizing proverbs, traditional sayings, stories, songs, and expressions.	0 1 2 3 4	…learn by reading non-fiction, by studying, examining, classifying, comparing, analyzing.
…think and talk about events, not words. (Words function to paint action pictures.)	0 1 2 3 4	…think and talk about words, concepts, and principles. (Words are perceived as representing objects more than actions.)
…use stories of human action to store, organize, and communicate much of what they know"; information is "embedded in the flow of time" usually on a "story line".	0 1 2 3 4	… manage knowledge "in elaborate, more or less scientifically abstract categories", and store it in print rather than in stories.
…value and learn information handed down from the past.	0 1 2 3 4	…seek to discover new information.
…value traditional solutions.	0 1 2 3 4	…value innovative solutions.

SUBTOTAL 1 | **BASIC LEARNING**

Importance of sound: ORAL COMMUNICATORS	**scale**	**PRINT COMMUNICATORS**
…are deeply affected by the sound of what they hear.	0 1 2 3 4	…are affected by the content of what they read.
…prize clarity and style of speech.	0 1 2 3 4	…prize clarity and validity of

		reasoning.
…view speech primarily as a way of relating to people, or as a form of entertainment.	0 1 2 3 4	…view speech primarily as a means of conveying information.
…respond to a speaker while he is speaking and participate in the story telling.	0 1 2 3 4	…generally read or listen quietly.
…engage in verbal contests, trying to excel in praise, insults, riddles, jokes, etc.	0 1 2 3 4	…engage in few verbal contests, but write letters to the editor, etc.
…believe that oral exchange should normally be formal, carefully articulated.	0 1 2 3 4	…believe that oral exchange should normally be informal, casual.
…can produce, in some cases, beautiful verbal art forms, such as poetry and ballads.	0 1 2 3 4	…can produce, in some cases, interesting literature, but generally not verbal art forms of a high quality.
…view a written text as a record of something spoken or an aid to memorization or recitation.	0 1 2 3 4	…view a written text as a vessel of information.
…prefer to read aloud or at least imagine the sounds of the words as they read.	0 1 2 3 4	…prefer to read alone, taking in the content of the words but not their sound.

SUBTOTAL 2 | **SOUND**

Importance of real-life experience: ORAL COMMUNICATORS	**scale**	**PRINT COMMUNICATORS**
…learn and retain knowledge in relation to real or imagined events in human life.	0 1 2 3 4	…learn and retain knowledge as general principles, with events as examples.
…may recite genealogies but make few lists.	0 1 2 3 4	…make lists but recite few genealogies.
…relate closely and personally to the people and events they know about.	0 1 2 3 4	…relate more objectively to what they know, because writing comes between them.
…think and talk mostly about events and people.	0 1 2 3 4	…think and write about their own feelings and thoughts as well.
…reason from experience and association.	0 1 2 3 4	…reason by means of "formal" logic, using analysis and explanation.
…organize non-narrative speeches (such as exhortations and sermons) largely by recounting events associated with the point being made or with the words being used.	0 1 2 3 4	…organize non-narrative speeches (such as exhortations and sermons) by laying out a logical progression of thoughts.

SUBTOTAL 3 | **REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE**

Style preference: ORAL COMMUNICATORS	scale	PRINT COMMUNICATORS
…communicate by joining sentences with conjunctions such as ‘and’, ‘then’.	0 1 2 3 4	…communicate by joining sentences with subjunctives such as ‘while’, ‘after’.
…can organize experiences and episodes.	0 1 2 3 4	…can organize long, logical arguments.
…construct longer narratives by stringing episodes together; themes may be repeated in several episodes.	0 1 2 3 4	…construct narratives with chronologically linear plots that reach a climax and resolution; any themes are validated by the outcome.
…use symbols and stories to carry the message.	0 1 2 3 4	…use charts, diagrams, and lists to explain the message.
…frequently use words in set phrases, such as sayings, proverbs, riddles, formulas, or just descriptions such as ‘brave soldier’.	0 1 2 3 4	…generally use words independently, with few set phrases.
…appreciate repetition, in case something was missed the first time.	0 1 2 3 4	…do not like repetition, since material missed can be read again.
…like verbosity (many words to say a little)	0 1 2 3 4	…like brevity (few words to say much)

SUBTOTAL 4 | **STYLE**

Importance of dialogue: ORAL COMMUNICATORS	scale	PRINT COMMUNICATORS
…tend to communicate in groups.	0 1 2 3 4	…tend to communicate one-to-one.
…learn mostly in interaction with other people.	0 1 2 3 4	…learn mostly alone.
…cannot think about something very long without dialogue.	0 1 2 3 4	…can think about something for a long time while making notes about it, etc.

SUBTOTAL 5 | **DIALOGUE**

Importance of drama and melodrama: ORAL COMMUNICATORS	scale	PRINT COMMUNICATORS
…employ exaggerated praise and scorn.	0 1 2 3 4	…intentionally moderate their praise and scorn.
…drawn "heavy" characters in their stories.	0 1 2 3 4	…prefer realistic characters in stories.
…create art forms that emphasize struggle against an enemy.	0 1 2 3 4	…create art forms that emphasize struggle to reach a goal or overcome an obstacle.
…use their hands to help express themselves when they tell stories, through gestures or by playing musical instruments.	0 1 2 3 4	…use their hands little, since gestures are not written or read.

SUBTOTAL 6 | **DRAMA AND MELODRAMA**

Importance of context: ORAL COMMUNICATORS	scale	PRINT COMMUNICATORS
…view matters in the totality of their context, including everyone involved (holistically)	0 1 2 3 4	…view matters abstractly and analytically (compartmentally).
…leave much of the message unverbalized, depending instead on shared situation, shared culture, intonation, facial gestures, and hand gestures to help communicate the message.	0 1 2 3 4	…clarify the message by using words rather than context, gesture, or intonation which cannot be conveyed in print.
…can be imprecise, and clarify as needed, based on the listener's reaction.	0 1 2 3 4	…learn to avoid ambiguity because it cannot be clarified by an author at a distance.
…avoid asking or answering "direct" questions.	0 1 2 3 4	…ask and answer "direct" questions.
…are uninterested in definitions since the context renders them superfluous.	0 1 2 3 4	…appreciate definitions.

SUBTOTAL 7 | **CONTEXT**

Add the circled numbers in each set of choices. Write the subtotals below and add them together. ***Be sure you answered all the questions, even if you had to guess or didn't really know.***

BASIC LEARNING

SUBTOTAL 1 _____
SUBTOTAL 2 _____ **SOUND**
SUBTOTAL 3 _____ **LIFE EXPERIENCE**
SUBTOTAL 4 _____ **STYLE**
SUBTOTAL 5 _____ **DIALOGUE**
SUBTOTAL 6 _____ **DRAMA AND MELODRAMA**
SUBTOTAL 7 _____ **CONTEXT**

TOTAL ____
LOCATE THIS SCORE ON THE
ORALITY SCALE BELOW

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ABSTRACT

HOW SHALL THEY HEAR? THE INTERFACE OF URBANIZATION AND ORALITY IN NORTH AMERICAN ETHNIC CHURCH PLANTING

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This dissertation explores how urbanization and immigration affect the worldview and cultural identity of immigrants. Chapter 1 introduces the dissertation and presents the research problem. The chapter also defines key terms, gives the author's background, sets limitations and delimitations, and overviews research methods employed in the writing of this dissertation.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review, synthesis, and analysis of works in the fields of urban anthropology, orality studies, and church planting.

Chapter 3 explores the relationship of immigration and cultural identity. The chapter discusses ways in which urban areas encourage or limit cultural production of residents and how immigrants respond to those pressures as they express their cultural identity. The chapter concludes with an analysis of three models of assimilation likely to be found in urban contexts.

Chapter 4 presents the oral worldview, including the nature of oral cognition, oral community, and methods of oral communication. After describing primary oral cultures, the chapter discusses the introduction of literacy to an oral people and the effects of residual orality.

Chapter 5 draws together research presented in chapters 2 through 4 and

discusses a grounded approach for identifying and reaching ethnic groups in the city. The first section presents methods to conduct ethnographic research so church planters can understand the specific dynamics in their communities. The second section discusses issues germane to reaching ethnic groups in the city including mono or multi-ethnic church, orality issues, critical contextualization, strategies for ministering in the three assimilation models presented in chapter 3, and the need for church partnerships.

Chapter 6 concludes the dissertation by summarizing key points from each chapter. The chapter also describes the application of the dissertation to urban settings outside of North America and discusses the need for further research on related topics beyond the scope of this dissertation.

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