

of voluntary singleness for many—to catalyze indigenous movements of churches among the unreached squatters of Asia.

How much could God do?

At the 1989 Lausanne II Congress in Manila, a gathering of many of the world's evangelical leaders, there was a major strategic focus on the urban poor. Mission strategists had just brought together lists of strategic goals for the year AD 2000, and they were requested to revise these goals, placing a primary emphasis on the urban poor.

The target proposed was threefold: a vital, ministering church, culturally and geographically accessible to every urban poor person; a movement of churches of the poor in every major city; and transformation of slums and squatter areas. God will do what we ask.

As you read, please bow and pray for:

1. Two incarnational workers in every squatter area.
2. A church in every squatter area.
3. A movement among the poor in each mega-city.
4. Transformation of slums and squatter areas in some cities.
5. Incarnational workers from among the poor who can affect economic and social structures and political options.
6. Mission leaders to make the squatters a priority.
7. A major thrust from Latin America and Filipino churches to other Asian squatter areas.
8. 50,000 cross-cultural workers in the slums raising up indigenous leaders movements of 10,000 in each city.

Chapter Eight

Pilgrimage Among the Poor

Let me describe a personal pilgrimage. It has resulted in the establishment of the Urban Leadership Foundation and several other missions and religious orders. It is now being worked out through the building of a network of many missions towards the urban poor in the Encarnação Alliance.

The Jesus of the poor

When I first entered the slums, I found an integration of all I had known about the life of following Jesus—a sense of the presence of his Spirit, preaching, humility, loving, and caring. And I knew that I had found a key to understanding the heart of the one who chose to be poor among the poor.

Living in the slums also brought me to the central purpose that links Jesus' works together—a passion for knowing God. Out of all of this came the first draft of *The Lifestyle and Values*, which has defined the core values of the various missions that since have been established.

During those early years, we defined our central purpose as *knowing and following Christ*. From this and for this all other purposes flow.

Purpose one: following Christ

We desire individually and corporately to develop intimacy with Christ and to walk in his footsteps. This means imitating his character and attitudes as we seek to live out his principles of

self-denial, sacrifice, and service in the context of the twentieth century slums of the world's great cities.

The desire to follow Christ results in a certain lifestyle, both among the poor and when relating to the middle class.

1. *Identification*

Following Jesus' pattern, who "though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9), we commit ourselves to live and work among the urban poor, to live as nearly as possible to their standard of living, while maintaining reasonable health and recognizing emotional, physical, cultural, and family limitations. We intend always to master the language and culture of the people among whom we minister.

2. *Non-destitute poverty*

The Master not only chose poverty in birth, life, and death, he also calls his servants to such a lifestyle. We recognize our basic needs for food and clothing (1 Timothy 6:6-8, Matthew 6: 25-33), which may include tools of our trade or children's toys. We recognize the just need, inferred from the Scriptures for each family to own its own home, although some, like the Master, may choose a mobile, apostolic life with nowhere to lay one's head (Luke 9:58). In putting our treasure in heaven, we covet the unsearchable riches of Christ.

We desire to possess nothing that cannot be shared with those around us. Regarding what we have, we hold it not as our own but rather as lent to us for a season. We will seek to exclude from both our personal and communal lives the cares of the world, the delight in riches, and the desire for other things (Mark 4:19). We will avoid the abundance of communal properties or wealth. Buildings, administration, and ministry shall be developed in the simplest manner consistent with good health and with efficient, well-pleasing work.

3. *Inner simplicity*

Renouncing possessions is an outworking of an inner simplifying of our lives which leads to the openness, gentleness, spontaneity, and serenity that marked the Master. In renouncing possessions we seek to simplify our external lives in order to simplify more clearly our inner lives and focus on knowing our Lord.

Along with outward poverty, we desire an inner humility; along with servant works, we seek the spirit of a true servant. In caring little for this world where we are strangers and pilgrims, we set our hearts on that spiritual home where our treasure is being saved up, and on that glory which we shall share with our Lord, provided we suffer with him.

We encourage middle-class Christians to such simplicity of lifestyle. For some it means earning less, and using their time for the kingdom. For others it means to earn much, consume little, hoard nothing, give generously, and celebrate living. Such lifestyles are infinitely varied. We refuse to judge others in such areas.

Jesus the apostle

During the long hours in prayer and the obedience of entering the slums in Manila in those early days, a new knowledge of the presence of God and a release of power came. Surprisingly, God, in his sovereign will, did not permit me to remain in the slums of Manila.

God had his hand in this apparent blockage to ministry among the poor and used it. His was a broader vision than mine. Out of the pain of leaving the poor came the urge to create a book that has changed lives, calling men and women to live among the poor. *Companion to the Poor* was the formulation of a new evangelical theology for living and working incarnationally among the destitute.¹ At that time, such a ministry was not easily

accomplished within accepted evangelical beliefs. God has since brought about a growing evangelical commitment to core biblical truths affirming such ministries. Indeed, such a theology is now becoming popular under the theme of the kingdom of God.

As I worked on that book, I had a growing sense of God speaking, commanding the mobilization of the church in my own nation of New Zealand—an apostolic movement of missionary entrepreneurs to the poor of Asia's slums. Servants to Asia's Urban Poor was born.

It was developed around the document that I partially quoted above, *The Lifestyle and Values*. These values had grown out of reflection on the older historical orders, and a realization that core values are far more important than structure in ministry. A second booklet, *A Strategy to Reach the Poor of the World's Mega-Cities*, dealt with the wider vision.²

I went back and studied the lives of the great pioneers of earlier centuries, particularly Assisi, Xavier, and Wesley. The notable thing about their movements, in contrast with modern mission societies, was a primary emphasis on knowing God. This has been a central value in Catholic orders working among the poor. (I am not here affirming their doctrines—only looking at the effectiveness of their structure.) For example, although famous for her social work, Mother Teresa's workers spend only five hours per day in work; most of the day is spent in prayer and in the Word.

This primacy of spiritual discipline, of seeking God, is absent in most Protestant missions whose aims are the work for God, rather than to know God.

Purpose two: knowing Christ

In our minds, knowing God includes the traditional evangelical understanding of knowing God in obedience, through time in prayer and the Word, together with the Franciscan perspective

that knowing God is to be found through loving the poor, and the Old Testament perspective that righteousness involves social justice. The result is some lifestyle commitments and spiritual disciplines.

We seek to know our Lord more intimately through:

- Obedience and devotion.
- Simplicity of possessions and renunciation of wealth (Luke 14:33).
- Incarnation and service among the poor of the slums (Matthew 25:34–40).
- Preaching the gospel to the poor (Luke 4:18).
- Seeking justice for the poor (Jeremiah 22:16).
- Commitment to community.

1. Spiritual disciplines

We believe our whole lifestyle should become a true walking in the Spirit. We hold to the importance of Spirit-directed self-discipline in the cultivation of spirituality, through regular meditation, study of the Word, worship, prayer, and fasting. We recognize that without steadfastness in these disciplines our lives will be inadequate to cope with the stresses of living among the poor. Our first work is intercession, from which springs our ministry.

2. A lifestyle of celebration

Our lives are to be a sign of joy among the people. The center of our lifestyle is the daily celebration of our Lord's death and resurrection. Wherever we go, we seek to lead others into this celebration of the resurrected Lord, bringing the hope of Christ into slums without hope, the joy of Christ into slums of despair.

3. *Joy in suffering*

We rejoice, too, in suffering, knowing that suffering produces character (Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2:4).

4. *Sabbath and jubilee rest*

Celebration, rest, and joy were built into the Scriptures in the concepts of the jubilee and Sabbaths. Knowing that joy flags under overwork, we will zealously keep free one day per week for rest outside of the slum areas. We will season our year with weeks for celebration and festivity, rest, and retreat. The seventh year should be a year for rest, reflection, and recommitment.

5. *Self-examination*

We will read and review our lives at least monthly, rewriting our values and lifestyle yearly, in consultation with a spiritual adviser.

Only after these objectives came the work goal of the missions: establishing multiplying fellowships. Growing from the center of evangelical and charismatic Christianity, and based on four years in the slums of Manila, the ministry values that enable this to happen emerged. I had enough experiences with the dramatic intervention of the Holy Spirit in ministry among the poor to realize that he is the one who founds churches, missions, and movements. During these years, I had also grappled with the social and economic factors associated with poverty.

Purpose three: establishing multiplying fellowships

We desire to help in the establishing of multiplying movements of disciples congregated into indigenous fellowships and churches which minister according to the gifting and power of the Spirit. With the Bible as our rule for faith and practice, we affirm the following values. These are not rules but shared emphases.

1. *Evangelism and disciple-making*

Our primary commitment as communities is to go and preach the gospel (Mark 16:15), and to go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18–20). We recognize that this central thrust occurs in the midst of a wide diversity of ministry, gifts, and calling. While our Master was preaching, he also went about doing good (Acts 10:38), healing the sick and delivering from demons (Matthew 4:24), declaring the gospel by both word and deed.

2. *Service to the urban poor*

While acknowledging the love of Jesus for all men, we choose to focus our love and discipling among the urban poor of the Third World's great cities, seeking to follow Jesus' approach of preaching the gospel to the poor (Luke 4:18).

We will only minister extensively among the rich and middle class if the poor are significantly helped as a result, and upon consensus of the mission team.

3. *The power of the Holy Spirit*

We choose to work in the power of the Holy Spirit, seeking to lead others into the fullness of the Spirit, and into the exercise of spiritual gifts and the expression of spiritual fruit. We look to him as leader and administrator, the one who opens new communities, who ministers, who reveals God's will, who heals and delivers. We expect him to work miraculously on our behalf.

4. *Peacemaking, justice, and development*

We seek to live in harmony with all men, but in seeking peace will be involved in reflecting the just nature of the God we seek, into the structures of society, in such a way as to speak out for, to defend, and to uplift the poor among whom we work. We will act in such areas by being as wise as serpents and harmless as doves, seeking to effect change by bringing repentance and reconciliation, though this may at times involve non-violent confrontations.

In establishing poor people's churches we will seek to avoid social dislocation by reaching whole communities. We seek also to establish technically skilled and economically independent church leadership. We commit ourselves to encouraging middle-class and rich Christians to give to the poor, as Paul did (2 Corinthians 8:3–15), in order that some level of equality be attained.

We seek to uplift the economy of the poor by working where possible to get the skills to produce, the means of production, and control of production into the hands of the poor. This involves introducing appropriate technology, cooperatives, cottage industries (in preference to mass production), and profit sharing. Our intended model is that of holistic ministry, and small rather than large-scale projects.

We are committed to biblical justice and equity and therefore renounce the abuses of both capitalism and Marxism. We renounce the greed of the profit motive, the exploitation and dehumanization of humanity, and the exhausting of irreplaceable natural resources by capitalism. We renounce the use of force, violence, the class struggle, and bitterness inherent in Marxism. While for specific goals we may find ourselves aligned with various political groups, we are committed to none but the politics of the kingdom of God.

Jesus, lover of the whole world

God kept speaking of other cities through visions, moving me to walk through them and intercede for them. (Every major advance in ministry seems to have come to me this way. I am not saying that others should expect this, or that young Christians, with little discernment, should spend their time seeking this. I only affirm that this has been my experience.) I began walking the streets of other cities, and decided to write this book. His call had changed from reaching the poor to reaching and transforming the cities, including both the poor and those who create their poverty.

In the process, I took the core of a second team to Bangkok, to survey and prepare for entrance into that city. This team is now established, and the New Zealand mission is looking towards another South Asian city. It has also developed an Australian base.

The call was obviously wider than what we had envisaged, and the Lord spoke to me to move on and develop the broader mission, rather than maintaining my leadership of the New Zealand work. God has gone on blessing that work. The workers on the field have continued to follow *The Lifestyle and Values*, for the foundations were well laid, with enough workers to give a group dynamic that has been lasting. And God's promises at its outset have provided a covenant with him for its continued growth.

A large part of the success of these teams may be attributed to their patterns of decision-making in a team context. These contain the seeds of mutually laying down our lives for others.

The Body of Christ

One of my main callings in life has been to build teams, and my experience in the slums led to a firm conviction that unless a team structure was built solidly into this mission, workers would not survive the stresses. So one of the values became fellowship of commitment.

God gave a good initial team from New Zealand. Pete Falconer and his wife Libby sacrificed many years of their lives for the establishing of the home base. Colin Harrington brought to the work experience in team leadership from his previous years in Indonesia. Several workers emerged from the Spreydon Baptist Church.

1. Fellowship of commitment

We choose to work, together in communities of four to twelve brothers and sisters, working in pairs or family units, and coming together at least once every two weeks for a time of training, of

fun, or of ministry to one another, a communal feast, a time of confession, and for celebration of the death and resurrection of our Lord.

While guarding freedom of conscience and spirit-directed individual initiative, we choose a partial sharing of income, possessions, and ministry goals.

2. *Decision-making in teams*

We commit ourselves to submission to one another. Each of us has God-given and communally confirmed leadership roles. We commit ourselves to obedience to our brothers and sisters in these areas.

In all questions of importance, as far as possible, decisions should be made by consensus. If a community leader senses a profound lack of agreement on an important issue, let him reserve judgment and in order to go forward, make a provisional decision, ready to return to it later, for standing still is disobedience for brothers and sisters advancing toward Christ. Those with responsibility for leadership must exercise authority but with humility. If a grave crisis arises in which there is a division of opinion, we will decide only after at least a day of prayer, humbling, and fasting.

Something old, something new

I began to think about a dual-level missionary order, a concept as old as the Franciscans and before. How could we call some to live among the poor, and yet at the same time involve others who loved the poor, but for one reason or another could not pay the price of dwelling among the poor?

Those of the first order are workers living right in among the poor. Those of the second order are people who are giving their lives to serve the poor, while not living among them. We established the next mission, structuring Servants Among the Poor as a religious order with vows of non-destitute poverty that would send North Americans.

The idea for Servants Among the Poor had come to me one night, when I had a vision of twenty people in the slums of Mexico, praying for the sick and preaching. Five weeks later, twenty people were gathered there. Then came several months of beautiful fellowship with Drs. Tom and Betty-Sue Brewster developing the organization. Tom initially gave leadership but passed away when I was in Calcutta. I had to return to the States to restructure Servants and to find ongoing leadership.

Workers on every continent have come out of all of this. Betty-Sue Brewster now teaches a course on “Incarnational Mission and the World’s Urban Poor” at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, along with several language-learning courses. A group of people began a training program by living among the poor in downtown Los Angeles. Their community is known as Cambria Community.

At the same time, Paul Miller, a brilliant and deeply-loved friend, formed Urban Leadership Foundation (formerly Servants International Resources) on my behalf. This was set up so that I could do research and would have an ongoing ministry organization from which to spawn indigenous works. Through this foundation, along with gifts from my New Zealand base, I supported myself while a missionary to the United States. I did not want to use money given for the work, lest I be charged with coming to the States to make a fortune!

This kind of cautiousness grows out of considering the Apostle Paul’s examples of raising and using finances. We built the work on several financial values.

Responsible faith

Jesus taught us not to be anxious about daily necessities, for he will provide if we seek his kingdom (Matthew 6:25-34). We choose to live in this spirit of carefree trust and joy. We expect that as we minister spiritually to others, God will provide for us physically in return (1 Corinthians 9:10-12).

We also recognize that in a twentieth century international context this requires responsible financial structuring by the sending churches and mission agencies through whom much of God's provisions are channeled. In general we trust God alone for our needs, while responsibly and graciously making our needs known to others where appropriate. In order to enter new areas, many will, at times, like Paul, work in secular careers to support themselves.

Finding Jesus in Latin America

The next work was birthed in the tenth city to which God had directed me to intercede. On a hillside near Sao Paulo, in an evening of prayer, it seemed good to ask God to capture the dynamism of the emerging Brazilian mission thrust for the poor of Asia. Under Pastor Waldemar who had planted many poor people's churches, and been central to the formation of another mission, *Servos Entre Os Pobres* emerged, and is now a project of the mission *Kairos* which he directs. This mission now has teams in Lima and Bogota and is presently exploring entrance to two Asian cities.

During the same night of prayer, God also spoke to me about a wonderful Brazilian wife, Ieda, who would be my companion on this journey in him. For many years God had left me single. In an apostolic ministry among the poor, singleness is a gift that may be greatly used. Taking a long look at the history of celibacy in the church, we have encouraged both this and sacrifice in marriage.

Gifts of singleness, sacrifice in marriage

We recognize the importance of family life in the Scriptures, yet, for the sake of the gospel, with an eye single to his glory, and seeking a life of undivided devotion to him, many of us will choose to remain single for some years, being under no compulsion but having our desires under control and not seeking marriage. Christ is our true companion and comfort, who does not weaken human

affection but enables us to love more richly with his love all with whom we come in contact.

Some couples, for love of the poor, may remain childless for a period of time. Yet others will be willing to be separated from loved ones and children for periods of time. We count on the Lord's promise to repay a hundred fold for all such sacrifice and remember always the gift to us that God the Father made of his Son. Couples with children will need to trust God wisely for the well-being of their children.

We recognize these states as gifts from God and look with confidence to him to give the grace needed for this life. In thus accepting the demands of such a life we must ever be on guard against the temptation to self-centeredness, coldness, or a lack of sympathy with the interests of others.

A call to the global Christian community

Our role in each country has been to walk with Jesus, to speak his Word. As his Word creates life, we draw together those called into training cores, find and build a cohesive board, and appoint an ongoing leader.

But the task is far bigger than we can accomplish by setting up new missions. The call of Jesus, the warrior King, now leads us to call, on his behalf, other missions into the battle for the poor. There are missionaries whom we have trained and who have been sent by other agencies with different structures. Invariably, they have been prevented from fulfilling their calling to the poor by the structures themselves. For this reason, I have begged mission leaders to set up alternative orders within their own missions. This was the reason behind writing chapter two of this book.

God is doing this. At Lausanne II in Manila, a gathering of the world's evangelical leaders, God made the urban poor one of the central themes of the congress, despite the fact the organizers did not plan to feature them significantly on the program. The grandi-

ose and possibly God-given plans of a related congress, “Global Consultation on World Evangelization by AD 2000 and Beyond,” do not even mention the urban poor except as part of development and aid programs. But the resulting AD 2000 movement accepted the urban poor as a central component to the development of this movement.

Particularly, at Lausanne II, God spoke through the song of a well-known Filipino song writer, Gary Granada. Gary is a personal friend, and we lived side by side in the slum of Tatalon. In the beautiful poetry of the Philippines and to the lilt of a guitar, his song told of a little squatter home, and asked the question whether it really was a home. The impact on such a grand Congress was to focus its heart towards the poor.

At the same time, missions such as the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) are encouraging workers to minister in the slums. Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (WEC) leaders have talked of it, and will talk of it again. Youth With a Mission (YWAM) has targeted the slums and attempted some works in them. YWAM is increasing its commitment to language and culture learning and to recruit long-term workers committed to church-planting.

Jesus, the integrator of mega-cities

Over a period of time, it has become apparent that the cries of the poor will never be answered unless we undertake battle on behalf of the cities that create their poverty. The next phase in following Jesus is a call to the cities, to pastor the pastors among the poor, to intercede, and to prophesy against those powers that hold the poor enslaved.

Jesus is king over cities, and over principalities and powers, whether they be manifest in economic structures, modernization, political oppression, or government bureaucracy. His name must be declared to those subject to the powers in each of these contexts.

But the primary focus of accomplishing this task cannot be upon Western missions but upon Third World missions. With or without the help of the West, they are going to reach the poor. This is the new direction of mission history.

Consider the 60 mega-cities with over five million people, each containing an average of 500 slums. By the year 2000, if the number of slums doubles as expected (along with prostitution areas, and drug gangs and prisons), and if we plan on two workers living in each area, we will need to see 120,000 workers in place and ministering if the poor of the world are to be reached. Missions from Third World countries to Third World countries will be the catalysts of multiple indigenous ministries.

Thus Urban Leadership Foundation has developed as a networking and training agency in many of these cities. Urban Leadership Foundation is committed to mobilizing and building networks among existing missions and churches by:

1. Catalyzing movements of churches among the poor.
2. Establishing movements of disciples among the elite who can transform the poverty.
3. Bringing spiritual and structural renewal into urban churches so they can reach the poor.
4. Encouraging missions from Third World cities to the poor of other cities.

Jesus, the downwardly mobile

Our personal call from Jesus was to return to the grassroots level in one of the poorest cities of South Asia—Calcutta. We returned with a team of workers to do battle for that city and people. Prophets for a time are found among the leaders of the nations. Then they are found, unknown, among the poor.

Because we initiated the work in Calcutta through much suffering, our board has requested that we return to a central