

# MISSION

on the

# WAY



Issues in Mission Theology

# Charles Van Engen

©1996 by Charles Van Engen

Published by Baker Books  
a division of Baker Book House Company  
P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Van Engen, Charles Edward.

Mission on the way : issues in mission theology / Charles Van Engen.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-8010-2090-5 (pbk.)

1. Missions—Theory. I. Title.

BV2063.E54 1996

266'.001—dc20

96-41593

Unless noted otherwise, all Scripture quotations are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION<sup>®</sup>. NIV<sup>®</sup>. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved. The other versions cited include the King James Version (KJV), the New American Standard Bible (NASB), the New English Bible (NEB), and the Revised Standard Version (RSV).

For information about academic books, resources for Christian leaders, and all new releases available from Baker Book House, visit our web site:

<http://www.bakerbooks.com/>

# 4

## Constructing Mission Theology in the City

*O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." [Luke 13:34–35]*

Were these words of Jesus a sigh of deep pathos, a cry of excruciating agony, or an exasperated pronouncement of judgment? Matthew (23:37–39) places them after the triumphal entry. Closely joined to the seven woes pronounced on the leaders of the Jews,<sup>1</sup> they are an integral part of Matthew's long discourse on eschatological issues related to the end of the age. In Luke, Jesus utters these words when on his way to Jerusalem prior to his triumphal entry (19:28–44); he is responding to warnings that Herod is plotting to kill him.

Whether viewed through the Matthean paradigm or the Lukan,<sup>2</sup> Jesus' cry, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" could be taken as a profound statement (a hermeneutic?) by Jesus concerning God's mission in the city.<sup>3</sup> Among the obvious elements here are the loving commitment of God to be involved with,

1. Note that these woes can in no way be construed as anti-Semitic. To the contrary, they denounce the leaders of the people for having misled the Jewish nation for whom God cares deeply.

2. See Bosch 1991, 56–122.

3. Comparing Babylon and Jerusalem, Greenway 1992 offers a provocative analysis of Jerusalem as an image of urban missiology. Oddly enough, he omits reference to this passage. See also Olley 1990.

and related to, the city; God's initiative in sending (mission) messengers to the city; and Jerusalem's mixed (mostly negative) response to God's love. But the dominant image is one of pained, loving, salvific tenderness: a hen clucking furiously to gather her wayward chicks under her wings.

Though Jerusalem kills the prophets, God does not flee from or give up on Jerusalem. Rather, God sends his Son, who comes as a descendant of King David and "in the name of the Lord." He comes riding on a donkey on his way to the cross and the empty tomb—events that occur in the midst and for the sake of Jerusalem.

In fact, Jesus' entire ministry might be viewed from the perspective of his encounter with Jerusalem. We do not know from his cry over the city whether he is aware of the coming destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. Yet we are assured from the structure of the text in both Matthew and Luke that ultimately, through his death and resurrection, Jesus offers redemption and transformation of the old Jerusalem into the new city of God, referred to later by John in Revelation 21. True to God's form of response throughout the history of Israel, there is always grace in the midst of judgment; in the end, there is a rewriting of the story of Jerusalem. "The last chapter in the Jerusalem story awaits the future. . . . She is called the Holy City and her Bridegroom is the Lamb. Life in the new Jerusalem is peaceful. There are no tears, nor causes for them. Death and mourning are gone, and so are pain and suffering. Best of all, in this city God in Christ dwells forever with his people in perfect relationship. Grace has triumphed and *shalom* is established" (Greenway 1992, 10–11).

When I hear those words of Jesus about Jerusalem, I hear the deep pain of an urban missionary. And it seems to me Jesus is offering some profound theological truths that are simultaneously historical, contextual, relational, and missiological. Is it not possible that these words also constitute a challenge and a call to search anew for a theology of mission for the city? We need to search for what Ian Bunting, a missionary for more than thirty years in the urban areas of northern England, called for: "an integrated method of training [urban missionaries] which can truly be described as global in scope, mission-oriented, and thoroughly contextual." Especially important here is the search for a correlation of reflection with action, of values with programs, of theology with practice:

While there is general agreement on a method of learning theology which involves seeing, judging and acting, there is no such agreement about the way to correlate theology and practice. There is, in fact, a sharp disagreement between those who look for more theoretical or systematic correlations (often the trainers in universities, colleges, and courses) and those who pursue more practical theological correlations (normally to be found in urban training centers and institutes). The issue is as much about where we learn our theology as

how we go about it. There is not much evidence that this divide between the academic and the practical has been bridged by more than a few. [Bunting 1992, 25]

## Why Construct a Theology of Mission for the City?

Many urban missiologists are looking for ways to better build on, and interact with, the literature and programs that deal with urban missiology. Although an impressive quantity of reflective thinking about urban mission has appeared over the last twenty years,<sup>4</sup> many of us are restless to find new ways to integrate those insights with our theology and missiology.

It seems that in urban missiology it has been difficult to deal with the whole system of the city. On the one hand, those involved in microministry deal with individual persons and their needs in the city—but they are often burning out in the process, in part because they are not dealing with the entire system. On the other hand, those who spend much energy doing macrostudies in sociology, anthropology, economics, ethnicity, politics, and religion in the city seldom seem to get down to the level of the streets and the people of the city. Their recommendations for concrete action seem weak, and their activism mostly dulled by the largeness of their scope of investigation. The staggering complexity of an urban metroplex like Los Angeles makes it nearly impossible for the students of the macrostructures to convert their findings into specific, timely, compassionate, personal ministry.

Then, too, many seem to be caught up in one agenda or another. Community organization is an area that needs further reflection and action by the church in the city, an emphasis that Robert Linthicum has called for.<sup>5</sup> William Pannell (1992, 6–22) points out that mass evangelism has too often been blind to the systemic issues of the city and has seldom sought the more radical, wholistic transformation of the cities in which its evangelistic enterprises occur. John McKnight (1989, 38, 40) highlights this tension:

4. E.g., Cone 1991; Felder 1989; Steele 1990; Linthicum 1991a; 1991b; Bakke 1987; Tonna 1985; Rose and Hadaway 1984; Frenchak and Keyes 1979; Frenchak and Stockwell 1984; Grigg 1984; 1992; Conn 1987; Greenway and Monsma 1989; Greenway 1973; 1976; 1978; 1979; 1992; Claerbaut 1983; Gmelch and Zenner 1988; Garreau 1991; Michael Peter Smith 1988; Recinos 1989; Elijah Anderson 1990; Whyte 1989; Gulick 1989; Pannell 1992; Sample 1984; 1990; Meyers 1992; among related works are Cox 1965; 1984; Ellul 1970a; DuBose 1978; Sheppard 1974; Schaller 1987; and Elliston 1992.

5. Linthicum 1991b, 109, says, "Participation in community organization provides the church with the most biblically directed and most effective means for bringing about the transformation of a community—through the assumption of responsibility by the community's residents to solve corporately their own problems." For a number of years Alfred Krass (1978) has voiced this concern as well, apparently wanting to keep evangelism, mission, community organization, and urban missiology together in a more integrated fashion. See also Messer 1992.

When I'm around church people, I always check whether they are misled by the modern secular vision. Have they substituted the vision of service for the only thing that will make people whole—community? Are they service peddlers or community builders? Peddling services is unchristian—even if you're hell-bent on helping people. Peddling services instead of building communities is the one way you can be sure not to help. . . . Service systems teach people that their value lies in their deficiencies. They are built on “inadequacies” called illiteracy, visual deficit, and teenage pregnancy. But communities are built on the *capacities* of drop-out, illiterate, bad-scene, teenage-pregnant, battered women. . . . If the church is about community—not service—it's about capacity not deficiency.

In addition, while there is increasing interest in planting and growing house churches in the city,<sup>6</sup> too few of them seem to have a strong missional intention to be God's agents of the transformation of the city itself.

Although generalizations like these are dangerous, the overall impression is that deficiencies are pervasive. At one end of the spectrum, many social service agencies give assistance to individuals but have little regard to the systems of the city (much less to gathering people into worshiping congregations). At the other end, many evangelistic, church-planting efforts do not deal with the entire scope of evil in the city. We see activists who seldom stop to do the broader reflection, and reflective investigators who do not often get around to doing anything to change the reality of the city they are studying.

Meanwhile, urban churches continue to struggle to find how to be viable missional communities of faith in the city. For the church of Jesus Christ, life and ministry in the city involve profound tensions. The church is not a social agency—but is of social significance in the city. The church is not city government—but is called to announce and live out the kingdom of God in all its political significance. The church is not a bank—but is an economic force in the city and is to seek the economic welfare of the city. The church is not a school—but is called to educate the people of the city concerning the gospel of love, justice, and social transformation. The church is not a family—but is the family of God, called to be a neighbor to all of those whom God loves. The church is not a building—but needs buildings and owns buildings to carry out its ministry. The church is not exclusive, not unique—but is spe-

6. See, e.g., Sheppard 1974; Neighbour 1990; Birkey 1988; Hadaway et al. 1987; Lois Barrett 1986; Lee and Cowan 1986; Banks and Banks 1989; and John Noble 1988. It would be interesting to study the base ecclesial community movements in Latin America as possibly a new form of the church in an urban setting—but that is outside the scope of this book. The astounding multiplicity of small Pentecostal storefront churches found in cities all over the world is another well-known phenomenon that has received too little attention from those who study the ministry of the church in the city. The megachurches that arose all over the world during the 1980s might have offered themselves as another new model for the church in the city—except for the fact that few of them have shown any intention to contribute to the wholistic transformation of the cities in which they are found.

cially called by God to be different in the way it serves the city. The church is not an institution—but needs institutional structures to effect changes in the lives of people and society. The church is not a community-development organization—but the development of community is essential to the church's nature.

We need to search for a theology of mission that will give us new eyes for perceiving our city, inform our activism, guide our networking, and energize our hope for the transformation of our city.

## How May We Construct a Theology of Mission for the City?

The remainder of this chapter presents a brief summary of steps found to be helpful in constructing a theology of mission for the city. The reader will notice a dependence on the three-arena approach to missiology, the use of narrative, and a missiological approach to Scripture—topics developed earlier in this book. Clearly, the methodology followed here is not the only way to proceed. Neither do its steps represent the last word on this matter. This section will merely highlight the broad outline, leaving it for readers to envision the way the process might take shape in their context. A most significant discovery has been that the manner in which the process applies to each given urban context is *itself contextual*. In other words, not only the content, but also the method itself must be transformed to fit critically and appropriately the particular issues, style, agendas, and themes arising in each context.

### Approaching the City

As can be seen from figure 20, our method for constructing a theology of mission for the city involves walking through the three multi- and interdisciplinary circles we saw earlier—and adapting for a particular urban context what we have learned from and about each of them. Thus the first step in our process is to be self-conscious and self-critical in approaching the city.

We begin by setting the stage, asking about the perceptions, images, and lenses that we use to exegete the city. Some (primarily in the United States) would view the city as a series of concentric circles, a perspective that gave rise to terms like “inner city” and “suburb.” Others (primarily Europeans) might see the city in terms of “old town” and “new town.” Persons from the Third World see the city as a central business district with surrounding *barrios*, or *favelas*, “districts,” “cantonments,” or “slums.” The city might also be viewed as a network of extended-family relationships, or as a compilation of ethnic subsystems. City planners see streets and buildings, politicians see voters, the police see violence, the educators see schools, bankers and economists see businesses, and commuters see traffic. The media see through

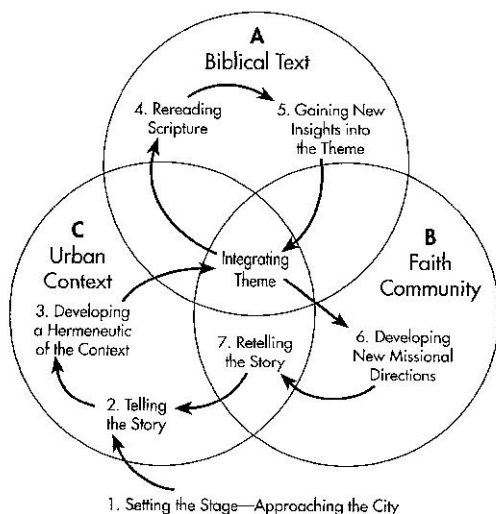


Figure 20  
**Methodological Components of a Biblical  
 Theology of Mission in the City**

a narrow, selective, and restricted lens, looking for sensational stories that will sell.<sup>7</sup>

Still others look at the city through the grid of spiritual warfare and see good and evil forces battling for the allegiance of the people and the structures of the city. All of us “see through a glass, darkly” (1 Cor. 13:12 KJV). All of us are insightful in what we see, and blind in what we miss. Yet a full-fledged theology of mission for the city will call us to look past the limits of our peripheral vision to gain some understanding of the complexity of systems and subsystems (interlocking and independent) that make up the urban metropolis.

A useful image here is a rose. Each petal (subsystem) is different from the others, yet interconnected with them. A petal alone does not make a rose. Yet the rose cannot exist except as the sum total of its petals. At the same time, the rose draws from a whole system of supports involving the rose bush, just as a city draws from a host of supporting cultural, geographic, national, global, and historical elements that help sustain it. Like the rose, the city also has intangible elements of beauty and smell that cannot be specifically identified with any given petal—it is the interweaving of the various petals that gives each city its unique flavor. Also like the rose, the city is full of thorns

7. It is a generally held opinion that the media significantly contributed to making the Los Angeles riots of 1992 worse than they would otherwise have been. The irresponsible television coverage almost invited additional looting and rioting.



and must be handled carefully and gingerly. Finally, the city is similar to the rose in its fragility. Cut the rose and it wilts quickly. Likewise the city. Life in the city is fragile, death is often too near.<sup>8</sup>

Thus the first step in our method involves a commitment to view the city systemically, wholistically, and critically while we search for biblical values and insights that may inform our life and ministry there. This in turn forces us to be willing to maintain touch with the complexity of the whole, while at the same time we keep our feet grounded in the specificity of the here and now of persons living in the city. A good way to do this is to begin on the sidewalks of our cities by telling a story.

## The Story

The second step involves standing in circle C (the urban context) and relating not just any anecdote or historical moment, but a specific kind of story. This method draws somewhat from the anthropological technique of participant observation, as well as from the case study approach of sociology and counseling. However, since ours is a specifically theological task, our stories will most fruitfully borrow from the insights of narrative theology. Although narrative theology has typically been associated with a rather recent hermeneutical development in the way scholars approach the Bible, the method itself contributes powerfully to seeing the macroissues of the city through the microconcerns of persons.<sup>9</sup>

Narrative theology is a method that goes beyond the purely historical, sequential retelling of an episode. At the same time it is necessary, at the other end of the spectrum, to stop short of a totally subjective approach that would ascribe to the event whatever meaning one feels led to give it. Rather, we are searching for particularly appropriate stories that will serve as specific time-and-place windows to larger macrostructural issues. As the stories are seen within the social, cultural, religious, relational, and personal context of the original urban setting, their meanings will illuminate our understanding of missiological praxis in the city.

The selection of the stories is a critical step in the reflective process, for we want to focus on narratives that are in some way representative of our ministries, central to our contexts, and rich in hermeneutical meaning for a deeper understanding of the cities in which they happen. When the story is

8. At Lausanne II in Manila in 1989, Fletcher Tink offered a "jungle-profile" view of the city that many found helpful. Among the many aspects of a primeval jungle that are analogous to modern cities are its subterranean life, surface life, its small plants, lower canopy, middle canopy, and upper canopy, its diurnal and nocturnal variations, and its ecological symbiotic systems.

9. For a discussion of this hermeneutical approach from a number of differing perspectives, see, e.g., Comstock 1987; Duke 1986; Fackre 1983; Goldberg 1981; Grimes 1986; Gunn 1987; Tracy 1988; Hauerwas and Jones 1989; Lauritzen 1987; Long 1987; MacIntyre 1989b; Moberly 1986; Mueller-Vollmer 1989; Muller 1991; and Osborne 1991.

appropriate, it naturally leads us to broaden our perspectives, to see through it like a window that looks out beyond the particularity of the event and helps us better understand the third step in the process: developing a hermeneutic of the context.

### A Hermeneutic of the Context

The third step of the process involves listening with new ears, seeing with new eyes, allowing the imagination to be impacted by the city in ways it may not have been previously—thus yielding a new hermeneutic of the city. This use of the word *hermeneutic* does not refer to deriving the meaning from a text of Scripture.<sup>10</sup> Neither does it refer to reading the signs of the times,<sup>11</sup> as was common in the missiology of the World Council of Churches of the 1960s and early 1970s, when there was talk of letting the world set the agenda. Rather, this type of hermeneutic involves rereading the urban context in terms of the symbols, meanings, and perspectives that have been there but to which we may have previously been blind.<sup>12</sup> Probably the best methodological treatment of this type of hermeneutic is found in Juan Luís Segundo's *Liberation of Theology* (1976). Although I would not espouse the way Latin American liberation theologians have reduced their hermeneutical method to narrow socioeconomic and political agendas, yet the process which Segundo describes seems to help us reflect on the new reality facing us in today's cities (see pp. 38–39).

### Rereading Scripture

The third step leads naturally into the fourth. Having looked at the urban context with new suspicions, new questions, and new eyes, we raise our sight and find that we now have new questions to bring to Scripture as well. The reader will see in figure 20 that the movement from step 3 to step 4 is by way of an integrating theme that constitutes the central idea interfacing all three circles. Because of the complexity of the inter- and multidisciplinary task, the mission theologian in the city must focus on a specific integrating idea that can serve as the hub through which to approach a rereading of Scripture. Clearly we try to avoid bringing our own agendas to Scripture and superimposing them on it. This was the mistake made by liberation theologians,

10. See, e.g., Luke 4:14–30; 24:27, 45; Acts 2:14–39; 8:30–31; and 15 as New Testament illustrations of this type of hermeneutic with regard to the Old Testament. Paul's writings, Hebrews, and 1 Peter are also excellent places to investigate.

11. See, e.g., Matt. 16:1–4.

12. Examples of this can be found in Num. 13 and Deut. 1 (the differing reports of the spies regarding Canaan), Ps. 137:1 and Dan. 1:19–21 (the differing attitudes to being exiles in Babylon), and John 1:36 and 4:35 (the differing perceptions that John and Jesus had as compared to those around them).

from which they have not recovered. Rather, we must find a way to bring a new set of questions to the text, questions that might help us see in the Scriptures what we have missed before. This new approach to Scripture is what David Bosch (1991, 20–24) called “critical hermeneutics.”

### New Insights into the Theme

As we reread Scripture, we are faced with new insights, new values, and new priorities that call us to reexamine the motivations, means, agents, and goals of our urban missiology. This in turn will call for rethinking each one of the traditional theological loci. Thus we will be involved in a contextual rereading of Scripture to discover anew what it means to know God in the city. The issues of creation and chaos, revelation, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and eschatology, for example, take on quite significantly unique hues when colored by the reality that faces us in the urban context. Robert McAfee Brown calls this type of reflection *Theology in a New Key* (1978) and *Unexpected News* (1984). In Latin American theology, this theological process has focused especially on issues of Christology and ecclesiology. In the city we need to allow our rereading to offer us new insights into the scope and content of our missiology, insights derived from a profound rethinking of all the traditional theological loci.<sup>13</sup>

### New Missiological Directions

The next step, developing new missional directions, involves a movement from circle A to circle B. Because of the complex nature of the enterprise, it seems best in this step to focus again on the integrating theme, which can help hold the various ideas together.

How do we go about coming up with new directions? Relevant here is a lengthy 1987 discussion by the Association of Professors of Mission as to what missiology is and how it does its reflection:

The mission theologian does biblical and systematic theology differently from the biblical scholar or dogmatist in that the mission theologian is in search of the “habitus,” the way of perceiving, the intellectual understanding coupled with spiritual insight and wisdom, which leads to seeing the signs of the presence and movement of God in history, and through his church in such a way as to be affected spiritually and motivationally and thus be committed to personal participation in that movement. . . .

Such a search for the “why” of mission forces the mission theologian to seek to articulate the vital integrative center of mission today. . . . Each formulation of the “center” has radical implications for each of the cognate disciplines of the social sciences, the study of religions, and church history in the way they

13. Conn 1993a, 102–3, gives a summary form of this process.

are corrected and shaped theologically. Each formulation supports or calls into question different aspects of all the other disciplines. . . . The center, therefore, serves as both theological content and theological process as a disciplined reflection on God's mission in human contexts. The role of the theologian of mission is therefore to articulate and "guard" the center, while at the same time to spell out integratively the implications of the center for all the other cognate disciplines. [Van Engen 1987, 524-25]

Conceptually we are involved here in something that philosophy of science has called paradigm construction or paradigm shift.<sup>14</sup> We know that paradigm shift is normally understood (especially in philosophy of science) as a corporate phenomenon that occurs over a rather long period of time and involves the reflective community's interacting with a particular issue. However, David Bosch has initiated many of us into seeing paradigm formation as a powerful way of helping us reconceptualize our mission with reference to specific communities in specific contexts. In these terms a paradigm becomes "a conceptual tool used to perceive reality and order that perception in an understandable, explainable, and somewhat predictable pattern" (Van Engen 1992b, 53). It is "an entire constellation of beliefs, values and techniques . . . shared by the members of a given community" (Küng and Tracy 1989, 441-42). Thus a paradigm consists of "the total composite set of values, worldview, priorities, and knowledge which makes a person, a group of persons, or a culture look at reality in a certain way. A paradigm is a tool of observation, understanding and explanation" (Van Engen 1992b, 53). In formulating our paradigm for urban mission we take the new insights gained from rereading Scripture and through the focusing mediation of the integrating theme restate them as contextually appropriate missional orientations of the church in the city.

A number of people have sought to describe the various possible missional orientations of the church. David Moberg (1962), for example, analyzed the impact of the church as a social institution. Lesslie Newbigin, on the other hand, has spoken of the congregation as "a hermeneutic of the gospel," meaning that persons and institutions in the surrounding contextual environment read the gospel through the mediation of the local church: "I confess that I have come to feel that the primary reality of which we have to take account in seeking for a Christian impact on public life is the Christian congregation" (Newbigin 1989a, 227).<sup>15</sup>

14. See, e.g., Hempel 1965; 1966; Toulmin 1961; 1972; Barbour 1974; 1990; Kuhn 1962; 1977; Fetzer 1992a, 147-78; 1992b; Küng and Tracy 1989, 3-33; and Bosch 1991, 349-62.

15. The last chapter of Newbigin's *Gospel in a Pluralist Society* contains some fascinating beginning points for a new reflection on what it could mean for the church to be intentional about its missiological orientation to the city. Newbigin highlights the local congregation as (1) a community of praise, (2) a community of truth, (3) deeply involved in the concerns of its neighborhood, (4) prepared for and sustained in the exercise of priesthood for the world, (5) a community of mutual responsibility, and (6) a community of hope.

One of the most creative ways to approach this matter was developed by David Roozen, William McKinney, and Jackson Carroll in their study of the *Varieties of Religious Presence* (1984). Their case studies of ten different congregations in Hartford, Connecticut, revealed four different types of mission orientation: (1) the congregation as activist; (2) the congregation as citizen; (3) the congregation as sanctuary; and (4) the congregation as evangelist. Clearly these four characterizations do not exhaust the various missional dimensions, intentions, and relations of the communities of faith (the church) with the city. However, it might be interesting for readers to examine their own faith communities to discover how many congregations and missional situations can in fact be encapsulated within each one of these four missional orientations.

### Retelling the Story

The final, but at the same time initial, step in the process involves suggestions for contextually appropriate, biblically informed missional action. This step is called "Retelling the Story," because it brings us back to the here and now of the person on the sidewalks of our cities and asks very specifically about the actions that need to be taken within and without the faith community to respond to the initial situation faced.

Here we find ourselves on the middle ground between biblically informed missiological theory and contextually appropriate missiological action. As we saw in the introduction (p. 26), one of the most helpful ways to interface reflection and action is through the process known as praxis. In *The Praxis of Pentecost* (1991), Ray Anderson presents the concept of praxis through a reflection on Jesus' ministry and specifically the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11). On the basis of this story, Anderson offers a hermeneutic of Jesus' ministry as "a paradigm of Christopraxis" (1991, 48). Anderson then goes on to speak of Christ's "praxis of liberation," "praxis of sanctification," and "praxis of empowerment" (1991, 49-62).

In praxis, not only the reflection, but profoundly the action becomes part of a theology-on-the-way that seeks to discover how the church may participate in God's mission in the city. To reiterate what was said in the introduction: The action is itself theological, and serves to inform the reflection, which in turn interprets, evaluates, critiques, and projects new understanding in transformed action. Thus the interweaving of reflection and action in a constantly spiraling pilgrimage offers a transformation of all aspects of our missiological engagement with the city. This leads us back to a faith commitment, a loving engagement, and a hopeful visioning of ways in which we pray the story might be retold. Thus we return to where we began, and we boldly proclaim the retelling of the story.

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!

“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with [people], and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God’ (Rev. 21:2–4).