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Preaching to the Streets – Homiletics for Urban Ministry

Reginald Smith PhD

Roosevelt Park Community Church

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Preaching to the Streets – Homiletics for Urban Ministry

Dr. Reginald Smith

Calvin Worship Symposium Workshop A22

January 29 and 30, 2016

Description of Workshop: How could the Bible speak to the hopes and fears of urban people who don't know anything about the Christian life? The workshop will provide biblical principles and case studies to assist your preaching to people who struggle with the ancient text and with struggles of life.

Preaching To the Streets:

Life in 2016:

_____ isn't necessary to have a family
People are more _____ intentionally. Watching media alone is the _____, not the exception.

Meanness is out, compassion is in.

The selfie is the current means of getting _____.

_____ isn't a main player in the culture, but rather on the _____.

Connecting to something _____ than oneself is the challenge of the church now

Demographics of the Urban Scene:

Los Angeles is the 2nd largest Iranian city in the world.

Chicago has more Poles than San Francisco has people.

One-third of the world's Jews live in the United States.

There are more Buddhists than Episcopalians in the United States.

In California, 239 languages are spoken; in New York, 184; in Washington 181; in Texas, 169.

More than 400,000 international students from 181 countries study at American universities.

Urban areas are forecast to grow from 1.2 B in 1990 to 4.2 B in 2025. The growth of some urban areas can exceed that of entire countries, which is why cities really matter. Mid size cities where the next wave of growth is coming (Harvard Business Review, July 16, 2012)

Context of Urban Ministry:

What are the 5 most important buildings in our culture:

Context of Urban Ministry:

“The ultimate purpose of the city, whatever its form, was to be God’s righteousness fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ _____, not the works of the law, was to mark our path through the cities of the world.”

(Harvie Conn & Manny Ortiz, “Urban Ministry” p.43)

“Israel’s missiological task would be to engage in a unique way. In the grip of the centripetal force of God’s glory manifest in Jerusalem, the people of the earth would _____ to the holy city. Life in the cities of the ancient Near East provided joy of the whole earth”

(Harvie Conn & Manny Ortiz, “Urban Ministry” p.91)

“That _____ was to make no economic or class distinctions. The urban world of promised inheritance that the Israelites entered would be a world of haves and have nots...ethnic divisions of insider and outsider/stranger...By contrast, Israel’s formation in covenant was to create no such un-breachable barriers for the expression of righteousness and justice and compassion. Any gulf between insider and alien outsider was _____”(Conn & Ortiz, Urban Ministry, p. 99)

Exegeting Your Community:

“The exegesis of the community can pay big dividends to all ministers and missionaries...to the community residents...to God. To ‘exegete’ literally means ‘to lead out’, to work toward understanding...No matter how adept an exegete is, it is all for naught if her or she does not also understand his or her contemporary audience.” (John Fuder and Noel Castellanos, “A Heart for the Community”, p.70)

Exegeting the Bible:

“Scripture leads to three things in sustaining the weary:

1. To produce God’s _____
2. To _____ God’s will do a new thing in the world
3. To bear _____ against despair (Duke Divinity preaching professor Richard Lischer, Lecture at Calvin Seminary, October 29, 2009)

Diagnostic Questions:

Biblical Case Studies:

Cain and Abel story (Genesis 4)

A city gone wrong (Genesis 11)

Isaiah's Vision (Isaiah 44)

Jeremiah's letter to the exiles (Jeremiah 29)

John 3:1-21 – Nicodemus

John 4:1-43 – the Samaritan woman

The birth of the church (Acts 2:1-13)

Apostle Paul's experiences in Corinth (1 & 2)