

Topic: From Jerusalem to New York – Urban Missions, Rev Teresa Wilborn

Text: Acts 1:8

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
(NIV)

Introduction: Witnessing in the urban context of the 21st century

Urbanization is the migration from rural to urban areas for education and employment. By 2050, 70% of the world’s population will live in urban areas. More than half of this urban population will reside in Asia.

Negative effects of urbanization

- Stress on the physical environment: Overcrowding, substandard housing, water/air/noise pollution
- Stress on the family: family fragmentation, greater exposure to vice

Outcome of urbanization: slums

- Consist of poorly constructed ramshackle structures (potential fire/flooding hazard)
- Insufficient living space
- No/Limited access to clean water
- Lack of sanitary facilities
- Residents are usually illegal immigrants and can be evicted without notice

Slum dwellers often have to make hard choices on how to utilize and allocate scarce resources.

Implications of urbanization for missions

- Meeting people where they are (slums, homeless)
- Meeting the needs of people (eg. business acumen - Bamboo Foundation; education- Hope House/Prek Omperl Methodist Church)

What does Acts 1:8 mean for us today?

- Every believer is a missionary. We are to be the hands and feet of Christ wherever we are.
- God will use our unique experiences and backgrounds for His work but He can only use us if we make ourselves available.
- Urbanization brings many challenges, but also many opportunities/avenues for ministry.