

Impacting Chicago Through the Nazarene Church– The Chicago Thrust

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During the General Assembly in Anaheim in 1985, the Division of Church Growth for the Church of the Nazarene under the direction of Dr. Bill Sullivan unveiled a denominational plan to enter 10 world class cities in the next ten years. The first city chosen for this urban thrust has been Chicago. Since that moment the Chicago Central District under the leadership of District Superintendent Keith Bottles had been mobilizing its resources to develop a thrust into Chicago for the next five years at the minimum.

The existing churches in Chicago include two black churches, one white, one Cambodian, one Hispanic, two Korean, one Indian, and one Arabian. The white church is the only church that has remained in the city over the years. There are numerous suburban churches around the city that were in the city at one time.

The following pages are designed to show how Chicago Central District has developed its thrust into the city.

Objectives

1. To glorify God in the city of Chicago through the efforts of the Church of the Nazarene.
2. To make the greatest possible impact for Christ in the city of Chicago through the concentration and direction of the resources of the Church of the Nazarene upon this key city for a period of five years, with special emphasis in the year of 1986.
3. To plant at least fifteen new congregations within Chicago's city limits through the efforts of volunteer, bi-vocational church planters. It should be understood that these 15 groups would not be full-grown at the end of one year, but that the final objective would be the formation of organized churches. Hopefully, the initial thrust of planting congregations would continue, not only in the first year (1986) but will include the continual and ongoing establishment of new churches in Chicago.
4. To provide for the care of the total man, and to utilize the great diversity of the Nazarene volunteer talent in the accomplishment of this goal. There is a great need throughout the city and especially the inner city, for health training, food and clothing distribution, counseling, legal services, employment opportunities, E.S.L. training, and G.E.D. training. Some or all of these needs could be supplied through centers established especially to supply these needs and to serve as a means of evangelistic outreach to the city.
5. To provide a base for the ongoing utilization of Nazarene talent, not only in evangelism, but in social involvement; not only in social involvement but in evangelism.
6. Strengthen existing churches.

Some Basic Presumptions

1. It is important that proper recognition and credit be given to the ministry that had been done in the city and is presently being done. To act as if what we are doing in the impacting of Chicago in 1986 is the beginning of impacting the city, without taking into consideration what has already been done, is to cut ourselves off from a great deal of expertise in the area of urban ministries, and to alienate the present programs from future impact. There is nothing more discouraging to the urban minister than to feel that there is not real understanding of that which has been accomplished through previous sacrifice and ministry.
2. It should be considered basic that any plans which are made for impacting Chicago be primarily evangelistic in nature, with the express goals of winning people to Christ and establishing local congregations of the Church of the Nazarene.
3. It must be recognized that any program to reach Chicago, while evangelistic in nature, must be at the same time minister to the whole person. Because of the great needs in the areas of hunger unemployment, etc., some form of service that speaks to these needs will probably be necessary, as well as desirable.
4. That investment of our finances and time be primarily in people, not buildings. It is true that some physical presence in the form of buildings. It is true that some physical presence in the form of buildings is necessary, but acquiring and maintaining a physical structure should not be our primary goal.
5. That in order to really impact Chicago, we must plan not for just a "one-time shot", but make provisions in our planning for a continual long-term ministry.
6. It must be recognized that those with the greatest needs often have the least amount of resources to meet these needs. Therefore, there needs to be some consideration for those churches in the inner city in the areas of budgets and personnel.
7. That although finances will be limited, the General Church must recognize that any kind of lasting effectiveness in reaching Chicago will require an adequate investment. The productivity of the harvest is always directly related to the amount of seed sown.

The Plan

A Three-Phased Approach To Reaching Chicago For Christ

Phase One — Preparation

In order to adequately impact Chicago for Christ, careful preparation and laying of plans is of utmost importance. Our success will probably be in direct proportion to our planning and preparation for the task. Therefore, the first step of the plan is to suggest at least four possible steps in the preparation phase:

1. Make an in-depth study of the cultural and sociological composition of Chicago by the organization of Nazarene sociologists. The purpose of this study would be to select key areas and key cultures which could serve as the basis for placing church planters in strategic areas among selected cultural groups. In all probability there is sufficient existing information, but

there is a need to locate this information and to gather it into a readily available form for our use. Some objectives of such a study would be to discover:

- a. The areas of concentration of specific cultural/ethnic groups within the Chicago area.
- b. The numerical sizes of such cultural/ethnic groups.
- c. An analysis of the receptivity to the gospel of such cultural/ethnic groups and their receptivity to the Church of the Nazarene.
- d. An analysis of the needs of the above mentioned groups, especially those needs which could be critical to reaching their members for Christ and establishing Nazarene congregations among them.
- e. An analysis of racism in Chicago as a factor in the formulation of an urban strategy.

2. Target specific areas and/or specific cultures, based on the sociological data provided.

These target areas would serve as the basis for placing volunteer church planters, and for the selection of high priority areas for the establishment of Nazarene congregations.

3. Select one to three locations in which we could purchase facilities to be used as centers for providing for ministries to felt needs of the community and church in which that center is located. These facilities could include such buildings as warehouses, apartment buildings, vacant supermarkets, etc. After being renovated through the use of Work and Witness teams, these buildings could provide such services as would be determined important to the felt needs of that community. Some such felt need suggested by inner-city pastors are:

- a. Temporary emergency shelter care. This is especially important for the housing of groups who come to work in the city. It would also provide more privacy in the parsonage home.
- b. Professional family counseling.
- c. Job retraining.
- d. Referral services.
- e. Extension classes.

These centers would be staffed by Nazarene volunteers who would be willing to give short-term missionary service (two weeks, a month, a summer, a sabbatical, one year, etc.). The centers would serve as support ministries for existing Nazarene churches in Chicago, and for support to the new works being established. They would be strategically located so that people in need from any of the local congregations could be referred to a nearby center. This would also relieve the heavy burden from the inner-city pastors, who by their position as leaders in needy areas must either ignore such needs, or try to run a relatively small, and possibly ineffective center through the local church. As biblical support for this type of endeavor, Acts 6:1-7 speaks to the issue. In that passage the Apostles set up the office of deacon, and seven laymen were selected to provide for the physical needs all about them. This was done because, "It would not be right for us (the Apostles) to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait on tables (Acts 6:2)

These centers would not need to be only places set up to meet social needs, but also could serve in part as the facilities for a local congregation.

4. Bring in a volunteer couple to co-ordinate and direct Work and Witness teams. These teams would renovate the three centers mentioned above, as well as help in the renovation or construction of church facilities for new and existing congregations in the city.

5. Establish a support structure for those involved in urban ministries. Some suggested areas where an organized support structure could be of vital help would be:

- a. Orientation for new urban workers.
- b. A monthly fellowship for urban ministers.
- c. A plan of "adopted missionaries", providing box work remembrance of urban missionaries on their birthdays, etc.
- d. Continuing education opportunities for urban ministers.
- e. Recognition of urban ministers as missionaries in the district missionary convention. Also the use of urban ministers as missionary speakers at district and local conventions.
- f. Counseling for urban ministers in the areas of culture shock, burnout, frustrations, and fears unique to urban settings, etc.
- g. A newsletter for urban ministers.
- h. Family picnics and activities for those working in the city.
- i. Dental and medical care for the urban minister's family.

6. Have a speaker from Chicago visit all our college chapels presenting the need and the challenge of Chicago and recruiting graduating volunteers to serve on church planting teams in Chicago.

Phase Two-- The Thrust

1. Put out a call through Nazarene periodicals, and other means of communication, for at least fifteen Nazarene couples who would serve as volunteer, bi-vocational, church planters. These couples ideally would be of the cultural groups which we desire to reach. In other words, as much as possible, try to have Chinese church planters reaching Chinese, Blacks reaching Blacks, East Indians reaching East Indians, etc.

The volunteers would then move to Chicago, locating in their target area, and begin steps to minister to the people of that area and to their designated cultural group. This through an evangelistic campaign, or any number of other methods-- methods that might differ with each culture or in each situation.

2. Wherever possible these volunteer, bi-vocational, church planters will be assisted by teams of bi-vocational volunteers recruited especially from our Nazarene colleges. It is felt that one of the greatest resources at our disposal are the vast number of young people in our colleges who would like to have a vital part in working in the inner city. Such a team effort can also have the vital effect of encouraging one another in times of problems and discouragement.

3. Bring in Work and Witness teams to renovate the three facilities selected as human resource centers. The direction and coordination of these teams would be the responsibility of the Work and Witness Co-ordinator mentioned above. Teams could also be used in the

construction and/or renovation of facilities to serve as churches for the new and existing congregations as the need develops.

4. Put out a call for volunteer personnel to staff the three human resource centers. This group could include a large spectrum of professions: doctors, lawyers, dentists, counselors, administrators, teachers, retired ministers, and missionaries, etc. This type of program could serve as an attractive option for:

- a. Recent college graduates who would like to make an impact for Christ and the church although not called to full-time Christian service.
- b. Nazarene professionals who would like to take time off from their own practice to help in short-term service.
- c. Retirees who although they are no longer working a full-time job, are in good physical health and would like to contribute something more to the Kingdom.

5. Designate a denominational-wide day of prayer and fasting for Chicago. It must be recognized that all of our plans will have no real impact on Chicago unless those plans are backed up and saturated with a mighty flood of prayer for the City.

6. Designate a denominational-wide offering for Chicago. If each church would take an offering on a designated Sunday to be used especially in the work of Chicago, our financial resources would be sufficient for a great thrust. Such an offering as that raised for the opening of Venezuela could be taken each year and be designated for the thrust city chosen for that year.

7. Seek outside help for funding the above-mentioned projects. Appeals should be made to Compassion, to the Church Growth Division, and to other Nazarene agencies that can help. But there are also many corporations and special grants that can be utilized at this point. Some organized effort should be made to locate and appeal to such groups.

Phase Three-- Long Term Provisions

To merely plan a thrust such as is mentioned above, without some provisions to continue after the initial thrust will definitely limit any real effectiveness. Therefore, there should be some consideration of the following:

1. Set up a program and make provisions for a continual, on-going maintenance of the programs in the three centers for human resources.
2. Make plans for a long-range program of strengthening newly established congregations, and for additional church planting of new groups.
3. Seek ways to continue the involvement of concerned businessmen and seek to strengthen the ongoing financial base.

The objectives, suppositions, and plan can be summarized in a three-pronged program, namely; church planting, human resource centers, and strengthening existing works in the city.

If an individual is interested in ministering in Chicago he or she can participate in one or more of these three areas.

In order to organize the work of the thrust, eight task forces were mobilized to study the specific areas of the operation. The task forces are:

- a. Targeting
- b. Property and Buildings
- c. Program and Ministry Development
- d. Personnel and Recruitment
- e. Nurture and Follow-up
- f. Public Relations and Media
- g. Fund Raising
- h. Finance

The parameters of each task force are gleaned from the three-phased approach.

Where The Project is Today

1. Finance - The General Church has committed funds from the following sources:

- a. \$100,000 from larger churches in the denomination.
- b. \$50,000 from Hunger and Disaster Fund (to be used only for human needs).
- c. \$50,000 from field budget for multi-cultural ministries.
- d. \$30,000 from VBS missions project (Phil Riley).
- e. \$100,000 from General Board allocation.
- f. \$100,000 from other sources, such as; Alabaster, 10% giving, special offerings.
- g. Budget is in place and being followed.

2. Target Areas

- a. Three predominantly black areas have been chosen.
- b. Three predominantly white areas have been chosen.

3. Personnel

- a. Rev. Tim Trilby has been appointed Administrative Assistant and is on the job.
- b. Bi-vocational workers are being contacted to be located in targeted areas that have been selected.
- c. Rev. Charles Johnson and his church planting team will make four visits to Chicago to hold church planting campaigns.
- d. A regional church planting team made up of people from the Olivet region is being formed and will be trained by the Johnson team to follow-up and eventually plant new churches.

4. Building and Properties

- a. An office has been secured.
- b. The committee is exploring properties suitable for holding services.
- c. Work has been done on churches already in existence.

5. Public Relations and Media

- a. Articles have appeared in church periodicals.
- b. TV and radio outlets have been contacted and plan to give coverage of the work
- c. The pastors of large churches have visited the city.
- d. "Showers of Blessing-Master Plan" has been funded by the Chicago churches.
- e. A packet to recruit workers is in the making.
- f. Other packets are being developed for recruiting workers, and media.
- g. A multi-media presentation is being created by Church Growth.

6. Nurture and Follow-up

- a. Materials are being prepared to welcome new people.
- b. Long-range nurturing activities are being planned.

7. Prayer

- a. Three prayer breakfasts have been held on the district; more than 500 people have attended these meetings.
- b. Small groups are being formed in churches to pray for the project.

Conclusion:

With the help of Dr. Sullivan and the Church Growth Division and Mike Estep, liaison for Church Growth, we are optimistic about the timing, planning, leadership, financing, personnel and other strategies that are being set in place for a prolonged effort in Chicago.