



The Big Idea of This Series

Main idea –

American churches at this time should be benefactor communities - “seeking the welfare of the city” - with a storehouse of resources that is overflowing, instead of always trying to make their own budgets. Yet this requires a deep understanding of the centrality of the church in God’s economy. An understanding that affects dramatically our time, talents and resources.

SEEK THE WELFARE OF THE CITY



The Big Idea of This Series

Jeremiah 29:7 – seek welfare of city

4 “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, ‘Build houses and live *in them*; and plant gardens, and eat their produce. 6 ‘Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease. 7 ‘And seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.’

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Core Ideas of Series

Core Ideas

- The church is to be a benefactor community
- Our enormous wealth ought to translate in our churches being a great source of community good
- Money is mistaught, undertaught, misunderstood and misused
- Mission enterprise needs to rethink its entire approach to raising and dispersing funds

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Understanding The Process



Don Browning

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Basic Ideas – Doing Good

Doing good (a
disciplined lifestyle)



Giving an answer



Being observed and
being asked



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Big Ideas: Politeia

“political activism”

Disruptive of
political life

“politeia”

Public life

“political
quietism”

Withdrawal from
political life



- Good occupations
- Everyday good works
- Relief and development
- Benefactors

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Theology of Money & The Early Church

2 main ideas:

- 1. We need to get used to the idea that our giving is to be in excess of our yearly income, including tapping our assets and using our assets.**
- 2. Major giving can be used to falsely establish ourselves as an important person in the community of faith, and a tremendous danger to the true progress of the gospel – and God will not tolerate it!**

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Impacting Cities

The church must operate in such a way that it will impact the city for the gospel.

How should we go about accomplishing this?

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Benefactor Households

A strong church community based upon strong families is to be a benefactor in their community

- Strong households providing for their own (3 generations)
- Strong women (even older) known for good works extending from their household base
- Strong collective response of good deeds

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Everyone A Benefactor

A strong church community based on “every Christian a benefactor”

- Each working to meet his own needs
- Each contributing to the community as it seeks to do good – seeking the Welfare of the City
- Each individual needs to replace a welfare life with a benefactor life, and church community shares the burden of this transition.

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Citizenship

Good citizenship

Civic virtues

View of personal rights

And it is not possible apart from the life of a community of faith – a one-minded community of faith. We cannot just live as individual Christians.

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Social Class and Calling

Social mobility

If upward mobility becomes the focus of our lives we cannot fully serve the progress of the gospel, build key churches, create church networks that last a lifetime and intergenerational families that serve the mission.

It is all at risk if we live for upward social mobility.

We all must use our station in life as our “base of operations”, and join our higher calling, recognizing that we are no longer “mere men”!

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Impacting Cities

- **Benefactor Households**
- **Everyone a Benefactor**
- **Citizenship**
- **Social Class and Calling**

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Impacting Cultures

If we really grasped what was happening in the last half of the 20th and early 21st centuries, American churches would give at least 5x their general budgets toward the progress of the gospel, especially in the Southern Hemisphere!

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Cultural Progress of the Gospel

How to radically restructure budgets toward the progress of the gospel.

- 1. Re-deploy current resources (minister of the gospel job descriptions)**
- 2. Disciple wealthy benefactors**
- 3. Create “Antioch fund” and invest resources**
- 4. Volunteer your retirement years.**

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Competent, Self-Enterprising Ministers of the Gospel

Reinvent job descriptions of ministers of the gospel

Ministers of the gospel (5-fold gifts of Ephesians 4:11) are to be involved in whole “Pauline cycle” – evangelize strategic cities, establish churches, train leaders.

They are not employees.

They should tentmake when necessary or when it is strategically beneficial

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Co-Workers As Benefactors

From the very birth of the Church (Barnabas sold a tract of land), all through the expansion of the gospel throughout the Roman empire, wealthy believers used their time, homes, and assets to help resource the ministry.

This is a vital piece of funding missionary enterprise today.

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Partner Churches

As churches we are expected to participate in the progress of the gospel.

They might play different roles:

Some Philippi types (co-workers, money)

Some Ephesus types (strategic location, base of expansion)

Some Antioch types (major partner, apostolic base)

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Church Networks As Benefactors

Relief and development is a logical extension of seeking the welfare of the city, but it must be rooted in networks of churches, not government-related global para-church enterprises. The whole area of relief and development needs to be rethought.

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Impacting Cultures

- **Competent, Self-Enterprising Ministers of the Gospel**
- **Co-Workers as Benefactors**
- **Partner Churches**
- **Church Networks as Benefactors**

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