



# **Becoming God's ecclesia in Amsterdam**

Mobilizing leaders  
of churches and ministries to work together  
as a collaborative ecosystem for  
Kingdom impact in the city

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BECOMING GOD’S ECCLESIA IN AMSTERDAM: MOBILIZING LEADERS  
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AS A COLLABORATIVE ECOSYSTEM FOR  
KINGDOM IMPACT IN THE CITY

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To Riek,  
the love of my life and companion on the journey,  
serving the Lord in the city.

## **I See a New City**

I see a new city, lured out from Heaven  
Dressed for a party; blazing with beauty  
Her rooftops are radiant, trees trembling with laughter  
And joy like a jewel shines in her streets.

From her walls and windows  
No weeping is heard  
Through her gateways and gutters  
Floods of tears do not flow  
For in her homes and houses no pain dwells  
Bricks once broken down in mourning  
Rise again in song and celebration  
Stones thrown downy enmity and envy  
Dare to dance in swirling swathes of mercy.

She sings: a million voices rising  
The long-lost languages of human hopes  
The secret praise of human heart, released at last  
Because her God is with her  
Because his home is made within her walls  
Because his voice is heard  
Gentle like the rains of spring  
Declaring: New! New! New!

This is the city I see  
The future I belong to  
This is the blueprint my heart holds to  
Even now, in streets that sing another story  
Even here, beneath a darker vision's shadow  
This metropolis of mercy  
Promising future realization  
Active now in Love's imagination  
This is my dream  
And though I wait, and though I long  
And though the sacred city may seem slow  
Still I hope  
Still I pray  
Still I will today  
Rise up and build.

– by Gerard Kelly<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Used with permission of the author.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to explore calling and the ministry of the whole body of Christ in the city as an agent of the Kingdom of God in the context of Amsterdam: a western European post-Christian and postmodern city. Another purpose is to research the current engagement of the body of Christ in Amsterdam and to find ways to mobilize the faith leaders to collaborate for more fruit of the Kingdom in the city. The study uses an ecosystem model, proposed by Tim Keller, to describe the necessary conditions for the development of a citywide Kingdom movement. The model has a contextualized Kingdom theology at its core, followed by movements of church-planting and disciple-making and finally a wide range of relevant ministries for the city.

The study describes a few important contextual realities, including the development of the culture of Amsterdam, its influence in history and its current post-Christian and postmodern worldview. It also addresses poverty, cultural diversity, and the influence of Islam in the city. The literature and theology chapters of the study provide insights and a framework for understanding the transformational nature of God's mission and connects this with the concept and the language of shalom. It also addresses the importance of the place and presence in the ministry of the Kingdom and applies this to the city, proposing a model of five purpose areas for cities. An analysis of the concept of ecclesia provides the foundation for understanding the calling of the whole Church as an Kingdom agent in the community. From these insights, six essential elements of the calling of the Church as an ecclesia for the city are developed. The theological chapter ends with a sketch for contextualizing the gospel to a postmodern context.



The first part of the research of the project is analyzing the characteristics of Amsterdam, in order to find its needs and strengths. Innovation and personal freedom in the culture are found as main assets (among others). However, the flip side of these characteristics are the needs of indifference (tolerance) and individualism. The postmodern mindset causes the individualization of truth and the dis-embedding of identity. Other main needs include the deep secularization (post-Christian reality), material and relational poverty (loneliness, and fragmentation).

The research of vision and ministry of the faith leaders in the city, shows that there is a core of a Kingdom ecosystem in the city: the majority of the participating leaders share a theology of the Kingdom and vision on the city, which calls the Church to minister to all spheres of the community. There are churches and ministries that are making new disciples and planting churches in the city, and there is a variety of relevant and contextualize ministries and projects that serve the needs of the city.

The two-day Amsterdam city consultation was a mobilizing part of the project, where faith leaders from the city with different backgrounds came together for learning and interaction based on the vision and the outcomes of research of this project. The conversations during the consultation provided a set of recommendations for an agenda for more shalom in the city. The last chapter of the study summarizes the outcomes, conclusions, and recommendations. It also recommends the next steps for a growing momentum, vision and collaboration of the unified Kingdom movement in the city. A spiritual infrastructure for this movement is recommended, as well as topics for a common agenda and training that will support and catalyze the faith leaders to collaborate and grow in becoming an ecclesia for the city.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

How can leaders of churches and ministries in Amsterdam clearly understand and increase the transformational role of the whole Church in their city? It is the assumption of this study that the sense common calling, shared vision, and intentional collaboration of churches and ministries as an ecclesia of God to serve the whole city is still in the beginning stage. Hence the title of this study: *Becoming God's Ecclesia in Amsterdam*. This action and research study is a quest for understanding the biblical calling of the whole Church as God's ecclesia in the city and how to contextualize this for Amsterdam. Based on this understanding, the final project will explore ways for mobilizing leaders of churches and ministries in Amsterdam in this calling and engage them in formulating a five-year plan of action for it. This plan includes the following.

- shaping a shared vision for the calling of the whole Church to increase God's shalom for the city
- setting priorities for churches and ministries to engage in this calling for the coming five years
- forging a spiritual infrastructure that facilitates existing and new city movements to become (more) fruitful in their specific role in the city
- proposing the topics and a process for the development of a curriculum for training that will serve the vision and the implementation of the plan

The authors of the book *To Transform a City* argue that there is a direct relationship between the well-being of a city and the condition of the Church in the city.

The condition of our communities is the scorecard on how well the church is doing at being the people of God. On a macro scale, this view of church means that every community should be better if the church gets the mission right.

The scorecard can no longer be about how well our individual congregations are doing. The condition of our communities is the scorecard on how well the church is doing at being the people of God (Swanson, Williams, & McNeal, 2010, p. 14).

Assuming this is a valid statement, what would be the assessment of the condition of Amsterdam, and what does this say about how the Church in Amsterdam is doing in this time?

At first glance, the city of Amsterdam is doing well in many ways, especially in economic and social terms<sup>1</sup>. This achievement is mainly because of an active role of the city government, many social-civic organizations, and the relatively high level of social welfare in Dutch society. However, in terms of material poverty, Amsterdam is still at the bottom two cities in the Netherlands (OIS Amsterdam, 2016b, p. 9).

When considering a non-material definition of poverty, the level of brokenness in the city might be even higher, especially with issues like loneliness and fragmentation.

The spiritual needs of the city are also significant. With more than five decades of church decline, it has become one of the leading post-Christian cities with a deeply postmodern worldview. General opinion holds that improvement of the well-being of the city can be achieved through human effort: individual development, effective government and ongoing motivation. In this view, God is not needed for the

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<sup>1</sup> Amsterdam is ranked 11th of best cities in the world in the recent report from Arcadis consultants (Arcadis, 2016), which compared 100 global cities on three themes: people (social), planet (environmental) and profit (economical).

peace of the city, especially the God of the Christian faith. Christianity is widely considered to be an echo of the past (de Wit, 2011, p. 1).

Unfortunately, in the last decade's most of the Church in Amsterdam also believed it had little to contribute to the city. This low expectation may well be caused by issues like sense of loss over the Church that has become a marginalized institution, a mainly inward directed focus, and a theological orientation of ministry that is focused on individual (spiritual) needs of the believers only.

However, there are reasons to believe that this is changing. Several churches and ministries adopted some forms of a missional vision for the people in their neighborhoods and for serving needs in the community. As Stefan Paas (2015) observed, "... it seems that a general understanding is emerging in the churches in our country, about the importance of an outward focus and a stronger and more active effort to connect with and engage in a severely changing society" (Paas, 2015, loc. 196 of 5361). The need for more shalom in the city might be more hidden than in other parts of the world but is definitely real and the Church in the Amsterdam is becoming more aware of their responsibility for it. This study is intended to research the small beginnings of this emerging vision of the Church and its current contribution to the well-being of the city. The study intends to identify these signs of hope and to establish a baseline for the vision to increase the contribution of the Church in Amsterdam.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this final project is to inspire and facilitate mobilization of church and ministry leaders of the Church in Amsterdam to collaborate efforts to increase Shalom in the city. This goal of catalyzing transformation in a city is a vision that is shared by other leader in cities around the world. An example is Tim Keller

(2012) in New York and in other cities with the City to City<sup>2</sup> networks. He states: “Changing a city with the gospel takes a movement” (Keller, 2012a, loc.10749 of 11994).

The study seeks to integrate two important realities. 1) God is at work in the city to realize His purposes, even beyond what the Church can organize or realize. 2) It is the responsibility of the Church to understand their calling in the city as instruments of God’s Kingdom in their time and context and to do whatever is possible to be fruitful in engaging in this calling.

The first reality requires an inventory of the Christ-inspired mission and impact in the city of various churches, ministries, and organizations. The goal is to celebrate what God is doing and use it as source of hope and inspiration. The second reality points to the need to catalyze a movement of leaders to help the whole Church, to work together with the whole gospel for the well-being of the whole city. There have been valid initiatives to bring the body of Christ together in Amsterdam in the past few decades for more unity, prayer, and encouragement, like the *Evangelisch Contact* [*Evangelical Connection*] network; the *Kingdom Prayer Net*, and other prayer gatherings; and the *Raad van Kerken Amsterdam* [*Council of Churches Amsterdam*]. These networks are mainly focused on connecting churches for fellowship, support, and prayer for the Church and the city. There are also movements including *Amsterdam in Beweging* (a network of reformed churches and church-plants) and the Pentecostal Council of Churches (a network of mainly African Pentecostal immigrant churches), which are actively engaged in the city, serving and

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<sup>2</sup> Redeemer City to City is a network that is started by Redeemer Church in New York with the purpose to help start gospel movements in cities around the world, based on the experience of Dr. Tim Keller’s church planting experience in New York (See <https://www.redeemercitytocity.com>)

reaching the society with word and deed and planting churches. (See Appendix K for an overview of these and other networks and movements in the city.) There are a few differences among the efforts of these networks and movements in the city and the approach of this final project:

Most of the other networks and existing initiatives are organizing certain parts of the church (*AIB* is focused on traditional reformed churches, *PCC* on African immigrant churches), while the vision of this project is to see all parts of the body of Christ mobilized for the well-being of the city. The project therefore engages and hopes to inspire the connection of these networks and other parts of the Church in Amsterdam that are not part of a citywide movement.

Most other networks and existing initiatives are focused on one topic in the city (prayer, helping refugees, or church planting), while this project is seeking to mobilize Churches in all areas related to a holistic engagement in the shalom of the city. There have been conferences and seminars on themes regarding city transformation theology and ministry. However, the Amsterdam city consultation of this project has been the first based on research of the city of Amsterdam and the actual contribution of the Church in the City. There will also be dialog amongst the leaders in order to present a shared agenda and priorities for the Church in the city for the coming years.

To provide some structure to the complexity of the scope of the study, a model for looking at the citywide Kingdom movement that is proposed by Tim Keller was adapted. Keller uses the term “gospel ecosystem” to define the essential ingredients for city movements. The ecosystem of this model is comprised of three essential concentric rings. The first ring is a contextualized theological vision. The second is comprised of discipleship making, church planting and church renewal movements.

The third ring is a wide range of specialized ministries that addresses the specific needs of the city. (Keller, 2012a, loc.10820 of 11994) In this paper the model is called Kingdom ecosystem (Figure 3, Appendix A).

The study uses this ecosystem model to identify what God is already doing in the city through His people and to see how each ring can be improved in order to increase the Kingdom impact in the city. The research of the study is designed to answer the following questions.

- What are the specific needs, characteristics and assets of the city that must be addressed by a transformational movement in Amsterdam?
- How do leaders of churches and ministries view the role of the body of Christ in relationship to the realities of the city?
- What is the current influence or contribution of the Church in the city in regard to these needs, characteristics, and assets?
- How can church leaders and urban ministry leaders be connected and mobilized to increase the transformational impact of the Church in the city beyond that of each individual church or ministry?

The research is divided into two categories. The first is an overall exegesis of the city in order to establish the specific characteristics, the felt needs, and the assets of the city of Amsterdam. The main goal of this research is to show the Church how to contextualize and prioritize their ministries in order to serve the city the best possible way. The second is research of the Church of Amsterdam and its related ministries, showing its current status of the three rings of the gospel ecosystem: contextualized theology, church multiplication, and renewal movement and ministries serving the interest and needs of Amsterdam.

The first research category is quantitative and includes collecting and analyzing statistical data, reviewing existing research regarding Amsterdam by the city government, and other sources. This research provides major information for the process of mobilizing the Church to work together as a transformational ecosystem and for the design of the plan of action.

The second research category is a qualitative approach that was designed to include as many churches and ministries in the city as possible from different denominations and cultures. An appreciative inquiry of church leaders was conducted to understand their perspectives on theological vision, multiplication of disciples and churches, and the ministries to the city. Also, some existing studies on the church in the city were reviewed and analyzed. This research serves as another major source of information for the Church to understand assets and weakness that are relevant to in forging the ecosystem for serving the Kingdom in the city.

The research also included analysis of the current networks and movements of faith leaders who serve the well-being of the city. The study was designed to seek ways to strengthen, innovate, multiply, and connect or integrate these networks for increased healthy impact on the city.

The study includes a city consultation that was held in April 2017. This consultation was organized to present and validate the research on the four main questions cited. One of the main outcomes of the event was to define a shared agenda for catalyzing a transformational movement in Amsterdam and a proposal to create a curriculum for churches and leaders of urban ministries in the city.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

*Church of the City*: the term *Church* with a capital “C” will be used in this paper to identify the whole body of Christ in the city. This use of the term *Church*



includes the churches, Christ-inspired ministries, organizations, and institutes in the city.

*ACCL*: The Amsterdam Council of Christian Leaders (ACCL) is a group of seven leaders of churches and networks from different cultures and denominational backgrounds who are committed working together to serve the cause of the Kingdom of God in the city of Amsterdam. This counsel was formed in 2013 with the desire to inspire and catalyze the Church in Amsterdam to reach out to the city. The council seeks to serve the Church in the city by facilitating networking, prayer, ministry collaboration, advocacy, and training of leaders. The focus areas of the council are city prayer, city evangelism, city transformation, and fellowship of leaders. The desire of the leaders is to broaden the counsel in order to represent a major part of the body of Christ in the city and to grow in impact, vision, and unity. The ACCL facilitated the Amsterdam city consultation and the research for this study.

*ACLT*: the Amsterdam City Leaders Training intends to train (emerging) leaders in the body of Christ to strengthen their vision, theology, skills, and strategy in the area of city transformation. The curriculum and implantation pathway proposed in this study is based on the outcomes of the research and the input of leaders in the city during the city consultation.

*Exegesis of the city*: the term *exegesis*<sup>3</sup> is mostly used for the interpretation of the meaning Scriptures based on thorough analyses of the context, and the study of biblical texts. Exegesis of the city is the process of interpreting the unique realities and characteristics of a city or community based on the analyses and research of its context.

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<sup>3</sup> Definition: “from Greek, from *exēgeisthai* to interpret, from *ex-* 1 + *hēgeisthai* to guide.” (“Collins English Dictionary: complete and unabridged,” 2012)

*Kingdom*: the use of this term in this study refers to the Kingdom of God, which is the central focus of the teaching and ministry of Jesus Christ. The primary understanding is that the Kingdom of God is about the reign of God. The theological understanding of the Kingdom of God is addressed in chapter 4 of this study. When the term is used in combination with words like *impact* or *life*, this term *Kingdom* indicates the connection with the values and the manifestations of Kingdom of God.

*Kingdom Ecosystem*: the term *Gospel Ecosystem* is coined by Tim Keller (2012) in his book *Centre Church*, referring to the Church in a city as a transformational organism or ecosystem. The model (Figure 3 Appendix A) is adopted in this final study because it can help to provide language and a model for talking about the collaborative Church and Kingdom ministries in a city. In this paper, the term for the model is modified to “Kingdom ecosystem” because it emphasizes that the collaboration is Kingdom focused rather than “church” focused.

*Collaboration*: a term primarily used in this study in a broad sense for churches, ministries and christian organizations that realize that role is a part of the whole Church in the city. This realization can lead to different levels of practical involvement with others in the city, including prayer, actual ministries, outreaches, vision development, research, community development, etc. Chapter 6 describes the outcomes of the research of the actual vision and practice of the collaboration in the city on different levels.

*Transformation*: a term used in this study for change towards more wholeness. The premise of the study is that God’s mission includes bringing wholeness in all dimensions of life and that His Church is called as a partner in this mission (Chapter 4). An important note is that in this study, transformation is not a bringing to perfection that will be produced by efforts of the Church. It is a result of the

mysterious work of grace and of godly principles, values, and ministries that He works out sovereignly and through partnership with his disciples in bringing more wholeness in people, relationships, communities, and cities.

*Shalom*: a biblical term used in this study for the state of being that God intended for persons, relationships, and communities. Shalom is a deeply wholistic concept that has meaning for all areas of life. The concept of shalom is described in Chapter 4.

*Movement*: a term used to indicate an intentional partnership amongst leaders of churches, ministries, and christian organizations with a common vision or goal for the city. A movement focuses first of all on momentum and growing fruitfulness rather than on structure and organization. There are networks in the city that have movement characteristics and also those who are more organizational in nature. A Kingdom ecosystem in the city implies a range of movements with different foci, as well as an overall movement of growing towards a relational connection and a unified vision of shalom for the city.

### **Audience**

The targeted audience of the final study is comprised of my Personal Learning Community (PLC), which is a group of persons who functioned as a support and learning community during my BGU studies. The people of this group are church and community ministry leaders with a passion for city transformation and are engaged in training other leaders.

Another group includes leaders of churches, ministries, and Christ-inspired organizations in Amsterdam. These leaders were invited to participate in the research of the study and in Amsterdam city consultation. This study seeks to mobilize these leaders to participate intentionally in the vision of the Kingdom ecosystem in

Amsterdam to increase the shalom of the city.

A third group includes leaders in other western European cities who have a desire to seek a collaborative Kingdom movement to reach and transform their cities. The postmodern and post-Christian culture and other realities of Amsterdam can be found in many other cities in western Europe and even in other parts of the world. It is my hope that the final study can serve as an inspiration and an example for other cities to mobilize and inspire transformational ministries in their cities.

### **Stakeholders**

There are many potential people who could benefit from this study. The overall goal of the study is increase of shalom in Amsterdam; therefore, at a meta level all areas of a city should benefit. More specifically, the leaders of churches and ministries in the cities who are engaged in the research and the consultation and the training of leaders as a result of the study are expected to become more effective in their engagement in the city.

Another group of stakeholders are the people who helped organize the city consultation, including the speakers, workshop presenters, panel discussion members, etc. It is anticipated that the ACCL will take ownership of the city consultation and monitoring of the five-year action agenda.

The ACCL has a goal to develop (or assemble) the training content for the ACLT from the validated proposal from the city consultation and will make use of input of other leaders in the city and from my network. As part of the training, guest lectures, internships, and research will be facilitated by various church and ministry leaders in Amsterdam.

## **Integration with Dimensions of Transformational Leadership**

The goal of this study is to mobilize leaders to increase the transformational impact of the Church in the city, which implies that it seeks to encourage and strengthen the eight perspectives of transformational leadership as taught at BGU.<sup>4</sup> (Bakke Graduate University, 2016) (University, 2016). Following are a few comments on perspectives that will get special attention in the study.

*Calling-Based Leadership* “seeks to understand God-given gifts, experiences and opportunities in relation to his/her unique role as a called instrument of Christ’s transforming work in and above world cultures” (Bakke Graduate School, 2016). It is a fundamental priority of the final study to encourage and help leaders to understand their callings in the transformational work in Amsterdam. This will be a main goal for the consultation and also of the ACLT that will be offered as a result of the study.

*Servant Leadership* is about “the leader’s behavior” and priority as a servant. In the style of Jesus, the leader leads by serving and serves by leading. Servant leadership is the style the other leaders and I will use in organizing and leading the consultation. In this kind of city collaboration, leadership cannot have authority from positional power but will have an impact if exercised with a servant attitude.

*Contextual Leadership* recognizes that God is already at work” in other cultures and seeks to experience its unique gospel expression” (Bakke Graduate School, 2016). An important goal of the study is to help the leaders of the city see the picture of unique character, assets and needs of the city, and what God is already doing in the city and in the Church. This will inform and encourage church leaders to contextualize their ministries and leadership. This perspective and the theology

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<sup>4</sup> Transformational Leadership includes the leadership attributes of calling-based; incarnational; reflective; servanthood; contextual; prophetic; shalom; and global.

behind it will also be an important part of the ACLT curriculum.

*Global Leadership* means that “the leader understands the complexity of today’s global, pluralistic, urban, economic, and political landscape and sees the Church from the perspective of a world church rather than a nationalized, denominational, or localized church” (Bakke Graduate School, 2016). One of the paradigm shifts that this study aims for is the change from leadership that is inside-focused to a Kingdom perspective and influence.

*Shalom Leadership* is the perspective that “the leader pursues reconciling relationships between people, people and God, people and their environment, and people and themselves. The leader works towards the well-being, abundance, and wholeness of the community as well as individuals” (Bakke Graduate School, 2016). In order to forge a contextual and transformational theological vision in the Church as ecosystem in the city, bringing shalom will be the central concept. Leadership that flows from this understanding will bring shalom.

*Prophetic Leadership* is defined by BGU as a “leader who speaks truth with love to and through power. With sacrifice and humility, the leader pursues change in the broken systems and practices in the political, economic, social and religious life of the city” (Bakke Graduate School, 2016) In the dialogs during the consultation and in setting the five-year agenda, one of the questions for the Church in Amsterdam is What is the prophetic role of the Church in the city?

### **Scope and Limitations**

The scope of the study is the entire city of Amsterdam and the engagement of the whole Church in the city. This means, however, that the research for the study is limited to the most crucial overall characteristics, assets, and needs that are relevant for most of the city. It is therefore limited in identifying specific needs and assets in

certain areas and in geographic and cultural specifics.

Another limitation is that although the aim of the study is to engage the whole Church in Amsterdam in collaborative engagement in the city, not all leaders will be able or are ready to be actively involved in participation in the research, the consultation, or even in the proposed agenda for the coming five years. Therefore, I am aiming for the engagement of the Church in the research, the city consultation, and in the collaboration based on a common action agenda including a fair representation (at least 30 to 50 of the estimated 250 churches) of the diversity of the Church and ministries in the city. This diversity should reflect various traditions as well as the cultural dimensions of the Church.

Finally, I recognize that the research, the analyses of the city, the proposed theological frameworks, and recommendations of this study need to be discussed, critiqued, corrected, and completed by others who are part of the Kingdom ecosystem of the city. It is my prayer and desire that this study and project will contribute to the movement of God in Amsterdam that will inspire and catalyze others to join this journey and bring their unique experience and perspective to the conversation and ministry for the sake of God's plan for this city.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CONTEXT OF MINISTRY**

Peace for cities is when everything works for everybody, and no one is left out.

– H.P. Spees

In prayer meetings for the city, often the words of the Lord's prayer reflect the desire of intercessors for the city: "Let your Kingdom come on earth [in Amsterdam] as it is in heaven." What would change in the city when this prayer is being answered? What would be the role of the body of Christ in the process of this change? In order to search for answers to these questions and how to mobilize the Church to engage in this process, a good understanding of the context of life in the city and of the Church in the city is necessary.

The research of this study includes a research of the city and of the current vision for the engagement of the Church for the city. The outcomes of this research are discussed in Chapter six. Therefore, the current chapter is not a full analysis of the city and the Church but is intended to give a background on both to provide the context that is required for a good interpretation of the research and its outcomes.

Topics addressed in this chapter are the history of Amsterdam and the historical development of the culture of the city. After the historical view, relevant topics of the current situation of city and its worldview are highlighted: the issue of poverty in Amsterdam, the political environment, the postmodern and post-Christian worldview, and the increase of the Muslim population in the city.



## Historical Background of Amsterdam

### *A Brief History of Amsterdam*

Amsterdam as it is known today is the capital of the Netherlands with less than 850,000 residents. Figure 1 shows the coat of arms of Amsterdam: “Based on the attitude of the citizens of Amsterdam during the German occupation of 1940-1945, Queen Wilhelmina Amsterdam the city the right to add the slogan: Courageous, Determined and Merciful to the city coat of arms, on March 29, 1947.” (Amsterdam City Hall, 2015)



*Figure 1.* Coat of arms of the city of Amsterdam: Courageous, Tenacious and Merciful

Amsterdam is a popular place for tourists, businesses, and artists and is a sought-after place to live. However, about 800 years ago this area was only inhabited by a few farmers and fishermen living in a harsh environment fighting against the waters that frequently flooded the weak peat grounds (Mak, 2013). The name of Amsterdam is derived from the work of the early pioneers who built a dam in the Amstel River in 1200 AD. The dam prevented floods from the Southern Sea (a body of water connected to the North Sea) from reaching inland. (Werkman, Vincent, & Wintle, 2018)

Count Floris V granted permission to the people living near this dam to collect tolls, and in AD 1300, Amsterdam received city status. At about the same time, the first church (the Old Church) was build near the dam and still stands today as the oldest building in the city. The settlement grew as dikes were built around the river

Amstel to reclaim land. This provided the opportunity to develop a harbor directly connected to the Southern Sea. The main business was trading, and the main commodities were herring and beer (Amsterdam City Hall, 2003).

How did a settlement like this, without any geographical or environmental benefits, develop into a major European city? Two important elements played a role in this growth: the “miracle of Amsterdam”<sup>1</sup> and the invention of improving the gibbing of herring.<sup>2</sup> The miracle of Amsterdam made the city become one of the main holy places in Europe, attracting many pilgrims and a religious tourism industry. “In the year 1500, the city had no fewer than 20 convents and monasteries, roughly one for every 500 inhabitants” (Mak, 2001, p. 44).

The gibbing improvement made it possible for fishermen from Amsterdam to travel farther distances to find fishing grounds. This spawned all over Europe: “Within a few decades, the Dutch had cornered the market. They shipped tons of herring to Poland, to France, up the Rhine into Germany, even as far afield as Russia” (Shorto, 2013, p. 32). This expansion of fishing and trade caused a strong industrial growth (shipyards, storehouses, trade companies, etc.).

In the year 1519, the Spanish took over the rule of Amsterdam until the founding of the new political union of the Netherlands in 1543 (Amsterdam City Hall,

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<sup>1</sup> The miracle of Amsterdam takes place in 1345 when a dying old man asked for his last rites. He vomited up the host he had received, and his maid threw the host with the vomit into the fireplace. The next morning the maid found the host fully intact. When she reached into the flames to remove the host, she did not burn her hands. This host was brought to the Old Church as a relic of this miracle. Source: (Erfort, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> There are two important innovations that caused a change in the fish industry in the 15th century. The first was Gibbing the herring before preserving it with salt, whereby instead of gutting all intestines, one leaves the pancreas and small pouches with enzymes intact. This allows the fish to be preserved for a long time (over a year) and increases the taste. The second innovation was gibbing and preserving the fish while still onboard the fishing boats. This expanded the fishing area dramatically. Source: (Kemperman, 2017)

2015). When the war with Spain was finally settled, the traders in Amsterdam became more influential. Amsterdam had fleets of ships across the seas to Japan, India, Ceylon, and Indonesia, which led to the “golden-age.” The successful trips to “the East” resulted in the founding of VOC (United East Indian Company) around 1600 to facilitate and control the trade with the Far East. (Southworth, 2015, p. 1-11)

The VOC was the first publicly owned company in the world, generating substantial revenues for its stockholders, among which were lower and middle-class citizens. During the golden age, the city expanded with new rings of canals, houses, and large storage houses. A few decades later, the West India Company as a sister company to the VOC was started, which, among other achievements, founded New York City (New Amsterdam), and colonized Brazil and the Caribbean Islands (Shorto, 2013, p. 219 ). The golden age was a time of increase of wealth, influence in the world, new philosophies, inventions and the arts. However, there were dark sides to these developments, including the exploitation of the overseas colonies, forcing its residents into Protestantism with the use of violence and the active involvement of the VOC in the world-wide slave trade (Mak, 2001, p. 117).

From its early existence, Amsterdam was known as a safe haven for refugees and was tolerant of different religious and political backgrounds. The historian Geert Mak stated:

Tolerance was in this town not a mere principle, but a practical necessity: the open merchant city, being the meeting place of all sorts of different cultures could not allow itself to indulge in the large-scale persecution of those adhering to different beliefs. Nevertheless, ... if threatened by any group, the city father would crush the interlopers mercilessly. (Mak, 2001, p. 64)

The golden age came to an end due to the wars with France and England, which led the city to near bankruptcy. A period followed with low growth and political unrest. The rising worldwide trade, the introduction of the diamond industry, and the opening of the North Holland Canal brought new growth to the city economy and new expansion to the city with poor-quality housing (Amsterdam City Hall, 2017).

The crisis years in the beginning of the twentieth century were hard for the city, and World War II took a severe toll. A majority of the 75000 Jews living in Amsterdam were sent to concentration camps in Germany (Committee May 4-5, 2011). The last winter of the war brought many Amsterdam citizens to the brink of starvation.

After the war, Amsterdam rebuilt again with a strong business growth and population increase. In the 1960s, Amsterdam became the center of a cultural revolution (hippy capital of Europe). The openly promoted red-light district and the legalization of soft drugs shaped the image of the city as place for parties and freedom. Amsterdam was also considered the gay capital, where the first gay marriage in the world was conducted in 2001. The city attracted people from around the world and is now one of the most diverse cities in the world with more than 180 registered nationalities (OIS Amsterdam, 2016a, p. 31). Today the city has a flourishing tourism industry, is known for its fashion and design industry, and is still a major player in trade and commerce (IAMsterdam, 2017).

The history of the city reveals that the pragmatic collaboration across different classes and cultures was a necessity to survive, but also an important base for its flourishing. It is significant to note that the same features are needed for moving towards the goals of this study, to catalyze a citywide collaboration of faith leaders, as

well as civic leaders for the well-being of the city. Another significant element is the recognition of a miracle of God in this place, causing the settlement to grow into a city of significance. This study seeks to establish the importance of the connection between God's presence and "place." History shows that this has been acknowledged in the genesis of the city but has been lost in later times. This part of the history of Amsterdam can give hope and relevance in quest of the Church to re-discover and re-contextualize the relationship with God's reign and the development of the city.

Finally, innovations like gibbing, shipbuilding, reclaiming land from the sea, as well as ways of governing and financing, have made the city successful throughout history. In finding ways to minister as the Church of God in the city, it is important to cultivate innovative ways rather than relying on what is known.

### ***Cultural Historic Background***

In the following, I focus on the historic development of the culture or worldview of the city. The term that is associated with the culture of Amsterdam is tolerance, "Our toleration and flexibility allow us to adapt to each new style that comes blowing across the border." (Mak, 2001, p. 1) Although the size of Amsterdam as city is small compared to international standards, its influence in the world throughout its history is significant, especially in the realm of ideas and culture. The historian Shorto states: "... it has influenced the modern world to a degree that perhaps no other city has, and its imprint on the United States in particular goes to the core of the American identity" (Shorto, 2013, p. 16).

### ***Major Influences Shaping the Culture of the City***

The fight against water marked the history of Amsterdam and created new ways of thinking. This fight caused people to cooperate across classes, ranks, and political opinions. "This system grew from people's cooperation, not a policy

imposed by a conquering general or feudal lord. The people learned to discuss and cooperate for the good of society” (Contexture International, 2015). This experience created a view of collaboration and leadership that was pragmatic, consensus based, and non-hierarchical. These characteristics are still dominant in the view on leadership in the city.

Amsterdam was not for significant periods of time controlled by kings or rulers or by the Church and, therefore, could “cultivate its individuality” (Mak, 2001, p. 22). This was unique in Europe, and although there were instances of prosecutions of minorities and dissidents, the general climate was welcoming (tolerant) for these groups. “Amsterdam ... became a safe-heaven for refugees and religious dissidents from all over Europe, including the French Huguenots and Sephardic Jews...” (Jurgensmeyer & Roof, 2012, p. 30).

Amsterdam became the city of thinkers, philosophers, debate, and publication. The freedom of religion, opinion, and publication made Amsterdam an attractive place for publishers (Rinzema, 2017, p. 8) and Amsterdam became one of the main cities of publishing industry. Strong outside influences were the France revolution, the reformation, and the rise of the enlightenment in Europe. All of these influences that came together in Amsterdam caused a shift towards the importance of individual choices and human reasoning (Shorto, 2013, p. 204-205).

#### *Influential Thinkers Shaping the Culture in Amsterdam and Beyond*

One of the important thinkers that became influential in this climate was Erasmus, who was born in Rotterdam but came to Amsterdam, where he wrote and published his books. He critiqued the theology and the structures of the Catholic Church, without suggesting leaving the Church as part of the protest, as Luther would do later, but to change it from within.

Erasmus mounted a sustained assault on the structures of the Catholic Church, insisting that the essence of Christianity was not to be found in observance of the sacraments, or in the power of the Vatican, or even in the person of the pope, but in the individual: in the study and awareness of holy scripture.

(Shorto, 2013: p. 38)

The freedom of the individual and the responsibility of human reasoning in his theology connected with the emerging liberalism in Amsterdam, catalyzed further change in the worldview.

Maybe the greatest influence in the cultural development of the city was the philosopher Baruch Spinoza, who was born and raised in Amsterdam. His *Tractus Theologico-politicus* (Spinoza, 1689) encouraged a liberal explanation of the Bible and argued for the importance of democracy and freedom of opinion. His later work *Ethica*<sup>3</sup> was a practical philosophy aimed to help people find relief in suffering. A core premise of the work was the idea that God is not outside of creation, but that all of creation, including humankind, is an expression of God (Entoen.nu, 2017).

Spinoza influenced many thinkers and philosophers of the eighteenth century and beyond. He advocated a culture of liberation from oppression of rulers and institutes like the Church and gave way to individual freedom, reasoning, and democratic forms of government. However, in his views of theology and culture, he placed God and the authority of the Bible under the supremacy of human reasoning. Rebecca Goldstein formulated this as follows, “Spinoza was to offer something rather new under the seventeenth century’s European skies: a religion of reason” (Goldstein, 2006, p. 121).

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<sup>3</sup> The Vatican libraries still have copies of the original texts of the *Ethica* (Spruit, Totaro, & Spinoza, 2011).

Another remarkable influencer of the cultural climate of Amsterdam with a world-wide impact was Eduard Douwes Dekker. He was the writer, under the pseudonym Multatuli, of a novel called *Max Havelaar*, about the life in the Dutch Indonesian colony. With this novel, he protested against the suppression of the colonized people by the VOC, arguing for honoring human rights, local government, and democratic values in colonies as in Amsterdam (Oostrom, 2007, p. 90).

Dekker was strongly influenced by Spinoza, but he rejected faith in God altogether, “he called faith ‘a plague’ and ‘a forced substitute for knowledge.’” (Multatuli, 1833 ) Shorto observes: “A genuine secular movement was just then in its infancy in Europe, and Dekker’s writings— so public and so insistent— gave it oxygen.” (Shorto, 2013, p. 236). Dekker’s influence led eventually to a process of independence of most Dutch colonies. Also, Dekker is viewed as one of the fathers of the socialistic movement in the Netherlands (Glissenaar, 1999).

For this study it is important to note that individual freedom to reason, without fear of suppression, is a strong historical asset of the city. Erasmus, Spinoza, and Dekker were all protesting severe injustices of their times. In reacting against suppression or injustice, however, they did not move the culture and its worldview towards God’s justice and peace but pushed the reign of God to the background. The lesson that can be drawn from this historic development is that transformation towards real wholeness in the city is not only working against injustice or doing good, but also bringing the gospel of Christ and forging the values of the Kingdom of God in the culture.

Another influencer was Aletta Jacobs, a medical doctor who noted that poverty was deepened by the many children born into these poor families. She started to educate woman about sexuality and was one of the pioneers of contraception.



Jacobs is seen as the founder of the women's rights movement and the and the introducer of sex education for adults and children (Oostrom, 2007, p. 93).

### *Post War Cultural Movements*

In the twentieth century, sexual liberation became a major theme in Amsterdam. The red-light district has been part of the city for a long time, but in the 1960s it became openly promoted as a main attraction for visitors to the city. In 1946 the COC (Culture and Recreation Center) was founded in the city for homosexual men, which became the first organization for promoting the integration of homosexuality in society. This organization became a strong influence in Holland, strategically positioning the gay agenda in the media, education, and politics. The COC gave birth to the international gay liberation movement (Pickett, 2009, p. 91). In 2001, the first gay marriage in the world was conducted in Amsterdam (The Associated Press, 2001). Now, after less than two decades, gay marriage is legalized in many Western countries, proving that Amsterdam is still a trendsetting city.

In the sexual liberation that started with Jacobs, one can see again that advocating against suppression of women's rights, sexual education, or rights of people with a same sex orientation are righteous causes. However, without bringing healthy biblical principles in the new cultural views related to these topics, the pendulum easily swings towards a culture promoting a sexuality without boundaries. One of the challenges of the Church is to celebrate the good fruit of these cultural changes, but also to show that tolerating everything is not real freedom.

After World War II, the postmodern era started to emerge in Amsterdam. The liberal movement in Amsterdam became more experimental and anarchistic. The tolerant culture of Amsterdam gave room to the hippy movement (van Herpen, 2008, p. 7). Many expressions of this movement could be found in the city, ranging from

student protests against the institutes of university (more student influence and democratic governance), to the squatters' movement, occupying many empty buildings in the center of Amsterdam, to the demonstrations against nuclear weapons in Europe (van Herpen, 2008, p. 14-15).

The tolerant climate in the city also gave room to development of a major drug use and trade over the city (Pompidou-Group, 1987, p. 20). In trying to control the devastating effects of drug addiction, Amsterdam started providing free methadone as a substitute (Pompidou-Group, 1987, p. 14-15). and later legalized the use of soft-drugs, including allowing coffeeshops to sell soft-drugs. Growing marihuana and supplying coffeeshops is still illegal but "tolerated," as is a typical example of the emerged pragmatic culture of Amsterdam. (A. C. M. Jansen, 1989, p. 170-173)

A typical expression of the hippy culture in Amsterdam was the "provo" movement.

The Provo movement (1965-1972) was directed by a 'playful anarchist' group which combined non-violence and absurd humor to create social change. The name Provo was coined by Dutch sociologist Buikhuizen to describe, in a condescending way, post-war disaffected Dutch teens who spent their time provoking the authorities. (Vanderspyn, 2003)

This movement provoked the city council and the mayor by organizing public meetings, "happenings," publications, and taking initiatives like white bikes and cars (free bikes and car-sharing). The provo movement faded away, but seeds of their disruptive ideas are popping up in the current culture in the city and can be seen in green initiatives (e.g. car- and bike-sharing, and the bohemian elements of the city culture.) This period laid the foundation of the postmodern worldview that today is a strong influence in the city.

The cultural development of Amsterdam has been a strong influence in the surrounding regions and in the rest of the world. However, it will become clear in this study that the worldview, or culture of the city, is one of the areas that needs transformation. Redeeming the culture in a healthy way, without simply reacting against it, with listening, serving, and demonstrating better values and principles is an important task. This study will review the role of the Church in this area and suggest pathways to the impact of culture on the city. Because of the cultural influence of Amsterdam, investing in this area of transformation will have a wide impact.

### **Current Realities in the City**

After reviewing relevant aspects of the history of Amsterdam, the following I deal with some topics in the current situation. Chapter six contains an overall exegesis of the city, covering several other topics of interest for ministry in the city. The topics presented in this section provide the context of Amsterdam related to themes addressed in the literature and theological chapters.

#### ***Poverty in Amsterdam?***

In many global cities, poverty is one of the root problems of society. In the biblical concepts of righteousness and mercy, dealing with the poor always has a significant place. In Amsterdam, poverty is an important concern; however, it is significantly different from the poverty related problems in many other inner-city areas and slums of other global cities. The social security systems of the Dutch national and local governments are providing an important safety net for their citizens. There are different forms of government aid in the system, but the bottom security (called *bijstand*) is a level of supported income that is intended to meet the criterion that is defined as “not-much-but-adequate” (CBS, & SCP, 2013, p. 15). This amount should provide a family or individual with resources for minimal housing,

food, medical care, and education for the children, and for basic social participation (e.g. a computer and internet connection and membership for a soccer club for the children) (CBS, & SCP, 2013, p. 45).

Most people living at this minimum level have been unemployed for a number of years or unable to work due to medical or psychological reasons, and who have run out of the temporary higher levels of government or insurance support. For people who have a job, there is a guaranteed minimum wage in the Netherlands that provides a higher level of income than the safety net. However, although this safety net is preventing many vulnerable people from succumbing to extreme poverty, there are many who experience that it is inadequate to provide for the intended “not-much-but-adequate” level (CBS, & SCP, 2016, p. 57) Studies show an increasing number of people living on or under the relative poverty line (CBS, & SCP, 2013, p. 4).

One of the challenges in neighborhood development in Amsterdam is that poverty is hard to notice from the outside. Most housing and infrastructure is in a relatively good condition, and there is a low number of homeless or beggars on the streets. The poverty problems are mostly hidden behind the doors. These challenges make it harder for the Church to engage in poverty alleviation in the city and it can also negatively influence the sense of urgency for it.

Although Amsterdam has a social system that prevents extreme poverty, it is important to realize that in this city the number of households living below the social poverty line is the second highest nationally, at 17.2% (CBS, & SCP, 2014, p. 9). When the government safety net is becoming less sufficient for the poor, the Church may have to play a new role in this field, a responsibility that has been left to the government for decades. The main reason the government will not be able to sustain the current level of social security is the aging population. “The costs of social

security can, when keeping the current arrangements in place, rise with about 9% of the gdp.” (Goudzwaard, 2002, p. 13). Other challenges are costs of medical care due to higher life expectancy and new medical innovations. Currently the medical insurance costs of an average household is around 25% of the income; this can rise to between 30 and 40% (CPB, 2011). “These rising costs can eventually put pressure on solidarity in the care between young and old, poor and rich” (CPB, 2011).

### ***The Political Environment***

The political environment in Amsterdam has many areas of interest, but for the scope of this paper only two aspects are highlighted. the Dutch political system, locally and national, is comprised of multiple parties in the election and government processes. These parties do not require high voting thresholds, and they represent a large variety of different political and civic convictions and stands. Main streams of the political landscape in the last century have included social / labor, liberal democrats, and Christian parties. (NIMD & IPP, 2008, p. 23-25). During the last decade, the political landscape has become more pluralistic and fluid: election results rise and fall and a number of one-issue parties (animal rights, elderly, green issues, etc.) rose up as well as some populist parties (NIMD & IPP, 2008, p. 12). One of the trends in cities like Amsterdam, is the diminishing strength of traditional Christian political parties, who have hardly any representation in the city government.

The political system in the Netherlands is strongly involved in issues like income, housing, healthcare, well-being and education. This significant government involvement may have contributed to a decline in church engagement in civic and social issues in the city, in comparison with the Church involvement in most non-Western European cities. The extensive social agenda of the government and related institutions is resulting in high scores of well-being in several areas (Arcadis, 2016).

An example of impact of government policies in cities is a 10-year program launched by the national government in 2007 to severely change the condition of 40 of the most problematic neighborhoods in the country (called *Vogelaar Neighborhoods*). Amsterdam has a number of these neighborhoods. The program provides government and third party (e.g. building cooperations) investments in five themes: housing, work, education, safety, and integration, in order to achieve a significant alleviation of the problems in these neighborhoods. In the first four years, more than 1 billion Euros were invested (SCP, 2013, p. 9). Most old housing in these areas has been demolished to make room for new developments. These renovations impacted the many aspects of the neighborhoods, including the costs of living and the social classes of the residents who end up living in these neighborhoods (Stam, 2009, p. 64-65).

There are many other aspects where the government is active in the welfare of the people in the city. The last few years even more of the control of the social-civic policies and budgets are delegated from national to local level government (Government the Netherlands, 2016). This government engagement can be viewed as “common grace.” Many will celebrate this engagement, while others critique that the government’s engagement only goes so far and cannot achieve true transformation, because they operate out of personal or economic motives and not always considering the voice of the weak or poor.

Another complication is that government control and regulations due to separation between state and religion, can limit Christian organizations and churches to play a role in this community engagement. Many of those who seek to minister out of inspiration from the Kingdom of God to the felt needs of the community have to find ways to partner well with the government and other public and private

institutions and professionals. At the same time those involved in these partnerships need to maintain their freedom to challenge the motives and outcomes of the other parties, if needed, based on their prophetic role and the principles of the Kingdom of God.

### ***Challenges of a Growing Muslim Population in the City***

The Muslim population of the western European cities is growing due to immigration and a higher birthrate among Muslim families. This growth is also true in the Netherlands: 5.5 % of the population in 2010 was Muslim (Forum, 2012). The largest groups of immigrants in the Netherlands are Turks (87 % Muslim), Moroccans (92 % Muslim) and Surinamese (10 % Muslim) (Forum, 2012). The projection of the number of Muslims in the Netherlands in 2050 is shown in Appendix A, Figure 4. This projection probably needs an adjustment due to the large refugee influx in Europe from the Middle East and northern Africa in recent years.

### ***Change in the Political Climate***

Freedom of religion is a constitutional right in the Netherlands, and the integration of Muslims was not a significant political or public issue until the rise of radical Islam and the murder of prominent politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002, and film director and public opinion maker Theo van Gogh in 2004 in Amsterdam (Bruke, 2004). Although, Fortuyn was not murdered by a Muslim, his death became a turning point in the political climate to a more intolerant attitude towards Islam (Brown, 2014).

Out of this sentiment, politician Geert Wilders founded the PVV (Party for Freedom), which became one largest and most influential parties in the Netherlands. The agenda of this party stirs a fear-based anti-Islam sentiment based on labeling it as the main threat of the community and as a cause of failure of integration of

immigrants in the community (Brown, 2014). However, there are genuine concerns regarding the rise of Islam in the Dutch society that manifest in the community, and these are part of the context of ministry of the Church in the city. Following the main concerns are briefly discussed.

### *Cultural Change in Neighborhoods*

In Amsterdam there are suburbs where the majority of the population is from a migrant background (Hylkema, Bosveld, Selten, & Beentjes, 2015, p. 64), of which Muslims form the largest group (Hylkema et al., 2015, p.55). Because of freedom of religion, the same rules apply for Islam-based schools and mosques as for Christian schools and churches. The number of mosques has been growing since 1970 and is now estimated at 42 in Amsterdam (OIS Amsterdam, 2014, p. 17).

The tolerance of the main culture of Amsterdam is the opposite of some the strict regulations of fundamental Islam. When the signs of Islamic influence seem to rise in the public domain (like halal food in supermarkets, women with headscarves, men with traditional dresses and beards, mosques, etc.), it feels form many as a clash of cultures. In these areas some native Dutch feel intimidated and alienated by the Muslims. These feelings are amplified by the relatively higher percentage of Muslim youth causing trouble and involved in crime (especially Moroccan males) (CBS, 2016a).

### *Fear of Radical Islam and Terrorism*

In the last three years, there have been several terrorist attacks in European cities (e.g. Brussels, London, Paris, Berlin and Barcelona) linked with radical Islamic groups like Islamic State (IS). The national coordinator for security and counter-terrorism states in his recent report that the threat level is “substantial” and that “the main threat to the Netherlands is posed by jihadism, in the form of a variety of



actors... potentially able to carry out both small- and large-scale attack” (Schoof, 2017, p. 2).

### *Fear of Loss of the Christian Culture*

Unfortunately, fear of Islam has impacted many Christians. Not only caused by the factors previously highlighted, but also from the fear that their faith and values are under attack as well as the Judeo-Christian culture of the Netherlands. The tragedy is, however, when fear of Islam in general drives the attitude and behavior, it is less likely that Christians will develop significant relationships with Muslims. Herein lies a major challenge for the Church in the city: to encourage believers to have deep love for Muslims and to help them acquire the skills and opportunities to create meaningful relationships with them. Bert Ruiter is one of the leading voices in this charge:

“Christians also need to come to grips with the growing influence of Islam in Europe, ...some fear that Islam will become the major religion in Europe in the next 50 to 100 years but such predictions ignore what God is doing both in His churches in Europe and among Muslims” (Ruiter, 2017).

### *Post Modernity*

“In the World Values surveys of 1990 the Netherlands ranked as the most postmodern country” (Inglehart, 1997, p. 157), and Amsterdam played a central role in it. Since postmodernism is a main characteristic of the culture of the city, it is relevant to the understanding of the context of the ministry of the study. It is hard to find a conclusive definition of *postmodernity* because it emerged simultaneously in many areas of life including arts, philosophy, architecture, and social sciences. The encyclopedia Britannica defines it as follows:

Post-modernism, in western philosophy, is a late 20th-century movement characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, or relativism; a general

suspicion of reason; and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1998).

Postmodernism emerged as a reaction to and critique of the modernistic worldview. Leading philosophers and strategists of this movement were Michael Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Francois Lyotard and Richard Rorty (Hicks, 2004, p. 1). Many of the postmodern philosophers started to “deconstruct reason, truth and reality, because they believe that in the name of reason, truth, and reality, Western society wrought dominance, oppression and destruction” (Hicks, 2004, p. 3).

Worldviews change gradually, but they have a deep impact on the values, the perception of reality, and the behavior of significant portions of the culture. A brief summary of the characteristics I gathered over the years of the postmodern worldview, in comparison with those of the modern and pre-modern worldview, is in Appendix L.

In reviewing the cultural history of the city (discussed previously) and the definition and characteristics of postmodernity, it is not hard to understand why the culture in Amsterdam was receptive to the postmodern influences. The distrust of kings, rulers, and institutions of power, as well as the leading role of the city in cultural changes related to topics like individualism, sexual liberalism, democratic governance, and secularism, made the city ready to embrace postmodernism.

The characteristics of the postmodern mind-set can be clearly found in the hippy and provo movements in the 1960s and 1970s. These movements faded away but were instrumental in Amsterdam’s becoming a postmodern city. This has been confirmed in the analyses of van Herpen:

... in the early 1960s the Netherlands was already a postmodern frontrunner in Europe. Being one of the first countries to experience the postmodern value shift, we may expect this value shift to express itself earlier in the Netherlands than elsewhere. In fact, it did. The Dutch Provo movement of 1965-1966 was, probably, the first postmodern youth revolt in Europe and even, maybe, in the world. (van Herpen, 2008, p. 7)

Postmodernism is not only found in a segment or subculture in Amsterdam but is an influence that manifests gradually in the worldview of the generations born after the 1950s and even stronger in the later generations.

#### *Postmodernism and the Formation of Identity*

Professor Wim Dekker (2009) studied the impact of postmodernism on identity formation and presented his findings in a lecture to Christian movement leaders in the Netherlands. Dekker identifies that the following cultural factors deeply shape the postmodern identity.

- separation from time and place (no rhythms) through globalization, the twenty-four-seven economy, internet, etc.
- social disembedding (no roots) through global financial and other systems (there is no local influence or context)
- re-ordering of knowledge and social relationships (no traditions) caused by information as a commodity, and the breakdown of family and communities

Dekker (2009) observes that these social realities cause identity formation in the postmodern context characterized by the following features.

- identity formation is a reflection project, for which the individual him or herself carries the full responsibility

- “self” is seen as writing your personal narrative (you are the author of your own life)
- reflection is constant and prominent (the ever-repeating stream of the same reflective questions, in order to deal with an overflow of choices)
- this reflection is strongly tied to the physical body. Your body is your main compass (how do I *feel* about this?). The body is the source of information, something to exercise control over and to express yourself (*how do I want to look?* Clothing, make-up, tattoos, style, etc.)
- identity formation is only based on internal reflections (it is not tested against an external norm). There is no master story for direction and grid of values to give direction to formation. Life has no higher purpose than self-formation. There are no social role-models to follow (Dekker, 2009)

These observations about the formation of identity of the postmodern person provide crucial insight to identify their sensitivities and needs and to understand effective ways to minister to this large group in the city. Besides insight in identity formation, the characteristics of the postmodern worldview provides specific barriers as well as unique opportunities for those who want to share the gospel and provide relevant ministries to this group.

#### *Barriers to Overcome in Connecting to the Postmodern Worldview*

Traditionally the approach of apologetics and evangelism has been mainly developed in a modernistic context. In changing the focus towards a postmodern culture, the barriers I point out will become evident. Based on the postmodern characteristics, one may expect that the first barrier is the rejection of the absolute truth. The postmoderns embrace subjectivity, local, personal, and contextual truth. The meta narratives are rejected (“Postmoderns see metanarratives as inherently

oppressive and as generally beyond the ability of humans to grasp them.” (Kelly & Dew, 2017, p. 8)), and replaced by personal stories. Therefore, the approach of presenting the gospel primarily as a series of systematic dogmas will most likely not be well received by this group. A more fruitful approach for reaching the postmodern person is to explain the Gospel as the story of personal God with humanity (it is “a mega narrative or big story, but it is yet not a metanarrative.” Kelly & Dew, 2017, p. 196)

Another sensitivity of postmodernity is the rejection of intolerance towards personal differences or moral exclusion of person, based on lifestyle, identity, or opinions. “Postmoderns are not necessarily concerned to prove themselves “right” and others “wrong.” They believe that beliefs are ultimately a matter of social context...” (Grenz, 1996, p. 15) An approach that is not inclusive or based on acceptance of the person will not be fruitful. A third barrier that is connected to this, is information outside one’s own experience or context is viewed as irrelevant. (Dekker, 2009)

Postmoderns in general have an aversion towards the power play of institutions, religion and politics Grenz observes: “It’s part of a more general postmodern attitude, a desire to challenge the power of modernity as invested in institutions and canonical traditions.” (Grenz, 1996, p.26) In the Christian era, the churches in the nation were strong institutes that held a powerful position in society. In this study, a different type of transformational impact of the Church in the community will be proposed in Chapter 4, from a position of the Church in the margins of the culture, based strongly on Kingdom values including prayer, love and servanthood.

Finally, for postmoderns everybody is personally responsible for writing their own life narratives (as discussed above in the features of Dekker (2009)).

Surrendering their journey and choices of life to the Lordship of Jesus and the authority of Scripture is therefore a deep challenge for the postmodern person. To make this commitment to Christ usually takes ample time and process to learn to trust God in order take the “risk” of submission.

### *Opportunities and Bridges*

There are principles and values of the gospel of the Kingdom that are clearly counter cultural to the postmodern view. However, some parts of the critique of the postmoderns regarding the modern pride of human reasoning, systems and power, may find the gospel on their side. The postmodern worldview, therefore also provides new opportunities and possible entry points for the gospel.

The postmodern openness to spirituality and the supernatural presents a challenge to the modern focus on human reasoning. Also, the postmoderns are open for an experimental spirituality, rather than a spirituality of reasoning based on dogmas and institutional Christianity. It is not about proving to be right. The mindset of the postmodern is more open to mystery and parables (Grenz, 1996, p. 204).

The desire for postmoderns to experience personal growth and development presents an openness to the spirituality of discipleship. The confusion in identity (previously highlighted) is cause a search for real answers for personal emotional and spiritual needs and brokenness. The gospel invitation to receive a renewed identity in Christ is a relevant proposition in this context. The postmodern person is also generally more open for mentoring and coaching than most persons with a modern mindset, because of the pressure to write their own life narrative.

Finding meaning in life and make a difference is important for the postmodern generation, “Because they perceive life itself as drama or narrative, their major concerns revolve around the process of fabricating stories that can define personal

identity and give purpose and shape to social existence.” (Grenz, 1996, p. 45).

Therefore, involvement in meeting social needs, fighting injustice, etc. will likely be perceived as worthy investment of time and energy. This is a connection point with the missional calling of the gospel. In all of this, the journey itself is important, especially if it can be shared with others.

The postmodern worldview does not stay at the doorpost of the Church in the city, but it also part of the mindset of the church members and visitors (in various degrees). Postmodernity influences the way believers respond to teaching, traditions, liturgy, apologetics, engagement, commitment, community, etc. (The Christian Post, 2004). Learning how to follow Christ and to be a relevant church community, for their own members as well as in reaching the surrounding community, is not optional for the Church in the city. In this study, the question of what it means to be a Church in a postmodern city will be explored in more detail.

### ***The Post-Christian Reality***

#### *A Brief History of the Church in the City*

To be able to place the contemporary Church in Amsterdam and the post-Christian reality into perspective, the history of the Church in the city must be reviewed. In line with the rest of medieval Europe around the year 1300, Roman Catholicism was the main religion of the founders of Amsterdam. As highlighted before, the city council was not in control of the religious leaders of the Church, even when the town became an important pilgrimage after the Miracle of Amsterdam and had many chapels, convents and monasteries. Besides the prominent place of the Church in the city, the defense of land against floods, and trade and commerce were priorities in the focus of the government of the city (Mak, 2001, p. 64).

The rise of Protestantism in Europe after the beginning of the reformation in

1517 caused many conflicts, riots, and wars across Europe, including the 80-year Spanish war. Amsterdam tried to stay outside this conflict, but the Calvinists gained influence in the city, led by Calvinists refugees entering the city from other parts of Europe. The year 1578 was the year of change for Amsterdam. The city governors who supported the Roman Catholic Church could not withstand the Protestant demand for recognition of the Protestant church. They were ousted from the city council and replaced by leaders with other religious and political values. (Mak, 2001, p. 88-89) This so-called “alteration” was done without bloodshed. “The catholics had to leave their churches and offices, but their lives, their trade and their firms remained untouched” (Mak, 2001, p. 89). Amsterdam became a Protestant city.

Before the alteration in Amsterdam, groups of Anabaptists entered the city around 1530. This group had a “revolutionary nature” and “their ideology not only threatened the position of the Church, it challenged the magistracy itself” (Mak, 2001, p. 64). Because they threatened the status quo of life in the city, they were persecuted severely in the city. After a few waves of conflict, the followers of the Anabaptist leader, Menno Simons (Mennonites), were no longer openly seeking confrontation with authorities and became a mainstream church (Mak, 2001, p. 68).

At the same time, there was an influx of sephardic Jews who were refugees from Portugal, fleeing from the threat of the inquisition. There was initial resistance of the city council to grant them rights for building a synagogue. However, in 1614, the first synagogue was founded (Mak, 2001, p. 92-93). The Jewish culture has impacted the city in many ways, including the use of Jewish terms in the city dialect. A nickname for Amsterdam is *Mokum* (*place* in Hebrew). At the end of the 18th century, approximately 10% of the population had a Jewish background (Snel, Abels, Vis, & Bakker, 2000, p. 12). The tragedy of the prosecution and genocide by the



Nazi's during World War II is still a severe scar on in the soul of the city. Still anti-Semitism is a reality in city. In seeking the wholeness of the city, this theme should not be overlooked.

In 1795, the Roman Catholic church regained the freedom to function as a Church again (after a period of illegal and hidden gatherings) and started to build churches and institutions (Snel et al., 2000, p. 151) In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Church in Amsterdam diversified and blossomed. The Dutch Reformed church was the main Protestant church in the city. In this period, however, church-splits caused the emerging of several different types of reformed churches (de Groot, 2010, p. 7, 20, 82).

One of the prominent leaders was Abraham Kuyper, who founded the *Gereformeerde kerk* (Reformed church). He was not only an influential pastor and church leader, but he also founded a political party, a university, a newspaper, and several other institutions (Batteau, 1987. p. 1). Kuyper was convinced that the message of the gospel should impact all spheres of life.<sup>4</sup> Kuyper became Prime Minister of the Netherlands and influenced the political and church landscape of his time. In this period, the Church became a political power factor in the democratic political arena nationally and locally. Kuyper was a pioneer of cultural transformation, only he created a Reformed “silo” of Christian institutes (as discussed above) in the culture in which the values and principles influenced many areas of life. In this study the concept of transformation of the community will not promote the formation new Christian silo, but a contextualized engagement in all spheres of

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<sup>4</sup> A well-known statement of Kuyper that showed his view on Christ and culture is: “there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘Mine!’” (Kuyper & Bratt, 1998, p. 488)

society inspired, informed and empowered by the good news of the Kingdom of God.

In this period, many other churches and ministries entered the city. Among them were the *Salvation Armee* (1865) and *Tot Heil des Volks* (1855). They developed strong ministries to serve the city through serving the social and spiritual needs of citizens, and still exists in the city. In this period several evangelical churches and denominations started organizations and churches in Amsterdam (Snel et al., 2000, p. 7). In 1907, the first Pentecostal church of the Netherlands was founded in Amsterdam. The Pentecostal / Charismatic movement became a significant part of the Church in the city, to a large extent because most of the many immigrant churches that emerged in the city had their roots in this movement (van der Laan, 2012).

This brief history shows that Amsterdam has been a city that was relatively welcoming towards new streams of faith, due to its tolerant culture. Many church movements had their headquarters in Amsterdam, and numerous churches were built in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, the worldview of the city also caused a lower than average percentage of church members to be committed to active church life (Snel et al., 2000, p. 7). In catalyzing a unified church movement in the city, this reality means that there is a large number of different types of churches to engage with, but they represent a very low percentage of the population as active church members. In chapter 6, the research on the number of churches and members in the city is discussed.

### *The Post-Christian Area*

The Netherlands was considered a “Christian nation” more than 50 years ago, with a majority of the people being members and regular attendees of a church, mainly Roman Catholic and traditional Protestants (Reformed churches). “The 1899

census revealed that 2.3 percent of the Dutch population did not belong to a church or any other religion. For Amsterdam, this figure was 5.9 percent. However, between 1900 and 2000, membership of the major protestant churches in Amsterdam decimated to just a few percent of the population.” (de Wit, 2011, p. 2) In 1958 76% of the Dutch population were members of a church. In 2004, this number was 36%, and the expectation for 2020 is that this will drop to 21% (SCP, 2006, p. 38).

In most cities, the number of active church members is much lower. An estimate regarding church attendees of Protestant churches in Amsterdam in 2011 by Willem de Wit (2011): “In a population of almost 750,000 there are about 25,000 regular church visitors, of whom 14,000 go to migrant churches. Unchurchedness has borne fruit tenfold: today the majority of the citizens of Amsterdam have no religious affiliation at all” (de Wit, 2011, p. 2). It is into this context that the church finds itself with an opportunity to make its case for relevance. The research discussed in Chapter 6 will not only discuss the current reality of the number of Christians and churches, but also give some insight in the experience of spirituality of the large groups without an official religious affinity.

According to de Wit (2011), post-Christianity in Amsterdam is a reality that now covers multiple generations. The first generation actually left the Church, often with frustration, hostility, disappointment, or other negative feelings. Most of the current generation had no personal experience with the Church and are deeply estranged from it, as well as from the Bible and the gospel message. There is a strong common understanding in the contemporary mind-set that Christianity is something of the past (de Wit, 2011, p. 3); something that has been tried and did not work. The Church and the Christian message seem to be the least logical place to turn to for answers or help.

## *The Church in post-Christian Amsterdam*

After more than two decades of building relationships with leaders in the city it is my observation that it takes time for believers and churches to deal with the psychology of years of decline, loss of visibility, and cultural relevance of the Church in the view of many in the city. It is a process that includes experiences like grief, anger, and frustration towards the surrounding culture and even to God, confusion regarding identity, etc. This process is still ongoing in parts of the church, especially in the traditional churches, which have been in the city for a long time and have deeply experienced the change in membership and their role in the culture of the city.

However, based on signs like the topics of consecrations among leaders and publications as well as an increasing reporting of church plants and missional initiatives,<sup>5</sup> churches and ministries in the city are in the process of finding their identity and calling in the current reality. Author de Wit (2011) formulates this challenge in his book, *On the Way to the Living God*, as follows. My message “is not the desperate attempt to safeguard myself and others from becoming post-Christians. Rather, it is the invitation to move beyond the post-Christian condition. The question is not—how one can still be a Christian? —but—how one can already be a post-post-Christian?” (de Wit, 2011, p. 5).

The complexity of mobilizing the Church in the city is that the churches are in various stages of dealing with the post-Christian reality. Some are still in the grieving phase; others are searching for new ways, while others are already fully engaged in

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<sup>5</sup> Many of the denominations in the country, both from traditional as well evangelical pentecostal background are engaged in church planting and missional activities. The majority of these backgrounds work together with theological training institutes and missional supporting organizations in *Kerklab* (Church-laboratory). More information on church planting activity, research and missional initiatives can be found at <http://www.kerklab.nl>.

missional expression in this post-Christian culture. A picture of the various responses of churches to the post-Christian reality are illustrated in the findings of de Wit (2011).

First, there is the conservative or confessional Reformed answer: keep to the status quo of the church as defined in confessions of some centuries ago, and as established in practices that have been received from past generations.

Second, there is the liberal Reformed answer: give in to the post-Christian condition and adapt beliefs and practices accordingly.

Third, there is the evangelical Reformed answer: freely adapt all forms to the present condition but maintain the fundamental Christian beliefs and ethics of the past.

Fourth, there is the catholic Reformed answer: exploit the rich heritage of the church of all places and times to respond effectively to the post-Christian condition. (de Wit, 2011, p. 4)

A citywide movement has to be sensitive to the different ways the current reality of the Church in the culture is experienced, and at the same time be a catalyst for change towards fruitfulness and relevance in the current reality of the city. An example of careful yet creative dealing with the differences in the process of adopting to the post-Christian reality is found in re-planting of existing reformed churches.<sup>6</sup> There are several of these examples in Amsterdam, mainly with the Amsterdam in Beweging (AIB) network.

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<sup>6</sup> While an existing small group of older church members of a traditional church that was not vital enough for surviving continue their familiar services and traditions, a church planter uses their building and the infrastructure to plant a new missional community of faith. This new plant will have different expressions and activities but is connected relationally and formally with the older group. In this way, the foundations and prayers of the former older generation is honored, but the adaption of the new post-Christian reality is not slowed down by them. De Boer published a study on this subject: (de Boer, 2007, p. 29 - 30).

Another complicating factor is that the post-Christian label does not apply to all of the many cultural backgrounds of residents in the city: many people from Africa or South America are still being raised in a predominantly Christian context. Another large group includes Muslim citizens who have who have never lived in a Christian worldview and are now entering a post-Christian culture in the city. In contextualizing the good news of the Kingdom of God, the leaders of the churches face the challenge to lead their people in skills and vision to embrace a complexity of backgrounds, stages, and worldviews.

The fact that in a city like Amsterdam only a few percent of the people have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord has to be a compelling reason for the Church to pray and work together for the city. The biblical vision of the shalom of the Kingdom of God for the city includes the reconciliation of the relationship of people with God (Col. 1:20-22). The Church is almost a forgotten concept in the mind of most people of the city, but the Lord of the Church has not forgotten the city or its residents. There is a new opportunity to introduce Jesus and His Kingdom to people, like painting on a blank canvas. This opportunity demands a thorough understanding of the Kingdom of God and of the Church and its calling in a way that is contextualized for the realities of the city.

### **What Part of the Context Will be Influenced by this Final Project?**

This study advocates that the engagement of the Church in the city has the opportunity to impact several topics of the described context. Poverty alleviation is one of the biblical priorities of the people of God in this world; therefore, it is one of the priorities of transformational impact. Leaders can reveal the facade of “not much but sufficient,” exposing the loss of dignity of the poor, their stories and aspirations, and the loss to the common good with so many of the community sidelined just

getting by.

This priority requires a clear understanding of poverty in Amsterdam and the development of a non-materialistic view of poverty alleviation as proposed in this study. Training the Church to develop this view will prevent the Church from being blinded by the deception that Amsterdam is a city where material poverty is not an issue of concern, and it will help the Church to be ready to increase its role in this area when the government is decreasing involvement and lowering the quality of the social safety net. Another assumption of the impact of the project is related to the post-Christian reality. The outcomes should be contributing to at least two aspects: first, a growing awareness of the Church of the post-Christian reality and a relevant way to be Church in the midst of it; secondly, the growth of the number of followers of Jesus in the city. The first element implies a transformation of the Church to become vital and relevant in the midst of the post-Christian culture. It must move from frustration and grief to a new identity of the people of God for these times, with a contextualized understanding of its mission. The same applies to the postmodern worldview. It is crucial for the Church to find the opportunities offered in postmodern culture and to contextualize the gospel and the community of believers in a way that is truly perceived and experienced as good news.

The second aspect is the realization that in order to transform the city and its worldview, the number of followers of Jesus must increase. Disciple-making and church planting are at the core of the calling of the Church. This study seeks to inspire and catalyze disciple-making movements in the city, reaching people from every nation and (sub) culture.

Regarding the growing number of Muslims in Amsterdam, an outcome of this project will be to prepare believers in Amsterdam to love the Muslims in their city

and to engage in personal and ministry relationships with them. This is done through sharing stories of hope and offering training on how to connect and reach Muslims.

In this chapter, several aspects of the context of the city have been reviewed. The Church in the city is in the midst of it. It is a small minority group in the city that is still rather compartmentalized and has been intimidated by their own struggle to survive. Yet this study will show that many leaders experience a challenge by the Spirit to “move from concern and worry to compassion for the realities of the community” (Platt, 2017). It is absolutely clear from this chapter that the vision to engage in context in the city cannot be done by human power. It requires inspiration from the love of Christ and hope by the work of the Holy Spirit. It requires leaders who feel compassion to join hands and hearts for the sake of the city. This project is designed to facilitate that desire and in the next chapter I will explore relevant literature that can help shape the vision and the practice of this movement.



## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Every transformation in the direction of love and justice in every dimension of society, both private and public, is an element of the Kingdom of God.

– Langmead

Chapter 2 provided a few sketches of the context in which the believers in Amsterdam are placed to live out their calling as the body of Christ in the city. This chapter highlights a set of themes that are significant for how this calling can be understood and put into practice. A few resources that contribute to the conversation of each theme are reviewed. These themes are 1) the engagement of the Church in the city; 2) urban church planting and disciple-making; 3) contextualizing the gospel and ministry in a city with a diversity of cultures and worldviews; 4) relevant ministries for the city; and 5) city-movement leadership;

#### **The Engagement of the Church in the City: An Agent of Transformation?**

*To Transform a City* (Swanson et al., 2010) is a book that addresses many topics that are relevant to this theme, including the history and definitions of city transformation, the importance of cities, the understanding of the gospel of the Kingdom and the mission of God in the context of city transformation, collaboration, and unity, etc. By doing this, the authors systematically unpack the keywords in the subtitle of the book: “*whole Church, whole gospel, whole city.*” The book asserts the centrality of the holistic understanding of the Kingdom of God for the Church and to move away from dualism. To avoid dualism in the missional understanding of the Church from a Kingdom paradigm, it “... involves introducing people to the King (Jesus), and it involves bringing his perspective, his values, and his generative

structures into the world in which we live” (loc. 1325 of 4226). In making the Kingdom of God the primary core of the calling of the Church for the city, the authors confirm its central place in the Kingdom ecosystem model used for this study.

Swanson et. al., (2010) encourage the Church to translate the biblical principles of involvement to actual contextualized ministry based on the assessment of the realities of the city. However, the authors stay at a high level abstract level; they do not provide specific approaches how to contextualize it in a post-Christian postmodern city. Also, they do not provide methods or tools for exegeting cities, required for this study regarding Amsterdam.

On a generic level, Swanson et. al (2010) offer a good starting point for implementation. They suggest to start with imagining what transformation of the city could actually change. “Cultural change will happen only as believers create a more attractive and compelling picture of what life can be in the city” (loc. 1059 of 4226). The need for this discipline of prayerful “prophetic imagination” is an important observation that should not be overlooked in the process of mobilizing the Church in cultural and social engagement. If not, it can easily become simply trying to do good.

In the book *Die Welt Umarmen [To Embrace the World]* Johannes Reimer (2014) seeks to help the Church to find its future in a post-Christian culture and “not to surrender to this culture, but to find the right missional positioning ...and calling” (p. 12). The book gives a useful analysis of the understanding of the cultural engagement of the Church in the New Testament Scriptures as well as in church history.

A key element in Reimer’s (2014) book is the exegesis of the Greek term *ecclesia* that is used in the Church in the New Testament. The application of the insights for the use of the concept of *ecclesia* is rightly connected with the calling of

the Church to be culture makers and culture preservers in the city. Reimer states this as follows.

... the Church is an ecclesia and therefore, also a social-political reality for a place. She is responsible as the contemporary carrier of the mission of God in the world. She is called to make all nations as His disciples (Mat. 28:19). This however implies both a spiritual as well as a socio-cultural change as result of the gospel. (p. 12)

Reimer (2014) places the calling of the Church within the trinitarian mission of God. The *Missio Dei* is the foundation of the mission of the Church towards the world. The *Missio Christi* is the foundation of the incarnational method of engagement of the Church in the world. The *Missio Spiritu* is the foundation of missional calling to expand the Kingdom of God in the world (p. 160). This grounding of the mission of the Church in the trinitarian revelation of God can offer a solid foundation underneath the contextualization of the Kingdom theology for the diverse Church in Amsterdam.

Although the Reimer (2014) provides an outstanding theological and practical foundation of understanding the missional and transformational calling of the Church, the applications in the book are written for the local church level only. It does not include the level of the whole Church in the city and the structures and leadership required for developing it. The analyzed examples are also focused on local churches and their visions and practices of wholistic engagement in the community. This study will use the foundational work of Reimer and apply it to the citywide Church as well.

Finally, the Reimer (2014) gives some practical approaches for contextualization of ministry and engagement in the city. These applications in the book are aimed at cities within the German post-Christian culture, which has many

similarities with Amsterdam. This makes this book even more useful for leaders in Amsterdam.

In *Center Church*, Tim Keller (2012a) writes from his experience with the Redeemer Church he planted in 1989 in Manhattan and with the City to City network. Instead of presenting the “Redeemer model,” the intend of the book is to help the reader establish one contextualized theological vision on the Church and its role in the city. A contextualized theological vision is defined by Keller as “a faithful restatement of the gospel with rich implications for life, ministry, and mission in a type of culture at a moment in history” (p.19). Keller places this theological vision as the balance between the theological doctrines of faith and practical ministry in the city.

Keller’s (2012a) book is structured around three pillars: the gospel, the city and the movement of the Church in the city. He starts from the orthodox-reformed understanding of the gospel, and from there he points out the necessity, the process, and the boundaries of contextualization. Keller also emphasizes the importance of being called to a place, and of city engagement as part of the mission of the Church. Serving the community with relevant ministries and equipping believers to understand their work as a Kingdom calling are essential ingredients of this engagement.

Keller (2012a) spends a significant part of the book to analyzing models of engagement of the Church in the culture through the lens of his reformed theology and his experience in city movements in New York (Appendix A, Figure 5). This analysis, however, is rather theoretical and theological. It lacks conversations with leaders that actually apply these models and express their experiences.

Keller (2012a) acknowledges a transformational role of the Church in the city, but on the other hand is cautious not to become too triumphant. He tries to find a

balanced center, by learning from the strengths of all the models, while avoiding elements he deems unhealthy or unbalanced. The conclusion he arrives at is summarized as follows.

We should expect healing from sin in all areas of life — private and public, within the church and out in culture. We must see the gathered church as the great vehicle for this restoration — and yet individual Christians out in the world can be said to be representatives of the kingdom as well. We cannot separate our spiritual or church life from our secular or cultural life. Every part of our life — vocational, civic, familial, recreational, material, sexual, financial, political — is to be presented as a “living sacrifice” to God (Rom 12:1–2). (loc. 6690 of 11994)

This conclusion supports the idea that the gospel has a transformative impact on all spheres of life, but it applies it mainly to the life of the believers only. The question of whether or not the Kingdom can change the well-being of all spheres of the culture in general is not answered. This is a vital question for the Church in a highly post-Christian secularized city. This study proposes in the next chapter that the answer to this question is positive, Kingdom influence is not only private but also cultural.

Keller’s (2012a) *Center Church* is a helpful manual for church leaders to develop a contextualized theological and ministry vision for their own cities. The Dutch version of the book makes it even more helpful for this purpose by inserting short contributions from Dutch theologians who reflect on application in their contexts. *Center Church* is also a vital resource for this study because a movement of church planters in the city (*Amsterdam in Beweging*) is inspired and trained by the City to City network. Therefore, the language and the approach of *Center Church* will

be easily recognized and will help build on what God is already doing in the Church of the city.

In *Transformation: Change the Marketplace and Change the World*, it is Silvosó's (2007) goal to shift the paradigms of individual believers and of the Church in order to realize that the scope of the good news of the gospel is broader than personal salvation and internal change only. For the author, the proclamation of Jesus that the Kingdom of God is near has transformational implications for the conditions of life, relationships, work, communities, cities, and nations.

Silvosó's (2007) main emphasis of the *Transformation: Change the Marketplace and Change the World* is to connect the mission of the Church with the market place by developing a biblical foundation for a theology of work as well as a theology of transformation of the market place. He arrives at five critical paradigms for transformation that are pivotal for change: discipling nations (not just individuals); reclaiming the importance of the marketplace for the mission of the Church; looking at work as worship; becoming salt and light in a dark world; and the priority of eliminating systemic poverty.

The development of a theological vision for engagement in market place transformation of the Church in the city is important for this study. Silvosó (2007) describes several real-life testimonies from different parts of the world to illustrate the practical applications of his vision.

The strength of Silvosó's (2007) book is that it highlights the relevance of the Church in engaging the marketplace as places of influence (business and government) in order to transform a community. However, it lacks, in my view, the element of presence and ministry in the community "at neighborhood level." The proposal

worked out in chapter 4 of this study is that marketplace ministry as well as community engagement is part of the calling of the Church.

The proposed priorities of Silviso's (2007) book are to remove corruption in the marketplace and systemic poverty in the community. These priorities need contextualization in Amsterdam because these topics might not address the biggest needs of the city. However, the relevance of the vision to embrace marketplace leaders as ministers of the Kingdom is absolutely vital for this study, and the proposed paradigms are worthy to be adopted by the Church in the city.

*The Spirit of Christ and the Postmodern City* (Grigg, 2009) is also a reflection on missional theology and centers around the question, "What is the relationship of the Spirit of Christ to the transformation of a postmodern city?" (p. 4). Grigg has a long personal history in city transformational ministry within different environments, like the slums of Manila, as well as in a postmodern city like Auckland, New Zealand. His first-hand experience of a citywide spiritual revival in Auckland caused him to rethink city transformation in light of such a revival.

Grigg (2009) proposes a new hermeneutic of "transformational conversations" (p. 13-80) based on an analysis of the biblical picture of an "ideal city" and on the brokenness of the city and its postmodern culture. He proposes to have these conversations inside the Church, but even more with and within the urban community. The conversational approach and the topics Grigg proposes will be valuable for the Amsterdam context. The challenge for faith leaders in Amsterdam is to find ways and places to facilitate these kinds of conversations with stakeholders in the city.

In searching what revival-like visitation of God's presence through the Holy Spirit would mean in the context of city transformation, Grigg (2009) analyzes

historical revivals as well as the revival experienced in Auckland. Most revivals in history only had a limited effect on the social and civic life in the city. Grigg, however sees the potential for revivals to bring deep and lasting change in the city. The author proposes goals and processes for this kind of “transformational revival”. An important precondition he suggests for a transformational revival is to have a solid and widely shared holistic Kingdom theology that is contextualized for the city. This is in line with the first layer of the Kingdom ecosystem model of this study.

Grigg’s (2009) book uniquely covers the theological foundations, the cultural analyses as well as applications for city wide movements. The starting point of the book, however, assumes that there is already movement in the city of spiritual renewal as well as churches and ministries working together closely in the city. Grigg’s contribution is how to bring this to the next level of impact and transformation in the community. In the case of Amsterdam, the citywide movement is still in the early phases. I would welcome the story of the first phases in Auckland, as well as the stories of implementation of the proposals of Grigg for a deeper transformational city revival, especially the implantation of the transformational conversations and the conversation with the postmodern context.

The challenge with this “revival-factor” is that it is not a common concept and language for all parts of the Church. However, the power, gifts and outpouring of the Holy Spirit is increasingly embraced by groups outside the Pentecostal movement in the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> Also, the postmodern mind-set is expected to be more open for the

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<sup>1</sup> Clear signs of this are the large number of members and leaders from traditional churches participating in conferences organized by the Pentecostal movement like *Opwekking* Pentecost conference (See Opwekking Conference: <http://www.opwekking.nl/conferenties/pinksterconferentie>). Also growing renewal movements within the traditional churches like New Wine and Evangelisch Werkverband organizing conferences on themes related to baptism with the Holy Spirit, healing, gifts of the Spirit, etc. (There is More conference: see <http://www.thereismore.nl> and <http://zomerconferentie.new-wine.nl>)



experience-based spirituality than a culture with a pure modern view. Finally, the post-Christian reality of the city with only a few percent of followers of Christ should ignite the conversation about the need for a spiritual revival for the sake of the city.

Stefan Paas (2015), the author of *Vreemdelingen en Priesters* [*Strangers and Priests*] is a missiologist from a traditional reformed background who moved from the Bible belt in the Netherlands to Amsterdam and was confronted with a deeply secularized culture in the city. In his book he reflects on what the missional approach of the Church should be in this post-Christian minority situation. A remarkable statement of Paas based on his assessment of the history of the Church in Europe is “if 10% of the people in the future would be in the flock of Jesus, that is what one should expect” (loc. 672 of 5361). Although this statement is made to downplay the expectancy of the Christianity of the past, this 10% goal is still a big challenge for the Church in Amsterdam (See outcomes of the estimation of the number of active Church-members in the city, in Chapter 6).

Paas (2015) continues with an evaluation of various missional models or views of the Church: “all-citizens” Church; counter-culture Church; church growth focused Church; Church as transformational force; inside-out Church; and Church as power force. Paas critiques most of these models for having a paradigm that either substitutes Church with the world, or of conquering and changing the world in order to make it Church. From my perspective, the evaluation of Paas is far too caricatural. In my experience, the motives and vision behind most of these models are born out of genuine desires of leaders and churches to search for ways to bless the culture with the good news of the Kingdom and a longing to see many be reconciled with God through Christ.

The proposal of the Paas (2015) to view the Church in western Europe as the people of God being in exile is absolutely useful in the Amsterdam context. The same applies to the emphasis on the priestly role of the people of God in the culture, representing the culture for God and being a prophetic community to the culture. The encouragement of a spirituality for the Church in a minority setting with a strong emphasis on doxology, is a valuable assertion for the Church in a post-Christian culture. However, the book fails to emphasize that God often uses a remnant to restore and rebuild the ruins of the city and the culture in the story of Israël in Scripture, (see examples in the books of Nehemiah and Ezra, and prophetic texts in Isaiah 58 and 61).

### **Urban Church Planting and Disciple Making Movements**

This section focuses on the theme of church planting and making disciples, which is the focus of the second layer of the Kingdom ecosystem. The Word Made Flesh (Langmead, 2004) explores the missiology of the Church and proposes a theological foundation for “Incarnational missiology.” The author suggests that the incarnational nature of God and an incarnational Christology provides the motivation, the power and the model for incarnational mission (Langmead, 2004, p. 58).

Langmead (2004) also distills seven important requirements (Langmead, 2004, p. 36) that characterize incarnational mission and develops a three-dimensional framework for assessing incarnational missions: 1) Jesus as the pattern for mission (disciple-making, and incarnational presence); 2) the presence of the risen Christ (living “in Christ”) as the enabling power for mission; 3) God’s incarnating dynamic in history (missio-Dei) as the ultimate foundation for mission (Langmead, 2004, p. 292). Based on this framework, the author analyzes the missiology of seven main Christian traditions. A major conclusion of the book is that the missiology all of the

researched traditions is increasingly moving towards an incarnational understanding. Each of the streams of the Church has their own unique emphasis and expressions of the three-dimensional framework.

Langmead (2004) is skilled in using his framework in order to analyze the missiology of church streams. However, without the insight behind the framework as a result of a thorough study of the mission of God, the three statements of the framework are too generic to be applied by others. It would be helpful if the author added other characteristics to look for in an assessment of a missiology.

Langmead (2004) also concludes that there is a broad growing understanding among the traditions “that the Kingdom ought to be central in missions, not the Church” (p. 193). To put it in other words, “that the church is not the sender, but the sent one; mission is no longer simply the work of the church but is the church at work” (p. 167).

The suggested application of incarnational missions by the Langmead (2004) is defined in the context of postmodern Australia. Unfortunately, this section is short, and the author only spends a few pages on the missional incarnation in the postmodern context. The application is rudimentary as the author states, “...we that cannot discuss which elements (of the postmodern culture) can be embraced and what needs to be rejected” (p. 242). To have Langmead propose a full contextualized incarnational missional approach for a postmodern post-Christian environment would have been added value. Fortunately, his proposal of elements of an incarnational missiology for the church is solid and contributes to the understanding of the mission of the Church as proposed in this study.

In *Contagious Disciple Making* (Watson & Watson, 2014), the writers analyze the characteristics of successful discipleship and church planting movements started

by their organization in different parts of the world. Biblical patterns for discipleship are implemented, with an emphasis on (ongoing) discipleship and multiplication (disciples who make disciples). The authors also describe the lessons learned from many years of training and coaching discipleship movements in different cultural and religious contexts. They include discipleship group formats, ways of training disciple makers, and principles for multiplication of disciples.

The approach of Watson and Watson (2014) on how to reach and disciple people from a certain (sub) culture (called “silo” in the book) is a useful contribution. They encourage not to take people out of their silo while being disciplined. This provides opportunity to coach them to contextualize the gospel to the culture of the silo and to engage them in the process of making disciples among others in that silo (p. 109).

The perspective of starting indigenous discipleship movements within many ethnic and cultural groups or clans could be an important perspective in the diversity of Amsterdam. Another emphasis from Watson and Watson (2014) is to encourage new disciples in a process of inductive Bible study, rather than teacher-based Bible study classes. For a discipleship movement, the disciple should be able to read the Word, hear God speak through the Word, and obey the Word they have received.

Watson and Watson’s (2014) book focusses on the start of the discipleship process (making new disciples) and on multiplication. It provides little instruction for ongoing discipleship (personal transformation, following Christ in the workplace, marriage, etc.) or with the dilemmas of the Muslim culture. Also, there is nothing on how to create relevant house churches of ex-Muslim believers. While this information is much needed in Amsterdam with a growing Muslim population, the strong focus on making new disciples might be the major concern for the Church in Amsterdam.

*Miraculous Movements: How hundreds of Thousands of Muslims are Falling in Love with Jesus* by Trousdale (2012) is a book that documents more than 20 stories of the transforming impact of the gospel of Jesus Christ on Muslim people groups in Africa. These stories show how village people, sheiks, imams, and entire mosques are touched by the revelation of the living Christ. They present a picture of how new believers are trained and mentored in discipleship and church planting movements started through the work of City Team (the mission organization of the author).

The principles the Trousdale (2012) derives from the stories reveal how the power of prayer and simple obedience-based discipleship and training has transformed numerous Muslim communities. These discipleship principles are described in more detail in Watson and Watson's (2014) book *Contagious Disciple Making*. The stories provide insight in the implementation and impact of these principles.

This book is valuable for this study because it generates hope for the readers through the stories about what God is doing in the Muslim world, even in the most radicalized Muslim communities. The stories are signs of hope and can help readers to overcome the fear to reach out to Muslims, and it provides principles and methods that have been proven successful, in parts of Asia and Africa. In the Dutch context, I do not know if there are discipleship movements, except for the Fathers House Movement among ex-Muslims from Iran and Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> Testimonies from across the world confirm that muslims from this region are open to be reached and discipled (Torres, 2016). People from other regions like Turkey and Morocco seem much

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<sup>2</sup> This movement grew to more than 30 house churches among immigrants from Afghanistan and Iran, within a few years. The movement doubled in number of disciples in between 2014 and 2016. (Fathers House movement, 2018) The approach of this movement has many similarities with the principles of the book of Trousdale.

harder to reach. It would have been helpful if the authors identified the characteristics of people that are more open to this kind of movement. Also, among western Europeans, discipleship movements are hard to find, or grow at a different speed. Stories from the authors about their experiences in western countries would have been a strong addition.

However, the approach is biblical, and it is a way for the Church to see real growth in disciples that increases the percentage of believers in the city. The stories from Trousdale's (2012) *Miraculous movements: How hundreds of thousands of Muslims are falling in love with Jesus*, as well as the testimony of the Fathers House movement, is an encouragement for believers in the city that can result in an informed and bold effort to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with many Muslim immigrants. Even more, these principles might be fruitful in reaching and discipling groups with other cultural backgrounds.

Neil Cole writer of *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church*, (Cole, 2010) is a leader who has been used by the Lord to start networks of rapidly multiplying churches (Church Multiplication Associates (CMA)), in Western postmodern cultures. The central message of this book is that the current realities of global postmodern world reveal that a radical upgrade of the Church is needed, similar to the fact that computers need a fundamental upgrade for a new generation of software. Cole's proposals for this upgrade are based on a valid analysis of changes of the church in history and contemporary culture. His main proposal is that churches should become more relational, more incarnational, and more organic in nature.

This "redesigning" of the Church brings Cole (2010) to reflect on the fundamental calling or mission of the Church, which is making disciples of Jesus the

King. The Cole states: “We do not start churches to make disciples. We must make disciples, and then start churches” (loc. 1119 of 5045).

Cole (2010) states that leaders should dare to shape the Church in a way that is designed to facilitate the process of embracing people in the postmodern world and lead them on the journey of discipleship. He also emphasizes the need for faith in the power of the gospel to change lives and to plant this gospel in lives of people. “We want to plant the gospel, and the result will be a band of followers on mission together . . . a church” (loc. 1487 of 5045).

The testimony of Cole (2010) regarding his ability to multiply disciples and plant reproducing simple churches is impressive and much needed. However, the emphasis of the proposed missional DNA is strongly focused on making disciples only. The other elements of a holistic missiology, including serving the needs of the community, are missing. I question the dependency on strong outgoing leaders to keep this movement going. The book does not suggest how to maintain the momentum of multiplication while attending to care for other elements of church-life, including pastoral care and dealing with broken people who need the attention of the church over a long period of time.

The message of redesigning the expression of Church and discipleship approaches is relevant for this study. The majority of the people in Amsterdam do not have a picture of what the Church should look like; therefore, leaders have the opportunity to shape contextualized expressions that are based on the biblical calling or the Church and concepts within the surrounding (sub)culture.

### **Contextualizing Ministry in a Culturally Diverse City**

The high cultural diversity and the strong postmodern and post-Christian worldviews of Amsterdam are severe challenges for the Church in the city.

Mobilizing the Church as a transformational ecosystem in Amsterdam requires sensitivity and skills for cross-cultural engagement, as well as the wisdom to contextualize the gospel in the context of postmodern, post-Christian worldviews. Finally, the question is whether or not the culture or worldview can be transformed.

A book that is dealing with this last question is *Culture Making* (Crouch, 2008). The author uses the first part of the book to raise awareness of the joy and the responsibility that humans are intended to be co-creators who shape the culture of their place. In calling the human race to be culture-makers, there is an inherent risk that they will make things worse instead of better. However, throughout the book Crouch presents a hopeful picture from Scripture showing how God's power and grace will always give new opportunities to redeem a culture. This leads to the conviction of the author that the resurrection of Christ is the central inspiration and foundation for cultural transformation.

Crouch (2008) notes, however, that the transformation of culture will take a long time. "There is no such thing as instant culture" (Crouch, 2008, loc. 1944 of 4717). Culture is always grounded in time and in a place. Another helpful nuance is that it is God's signature way to use the least, the tiny beginnings and the unexpected, for His work of creation. "On a small enough scale, nearly everyone has the power to change the culture" (Crouch, 2008, loc. 3056 of 4717). The book provides a useful balance between boldly advocating the calling of God's people for partnering with Him in creating culture through living out of Kingdom principles by the inspiration of the Spirit.

Crouch's (2008) application is focused on finding one's gifting, then finding two or three others that share that gift and start creating things together, trusting that it can multiply and inspire others. This is wonderful, but also a "soft" approach in the



midst of a broken culture. The missing element for me is the element of advocacy or prophetic action against culture making in the world that is not righteous, pure, or honoring human dignity, by exposing it and/or creating an alternative. Another missing element is how to use modern culture influencing tools like social media in a way that influences culture in a godly way.

Crouch (2008) does bring out the fact that culture-making is something everyone can participate in. One can expect culture-making through such practical things as building relationships, sharing stories, sharing meals, creating arts, doing innovation, etc. This influential engagement in culture-making should be done with the realism of the implications of time, place, and scale.

Another valuable resource for reflection on shaping the worldview of a culture through the influence of the Kingdom of God is *Truth and Transformation: A Manifesto for Ailing Nations* (Mangalwadi, 2012). The unique perspective of the Indian author Mangalwadi, combined with a well-informed insight in the Western culture, positions him to address developments one can hardly see from the inside of the culture. The author highlights the blessing of Judeo-Christian roots in the Western culture, which he sees as the baseline for our high level of well-being, wealth, and the low level of corruption. He warns the West about the dangers of leaving this foundation through humanistic, post-Christian, and postmodern influences in the culture of western Europe. In comparing the fruit of the Judeo-Christian roots with that of a culture like India, he reveals what is at stake if the Western culture departs from these biblical foundations.

Mangalwadi (2012) also brings theological arguments against a dualistic gospel that lacks cultural engagement. He specifically points to the element of the supernatural dimension of Kingdom as a valuable contribution to the transformational

conversation. Mangalwadi pleads for attention to the spiritual influences behind evil and brokenness in a way that makes sense to the Western mind. “Without this supernatural worldview, it is impossible to understand adequately how sociopolitical authority can degenerate to the levels of cruelty and wickedness that it so often does” (loc. 1393 of 4376). He urges the Church to take up the charge for spiritual and social-civic transformation of the culture and its worldview. He encourages leaders to give themselves radically for this cause because there is much at stake. “To take up your cross means to become a rebel, to fight a corrupt establishment with moral weapons, to be a troublemaker and bear the consequences of that” (loc. 1208 of 4376).

I see Mangalwadi’s (2012) book as a wake-up call for the Church to not take the loss of Christian values of the culture for granted, especially in Amsterdam who has been a frontrunner and a trendsetter in cultural changes as discussed in Chapter 2. His call for radical action, however, needs a thorough exegesis and prayerful sensitivity in order to find the priorities and the real corruptions in the context of a given city. This study offers a starting point for assessing the needs and strengths of Amsterdam. The next step is to know where the entry points are towards changing the brokenness of the culture. When this is clear, then the leaders can take the charge of Mangalwadi to heart and fight a radical battle for change.

In *The Gospel in the Western Context* (Roest, 2016), Gert-Jan Roest makes a valuable contribution to contextualize the gospel in Western cultures as a scholar and from his experience as a missional pioneer and church planter in Amsterdam. This book gives an insightful description of the postmodern, post-Christian culture of western Europe. Roest analyzes the cultural contextualization of two theologians: Hendrikus Berkhof (from the Netherlands) and Colin Gunton (from the United

Kingdom), in order to formulate “contours of a western gospel at the beginning of the 21st century” (p. 241). He derives several useful approaches from the efforts of the two theologians and points to their weakness for the current Western context. Roest adds his own findings for improving the lenses of contextualization. In this effort he identifies three main idolatries of the culture that are absolutely relevant for the Amsterdam context.

- “The focus on the power we adore and trust: the power of human agency” (p. 318)
- “The focus on the kind of person we adore and want to be: a free and individual, self-sufficient and self-cultivating” (p. 319)
- “The centeredness on immanent prosperity and security” (p. 319)

Based on these cultural idols, Roest (2016) presents some examples of reframing elements of the gospel that address these idols and minister to underlying fears and pride. The book ends with offering these first steps that contain crucial elements but does not provide a process for working with them. Questions that remain include the following. What are good ways to get the attention and the credits from a secular postmodern person to present this gospel? What are good ways to help people discover the false security of these idols. How can the Church provide examples of hope in lives of followers of Jesus that are transformed by the gospel? I am convinced that the leaders in Amsterdam will be able to work on these applications because the components offered by Roest are essential to bring future transformative discipleship in the context of Amsterdam.

*Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Volf, 1996) is an outstanding book that deals with themes like identity, otherness, and reconciliation. Volf analyzes in depth the mechanisms of

exclusion of the human heart. He shows the theological and practical implications of exclusion and dealing with otherness by labeling people into categories, and how these mechanisms can only be resolved by the message of the cross of Jesus Christ as the road to reconciliation. The book describes the biblical pathway of reconciliation which starts the willingness to embrace of the other party, solely based on the foundation of being fellow humans created in the image of God. Followed with forgiveness and the process of healing of memories and trauma. However, the book leaves unanswered details on implementing these principles in dealing with conflicts where emotions are strong and trauma reactions and pain tend to overpower normal reasoning and drive behavior.

The foundational work of Volf (1996) will help the Church in Amsterdam to address underlying issues that emerge from negative experiences, misunderstandings, traumas, and prejudices that are amplified by the growing diversity in the city and in the churches. When the message of the book and its outlined pathway of reconciliation is embraced by the Church in the city, it will increase the health of the Church in the city in cross-cultural relationship as well the effectiveness of cross-cultural leadership teams and collaboration in the city.

*Leading across Cultures: Effective Ministry and Mission in the Global Church.* (Plueddemann, 2009) is a resource that provides insight in cross-cultural leadership. As Volf's (1996) *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* lays a philosophical and theological foundation of otherness, identity and reconciliation, *Leading Across Culture* shows how culture influences view of leadership and how to distinguish between cultural preferences, values, and biblical foundational values and principles. Simple steps include the following.

1. “uncover your own unconscious cultural values” (loc. 584 of 2311)
2. “discover the cultural values of others” (loc. 588 of 2311)
3. “look for biblical principles of leadership in all of Scripture” (loc. 590 of 2311)

The book shows the different approaches of cultures that have other perspectives on various to various topics that are relevant to leadership.

To assess cultural difference, Plueddemann advises the cultural research and models of Hofstede (2001)<sup>3</sup> and the GLOBE study<sup>4</sup> by House, R. J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P., & Gupta, V. (2004). These are useful tools that show the cultural scores on significant cultural characteristics (context, power distance, individualism, and ambiguity).

However, the proposed approach by Plueddemann (2009) and the use of these tools work well in the case of doing leadership activities in another culture, but it falls short when working in a multi-cultural melting pot with leaders from many different backgrounds and generations. Process guidance for dealing with cultural differences in these mixed settings would have been helpful for application leadership in citywide processes in Amsterdam. The contribution of this book remains valuable asset of leadership curriculum in Amsterdam because it brings awareness and insight to leaders in cultural matters that will serve the process in growing together in effective and respectful leadership.

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<sup>3</sup> Geert Hofstede developed a model of five cultural characteristics to evaluate and compare cultures and published research of many cultures based on these. See (Hofstede, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> The GLOBE study is a research program of cultural leadership characteristics of 62 countries, based on six leadership styles and nine cultural characteristics (including Hofstede’s model). See (House et al, 2004)

The book *A Missional Orthodoxy: Theology and Ministry in a Post-Christian Context* (Tyra, 2013) discusses the challenge to contextualize the message of the gospel in reaching out to other cultural contexts, without losing its power and truth. Tyra proposes that it is crucial to develop a clear understanding of the central meaning of the gospel of the Kingdom, and to keep this in focus while reframing the gospel towards another culture. The core of the gospel as Tyra presents this in this writing is too limited in my opinion. It has a good basic Christology, but it lacks statements about the Father and the work of the Spirit. Also, the transformative power of the gospel (the reason why it is good news) is not included.

Tyra's (2013) book is designed to help the reader to develop a theology that is both missional (contextualized) and orthodox (holding a firm foundation in the biblical teaching). *A Missional Orthodoxy: Theology and Ministry in a Post-Christian Context* is particularly useful for the Church in Amsterdam because in the second part of the book the author works out a contextualize theology for people with a postmodern mind-set.

### **Relevant Ministries for the City**

The third ring of the Kingdom ecosystem is comprised of a spectrum of ministries that are relevant to the needs of the city. The following resources will help the Church to have a biblical understanding and a healthy approach in ministering to the felt needs of the city.

The *New Parish* (Sparks, Soerens, & Freisen, 2014) is a reflection on the stories of the three authors in their discovery of the significant relationship between the place and the calling of the Church. They share the experiences of transforming their churches into faith communities with a contemporary paradigm of a parish. The definition they use for the term *parish* is to “follow Jesus into your neighborhood with

fellow followers of Jesus. Allow the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ to form your imagination for faithful presence” (p. 45).

The motivation for this change of paradigm is to confront the lies of the postmodern culture in the city, which Sparks et al. (2014) identify as: “the myth of individualism and ... living above place” (p. 23). The first is the denial of the dependence on relationships for human health, and the second is described as developing a pseudo-reality that keep people from experiencing real relationships with the people around them. The book’s response to these lies in the Western culture is as follows. “If the nature of God as Trinity models your relational calling, then the incarnation of God demonstrates your missional calling to live into time and place” (p. 26).

The concepts and principles offered in the *The New Parish* Sparks et al. (2014) are rich, but the language is more poetic than practical. The book encourages listening to the community, but it does not give guidelines for analyzing the neighborhood or ministering to the actual needs of the community.

In the Amsterdam context the sense of being a community in a neighborhood is almost lost due to deep individualism in the culture. This is a challenge for implementing the vision of this book in Amsterdam. I believe that individualism and loss of the appreciation of place must be healed within the churches before they can become a model of hope for community in the neighborhood. However, this should not stop the Church in the city in moving in the direction pointed out in *The New Parish* Sparks et al. (2014) in building relationships and serving the community.

In *When Helping Hurts* (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009), the authors develop a biblical view on poverty that is much broader than only material poverty. Poverty is a relational problem in its core, rather than a resource problem. Another strong

statement is that a combination of a wrong view on poverty, wrong motives of the “helper” (a “God-complex”), and a low self-image of the materially poor will cause ministries to hurt more than bring health (p. 67).

Corbett and Fikkert (2009) also emphasize that “until we embrace our mutual brokenness, our work with low-income people is likely to do far more harm than good” (p. 64). This insight highlights the issue of the attitude of ministry. It advocates for a posture of working *with* the community instead of working *for* the community. In order to bring shalom, one should be open to receive shalom. It brings dignity to a neighbor and praise to God when healing and learning is a mutual exchange.

Corbett and Fikkert (2009) rightly make a strong case for moving from providing relief for the felt need, to rehabilitation and development. In a highly government-regulated city like Amsterdam, the government and professionals are highly involved in rehabilitation and development, which demands crucial partnership and alignment. The book does not provide strategies for church-based ministries that operate within these complexities (for it is mainly focused on the context of the USA). This requires extra effort in contextualization for application to ministry in Dutch cities.

For the Amsterdam context, it is important to have a broader view of poverty in order not to miss the biblical calling to minister to the poor in this “rich” city. Also, it will help the Church to minister to the felt needs in the city in a healthy way. The Church in Amsterdam can benefit much from the non-materialistic definition of poverty offered by Corbett and Fikkert (2009). Poverty is at its core about brokenness in relationships, with self, others, God, and creation. Through this lens one can assess the real poverty in a rich city like Amsterdam. Also, the issue of ministry with the community instead of for the community is vital for healthy ministry in the city.



The book *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just* (Keller, 2010) provides an in-depth study of the biblical concept of justice and the calling of the people of God to serve the cause of justice in this world. Keller also works out how the instructions in the law and the prophets cover the ministries of relief, development, and social reform. Keller, in line with the book *When Helping Hurts* (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009) points out that it is healthy to move from the stage of relief to development and ideally to social reform, as soon as possible for lasting holistic change.

Keller (2010) also develops the concept of common grace: God is working redemptively in every culture, even in places where His people are not (yet) active. Another important aspect of engagement for justice is the cooperation between the people of God and non-believers, or secular institutions. Keller proposes “that Christians’ work for justice should be characterized by both humble cooperation and respectful provocation” (p. 158). As discussed in the political context of Amsterdam, this element is crucial for the Church in the city. Keller provides in this book a strong exegesis of justice and mercy ministry that is a solid foundation for ministry in the city. The prominence of the relational component in the instructions of the Mosaic law and the rest of Scripture deserved more attention than it received in this book. The relational approach to ministry is one of the key needs in the context of Amsterdam. However, the exegesis and proposed values in the book are excellent and will be reflected in this study.

In the book *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*, (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010) Pickett and Wilkinson (2010) share the outcomes of their statistical studies comparing data of many societies in the world. They found that there was no evidence of correlation between well-being and the absolute level of

income, but rather with the level of inequality in a given society. The correlation between quality of life and wealth can only be found when a population is in extreme poverty, but “... countries inevitably reach a level of affluence where “diminishing returns” set in and additional income buys less and less additional health, happiness or wellbeing” (loc. 280 of 7170). This insight is important when one looks for strategies of relief and development, in serving the communities: the first responsibility is focused on getting people out of absolute poverty, but after that, the strategy should be focused on creating more equality.

The data presented by Pickett and Wilkinson (2010) shows consistency of the same pattern in the correlation of different topics of well-being, including health, happiness, psychological health, crime rates, and teen pregnancies with inequality. Similarly, the level of trust people has in others and in their governments can differ up to 6 times between rich market democracies, based on the level of inequality (loc. 816 of 7170). The emphasis of income inequality the authors use is understandable because there is hard data available, but I wonder if the experience of inequality in a community could be much broader. In the research referenced in chapter 6 in Amsterdam North (Brinksma, 2014), I found that people with the same economical situation can have a very different experience of equality. Since income inequality in Amsterdam is moderate, this element might be important to understand.

Trust is a key element in all relationships and in making a community work. When the intention is to bring shalom to a community, the insight in this co-relation suggests looking for the causes of feelings of inequality. Systemic improvement might depend more on advocacy against, and efforts to bring systemic change in specific unjust inequalities.

*Kingdom Calling: Vocational Stewardship for the Common Good* (Sherman,

2011) is a book that is born out of the observation that in many churches there is a divide between the spiritual and secular and a lack of integration between missional calling and the vocation of followers of Christ (Sherman, 2011, loc. 128 of 3108.). A central Scripture of the book is “When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices; when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy. Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed” (Prov. 11:10).

By founding the theology of work on the concept of the *tsaddiqim* (the righteous), Sherman (2011) provides a helpful metaphor to broaden the scope of the responsibility of the Church to a culture that is based on God’s order (His righteousness). This is in line with the Kingdom teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, where he calls for a righteousness (*dikaïosynē*, which is the Greek word for the concept “surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law...” (Matt. 5:20).

The development of the mission of God and the role of the believer and the Church as partners in this mission is a strong core of the Sherman’s (2011) book. However, there is a lack attention to the role of the Holy Spirit as a crucial factor in the mission of the believer and the Church. The integration of the work and the gifts of the Spirit are vital for equipping believers to live, work and minister as *tsaddiqim*.

Sherman (2009) introduces four quadrants of integration of work and faith. These quadrants are ethics, evangelism, personal transformation, and experience (searching for calling meaning and purpose in marketplace ministries). Most churches are inclined to focus on one or two of these quadrants (ethics and evangelism) and Sherman is rightly suggesting integrating all of them in teaching and mentoring in the areas of vocational ministries.

To summarize, the resources reviewed for this topic advocate for a holistic

view of poverty (including non-materialistic poverty). When this is in place, while the material poor are empowered, and the “helper” is not motivated by a “God-complex” Corbett and Fikkert (2009, p. 67), the foundations of healthy ministry among the poor are in place. Also, the mutuality in serving is essential: with the community, not for, or to, the community. This relational aspect of ministry is central in the concept of becoming a modern-day parish church that is aware of its placement in the neighborhood. Incarnational ministry is, therefore, not only a calling for the individual believer, but also for churches in a neighborhood.

The concept of serving the cause of God’s justice in the community is a helpful concept. The fruit of justice is joy for everybody, especially the vulnerable and the poor. This concept helps the Church to prioritize and stand up for the important issues. Another lens to find the priorities of relevant ministries is that of finding inequality. The effects of inequality in a community are deep and broad. This means that in exegeting the community, the feelings and causes of inequality should be identified. These causes need advocacy or transformation in order to increase the well-being of the community.

Finally, the workplace is central to the ministry in the city. When believers see their work primary as a calling of worship unto God, they will experience work as a ministry. Stewarding their responsibilities in the workplace with Kingdom principles has the potential to transform the workplace and to touch the lives of co-workers in the name of Christ.

### **Leadership for Movements in the City**

Most of the resources reviewed contain portions that deal with leadership of city movements. In this last paragraph of this chapter, a few of these comments will be reviewed.

In the book *To Transform a City* (Swanson et al., 2010), the authors highlight the necessity of a unified and collaborative engagement of the Church in the community. They point out that a common mission is an essential element of unity in the city. The authors observe that “transformation movements won’t include every church, but they should not exclude any church” (loc. 2008 of 4226). This insight can help with catalyzing a city movement in Amsterdam because it prevents the trap to wait for the buy-in of the majority of the churches in the city in order to start moving ahead in some themes. But it also reminds the starting churches to make an effort to include others.

In *The Spirit of Christ and the Postmodern City*, Grigg (2009) points out that city movements needs apostolic and prophetic leadership. He also proposes that an important precondition of “transformational-revival” is that the movement should prepare apostolic and prophetic leaders for the marketplace. These leaders can create networks and organizational infrastructures that are ready to expand when the momentum of revival comes. He states, “In times of revival, these leaders can bring the embryonic building blocks and foster them into an effective synergistic movement for change” (p. 210).

This is in line with the argument from Silvos (2007) in *Transformation* that the Church should equip marketplace leaders as ministers of the Church with a special assignment to work in marketplace. The spiritual development, recognition of their calling and intentional commissioning from the Church is key for the engagement of entrepreneurs and professionals in the ecosystem of the city. Keller (2012a) also acknowledges the importance of this in *Center Church*.

Cole (2010) addresses movement leadership in *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church*. He skillfully blends insights from movement theory literature

and biblical principles that are proven in his own ministry. A clear warning from the author is to resist focusing on large audiences as a measure of success, but rather focus on small simple cores of people who can multiply themselves. This multiplication factor is key for launching movements. “If you can cut everything out but the most important core, you have something simple and profound at the same time. Package this idea in something so simple anyone can do it memorably, and you have a catalyst of a movement.” (loc. 3040 of 5045).

Keller (2012a) also explores movement dynamics in *Center Church*, and he acknowledges the need for movements in the city. He agrees with the analysis of the power of a compelling vision, the multiplication focus, and that movements can reach a tipping point that cause a real change in the reality of the city. However, he also pleads for balance in this area. He states: “I am not suggesting simplistically that movements are good, and institutions are bad — rather, that organizations should have both institutional characteristics and movement dynamics, though there are some tensions and trade-offs in the balance” (loc. 9826 of 11944). He suggests that leaders in city movements should be able to navigate between these two poles.

## CHAPTER 4

### BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS

And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?

– Jonah 4:11

The previous chapter provided a review of relevant resources on the main themes of this study. The focus of this chapter is to establish theological foundations for these themes. The understanding that God is not only actively involved in the salvation of people, but also in their personal transformation as well as their culture and society cannot be assumed as a common part of the theology of all churches and ministries in Amsterdam. Therefore, the chapter starts with an exploration of the mission of God in this world in relation to the concept of transformation. This is followed by an introduction of *shalom* and *shalom-making* as a useful biblical concept for integration of the many ways of transformational engagement in the society.

After this, a biblical view of the purpose of the city and the mission of the Church related to the city is reviewed. In order to establish the relevance of the city for God's purposes, an introduction to a theology of place is given. For the discussion of the mission of the Church in the city, the concept of *ecclesia* is explored.

The topic of contextualizing the gospel in the context of Amsterdam is discussed in the final paragraph of this chapter. The application of this paragraph is focused on contextualizing the gospel in a postmodern culture.

## **An Exploration of God's Transformational Mission**

### ***God's Transforming Nature***

The first instance of the transforming work of God is found in the first lines of the book of Genesis. After God created heaven and earth, the rest of the creation story can be viewed as a progressive work of transformation. Verse two is important in understanding this ongoing creational process: “now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters (Gen. 1:2). In this verse, the Spirit of God puts in a motion (*râḥap*: meaning flutter or shaking<sup>1</sup>) a further transformation (*transformation* actually means “a marked change in form” (Oxford University 2016a, 2018)) of the still formless, empty and dark earth, in stages that are initiated by the life-giving words of God (as described in the rest of Genesis 1). It is important to note that this transformational creation process was not initiated to correct what was wrong or broken or subject to curse or evil, but a further development of something good.

Another example of this ongoing movement of creation is the formation of Eve out of the rib of Adam (Gen. 1:22-23). Here also God transformed His very good initial creation into more completeness, in a better reflection of His glory, a greater beauty and better suited for His purposes. Where God's Spirit and God's Word are active, the potential for transformation is released. The Trinitarian God is both creator and renewer.

After the creation of Adam, God speaks about the assignment or mandate for humankind within His plan with this good creation: “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the

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<sup>1</sup> Strong's concordance (h7363).



fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground’.” (Gen. 1:28). This cultural (or creation) mandate reveals the plan of God for an ongoing formation of culture and order on the earth. This mandate is given to develop creation’s potential and to transform it in a direction that reflects God’s intended purpose and glory. Hence, transformation is a part of God’s creative nature. Humankind is called to partner with Him in this process and is therefore a part of human identity and destiny as well. This framework continues to show how these elements can be seen throughout the history of the Mission of God (*Missio Dei*), in order to understand His Mission today in Amsterdam.

### ***The Anatomy of Evil and Brokenness***

The tragedy of the Fall introduces “death” into the creation: brokenness and the curse of evil are from that moment part of everything that is going on in creation. The Fall starts with Adam and Eve allowing Satan to put doubt in their hearts regarding the goodness of God to bring them to fulfillment (Gen. 3:4-5). This struggle to fully trust the goodness of God is still at the core of all human sin and rebellion. Fear and shame emerged in the identity of humankind, resulting in blaming and hiding (Gen. 3:7-9) and in loss of the ability to experience the deep transparent relationships with each other and with the Lord as was intended. Keller (2010) puts it as follows, “When we lost our relationship with God, the whole world stopped “working right.” The world is filled with hunger, sickness, aging and physical death. ...shalom is gone – spiritually, psychologically, socially and physically” (Keller, 2010, p. 176). The four basic relationships (with God, self, others and the environment) are all affected by the Fall, resulting in poverty in these areas: “poverty of intimacy with God...; poverty of being...; poverty of community...; and poverty of stewardship...” (Corbett and Fikkert, 2009, p. 62).

Figure 6 in Appendix A shows how poverty affects the main spheres of life. As discussed in chapter 3, it is crucial for the Church in Amsterdam to be aware of poverty and brokenness in all these dimensions and understand God's mission as a holistic engagement in the earth to redeem and restore these elements. The statement of God to the serpent contains the promise of redemption: "... I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head"" (Gen. 3:15).

### ***God's Ongoing Mission After the Fall***

God's mission did not start and is not ended by the Fall. However, from this point onward, this mission includes redemption and salvation from sin and evil, as well as conquering the enemy and restoring the brokenness that was a consequence of the Fall. In the time of Noah, evil had become the dominating force in humankind "and God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). It is hard to imagine, but for the continuation of His mission of redemption and transformation of his creation, God had to cleanse the earth from the wickedness of human rebellion and evil.

After the flood God re-planted Noah and his family on the earth, and the blessing and the mandate of Adam is repeated to them (Gen. 9:1-7). A new beginning is offered to humankind and to creation, evil cannot overcome God's grace and his mission. Keeping this understanding of hope alive is a crucial discipline for the Church in Amsterdam while serving a deeply secularized city with a sinful reputation. In the remaining part of this framework, these transformational elements of God's mission will be discussed in God's partnership with Israël, in the ministry of Jesus, and in with the community of followers of Jesus.

### ***God's Transformational Mission and the People of the Covenant***

In the continuation of God's mission in this world, the element of a covenant partnership with the offspring of Abraham emerges: "and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3). This blessing comprises all the elements of God's mission discussed above. When the descendants of Abraham became slaves in Egypt, God hears their cry, and He acts on their behalf and delivers them from the powers of Pharaoh. The Exodus narrative can be viewed as a framework of the redemptive work of God's mission:

...it is the exodus that provided the primary model of God's idea of redemption, not just in the Old Testament but even in the New, where it is used as one of the keys to understanding the meaning of the cross of Christ (C. J. H. Wright, 2006, p. 265).

The Law of Moses, received from God on the Mount Sinai, contains an outline on how to live as a nation of God demonstrating wholeness and justice, if they follow His instructions. Within the Law there are specific instructions for organizing society in a way "that there would not be any poor among them" (Deut. 15:4, 11). These instructions include laws for tithing, gleaning, Sabbath, and jubilee. The year of Jubilee is another motif in the mission of God that models' transformation and the restoration of society. Wright (2006) comments, "If the exodus was God's idea of redemption, the jubilee was God's idea of restoration. Both are equally holistic" (C. J. H. Wright, 2006, p. 265). This observation by Wright is an important insight that reconciles the debate about the mission of God as a ministry of salvation (word) or as doing works (deeds) of justice, compassion and restoration. It clearly is both. The agreement on this conclusion in the vision of the Church in Amsterdam is crucial in working in unity and in preventing wasting energy in this debate.

Whenever the people of Israēl depart from their role in God's mission, He sends prophets to remind them of their purpose as people of God and to call them back to be partners in His mission,

...I will help you; I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people, to restore the land and to reassign its desolate inheritances, to say to the captives, 'Come out,' and to those in darkness, 'Be free' (Isa. 49:8-9).<sup>2</sup>

### ***The Ministry of Jesus Christ in God's Transforming Mission***

#### *Jesus' Holistic Ministry*

The framework continues with describing the transformational involvement of God's mission through the ministry of Jesus. God's mission is motivated by His love for this world (John 3:16) and is most clearly demonstrated in the coming of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. He is God's incarnate Son, who "... became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1:14). His mission statement (Luke 4:18-19) is transformational in nature: through statements of holistic restoration resulting in the jubilee: "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord!" (Luke 4:19). In his life and teaching Jesus revealed the heart of the Father and the essence of the law and the prophets (Matt. 5:17-20).

In order to express the holistic nature of the ministry of Jesus, the gospels frequently use the Greek word *sōzō*.<sup>3</sup> This word is best translated as "making whole".

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<sup>2</sup> There are many other references in the Old Testament Scriptures with instructions and promises that the people of God will be used in rebuilding, restoration, salvation processes of their own inheritance (the land, cities, the obedience of Torah), as well as the blessing of the nations. The prophetic literature has different layers that include the present, the area of the coming of the Messiah and transformation that takes place at the end of the age.

<sup>3</sup> *Sōzō* is the verb used to describe the actions of Jesus forgiving sins (Luke. 7:50), announcing salvation (Luke. 8:12), delivering people from demonic oppression (Luke. 8:36), healing from physical illness (Luke. 8:48), raising a child from the dead (Luke. 8:50). The context implies different types of miracles, but Jesus' ministry is all about *sōzō*.

While Jesus was bringing transformation in the broken lives of people, He also shaped a community of disciples. He taught them how to live in restored relationship with God, with self, and with each other and the world around them. This pattern is an important part of this transformational framework: combining transformational holistic ministry and shaping a reconciled community of disciples who demonstrate the life of the Kingdom and become instruments of his mission. This reflects ring two and three of the ecosystem model.

From the gospels it is learned that Jesus 1) saw the needs; 2) was moved with compassion; and 3) came to action (e.g. bringing healing, deliverance, and teaching) (Matt. 14:4). His compassion was not only for those who were materially poor, but also for those who were spiritually and relationally poor: “when he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:34-35). As this study will make clear, both are essential in the context of Amsterdam.

### *The Kingdom of God as an Expression of God’s Mission*

The central theme of Jesus ministry and teaching is the Kingdom of God. The concept of the Kingdom of God speaks about the reign of God more than of a place or person: it is there where He reigns.<sup>4</sup> Jesus was not only teaching about the Kingdom, but also in His ministry of *sōzo* He demonstrated its transforming authority. He was changing the lives and destinies of the people in the community: “... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing

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<sup>4</sup> There was already Jewish expectation of God’s Kingdom in Jesus’ time, with elements including the return from exile, delivering Israel from pagan rulers, and forgiving their sins (N. T. Wright, 1996, p. 151). Jesus redefines the understanding of the concept of God’s Kingdom through his teaching and by linking it with the outcomes of his ministry, such as when disciples of John the Baptist are challenging Him: good news for the poor, forgiving sins, healing the sick, feeding the masses, delivering the oppressed, raising the dead, etc. (see Luke. 7:22).

good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him” (Acts 10:35). John proclaimed: “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” (1 John 3:8b). When the reign of God emerges in society, this means a confrontation with the influence of the enemy: it is a rulership confrontation, resulting in transformation of people, and their communities.

The concept of the Kingdom has a strong eschatological component: it is here, and it is still coming.<sup>5</sup> When Jesus returns, the Kingdom will be inaugurated in fullness and will result in a complete wholeness. When we are seeking transformation of the city, there will be an increased peace but still incomplete and mingled with evil and brokenness. Jürgen Moltmann (2011) urges believers not to be disappointed or without hope when we are confronted by the limits of the manifestation of the Kingdom in our current reality by saying in a lecture at Emory University “It is ours to begin, it is God’s to complete” (Moltmann, 2011). The first-century followers of Jesus had a vital eschatological hope, resulting in an expectation of the manifestation of the Kingdom in their time. This was because they witnessed the resurrection of Jesus and received the gift of the Spirit as a “...deposit guaranteeing our inheritance...” (Eph. 1:14) for the future reality of the Kingdom of God. Recovery of this vital eschatological hope is necessary for the Church in Amsterdam for ongoing passionate engagement in the city, even if the signs of the Kingdom might be few or small.

#### *Kingdom Transformation by Power of the Resurrection and the Work of the Spirit*

The centerpiece of the transformational mission of God in world is the death on the cross and the resurrection of Christ. Through the work on the cross the curse is

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Gordon Ladd was one of the voices that helped understanding of the concept that Kingdom is *yet and not yet*, in his book *The Gospel of the Kingdom* (Ladd, 1959).

removed Death is defeated, and sins are forgiven, the new covenant of grace breaks forth that enables transformation *from the inside out*. The resurrection of Christ, that took place within human history, is the foretaste of the transformation of all things. This hope points the Church in the direction of God's mission: "the whole earth shall be full of His glory" (Isa. 6:3b).

It is crucial to note that it is the work of the Spirit that brings forth the transformation of the Kingdom. Jesus was filled with the Spirit in order to do the ministry of the Kingdom. Paul relates the resurrection of Jesus from death to the power of the Spirit. Jesus' proclamation of the work of the Holy Spirit that was about to come to His people shows how the followers of Christ will become agents of transformation: "'Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive" (John 7:38-39). This theme of a river of living water bringing life and transformation is found in Ezekiel 37 and Revelation 22:1.

*The Spirit of God is the transformational power of the Kingdom of God.*

In the history of the culture of Amsterdam, the culture moved from faith-based to belief in human reasoning, a rejection of the miracles (especially the resurrection) and the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit (see chapter 2). In order to have a transformational impact, the celebration and worship of the risen Lord and the empowering of the Spirit must always be a central part of the life and confession of the Church.

*God's Mission Continues Through His Followers*

The framework of God's transformational mission ends with looking at how the followers of Jesus are included in His mission. After the cross, Jesus commissions his followers to continue to be the partners in God's mission: "Again Jesus said,

“Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:21-22). Matthew formulates this in the great commission (Matt. 28:19-20). It is important to note that this great commission is *not* replacing the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 but should be seen as an *additional* element to bring people back into a relationship with the Father and teach them what it is to be people of His Kingdom.

The book of Acts is the continuing narrative of the Mission of God through the followers and disciples empowered by the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Kingdom and the power and gifts of the Spirit carried the mission of God from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. The community of believers experience the partnership of transformational mission in various ways. First there were signs and wonders that included healings and deliverances from evil spirits, similar to the ministry of Jesus (*sōzo*). There was also a manifestation of sharing and generosity, which led to a redistribution of wealth. The phrase: “And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them” (Acts 4:34), recalls the instruction of the Lord in Deuteronomy 15:4. The signs of jubilee became manifest. This blessing was not only within their midst but also the community around it experienced its blessing: “...praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). It is this journey that goes on in in the current time, as N.T. Wright 2008) formulates,

It is the story of God’s kingdom being launched on earth as in heaven, generating a new state of affairs in which the power of evil has been decisively defeated, the new creation has been decisively launched, and



Jesus's followers have been commissioned and equipped to put that victory and that inaugurated new world into practice. (N. T. Wright, 2008, p. 204)

This commissioning that changed the Roman world and touched people and societies all over the world is also at the heart of the citywide Church of Jesus Christ in Amsterdam: His children are partners in God's transforming mission in this city.

### *Understanding Shalom as the Outcome of God's Mission*

In the framework above, the mission of God is explored in relation to His work of transformation. The framework establishes that transformation comprises the process of increased culture, completeness, purpose, and beauty, as well as redemption, salvation and restoration of what has been broken or distorted, by sin and the consequence of the Fall. In this next section, the term *shalom* is proposed as a concept that covers all these aspects of transformation. Shalom-making is an expression that can easily be understood and embraced by the different parts of body of Christ in Amsterdam, as well as by people of good will and other stakeholders in the city. A case study of Jeremiah 29:1-14 is presented, because it contains many elements that are relevant for bringing shalom to a city in the current context of Amsterdam.

### *Introducing the Concept of Shalom*

The word *shalom* in Scripture has a comprehensive meaning that can easily get lost in translation by the contemporary understanding of the word *peace*. Nicolas Wolterstroff (1983) describes this as follows.

The horizons of shalom are vast: shalom in the first place incorporates right, harmonious relationships to God and delight in his service. Secondly, shalom incorporates right harmonious relationships to other human beings and delight in human community. Thirdly, shalom incorporates right, harmonious

relationships to nature and delight in our physical surroundings. (Wolterstorff, 1983, p. 70)

The author Perry Yoder (1987) identifies three main areas of the concept of shalom: firstly, it can refer to a material and physical state of affairs; secondly, it can refer to relationships; thirdly, it refers to the area of morality. (Yoder, 1987, p. 10) For Yoder the physical state of affairs means that there is no poverty and an absence of physical threats like war, disease, and famine. In the area of relationships, the word *shalom* is linked to the concept of justice, without oppression (Isa. 54:13-14). In the area of morality, Yoder suggests that shalom is connected with the ethics of the covenant. Psalm 37:3,7 for example, describes “the man of peace” as a person of integrity, blameless, innocent, without guilt.

### ***Transformation Defined as Peacemaking***

If the word *shalom* depicts God’s intended state of affairs, then *peace-making* is an action word that describes the transformation of everything that is not peaceful. It is holistic, transformative, and is central to the mission of the Church. “We should be actively and wholeheartedly engaged in an active, militant struggle for transformation so that the poor and the oppressed might experience shalom. ... Love is basic to shalom justice, both people and structures need to be transformed” (Yoder, 1987, p. 145).

The prophet Isaiah describes peacemaking as true worship, doing justice for the poor and the oppressed. If justice is done by God’s people, they will be known as restorers of cities. “Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called repairer of broken walls, restorer of streets with dwellings” (Isa. 58:12).

The term *shalom-making* or *bringing shalom to the city* is proposed in this

study to describe its transformational impact of the Kingdom ecosystem in Amsterdam. A biblical example of this concept is taken from Jeremiah 29:1-14.

*Seeking Shalom of the City: Jeremiah 29: 1-14 as a Case Study*

Jeremiah 29:1-14 connects the story of the people of Israël in exile in a hostile city<sup>6</sup> to the charge from the Lord to bring shalom to it. This charge turns the perspective of a period of anticipated loss and victimization through exile around to a period of influence and partnership with God's mission. This story has many parallels with the Church in Amsterdam. It also has to find its identity and calling as a marginal group, in a city that is estranged and sometimes even hostile to the Church and the Christian message.

In the psychology of the Jews in exile, the city Jerusalem was far more than just a capitol city. Jerusalem was the city of God, with the temple as the main expression of His presence. Babylon was also not just a city, but the city of the enemy and oppressor of God's people. It was a prototype of a city of Satan (Linthicum, 1991, loc. 280 of 6865). Being in this place as people of the promise and of the covenant of God was humiliating and actually unthinkable.

*Paradigm Shift: From Victims to Partners in God's Mission*

The exiles anticipated a short stay in this evil city and expected that the Lord would bring them back to Jerusalem soon, as some of their (false) prophets proclaimed (verse 8). However, this is not what God was saying to them. The message of Jeremiah was that they would be here for 70 years (multiple generations) and that they should treat this city during this time as if they were in Jerusalem.

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<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah sends a letter to the elders who are brought to Babylon during the first wave of exile in 592 BC. Most likely the city and the temple were not yet destroyed, but the city was conquered, and the leaders were deported to Babylon.

The words of the prophet force a shift in the mind-set. The promises of God are not bound to a location (Jerusalem and temple) as was the conviction of the exiles (“How can we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?” Ps. 137) but are based on relationship and calling. The presence of God is with the people of His covenant, which is not limited to their temple, to be a blessing for the nations. This insight makes this Scripture relevant for the calling of the people of God in every city or community. A similar paradigm shift is relevant for the Church in Amsterdam that has been in survival mode (internally focused) and grieving the loss of Christendom but is challenged by the Spirit of the Lord to accept a calling to bring shalom to the city.

#### *Shalom Making and the Calling for Incarnational Living*

Verses 5-7 instruct the exiles to live amongst the people of the city and not withdrawn from the community. They will become families and landowners in the city. The Lord purposed them to be incarnational: to become one of them. This requires a total overhaul of the prejudgments and letting go of anger and hate towards the people of Babylon. This incarnational process is consistent with God’s character (Langmead, 2004, p.48). He is the one who bridges gaps and removes barriers in order to bring His salvation and blessing close to people who are not deserving or expecting it. This implies that in order to bring shalom to the city, the movement of the Church is outward, as sent ones.

#### *Intentionally Seeking Shalom for the City*

“Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper” (Jer. 29: 7). The word *shalom* means “a state of holistic well-being in all spheres of life.” The word *seek* (*dâraš*) indicates an active posture. The meaning of the word includes

“going after, enquire, demand, and consult,” (Strong & Vine, 1999, (H1875)) and implies an attitude of tenacity and compassion in finding a solution or a result. This is the attitude that God is looking for in His people who are called to seek the peace of the city. Seeking shalom for a city cannot be a side effect of the Church in Amsterdam but requires a wholehearted commitment.

### *The Role of Intercession and Spiritual Warfare*

With the command to seek the peace of the city, there is also the command to pray for the city. The word *seek* in the text is the call to action, and the assertion for prayer embeds the relationship with the God of shalom in this mission. Prayer for the city is essential for the shalom of God to emerge in the city, as Mark Gornik (2002) says, “The true hope for the future of the inner city is grounded in prayer” (Gornik, 2002, loc. 1550 of 4029). The first efforts of collaboration of the churches in Amsterdam have been in the area of prayer. Whatever activities will emerge in the city, unified prayer for the city remains foundational.

### *The Promise of Returned Blessings*

Finally, there is an important promise: “...for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace” (Jer. 29:7b, KJV). When God’s people are dedicated to seeking the shalom of the city, they will be blessed even in the city of Babylon. It is a principle of God’s Kingdom: seeking the shalom of others will release the blessing of God on themselves. Randy White reflects on this principle in his own life. “At that time, it became clear to me what we were aiming at in the neighborhood and how God would build this peace into my life as a byproduct” (White, 2006, p. 57).

The picture of a people of God in exile applies to the Church in Amsterdam as Paas (2015) suggests in *Strangers and Priests*. However, the Church is called in the mission of God to pray and seek shalom through incarnational engagement in the

culture. In this process of serving the city, the Church itself will receive more wholeness themselves.

### **The City and the Mission of the Church**

After exploring the framework of God's transformational mission and the language of shalom to define this mission, this section is about its application in the city. In order to understand why God is interested in the city and why He wants it to prosper it, first the theology of place is discussed. After reviewing the concept of the theology of place, the focus is put on the theology of the city and on what can be seen as a picture of shalom for a city. The next step in this section is the development of a model for the understanding of the biblical purpose of the city. This leads to a proposal of six essential elements of the calling of the Church for the city.

#### ***Theological Significance of Place and Presence***

##### ***Foundations of Place and Identity in Genesis 1-3***

The creation narratives in Genesis 1 and 2 are about the care and the effort of God to create a place for life on the earth and for inhabitation of humankind and animals. God even makes a garden within this environment, a specific area where Adam and Eve were placed. Some of the elements that make this garden a place of significance are:

- it is a gift of grace from God; this is where He places them
- it is a place that is filled with His presence and reflects His glory and beauty
- it is a place of community: relationship with each other, with creation, and with God
- it is a place where they can dwell, be at home, and experience wholeness

- it is a place of calling and mission – the culture mandate (Gen. 1:28; Gen. 2:15)

A first conclusion is that a space without these elements is not a place as God intended it to be.

The mention of God creating Adam (Hebrew: *ādām*) from the dust of the earth (*āḏāmā*) reveals another significant connection between humankind and the concept of place (Bartholomew, 2011, loc. 726 of 10415). This connection shows that place is part of the human identity that requires rootedness in a place to be whole: “To be rooted is perhaps the most important need of the human soul” (Weil, 1987, p.43). This is significant since one of the makers of the identity of the postmoderns Amsterdam is the lack of rootedness (see Chapter 2). Bartholomew (2011) shares this concern.

We live amidst a crisis of place. In our late-modern age we have lost that very human sense of place amidst the time-space compression characteristic of “postmodernity” and globalization. Place has become something that one moves through, preferably at great speed, and virtual reality is no replacement. (Bartholomew, 2011: loc. 195 of 10415)

As a consequence of the Fall, Adam and Eve are removed from the garden (Gen. 3). Bartholomew (2011) rightly points out that this is not an isolated action, but that displacement is part of God’s judgment throughout Scripture and that being placed by God is a blessing (Bartholomew, 2011, loc. 687 of 10415).

Today many churches in Amsterdam are not aware of the significance of being placed by God. However, in order to become an instrument of shalom for a neighborhood, place becomes significant. If placement of a church in a specific area of the city becomes an experience of a blessed placement by God, the mission to become a blessing for this place in the city is a logical next step.

### *Ongoing Connection to Place and Blessing, Curse and Exile*

The story of humankind continues outside the Garden, but there also God is present and actively involved with them in this place (Gen. 4:1b) In the Cain and Abel story (Gen. 4), Cain is displaced as result of bloodshed, but this is directly followed by God's promise of protection.

With Abraham, the concept of place becomes connected to a land of promise for him and his descendants. He is called out of his city to become re-placed by God. In the story of Israël, they are forced to live in Egypt, first as a place of refuge. But when Egypt becomes a curse, his people are led through the exodus to be placed again in the land of promise.

The theme of receiving blessing in the land while being obedient to the covenant and being brought into exile when the covenant is broken, is strongly present in the prophetic books. In the prophetic literature, other nations are mentioned in statements of warning and blessings. For example, "The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance'" (Isa. 19:25). The land of Israel God gave to His people is not the only blessed place on earth.

During the period of the kings David and Solomon, there are two new elements added to the experience of place by the people of God: Jerusalem as the city of God and The Temple as the central place of worship. Jerusalem and The Temple can be seen as examples or models of a place, as is intended to be. As stated before, The Temple and the city of God are not exclusive places of God's presence but are archetypes of it.

### *The View of Place in the New Testament*

In understanding the theological importance of place, now I review the New



Testament Scriptures. In the New Testament, the theology of place seems to change the concept of blessing and curse in its relationship to place. No longer is the location of The Temple, Jerusalem and the land the central emphasis of the gospel narrative, but it is the combination of God's presence in a place and in community with His people. The message of Jesus is "the Kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21:31). Place is not removed from the picture, but God's "reigning presence" in a place makes it significant.

Jesus went from city to city to preach the gospel, He weeps over Jerusalem, and he warns Chorazin, Betsaida, and Capernaum because they do not receive him as the Messiah. The book of Acts shows the story of the apostles bringing the gospel to the cities of the world, starting in Jerusalem and ending in Rome. Most letters of Paul are sent to churches of cities as well as the seven letters in the book of Revelation John was told to send for the Lord. The cities are entities of interest for God, and the Church in the New Testament is clearly connected to them. Places are significant but cannot reach their full destiny without being a community that is restored to God.

The New Testament comes to a grand conclusion presenting the New Jerusalem, the city of destiny and fulfilled promise and purpose (Rev. 21). The nations of the world live in city that is beautiful, safe, prosperous, and joyful, a place where God lives among his people, a place as it is intended.

In order for the Church in Amsterdam to understand its calling in the city, the recovery of a theology of place is a key element. This includes a move against the trend of postmodernity of indifference of place and requires a deconstruction of the "myth of individualism and living above place" (Sparks et al., 2014, loc. 163 of 2750). The fact that God places a person, a ministry, or a Church in a certain city and

a neighborhood invites them to embrace it and be engaged in it as a significant element of their ministry assignment.

### ***The Biblical Purpose and Significance of the City***

After looking at theology of place in general, this section is about finding the biblical purpose of cities. From the discussion about the importance of place in the mission of God, it will be clear that cities are also significant entities: they represent large communities of people living in a place. This significance can also be concluded from the fact that there are more than 1250 references in the Scriptures (Bakke & Sharpe, 2006, p.37), and in significant parts of the narrative of the Bible, the city is part of the context. For the world today, cities are increasingly important due to the strong urbanization that is taking place: “globally, more people live in urban areas than in rural areas, with 54 % of the world’s population residing in urban areas in 2014 ...and by 2050, 66 % of the world’s population is projected to be urban” (United Nations, 2014, p. 1).

Not only the fact that many people live in cities makes it significant, also “Cities have a transforming effect on people. Cities form a creative center. Cities create fertile ground for thinking and receptivity. Cities can help people live more efficiently and productively” (Swanson et al., 2010, loc. 367 of 4226 ). Cities draw resources from the surrounding areas and export culture to other towns, villages and regions. In chapter 2, the cultural influence of Amsterdam in the country and beyond has been clearly established. Therefore, it is strategic to bring shalom to the city, while this will influence many other areas eventually.

There are several ideas about the main functions of a city. Keller (2012a) identifies that a city provides safety, stability (systems and institutes), culture, diversity, innovation and a market place (Keller, 2012a, loc. 3710-3770 of 11994). An

important addition to this list is the city as a place of worship. In the city of God, this is marked by The Temple, but in the Psalms and other places in the Bible, worship is strongly related to the city of Jerusalem. In the early development of cities, the element of a holy place was one of the reasons of existence of cities (Mumford, 1961, p 74).

The Dutch theologian and city architect Pieter Bos (2016) analyzed many city references of the Scriptures. His first conclusion was that there is a high appreciation of the city: the Scriptures “indicate that the city is part of God’s redemptive purposes and object of His blessing”<sup>7</sup> (Bos, 2016, p. 28).

In the study of the city in Scripture, the relationship between the promise of jubilee and the calling of God’s people to restore ruined cities clearly emerges. For example, “They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations” (Isa. 61:4). Another essential insight from the Scripture references is that cities are seen as corporate identities, with responsibilities and purpose (Bos, 2016, p. 53). God does not only look at individuals but also at the collective of people that are an interdependent community in a city who establish a collective culture. The conclusion of Bos regarding the purpose of cities is that they are a “...helpmate to God and even his designed ruling partner, as nations gather in her place and invest themselves.” (Bos, 2016, p. 218).

The purpose of the city in the urban theology of Bos (2016) is to be in partnership with God, to enable people of different nations to find a good

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<sup>7</sup> Amongst of the list of scriptural evidence for these statements are the references in the book of Hebrews that are looking forward to the city of promise from God (Heb. 11:9-10, 16; Heb. 12:22; Heb. 13-14). This city of promise is described in detail as the new Jerusalem in Rev. 21: 10-27.

environment, resources, culture, and community (Bos, 2016, p. 58). Like Bos, Viv Grigg (2009) also presents a biblical description of an ideal city. He formulates a set of themes that should be recognized in a good city, based on the river of the Holy Spirit that is the source of life, and on the characteristics of the nature of God, as revealed in the first chapters of Genesis (Grigg, 2009, p. 62-66).

As a conclusion of this section I will bring these concepts and insights together in a simple model for the biblical purpose of the city, which can be used in defining the role of the Church in the engagement of the city in Amsterdam. I propose a city is indeed called to be God's partner that provides five essential areas for the life of peoples from the nations of the world who find a place in the city. A city provides the following.

1. a *spiritual context*: this is the domain of worship and worldview. The biblical ideal purpose is a city that *worships God* ("The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him." (Rev. 22:9)) and *partners with Him* ("I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband." (Rev. 21:2)) to establish a worldview that reflects the values of the Kingdom of God, the Lordship of Jesus and has the Holy Spirit as the source of life ("Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city." (Rev. 22:1,2a))
2. a *governmental/environmental context*: this is the domain of governance, institutes, environment and infrastructure. The biblical ideal is a *righteous government* ("Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;

love and faithfulness go before you (Psa. 89:14)) a *life-giving environment* (When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices, when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy” (Pro. 11:10)): which will serve the people in the city with a working infrastructure, good services, safety, joy and a healthy development of urban life

3. a *marketplace*: this is the domain of business, education, and innovation. The ideal biblical purpose is a *fair and prosperous market place* (“...the harvest of the Nile was the revenue of Tyre, and she became the marketplace of the nations (Isa. 23:3b)), which will provide, meaningful work, fair business and trade, good and accessible education
4. a *cultural space*: This is the domain of the arts, entertainment, media, sports etc. The biblical ideal is *culture that is full of creativity, purity and truth* (“Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful...” (Rev. 21:27)).
5. a *community*: This is the domain of families, neighborhoods, community life, care. The biblical picture is communities full of shalom. (“Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each of them with cane in hand because of their age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there.” (Zec. 8:4-5))

The proposed model for the essential areas of purpose for the city is depicted in Figure 7 in Appendix A. This model can be helpful in reviewing the state of wholeness of these different purpose areas. Later in this study the characteristics of context of Amsterdam are connected to each of these purpose areas (see Chapter 7).

## **What is the Role of the Church for the City?**

The section above provided a lens to look at a healthy city from a biblical perspective. This next section will describe the role of the Church for the city. Since it only focuses on the missional role of the Church for the city, it is not a complete ecclesiology. The section starts with a review of the meaning of *ecclesia*, a concept that has been proposed in the previous chapter in the books of Silvoso (2007), Reimer (2014), and Mangalwadi (2012). After this, I will propose six main areas of engagement for the Church in the city based on the exploration of the calling of the Church and the mission of God.

### ***The Concept of Ecclesia as a Foundation***

The first time Jesus speaks about the Church (Greek word used is *Ekklesia*) is in the gospel of Matthew, when he took his disciples to the region of Caesarea Philippi, which was a significant spiritual place.<sup>8</sup>

But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (Matt. 16:15-18)

The question “Who do you say I am?” was posed in the context of the Jewish religious background of the disciples, who were confronted with an intimidating

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<sup>8</sup> The area of Caesarea Philippi was full of temples of Greek and Roman deities (including Caesar Augustus, Hermes, and Pan), and idol worship rites, like animal and other sacrifices, sexual rites (possibly even child sacrifices). The location was at the foot of a large stone wall (rock) with a cave (the cave of Pan), with an unmeasurably deep abyss that had water flowing out of it (one of the sources of the river Jordan). This cave was called the gate of Hades (the underworld). (Wiemers, 2008)

surrounding spiritual atmosphere of that place, including worship of political, spiritual, religious, and sexual powers. The confession of Peter is that Jesus is the Messiah (son of the living God); He is the highest authority in the midst of this place of manifestation of powers. It is in this context Jesus proclaims that the ecclesia will be build on the confession of Peter, and it shall not be overcome by the forces of darkness or the false gods of this world.

In this text and in other references, the term for the assembly of believers is the Greek word *ecclesia*.<sup>9</sup> Why did Matthew in this account of Jesus' words not use the reference of the temple or more likely, the synagogue? The logical answer is that the Roman concept of *ecclesia* is a more accurate picture of the mission of the Church as Jesus intended it to be, than that of the temple or synagogue. From the use of the word *ecclesia*, one can derive that the mission of the Church includes being a community of followers of Jesus that brings the life and values of the Kingdom in all spheres of life of the city. This is in line with what Luke reports of the first church, "having filled Jerusalem with their doctrine" (Acts 5:28). The doctrine is Jesus Christ has risen and is the Lord of Lords. Silvos (2015) states, in line with this conclusion about the mission of the Church, that it can be viewed as an *ecclesia* that "...injects the yeast of the Kingdom into the society so that first people, then cities and eventually nations would be disciplined (colonized)" (p. 15).

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<sup>9</sup> Reimer (2014) points out that the term is from the ancient cities of the Greek and Roman empires referring to a group of citizens that were called out to discuss and decide about the well-being of the polis (city) of an ancient city "... their decisions had ultimate consequences for the life in the city" (Reimer, 2014, p. 44) Ed Silvos (2015) studied the original meaning of this term and reports his findings in line with Reimer: "Ekklesia was the ruling assembly of the Athenian democracy. ... Subsequently, the Romans assimilated the concept and used the Ekklesia as the vehicle for colonizing new territories. Their version consisted of a group of faithful subjects deputized by the emperor to ensure that his will was done in their region. In other words, people of the day understood Ekklesia to mean both the institution and the system by which territories were impregnated with the style and customs of Rome" (Silvos, 2015, p. 9).

Reimer (2014) also stresses that followers of Christ were called out to become an ecclesia of God in the culture of the world and the community in which they are placed (Reimer, 2014, p. 47). This study embraces this concept of ecclesia in order to understand the calling of the whole Church for the city. It also explores ways to move towards implementing this calling in the current reality of the city. Figure 8 in Appendix A depicts the engagement of the Church in all spheres of the city.

### ***Unity: The Whole Church for the Whole City***

Before describing the elements of the mission of the Church in the city, first the importance of the unity of the church in the city is developed. This is important for the vision of a unified ecclesia for Amsterdam as proposed in this study.

#### ***The Church is Called to be One***

In the New Testament Scriptures, most of the references to the word *Church* is connected to a place (city or region). It is safe to assume that there were several meeting places (congregations) in the city, but they are addressed as one Church for the city or place. This concept of a Church for a city stands out in the vision of the apostle John, “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea” (Rev. 1:11). Each “city Church” received specific words of correction and encouragement, based on the realities of the city and that of the Church.

This is in line with the concept of ecclesia in the city. There can be many ministries and congregations in a city, but on a city level there is a clear collective responsibility as the representative body of Christ in that place. The role of the Church of God’s ecclesia in the city, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs, is a *collective* responsibility of all the churches, ministries, and individual believers in the city. This concept of common responsibility is not recognized by all



churches and leaders in Amsterdam. Most of the leaders feel the responsibility for their own congregations or ministries first. The survival and demands of churches and ministries is already a heavy burden for many pastor and leaders, which leaves little time and energy for citywide collaboration. The research of this study will show the actual status of participation in citywide collaboration in Amsterdam.

### *Compelling Reasons for Unified Collaboration*

The first reason for united collaboration is the prayer of the Lord Jesus expressed in John 17 that His followers should be one: "...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17: 21-22). This text makes clear that unity is important for the testimony of the Church in a post-Christian culture of the city

The second reason is that together there is a more complete expression of Christ "...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Eph.4:13) and "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Eph. 4: 16). A part of the weakness of the Church in Amsterdam is its fragmentation. One of the effects of this fragmentation is that the testimonies of what God is doing through his people is not often shared with other parts of the Church. The picture of blessing and hope is not fully seen. This study will contribute to change this reality by sharing the research and organizing a consultation to present the stories of what is happening in the city.

A major compelling reason for unity is the lostness of the city. Only a few percent of the citizens of Amsterdam are actually following Christ as their Lord and

savior (see the results of the research and estimates about the number of church members in the city in chapter 6). In order to see many reconciled with God through Christ, the churches and ministries need to work together strategically and relationally. I propose therefore, that the compassion of the Lord for the lostness, the pain, and brokenness of the city is the best catalyst for a movement of unity in Amsterdam. Finally, as noted before in Chapter 3, that in developing a unified movement in a city the best way forward is to start with a small group of churches and ministries who are share a vision for the city and are collaborating missionally and include others along the way, rather than wait for a majority participation (Swanson et al., 2010, loc 2008 of 4226).

Based on the previous paragraphs of this chapter and the reviewed literature, a set of six essential elements of the calling of the Church for the city is proposed below. These six elements together provide a grid for reviewing the contribution of each ministry or church in city, in growing together towards becoming God's ecclesia in Amsterdam.

### ***Six Essential Missional Elements for the Ecclesia in the City***

#### ***To Shape a Contextualized Kingdom Theology***

First the Church in the city needs to develop a contextualized theology of the Kingdom and must be able to translate its principles and values in the contemporary culture and realities of the city. This project will research the current views about the Kingdom theology of the leaders in Amsterdam, and it will encourage ongoing dialog and training regarding this topic. The transformational framework of the mission of God and the concept of shalom in the previous paragraphs can be a starting point for leaders in the city to come to a shared understanding of a theology of Kingdom and its goals and values.

This calling also requires a good exegesis of the city and its culture. The gospel is good news, but it takes insight and prayerful work to understand what the brokenness and the pain of the culture is, and how the gospel message is a joyful relevant answer. This project includes a collective effort to exegete (in general terms) the realities of the city and to encourage an ongoing effort for this in every city area.

*To Pray for the City (Serving as Priests for the Community)*

Secondly, the ministry of prayer for the city is central to the calling of the Church, as described in the case study of Jeremiah 29. Likewise, Paul emphasizes the priority of intercession for all people, and especially the leaders of society in order to experience shalom and for people to get saved and “come to the knowledge of truth” (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

Peter depicts the calling of prayer for the community as a central theme of the Church: “but you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Pet. 2:9). Paas (2015) confirms that this ministry is one of the central callings of the Church in the midst of a post-Christian context: “the metaphor of priests defines the missional character of the Church as two-way dynamic: the Church represents the word before God and she represents God for the world” (Paas, 2015, loc. 3126 of 5361).

*To Make Disciples of People from all Nations and Plant Relevant Churches*

The third essential calling of the Church is to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). Jesus modeled this ministry, and it is also the main theme of the book of Acts. The books reviewed in Chapter 2 on discipleship, *Church 3.0* (Cole, 2010), *Miraculous Movements* (Trousdale, 2012) and *Contagious Disciple Making* (Watson & Watson, 2014) all emphasize the importance of making *new* disciples. This emphasis is

important, since in the Church in western Europe discipleship often is limited to providing teaching and training for believers to become better followers of Jesus (Watson & Watson, 2014, p. 204). In a post-Christian culture, it is crucial to find bridges for the gospel of the Kingdom to the non-churched. This requires skills to contextualize the good news of the gospel to the different (sub) cultures of the city (see later paragraph in this study).

There are many resources on the topic of disciple-making, but for this study it is vital to highlight that the discipleship process can be seen as a transformational process of believers into persons who have integrated the values and principles of the Kingdom in their lives. As Paul writes:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom. 12:1-2)

This discipleship process prepares believers as Kingdom ambassadors who know and love God and who are ready to engage in the city as members of the ecclesia. This scope of personal transformation in the process of discipleship is holistic in nature, as is shown in Figure 9 in Appendix A. The wholeness of all areas of a person, including identity and relationships, is part of the process of the discipleship

*To Equip the Believers as Kingdom Leaders and  
Ambassadors in All Spheres of Society*

The forth element of the calling of the Church in the city is to equip believers as agents of change in the city. In this study it has been clearly established that the role of the ministry of the Church should be in all five areas of purpose of the city. This means that the interpretation of the concept of equipping believers: “to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph. 4:12) includes preparing the saints for ministry in all these spheres of the city. The idea of serving the interest of all spheres of the culture from a Kingdom perspective also referred to as the seven mountains strategy coined by Bill Bright (Campus Crusade for Christ) and Loren Cunningham (YWAM).<sup>10</sup>

This requires a solid theology of work and business, for an integrated spiritually and ministry vision, void of dualisms: ministry includes marketplace ministry and it includes the ministry of all believers. This type of teaching can include concepts like business as mission, to encourage creative integration of business models and Kingdom mission. It is also important that all believers are trained in understanding their callings, gifts, and talents and using the spiritual gifts in a marketplace setting. The gifts of revelation, wisdom, knowledge, and prophecy as well as gifts of healing are effective in the market place as signs of the Kingdom, as seen in many occasions in the book of Acts. This type of equipping can be viewed as an extension of the classical discipleship process, adding training and equipping of

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<sup>10</sup> These mountains are seven areas of culture that shape the mindset of the culture: These mountains are home (family); church (religion); education; media; government & politics; arts (including entertainment and sports); commerce (including science and technology) (Johnson, Wallnau & others, 2013, loc. 253 of 1712).

believers in these areas. In order to see themselves and function as shalom-makers and reconcilers see Figure 10 in Appendix A.

Grigg (2009), Keller (2012) and Silviso (2007) all support the vision that the Church can provide a Kingdom ministry context and training for all believers to become strongly engaged in the marketplace, cultural space and government, in order to be stewards and Kingdom influencers in the city. Bill Johnson adds an important warning that is not about taking control but servanthood: “The effort by many believers to simply obtain positions of leadership is putting the cart before the horse. Servanthood remains our strong suit, and through service we can bring the benefits of His world into the reach of the common man” (Johnson , Wallnau, & others, 2013, loc. 195 of 1712).

*To be a Community of Faith with the Neighborhood:*

*a Model and Agent of Shalom*

The fifth element of the calling of the Church for the city is to be a community that is a model and an agent of shalom for a neighborhood. As discussed before, the church in the book of Acts modeled a biblical way of receiving favor of the community (Acts 2:47). This text implies that the neighborhood could witness the life of this community of faith and also that it was impacted by its ministry. Reimer (2014) also speaks about the importance of being Church in the midst of the community: “the missional core of the nature of the Church includes the assumed intention of the transformation of the world in which the Church exists. The review of the relevant New Testament scriptures confirms this assumption” (Reimer, 2014, p. 105).

Sparks et al. (2014) in the book *The New Parish*, describe the journeys of the authors to learn what it means to be an incarnational community in the neighborhood. They call it “adaptive presencing”.

This adaptive presencing process is an integrative one that brings the postures of listening, discerning and acting together with one goal: faithful presence in your neighborhood. When all three facets are attended to within a community, the individual members function as a local expression of the family of God and are active participants in God’s family business, the renewal of all things. (Sparks et al., 2014, loc. 1609 of 2750)

*To Serve with Relevant Ministries for More Shalom in the City*

The final element is that all kinds of ministries are needed for the shalom of the city. The framework of the mission of God describes His ongoing engagement in bringing healing and redemption to the pain, the brokenness, and the lostness of the people. The ministry of Jesus was the clearest manifestation of this mission of God. He operated out of compassion for the people when he observed their needs (e.g. Matt. 14:14), as discussed in the theological framework of the transformational mission of God before. Jesus commissioned his Church to do the same. Keller (2012a) points to this. “Every part of the Church is outward facing, expecting the presence of non-believers ...to minister in word and deed, helping to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the poor as well as those who live and work in cultural centers” (Keller, 2012a, loc. 401 of 11994). There is a wide spectrum of ministries that cannot be covered in the study, but some biblical foundations and principles are described briefly following.

### *The Emphasis of Justice and Mercy in the Old Testament*

To do justice and take care of the poor are major priorities of the Scriptures. God instructs his people to have an attitude towards the poor and needy that reflects His own compassion for them: “If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward them. Rather, be open-handed and freely lend them whatever they need” (Deut. 15:7-8). As discussed before, a main concern in Amsterdam is the relational poverty (loneliness and fragmentation). This is in line with what Mother Teresa saw when she visited New York for the first time. She commented on poverty in the Western world.

The greatest disease in the West today is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is love. There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread but there are many more dying for a little love. The poverty in the West is a different kind of poverty -- it is not only a poverty of loneliness but also of spirituality. There's a hunger for love, as there is a hunger for God (Teresa & Vardey, 1995).

Justice and mercy are words that express the core values of God's rule: “righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you” (Ps. 86:14). The prophet Micah calls Israel to walk in these values. “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic. 6:8).

Mercy (*chesed* in Hebrew) is God's unconditional grace and compassion. The word *justice* (*mishpat* in Hebrew) means to do what is right in God's eyes. In Micah 6:8, “mishpat puts emphasis on the action, chesed puts it on the attitude (or motive)



behind the action” (Waltke, 2007, p. 394). Another important words in this context is *being righteous* (*tzadeqah* in Hebrew) and having right relationships (Keller, 2010, p. 9-10).

#### *God on the Side of the Poor, Widow, Orphan and Stranger*

In ministry in the city it is important to reflect God’s special care for the most vulnerable groups of society. The position of God towards these vulnerable groups is expressed as follows: “A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling” (Ps. 68:5). It is for these four groups (the “quartet of the vulnerable” (Wolterstorff, 2008, p. 75)), God rises to their defense. Their vulnerability is caused by the lack of relational support or assets (land) to work themselves out of their marginalized situation. Because of their relational weakness, they also lack people advocating for them in court or in disputes (Keller, 2012b, p. 2).

The categories might be different in the context of Amsterdam, but the concept of God’s special attention to those who are vulnerable and defenseless is still true and therefore should be a priority for the Church in the city. In this study, I address the question of who is in the quartet of the vulnerable in the city of Amsterdam.

#### *Biblical Instruments of Poverty Alleviation*

The instruments of ministry in the Scriptures can be categorized by relief, development, and social reform, as discussed in Chapter 3. Relief is giving resources to meet urgent basic needs, like tithes and offerings for the poor. The second is the type of help that includes the development of skills, knowledge, experience, and opportunities to work for and earn income. Offering fields for gleaning by the poor, widows, or strangers fits into this category. The vulnerable do not own land but get access to harvest by gleaning and provide for their food or income from it. Finally,

social reform is the kind of help that removes systemic poverty, causes, and provides opportunities for a better future, dignity, and breaking of cycles of poverty. The year of Sabbath, and even more, the year of Jubilee, is a standout example for this.

Shalom of the city requires all three levels of engagement. The ministries in the city must always look for ways to quickly move from relief to development and social reform. All of these instructions require a generosity of heart towards the poor and prevents the attitude of optimizing profit as the highest goal (no hardening of the heart).

It is important to note that all of these instructions in the Law had also a relational component (an example: “Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household.” (Deu. 26:11). The relationship element prevents giving to an anonymous category, “the poor”, but sharing with a person. It also provides a basis for mutual ministry on a basis of equality. The aspects of relationship-based ministry, based on mutual exchange and quality, are important for all shalom-making ministry efforts in Amsterdam, although it is not trivial in a deeply individualistic culture.

### *Conclusions for Biblical Ministry in the City*

From these instruments and principles from Scriptures, some generic conclusions can be drawn for ministry to the needs, the pain, and the lostness in the city. I will use four steps or attitudes suggested by Ed Silvoso (2007) that provide a practical fundamental approach to ministry in the city: “to bless the lost, fellowship with them, minister to them, and then (and only then) proclaim that the kingdom of God has come near them” (Silvoso, 2007, loc. 1830 of 4711). First, it is crucial to start all engagement with the *posture of blessing*. The compassion of the Lord and his transformational mission makes it absolutely clear that the agenda of all engagement

is to bless. It is a priestly role to speak blessing over the people in the neighborhood, in the schools, in the government, in the market place, etc.

The second step is to *build relationships*. In the missional framework and other parts of this chapter it has become clear that the Kingdom of God works relationally. Without relationships with the people and leaders of the city, there is no basis for shalom-making. The effort of building relationship is a vital part of the ministry itself.

The third step is to *minister to needs of the people*, to serve in the best way one can with relief, development, or social reform. Love is the basis for servanthood. Sometimes this means to do advocacy for them in the name of Christ in order to address injustice or systemic suppression. One can connect God's Kingdom with the reality of brokenness, pain, or lostness one encounter in the people they are in relationship with.

Finally, one can point at the source of our engagement, and *share the gospel of the Kingdom* and invite the people who are being served to enter in a relationship with Jesus. If they have tasted His love and compassion, they can be introduced to Him.

This section developed the biblical vision of place and the purpose of the city. From this baseline it continued with exploring the concept of ecclesia for the understanding of the calling of the Church in the city. This calling has been worked out in six crucial elements of ministry that comprise the role of ecclesia and will bring shalom to the city. In the last section of this chapter, the important issue of contextualization in sharing the gospel and in ministry to the needs of the city is addressed.

## **Contextualizing the Gospel in a Diverse Context**

The diversity of cultures in Amsterdam is rich and complex, with over 180 nationalities within its residents (OIS Amsterdam, 2016a, p.31). In a context of the city that is highly post-Christian and has a significant percentage of other religious backgrounds (like Islam), the task of contextualizing has become a concern for every follower of Christ. Everyone is a missionary. This requires, first of all, an awareness of the surrounding culture. The most vital skill of contextualizing is the art of listening. Listening to the culture where one is placed and listening to the Spirit in order to hear the gospel message clearly, as well promptings of the Spirit for clues and entry points for the culture. It is also important to see and observe what is actually going on in the neighborhood and even more, how God is already at work in the culture. Roxburgh, Boren and Priddy (2009) formulate this as follows.

Each of our contexts is unique; each has its own particular intermixing of cultural interactions. The gospel, therefore, must always be understandable in the language and thought patterns of that context. ...it is so important for churches to become skilled in listening to their own setting. Missional life emerges from the kind of listening that connects us with what God might be up to in a particular context (Roxburgh, Boren, & Priddy, 2009, p. 87).

A biblical example for this approach is the way that Paul expresses his motivation to contextualize.

To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ...To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. (1 Cor. 19:20; 22)

The story of Paul that is found in Acts 17:16-34 describes a clear application of the contextualized approach of Paul in the city of Athens.

### ***Approaches in Contextualizing***

Gary Tyra (2013) explores the spectrum of responses to culture in the process of contextualizing. He recognizes one extreme being “abject assimilation” and the other end “mere proclamation” (see Figure 11 in Appendix A). Keller (2012a) also seeks a balance between extremes of under- and over-contextualization: “because the city has potential for both human flourishing and human idolatry, we minister with balance, using the gospel to both appreciate and challenge the culture to be in accord with God’s truth” (Keller, 2012a, loc. 2214 of 11994).

Tyra (2013) suggests the concept of re-contextualization instead of accommodating the gospel to the culture: “the process therefore speaks of ‘fresh hearings’ of the gospel that can lead to both methodological and theological innovations as we engage in cross-cultural ministry (see John 3:16-21)” (Tyra, 2013, p. 82). This approach requires the missional believer to listen prayerfully to the message of the gospel from the place within the surrounding culture.

### ***Open to Embrace Otherness?***

The tendency to suppress or condemn another culture can be a challenge. In Chapter 2, the barriers of the modern postmodern gap are discussed as well as the hesitation for many Christians to build bridges in order to reach Muslims. Generally speaking, it is hard for humans to overcome “otherness”. In the book *Exclusion and Embrace*, Volf (1996) argues that solving conflict starts (and not ends) with embrace.

...the will to give ourselves to others and ‘welcome’ them, to readjust our identities to make space for them, is prior to any judgment about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity. The will to embrace

precedes any 'truth' about others and any construction of their 'justice.' This will is absolutely indiscriminate and strictly immutable; it transcends the moral mapping of the social world into 'good' and 'evil' (Volf, 1996, loc. 407 of 7050).

This statement is true for all types of gaps, barriers, and prejudices. The proposal to start with embrace as a primary calling based on humanity as image bearers of God is an important key, because it solely rests on the affirmation of shared humanity. This is most clearly demonstrated by the crucifixion of Christ. The cross is the sign of unconditional embrace and love. God is welcoming humanity to enter into his embrace and to be totally reconciled, both victim and perpetrator, even if they are still hostile towards Him (Rom. 5:10). The message of the cross shows a pathway for all groups that experience barriers due to otherness (moderns, postmoderns, muslims, atheists, etc.).

For a modernist, this pathway may feel counter-intuitive to "the need to be right". For postmoderns, it is difficult to trust and welcome others into their space of self, especially not to people they suspect of forcing opinions and using the force of power. They both wrestle with the Western cultural idol "to be free, and individual, self-sufficient and self-centered" (Roest, 2016, p. 319). However, regardless of how big the challenges are for reconciling the differences, this is exactly what the message of the gospel is all about. "...God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19-20). God overcame the biggest barrier, sin and rebellion of humankind, in Christ, which is the foundation of reconciling differences and the motivation for contextualization of the Kingdom of God.

A next step of embrace has to do with creating space within oneself to see things from the perspective of the other (Volf, 1996, loc. 1807 of 7050). This does not mean one has to surrender to the convictions of the other person but for a moment one allows a taste from their perspective. Based on this experience one can decide to evaluate her /his own convictions. Insight in the formation of self in the postmodern context can help the modern person to understand some foundational realities that are shaping his/her identity. Likewise, the postmodern can for a moment set aside the scepticism regarding the motif of the modern person and listen to his desires and fears before deconstructing his/her world.

### ***What is the Core of the Gospel Message?***

As noted before, Tyra (2013) suggest starting the process of contextualizing with finding the core of the gospel message. He uses the passage of 1 Cor. 15:1-4 to formulate this core of the gospel that “is modest in scope and soteriological focused” (Tyra, 2013, p. 48), in order to bring the gospel to the postmodern world.

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Cor. 15:1-4)

Tyra’s suggested core is the following.

- Jesus is both God and human
- Jesus’ death on the cross possessed an atoning significance
- Jesus rose bodily from the grave
- Jesus is now Lord of all (Tyra, 2013, p. 49)

For entering into the postmodern world, it is crucial to present the gospel as a transformational message that has redemptive power and purpose. I therefore suggest adding Romans 1:16-17 to this conversation.

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation<sup>11</sup> of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith’ (Rom. 1:16-17).

From this text, one can derive the *purpose* of the gospel: to bring wholeness, (*sōzo*) as seen in the mission of God’s framework. The *grace* of the gospel: it is a gift of righteousness from God; the *power* of the gospel: it is not an idea or a dream, but it is the redeeming and transforming power of the Holy Spirit, received by faith. The text also indicates that the good news is available for all humankind. The good news of the gospel is that the Kingdom of God is breaking forth based on the Jesus’s redemptive work on the cross, the victory of His resurrection, and through the work of the Spirit, brokenness will be transformed until His Shalom is established. I believe all these elements are crucial for fresh hearings of the gospel in the postmodern culture of Amsterdam.

### ***Fresh Hearings from a Postmodern Worldview***

The postmodern deconstruction of truth, morality, and meaning creates the illusion of ultimate freedom. It is, however, also an expression of the cultural idols of “...the trust in the power of human agency” (Roest, 2016, 318) and “self-sufficiency” (Roest, p. 319). In the end, the unlimited freedom results in a lonely journey in the

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<sup>11</sup> The Greek word used for *salvation* (Strong’s nr. g4991) in this passage is derived from the word *sōzo* (wholeness) (Strong’s nr. g4982).



midst of a bombardment of choices and information that is a heavy burden on the soul. In the discussion about identity formation in Chapter 2, the concept of dis-embedding was described as a root cause. In the biblical worldview, a healthy person is a connected person, relationally embedded in a connection with God and connected with others in “community”. A person has also a divine “placement” in a family, a tradition, and a local context with a purpose and destiny.

Re-embedding of postmoderns is not turning back the clock to the modern era but reconciling self with God’s purpose of a healthy identity and its intended embedding. The movement that the gospel offers is the embedding of *my story* in *our story* in *His story*. To go this path requires a restoration of trust (in something outside self). first of all, a restoration of trust in the goodness of the Lord.

“Come and taste that the Lord is good” (Ps. 34:9) is an invitation of experiential knowledge that can bring healing and deliverance of distorted ideas and experiences, restoration of relationship, and creation of new experiences (tasting). The fruit of this process is a growing trust and experience of the blessing of His story as a “mega-narrative” that is real and healthy to embed the personal story.

To help postmoderns with re-embedding, the community of faith in the city can offer healthy rhythms and a discipleship culture that includes the embrace of biblical patterns like sabbath and work, engagement and withdrawal, and action and reflection. Also, a spirituality that includes the practice of other spiritual disciplines (fasting, prayer, silence, meditation, etc.) will provide a grid of patterns that are biblical, Spirit empowered and historically proven.

In order to establish new traditions, postmoderns can be welcomed in a community of faith that is committed and passionate to grow together in Christ. This kind of community can provide the environment where “our story” can be written. It

provides a sense of belonging to a group of people who follow Jesus together, connected to the Church of the ages, and embedded in the history of the people of Israël. In the mission of the Church they become instruments of God's healing for each other and people who share a common mission to bring shalom to the neighborhood. It is God's design to write history together and establish new traditions.

In helping postmoderns to trust Jesus Christ, a relevant entry point can be to present Him as a *compassionate sojourner*. At the core, postmodern persons are left alone in a complex world, to write their own life story, without a moral grid in a complex matrix of (often broken) relationships. The good news of gospel is that Christ is the divine companion who walked this road before

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly (Matt. 11:28-30, The Message).

For postmoderns, conversion usually is a series of steps in their journey with Christ and other Christ followers. The transformational work of the Spirit will lead them to steps of change, healing and commitment. For them the process of formation of the (new) identity is important and ongoing. This *is* the process of discipleship.

The proposed approach of contextualization of the gospel and the ministry of shalom-making in a postmodern culture is far from complete. However, it can be a starting point of more conversation and wisdom collected from other resources, as well as from the years of experience of many leaders in Amsterdam who are serving in the context of the culture of the city.

After discussing important theological concepts that are building blocks for understanding the calling of the Church as well as biblical principles for the approach of ministry in the city, the next chapter will give an overview of the project design and research methodologies. The research of the project will show the measure of connection of the theory of the literature of Chapter 3 and the theological foundations of this chapter with the realities of the city and the Church of the city.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PROJECT DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices;  
when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy.  
Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,  
– Proverbs 11:10-11a

In this chapter the design of the final project and the methods of its research are discussed. The research has two main focal points: firstly, understanding of the city of Amsterdam, and secondly, research of the current state of engagement of the Church in the well-being of the city. The main research methods involve three approaches utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies: 1) statistical research on the city of Amsterdam; 2) primary research via a comprehensive survey tool for churches in the city to measure their visions for and current engagement of the city toward shalom; 3) outcomes of participant interviews via roundtable forums comprised of church leaders in the city. The central intervention strategy of the final project was a two-day consultation for leaders of churches and ministries in Amsterdam. The design of the city consultation and the program will be discussed in this chapter.

#### **Project Design**

##### ***Overview***

The main objective of the project was to find ways to help leaders of churches and ministries in Amsterdam to understand and increase the transformational role of the whole Church in their city. The research and organization of the city consultation

were not goals in themselves but served mainly as activation tools for this objective.

Originally the design of the project was comprised of the following steps.

1. pre-project preparation activities
2. research of the city characteristics and realities
3. interviewing civic leaders of the city to have their perspective on the city
4. research and interviews with leaders on the engagement of the church in the city
5. a city consultation for church and civic leaders to share and validate the research and to make an agenda of action for the coming five years
6. development of a plan of action and monitoring for the coming five years

During the execution of the project, some changes some changes needed to be made to the plan. It became clear during the preparation phase that active participation in a citywide vision and collaboration beyond the leaders' own ministries or networks required much more effort than expected. The idea of citywide collaboration was not rejected, but much more explanation, inspiration, and bridge building were needed among the (network) leaders in the city to analyze the current situation and to work together toward this goal.

This reality led me, with the leaders of the Amsterdam Council of Christian Leaders (ACCL), to the conclusion that in this stage the vision for a unified movement for bringing shalom to the city was too fragile to involve both the civic leaders and the Church leaders in the process of research and city consultation. Instead, the focus of the project changed to unifying and catalyzing collaboration amongst leaders in the body of Christ.

The original third step of interviewing civic leaders was replaced by meetings with key network, church, or ministry leaders to motivate them to participate in the

vision behind this project and in the research and the city consultation. A further decision was made to not include city leaders outside the body of Christ in the 2017 city consultation. The focus of the consultation concentrated on building a shared experience of working towards a more unified movement of the body of Christ for the shalom of the city. The vision to do a city consultation including other leaders of the city can be realized in a next city consultation.

### ***Pre-project Activities and Meetings***

One of the priorities of the ACCL is to initiate and catalyze a collaborative citywide movement of the body of Christ in Amsterdam to see more fruit of God's Kingdom in the city. This final project is in the heart of this vision. Therefore, the ACCL started to organize events in previous years in preparation for the research and city consultation of this project.

#### ***Amsterdam City Summit 2014***

The first main event that set the foundation for this final project was the Amsterdam City Summit event I organized for the ACCL November 1, 2014. The main goal of this meeting was to introduce a theological foundation for city engagement and transformation. It also provided a network opportunity for the ACCL to present the vision for citywide collaboration. The keynote speaker, Dr. Randy White of Fresno, California, shared his experience and the scriptural foundation for bringing shalom to the city. Local speakers focused on relevant topics in the city: postmodernism, collaboration for transformation, and the mission of immigrant churches in the city. Several short presentations showed only a few examples of Kingdom activity in the city: Kingdom Prayernet on citywide prayer; *Amsterdam in Beweging* (AIB) on church planting in the city; and The Father's House Movement on discipling ex-Muslims.

Around 25 leaders from the city attended the summit. In the roundtable talks at the end of the day, it became clear that the leaders recognized the importance of collaboration for missional engagement in the city and theological reflection on the city. The holistical theological approach presented at the summit was new to most leaders, but it was well received and acknowledged by almost all attendees. The summit also raised the awareness of the need for collaboration of faith leaders in the city beyond their own ministries and networks. It finally became clear, that more networking and theological reflection amongst faith leaders in the city was needed.

#### *Other ACCL Events*

Following the Amsterdam City Summit in 2014 until the city consultation in April 2017, the ACCL organized several events for leaders in the city. My role in the ACCL was co-founding council member, and as of January 2016, I became the chairperson of this council. In January 2015 and 2016, ACCL pastors' prayer meetings focused on intercession and spiritual warfare for different aspects of the city. Twenty leaders attended these meetings, which also provided opportunities for networking and vision sharing. Pastors and leaders learned to focus prayer on the city and expressed a desire to network with this focus in mind.

Another element of focus for the ACCL is to facilitate fellowship among pastors. Yearly breakfast or lunch meetings were attended by 20-30 pastors and leaders from the city. Praying in groups for each of the ministries and churches has been a highlight of these meetings. Also, the vision to work together as the whole Church, with the whole gospel for the whole city was discussed. The general outcome was a confirmation that leaders desire more connection and fellowship with other leaders in the city. Leaders affirmed the decision to work collaboratively for the

kingdom in the city; however, they expressed concern about the extra time burden on their schedules.

Finally, Dr. Ed Silvosio led a seminar for about 15 leaders from the city and other regions. He shared the apostle Paul's strategy to reach cities, to include the market place and business leaders in his ministry from the book of Acts (chapters 18 and 19). He also shared the vision of the Church as an ecclesia and the paradigm shifts discussed in the book *Transformation* (Silvosio, 2007) (see chapter 3). The journey of discovery that Dr. Silvosio shared was recognized by the attending leaders as similar to the expansion of their own visions towards a more holistic and transformational view of the Church in the city.

### **Research Methods**

#### ***Research of the City Characteristics and Realities***

The first step of data gathering was the collection and review of existing statistical data and qualitative studies from research institutes on issues that are relevant for an overall exegesis of Amsterdam, e.g.: demography, income, crime, well-being, housing, health, religion, etc. This data was collected from reports of the Amsterdam City Government, which has a research institute (OIS Amsterdam) that performs research in Amsterdam on many of these topics. Other sources are the national institute of statistical research (CBS) and other more specialized institutes connected to universities or government agencies. The goal was to provide information for the general exegesis of the city and to identify the most important needs, assets, and concerns.

In order to have an accurate picture of religion and especially of Christian faith in Amsterdam, the research of OIS Amsterdam is used. However, this research is generic in nature and comprises all religions in the city. Other sources were used to



provide a more detailed overview of the Christian church and Christian faith in the city: *Diepe Vrede voor Kleurrijk Amsterdam* (CGK-Amsterdam, 2003a).

Also, existing reports of information of the exegesis of the Amsterdam were used. The main sources accessed for this purpose follow.

- *Holistic Approach to Ministry* (Alagbe, 2008): a study on the holistic ministry engagement of African churches in Amsterdam Southeast
- *Een Portret van Amsterdam [A Portret of Amsterdam]* (CGK Amsterdam, 2003b): this is an exegetical sketch of the main characteristics of Amsterdam based on research and literature. This sketch was made by a church-planting team of the Christian Reformed Church of Amsterdam
- *Diepe Vrede voor Kleurrijk Amsterdam [Deep Peace for Colorful Amsterdam]* (CGK Amsterdam, 2003a): a report made by the missional team of the Christian Reformed Church of Amsterdam, showing the research and assessments they made for their church-planting efforts in the city. The needs of the city and the culture are analyzed and will be used to verify the results of this study
- *Exegeting Your Community* (Brinksmas, 2014): a paper on an extensive exegesis of the Banne Buiksloot neighborhood in Amsterdam North. In this exegesis the statistical data of the neighborhood was used in combination with interviews with leaders in the community, church prayer-walk reports, street level interviews, and a door-to-door interview survey of 88 families in the most vulnerable area of this neighborhood
- *Asset Based Community Development* (Brinksmas, 2016a): an asset-based mapping of IJburg Amsterdam. This is recently developed area of Amsterdam that is man-made island in the lake on the eastside of the city. The asset map is

based on interviews with leaders of different spheres of the neighborhood and statistical data of the area

### ***Research on the Engagement of the Church in the City***

#### *Networking Meetings to Engage Leaders*

As discussed above, a choice was made to focus the research on leaders of churches, ministries, and Christian organizations and to add the conversation and research among civic leaders in the city at a later stage (beyond the scope of this project). For this final project, the Amsterdam Chief of Police was the only civic leader who was interviewed. Also, a video was made with the chief sharing his views on the city and the role of the Church in the community.

I had several meetings with key leaders of networks or leaders with significant insight and ministries in the city in order to gain collaboration for the survey and for the city consultation. In these meetings I shared the vision of forging a collaborative movement of networks, churches, and ministries. Another goal was to find the unique grace and contribution of each ministry for the city. Questions included the following.

- do you share the vision to invite leaders from all churches, ministries, and networks for catalyzing a citywide movement focused on shalom for the city?
- what would be the contribution of your network to ministry in this?
- are you willing to participate with your leaders in the survey and the city consultation? Do you want to share about your network or ministry during the consultation?
- what would be your expectation of the outcomes of the project?

Finally, a substantial effort was made to reconcile differences and hardships of the past between among some of the leaders of different networks of the Church in

Amsterdam. The pre-project preparation included conversations with leaders, among others, from the following groups.

- *Amsterdam in Beweging* (AIB): a church planting network
- *Pentecostal Council of Church* (PCC): a church network
- *Protestantse Kerk Amsterdam* (PKA): a church denomination
- *Transform our World Netherlands* ministry: a national transformation ministry
- *Kingdom Prayer Net* (KPN): a citywide prayer network
- *Christen Unie* (CU) Amsterdam: a Christian political party
- *De Stadslamp* [city-light] Amsterdam: a communication platform

### *The Research Survey*

With the stronger focus on the Church in the city, the Kingdom impact survey included more detailed questions than originally suggested. The survey was designed based on the three rings of the Kingdom ecosystem model. The subject of collaboration of leaders was added in order to find data about the current quality of the Kingdom ecosystem in the city (level of connectives and collaboration) and the willingness for leaders to see more growth (See Appendix I for the design of survey).

The questions related to the first ring of the model regarding the theological vision on the Kingdom of God, the city, and the role of the Church in the city are presented as a set of statements, from which each can be scored 0 to 5 stars. This method was also used in other parts of the survey where an opinion was requested. These questions also allowed for additional comments. The second ring comprises questions in the form of select boxes and numbers to be filled in. In the questions of the third ring, a combination of the above is used. In order to measure the opinion of leaders on the needs and assets of the city, an extensive set of possible needs and assets was presented with the option for the applicant to indicate the relevance of each

items with a choice between 0 and 10. Also additional needs and assets could be listed in a comment box.

The survey was ben implemented with the online survey tool Survey Gizmo,<sup>1</sup> in a Dutch and an English version. Appendix G shows the printed outline of the survey of the as it was designed for this study (see Figure 3 in Appendix A). In principle, it is aimed at all churches, ministries, and Christ-inspired organizations with a ministry focus on the city of Amsterdam. In order to invite leaders to participate in the survey, the ACCL database was the starting point (about 70 leaders). This was extended with online information sources from churches and ministries in the city. I approached about 200 leaders with a request to participate in the survey and with a personal invitation to the city consultation. Also, Kingdom Prayernet (KPN) and the Stadslamp forwarded the information and invitation requests per email to leaders in their databases, approximately 120 for KPN and 300 for the Stadslamp. It is safe to assume that more than 300 leaders of churches, ministries, and organizations were invited to participate. The goal was to have at least 50 leaders participate in the survey. Another goal was to have a wide participation from various denominations and types of ministries.

## **The Intervention Strategy**

### ***Purpose and Goals***

The main intervention strategy for this final project was the Amsterdam city consultation. This consultation was held on April 7 and 8, 2017, in Amsterdam, and was intended to be a catalyzing event to mobilize, inspire and facilitate a unified

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<sup>1</sup> The online research survey is implemented in the Gizmo survey tool, see <http://surveygizmo.com/>.

movement of the body of Christ for more shalom in the city (see Figure 12 in Appendix A for the event promotion visual).

The goals of the event follow.

- to grow in understanding of the city: the needs and strengths of Amsterdam
- to share and learn about what God is already doing in the city through the body of Christ
- to shape a common understanding of the role of the Church for the well-being of the city
- to be inspired by the stories of leaders from different parts of the Church, with various ministries, church, and cultural backgrounds
- to pray and discuss together the priorities and opportunities for the whole church in the city, including shaping a common agenda of the Church for the city in the coming years
- to inspire vision, faith, and passion to contribute with God's unique calling for each church, ministry, or organization

Another purpose of the consultation was to present and to validate the research outcomes.

### ***The Program of the Amsterdam City Consultation***

The program of the consultation was structured around four main themes: 1) know your city, 2) love your city, 3) serve your city, 4) impact your city (see Appendix B, Table 4 for an overview of the program). The first day started with an inspirational talk from Alan Platt, of the Doxa Deo movement in South Africa, who shared his personal journey of discovery and implementation of a citywide transformational vision.

After this presentation, the first theme of the consultation (knowing your city) included a presentation of the results of the survey regarding the needs and assets of the city, as well as the additional research on the realities of the city. Further presentations included a keynote address on “the secular city” and the video interview with Amsterdam’s Chief of Police. This section was concluded with roundtable discussions about the needs, assets, and the culture of the city. See Appendix C for the roundtable questions of the consultation.

The second section, labeled love your city, started with a presentation of the survey results regarding the theological vision of leaders in the city on the Kingdom of God, the view of the city, and the role of the Church in the city. Three talks presented the journey and experience of a missional pioneer, the history of the Church in the city, and the citywide prayer movement (Kingdom Prayernet). The section was closed with a roundtable discussion on the theology of the Kingdom, the city, and the role of the Church in the city to validate the research presented and come to shared conclusions. The day was closed with a time of prayer for the city.

The second day opened with a review of the first day in order to update new attendees with the results of the first day. Allan Platt shared about his experience in catalyzing a citywide movement in Pretoria, South Africa. The section on “serve your city” was opened by sharing the survey results on the topics of outreach, disciple-making, church-planting, as well as projects and ministries serving the well-being of the city. Another three talks highlighted specific areas of engagement: a community transformation project in collaboration with the Amsterdam Medical Center in Amsterdam Southeast; a European economic summit organized by a church in Amsterdam; and a presentation of opportunities and challenges of Christians in the political sphere of the city. This section was closed with a roundtable discussion on

how one sees God's work in the city and the sharing of dreams for God's work in the future.

Finally, a section on impacting the city was started by sharing results of the survey on collaboration within the Church as well as with other stakeholders in the city, and on the demand for training to bring shalom in the city. After this, a panel discussion was held with leaders of main networks in the city and other city movement leaders from other Dutch cities (Haarlem and Amsterdam). This was followed by roundtable discussion about the ways to collaborate more effectively and on the common priorities for the agenda of Church for city engagement. The results of all the roundtables were reviewed and agreed upon. The consultation was concluded by a time of prayer with and for each other.

### **Evaluation**

The Amsterdam city consultation was the main instrument to evaluate the results of the data-gathering for the final project. Also, the consultation was used to validate the interpretation of the data in presented conclusions of the exegesis of the city and of the Church as an ecosystem in the city. The feedback on the research presentations from the interaction, roundtables, and discussion panels during the consultation were used for this by confirming and amending the conclusions of the outcomes.

The same approach was used to evaluate the proposed curriculum and model for training and mentoring of leaders as well as the proposed action agenda for the Church ecosystem for the coming five years. The desired outcome was to arrive at a training approach and the action agenda that is supported by the general consensus of the attendees of the city consultation, based on their experience and context. This approach will not only validate the data and interpretation of the research but also

lead to co-ownership of the action agenda and the proposed content and approach of training leaders.

The consultation itself was evaluated based on the feedback forms gathered from the participants (see Appendix D). This feedback form includes questions about the content of the presentations and workshops, the effectiveness and quality of the interaction, the program, the speakers, and the outcome of the city consultation.

The city consultation will also be evaluated in a meeting of the Amsterdam Counsel of Christian Leaders (ACCL). The ACCL will implement and monitor the progress of the action agenda. This will include reports to the churches and ministries that were involved in the consultation or registered for engagement in the ACCL information distribution. The council will also plan follow-up gatherings and training and workgroup events that will help implement the agenda.

### **Closing Remarks**

In this chapter, the design of the project and its research components were outlined. Each research component serves a unique role in realizing the objectives of the project. The city research provides the leaders in Amsterdam with an actual overview of the context of the city. The statistical information of the city and the findings of recent studies about different topics in Amsterdam will be integrated into characteristics of the important categories of the city. This will help leaders to define priorities and strategies for their ministries for the city in the coming years.

The survey conducted among the leaders of churches and ministries first shows how the participating leaders view the needs and the assets of the city. This assessment of the leaders will be combined with the outcomes of the research of the city in order to come to shared conclusions about the realities of the context of ministry in the city.



The survey also defined the starting point for the citywide movement in terms of vision and current outreach and ministries for the city. It will disclose the measure of a shared theological vision that can serve as a foundation for bringing shalom to the city. It also shows the current reality of the other rings of the Kingdom ecosystem model (disciple-making and church-planting and relevant city ministries).

The city consultation was the main activating component of the project. Besides inspiration from the experience of city movements from other parts of the world, the stories of leaders engaging the city of Amsterdam was a sign of hope and showed the application of the various elements of the role in the city proposed in this document. The consultation also served as a tool to evaluate and integrate the outcomes of the other research components. The outcomes of the roundtable conversations are important parts of the research of this project.

In the next chapter the outcomes of these research components are discussed. This will be done by presenting the results of the various research components grouped together in the main areas of interest of this project.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **OUTCOMES AND RESULTS**

Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, “Let us start rebuilding.” So they began this good work.

– Nehemiah 2:17- 8

This chapter describes the outcomes of the city research, the survey of faith leaders, the focus groups of leaders, and the Amsterdam city consultation of the final project as discussed in Chapter 5. These outcomes are grouped together in main sections that correspond with the main categories of the Kingdom ecosystem model (Figure 3 in Appendix A).

Each section ends with some conclusions based on the findings of the section. However, these conclusions will be brief and are only intended to summarize and highlight the main outcomes. In Chapter 7 these outcomes will be further interpreted and analyzed, which will lead to conclusions of this study and the recommendations for advancing towards the goal of the study: to become God’s ecclesia in Amsterdam by being aware of it and start living out this reality.

#### **Research Survey Participation**

Over 300 leaders of churches, ministries, and Christ-inspired organizations in the city were invited to participate in the research survey. The presented data is the outcome of the participation of 68 leaders who filled in the survey, 18 more than the original goal. The diagrams of Figure 13 in Appendix A. shows that 50% of the

participants represented churches in Amsterdam; the other half represented ministries, social and civic organizations, and training and network organizations in the city. There was also a good variation of affiliation with different church backgrounds (See Figure 14, Appendix A). The Pentecostal and charismatic affiliations make up the main group of 43%. Another substantial group is the Reformed section (PKN 15%) combined with other Reformed (20%). There is also an Anglican church and one large Roman Catholic parish church participating in the survey. The goal to have more than 50 leaders representing different parts of the Church, including ministries and Christ-inspired organizations, was reached.

### **Project Outcomes Regarding the Exegesis of Amsterdam**

This section presents the outcomes of the research of the context of ministry in Amsterdam. First, the outcomes of the city research are presented. Secondly the outcomes of the research survey regarding the assessment of needs and assets of the city are presented. Finally, this section is ended with a presentation of the roundtable discussions related to the context (see Appendix C, roundtable session 1).

#### ***City Research Outcomes***

In this section a summary of a general exegesis of the city is presented. The data was retrieved from statistical information and from other studies (see Chapter 5). Due to the limited space of this section, the outcomes will only focus on some core themes: the general well-being of citizens, the quality of community and relationships, material poverty and inequality, spiritual life in the city, and the city culture.

#### ***The General Well-being of Citizens***

In a sustainability index study (Arcadis, 2016) the consultants of Arcadis compared 100 global cities on three themes: people (social), planet (environmental),

and profit (economical).<sup>1</sup> Amsterdam ranks 11th in this list, scoring 7th place in area of people, 19th in the area of planet, and 16th in the area of economy. The profile of the report states the following regarding Amsterdam.

Amsterdam exhibits one of the best balances in the Index across the three pillars of sustainability. Historically, Amsterdam is recognized as a city of commerce and entrepreneurship. Its successful entrepreneurial background has built an innovative ecosystem creating synergies between inhabitants, public organizations, schools and businesses. Amsterdam was awarded the European Innovation Capital for 2016. (Arcadis, 2016, p. 23)

There are clear assets of the city that stand out in this research of Arcadis. The culture to work together pragmatically for common causes was already mentioned in Chapter 2 on the cultural history. This same asset is now used to create synergies between very different entities in the city for the problems of today. Other assets with historical roots are commerce and entrepreneurship, as well as innovation (see also Chapter 2 on the history of the city). Research by the city municipality on the overall well-being score relative to living in the city reports that 5% of the people are unhappy; 13% are average happy; 61% are happy, and 17% are very happy (OIS Amsterdam, 2016a, p. 27).

The high score of social well-being (ranking seventh in the world) on a citywide level is a blessing; however, after analyzing the different areas of the city, a more diverse picture arises. The areas of the center and the south have a positive score. These are affluent and business areas of the city. The well-being of the people

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix F, Figure 2 for more definition of these three categories.

in the north, southeast, and new west is viewed negatively (see Table 5 in Appendix B).

In order to include an example of exegesis on a neighborhood level, the paper on the outcomes of an intensive exegesis projects conducted by the Rafaël Amsterdam North church in a vulnerable neighborhood in Amsterdam North (the Klipperstraat area) served as an input for the city research of this project.<sup>2</sup> This neighborhood exegesis included interviewing 88 families in five apartment blocks about issues regarding well-being. Table 6 in Appendix B shows the outcomes from this neighborhood. A positive sense of well-being in this area is reported by only 32% of its residents. The analysis of the interviews in Klipperstraat neighborhood revealed a correlation of the low sense of well-being, with poor social relationships and a low self-image (Brinksma, 2014, p. 51). This insight provided useful keys for the Rafaël Amsterdam North church to minister effectively in that neighborhood.

The differences in the sense of well-being described above show that an area of strength of the city can have a completely different outcome for some parts of the city. Hence, the importance for the churches in the city to be incarnationally present at their neighborhood levels and serve the felt needs of those places.

#### *The Quality of Community and Relationships in Amsterdam*

The outcomes of the research of the city continues with findings regarding the sense of community and the quality of relationships. The negative side of the individualistic culture in Amsterdam is the loss of social cohesion. Relational poverty is one of the strongest needs in Amsterdam. The most recent study shows that 65,000

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<sup>2</sup> The exegesis of the neighborhood is documented in a paper I wrote during my BGU doctoral program. The research included interviews with community leaders, street interviews, and interviews of residents of 5 apartment flats in the statistical and qualitative research data and impressions of of prayer walking in the neighborhood. (Brinksma, 2014)

people (11%) in Amsterdam experience severe loneliness and about 200,000 (34%) of the residents suffer from loneliness at a less severe level (OIS Amsterdam, 2016a, p. 42).

... the people that suffer from loneliness have a lack of meaningful relationships with others. Elements that play a role in this are both the frequency and the quality of the relationships. Loneliness causes a lower quality of life and increases the risks for health problems. ...social loneliness is more frequent than emotional loneliness (30% resp. 19%) ...The alleviation of loneliness is one of the goals of the city political program 2015 - 2018 of the city of Amsterdam. (OIS Amsterdam, 2016a, p. 42)

The areas of the city with more than average levels of severe loneliness are parts of north (15%), new west (23%), and southeast (16 - 19%). In the neighborhoods with high percentages of loneliness, the sense of neighborhood safety and cleanness are often reported lower, as is the case in Klipperstraat area (see Table 6 in Appendix B).

The objective crime rates in the city are dropping (96,907 registered crime cases in 2016 vs. 105,234 in 2015). About 25% of the crimes have a severe impact on the personal life of the victims ("high-impact" crimes) (OIS Amsterdam, 2017, p. 4). The general feeling of safety does not always follow the statistics, "this expressed feeling of un-safety is a symbol that represents all kinds of social problems." (OIS Amsterdam, 2016a, p. 159)

A related issue in the city is fragmentation. Fragmentation is about gaps or barriers that are limiting or blocking the connection with other(s) (groups). These experienced barriers are usually based on social or religious identity, fears, or other limitations in social interaction with others. As described in Chapter 2, the city

government is strongly involved in the social and civic fabric of the city. There are many government as well as public initiated projects, services, and initiatives that provide social and civic support to individuals and areas (in the asset map of the IJburg area over 60 active organizations and initiatives were found (Brinksma, 2016a, p. 44)).

However, these services and initiatives often cannot solve the fragmentation or other relational neighborhood problems, because they are too specialized or not integrated themselves. (Brinksma, 2016a, p. 34) The history of IJburg is a good example of the complexity to solve fragmentation issues in the community. The development of IJburg started about 12 years ago with the vision to create a neighborhood without borders (OIS Amsterdam, 2016c), where social classes are mixed in every housing block as well as care facilities. This policy was aimed at more integration between social classes. After a decade, the reality is that there are more tensions and less integration between residents than in other areas.<sup>3</sup> In bringing shalom in the city, fragmentation of the community is a major concern for the Church. The possible role for the Church in restoring fragmentation of the community was acknowledged by civic leaders interviewed in Amsterdam North and IJburg: Ellen Weers works as a liaison officer in Amsterdam in IJburg (with a non-religious background). Her response on the role of the Church was as follows.

The church can build bridges between fragmented and isolated groups. The churches can bring more reconciliation and collaboration in the community. Churches must be strong communities of faith, from which they receive deep inspiration. At the same time, they should be an open community, an

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<sup>3</sup> Based on the conclusions of the research that was done by the University of Amsterdam on the effects of the mixed economy of IJburg (Lindner, 2014)

instrument of service to the community. (Weers, personal communication, May 20, 2016)

Another statement from Kenan Uzunovic, manager building cooperation *Stadgenoot* in Klipperstraat, (with a Muslim background):

Churches are important because they can build bridges in their communities.

The power of a church is that they work from the heart (not for gain or profit)

The strength you have is to really listen to what people need and be flexible in how to meet that need. Most organizations work with an agenda, but you are really interested in people and their needs. Also, you can mobilize more people than I can ever pay (Uzunovic, K., personal communication, May 8, 2016).

Finally, broken family relationships are another major concern in the well-being of the city. In 2016 Amsterdam was the city with the highest divorce rate in the country (11,9 out of 1000 marriages per year). In the top six of the list of neighborhoods with the highest percentage of divorce in the country, there were two Amsterdam neighborhoods (both in southeast) (Mulder, 2017). These neighborhoods in Amsterdam have a high percentage of people living under the social minimum level (22% - 24%) (Mulder, 2017). Also, more affluent areas can have high divorce rates, like IJburg: 36 out of 1000 marriages per year (CBS, 2016c).

Broken relationships have a strong impact on the children involved in those families. In Amsterdam 22.4% of all children grow up in a one parent family (CBS, 2016b). Research shows that children from a divorced couple have a higher risk for low education, lower income, depression, addictions, weak relationships with parents, and divorce (Ince & Verheijden, 2015, pp., p. 2-3)

The findings above indicate that the sense of community is low in Amsterdam.



Another major concern is brokenness in the area of relationships in families and marriage as well as in the community (fragmentation).

### *Material Poverty and Inequality in Amsterdam*

The theme of material poverty and inequality is the next topic of the outcomes of the research of the city. In Chapter 2 a picture of the reality of poverty in Amsterdam is given. In this section a few additional updates on the current situation are presented. Every year the city publishes The Poverty Monitor (OIS Amsterdam, 2016b), a report with research and analyses regarding poverty in the city. The 2015 update starts with the following.

It is going well with the city, this can be concluded by the reports on the condition of the city, but this statement needs nuance: on average the developments of the last few years are well in Amsterdam, but not everybody benefits from it. ...24% of the households have a low income, and this number is growing, also a quarter of the youth of Amsterdam is raised in a low-income household. (OIS Amsterdam, 2016b, p. 5)

The problem of poverty is complex and touches many areas of life. One of the related issues that stands out is that in low income families, 20% are single parents, while in the rest of the families it is 7%. Similarly, the percentage of non-Western background families in the low-income group is 65%, while 29% in the rest of the group (Michon, 2014, p. 53). The residential areas of the city with low-income families became more concentrated and more segregated from the other areas (Michon, 2014, p. 56). This is due to the housing policy of the city, where social housing has become more expensive and the volume is too low. This causes the poor to be driven out of the city (Brinksma, 2016a, p. 34) or or to concentrate in the older housing areas.

The findings in the book *The Spirit Life* Wilkinson & Pickett (2010) (see Chapter 3) regarding the relationship between several kinds of social and personal problems and inequality are significant in assessing poverty and in finding ways to alleviate them. The social safety net and other government initiatives to help the poor financially are important to keep families out of extreme poverty but are inadequate to solve other related issues.

The income equality in the Netherlands is relatively low, but in Amsterdam this number is 30% higher than nationally (OIS Amsterdam, 2016a, p. 70). Equality is based on more than income alone; it is about empowerment, feeling included, opportunities in life, etc. In Amsterdam the gap between those who thrive in the city and those who feel left behind is growing. The reasons include higher housing prices (excluding some from getting a house or moving to another area); growing intolerance towards immigrants, based on culture or religious background; the technology gap; the education gap; etc.

The conclusion of research on the theme of material poverty and inequality is well summarized by Hetty Vlug (as cited in Michon), Poverty Coordinator for Amsterdam. She states,

Poverty is not only an income problem. More pressing for the people involved are elements like isolation, joblessness, problems with raising children and health issues. The persistency of poverty in light of this reality, requires a citywide approach. Buddies, mentors, helpers with reading, coaches from the business world, volunteers at the food bank, initiators of a hiking group or a free haircut: all these things are a picture of the highly required mutual solidarity of residents of Amsterdam. (Michon, 2014, p. 5)

This holistic view of poverty alleviation is clearly recognized by the city. The Church may not be able to solve the economic issues of poverty but can be strongly involved in this solidarity agenda that Vlug (as cited in Michon, 2014) refers to. Further, active advocacy and working on solutions for systemic aspects of poverty and inequality are an important area for the Church in the city to be involved in.

### *Spiritual Life in Amsterdam*

The next topic of the research of the city is the spiritual life. The outcomes gave insight about the affinity with religion, the different expressions of faith, the number of churches and active Christians, and, finally, the issue of separation between state and church in Amsterdam.

Chapter 2 presented the decline of Christendom in Amsterdam. This section explores the current situation of Christianity and faith in general in the city. Figure 15 in Appendix A shows an overview of the percentage of residents from Amsterdam who express an affinity with a religion or spiritual perspective, measured in 2014. The Turkish and Moroccan citizens have a high percentage of affinity with Islam only. Another large group of immigrants in the city are from Suriname. Around 40% of them are Christians; another 25% of them are affiliated with other faiths. Of the established Dutch citizens only around 22% report a faith affinity.

Figure 15 in Appendix A also shows that the immigrants cause a rise of almost 4% of the total percentage of people with a Christian affinity. The totals for religious affinity reported in Amsterdam are 17% Christian and 13% Muslim; the figures for Buddhist and Jews are around 1%.

In Figure 15 of Appendix A, the large grey part of the columns (62% of the city) represent the group of residents who have no affinity with a formal religion. However, a growing part of this group report some kind of spiritual connection.

Figure 15 in Appendix A shows the different facets of spirituality reported in the city. There are people that are atheists (21%), agnostics (16%), or have faith in some sort of a spiritual power (21%) and sometimes believe in God (8%). The group that believes in a higher power are called *ietists* [believers in something]. The researcher split this group in three parts.

The first group exists of classic formal of knowledge (gathering) to which unexpected powers are assigned including magic, shamanism, astrology, and tarot. The second group relates to Eastern influences including reincarnation, vegetarianism, yoga, and meditation. The last group exists of beliefs in ideas that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, including telepathy, parapsychology, and alternative healings (OIS-Amsterdam, 2014, p. 10). This group is larger than Christianity or Islam in the city. The Church in Amsterdam has the challenge to reach out and contextualize the gospel to this group of spiritual seekers.

For the purpose of this study it is helpful to know the number of churches in the city and an estimate of active believers in Christ who are regularly attending a church in the city. These numbers are not easy to find in the statistical data. The first approach to find the number of believers is based on the available data about the affinity with the different Church categories (denominations or Church or church-networks) in the city, which is combined with an estimation of the percentage of regular church attendance of each of these categories. The affinity can be derived from Table 7 in Appendix B. About church attendance there is no reliable data; therefore, an estimate is given in percentage of the total group connected to each church-stream in the city. This method leads to a number of 34,500 regular church attendees, which is 4.11% of the population of Amsterdam.

Another approach can be made, based on the findings of a report of the

Christian Reformed Church in 2003, with an estimate on the number of churches per church-stream and an estimate of the regular attendance (see Table 8 in Appendix B). Based on the new data number of churches of the PKN and Roman Catholic Church, an updated version of the numbers (from 2016) is presented in this table. This method gives a number of 25,220 regular church attendees, which is around 3% of the city population. Based on this, I propose for this study to use the following estimated numbers: *a total number of 350 churches in the city and a regular group of attendees of 3.5% of the population.*

As discussed in Chapter 2 on the political environment, when a church wants to engage in seeking shalom for the city, it should be willing to work in partnership with the city government and its associated organizations. In the constitution of the Netherlands, there is a separation between state and Church. In a symposium held on November 29, 2017 in Amsterdam about the relationship between the city and religious organizations the following remarks were made on behalf of the government:

There is an increased interest by the city to work with religious organizations because of the following.

- the new Civic Organization Act (WMO), requires more decentralizing and search for social capital, which makes religious partners interesting
- integration issues can drive new partnerships
- safety issues in the community can stimulate new ways of partnership with Muslim organizations (Kennedy, 2017, p. 5)

The conclusion of this presentation was that the city will view the separation between state and Church “as an elastic definition: It is necessary in this current pluralistic society to have a relaxed, uninhibited and curious attitude.” (Kennedy,

2017, p. 16). This position is in line with the tolerant culture of Amsterdam, which knows the rules but always seeks to find pragmatic ways to serve the best common interest. In seeking shalom for the city, there are many issues where the common interest between the Church and the city can be found.

This section about the spiritual life of the city shows the realities of the main religions and expressions of faith in the city. The outcomes about churches and the estimation of active members provides a baseline of the situation for the Church in the city. Finally, the relationship with the city provides opportunities for partnerships with the city on important issues of shalom for the city.

### *The City Culture of Amsterdam*

The final topic of this section on the research of the city presents the main characteristics of the Amsterdam culture. Chapter 2 contains a description of the historical development of the culture of Amsterdam. This section summarizes some key elements of the culture of the city. For this objective, the input of the study A Portrait of Amsterdam (CGK Amsterdam, 2003b) is used as a starting point. The writers of the report took the analogy of the canal rings in the city center to express their view on the main characteristics of the city.

- Amsterdam as a city of trade, transport and services (the commerce canal)
- Amsterdam as capital of tolerance and freedom (the tolerance canal)
- Amsterdam as a city of care and servanthood (the merci canal)
- Amsterdam as a magnet for immigrants (multi-ethnic canal)
- Amsterdam as a city of culture and knowledge (cultural canal)
- Amsterdam as a changing city on its way to the future (innovation canal)

(CGK Amsterdam, 2003b, p. 2)

Commerce has always been a central characteristic of the city, as became clear

in Chapter 2 on the history of the city. The pragmatic and opportunistic approach always found ways to optimize possibilities to look for commercial benefits and to connect to other cultures with a bold confidence. Currently Amsterdam is still successful in traditional commerce but also finds new opportunities. Amsterdam is major player in the fashion industry, denim capital of the world (IAMsterdam, 2017), in the game and app development, and has the world's largest data transport hub, Amsterdam Internet Exchange (AMS-IX) (IAMsterdam, 2018b). The startup environment in the city is very successful.

Amsterdam has a long and illustrious history as a hotspot for innovations of all types. The city attracts creatives of all stripes, who find it easy to meet open-minded partners and cooperate across disciplines; as a result, creative industries such as advertising, TV, music, app development, and gaming are thriving – as is the city's bustling startup scene. (IAMsterdam, 2018a)

Care and servanthood are also proposed as main values of the city by the authors of the Portrait of Amsterdam (CGK Amsterdam, 2003b). There is a long history of care for the poor, widows, orphans, and sick in city that started with the almshouses of the sisters' order *Begijnen* and other monasteries in the city (Parker, 1998, p. 49). During the Protestant period, there were substantial care and mercy ministries by the Mennonites, the Reformed and Lutheran Churches partly sponsored by the city Government. (Safley, 2003, p. 139) Another example of care in Amsterdam is found during World War II, when citizens provided care and shelter for the Jews, for the suppressed, and for those on the brink of starvation. A civil

expression of advocacy was the “February strike”<sup>4</sup>: a massive city protest against the persecution of the Jews.

Honesty demands to state that care, mercy, and advocacy were often lived out by a minority in the city, while the opposite attitude was displayed by many in the city (Mak, 2001, p, 286). After the war, the role of the Church in care and mercy in the city diminished, while the government’s role gained importance. The last decade the government seeks participation of the residents, churches, and other parties in the city for the care and social support (Vlug as cited in Michon, 2014, p.5).

Amsterdam as the capital of freedom and tolerance also has a long history as described in the historical cultural background of the city in Chapter 2, Cultural History). In the international and tourist media, tolerance is often associated with legalizing prostitution and soft drugs; (Bailey, 2013) however, they represent a much wider influence in the city. The freedom for individual expression and thought is still a high value in Amsterdam.

Amsterdam as a magnet for immigrants has been a central characteristic throughout history (see Chapter 2). The persecution of people with different cultural and or religious background was less severe in Amsterdam than in the surrounding world. The strong immigrant stream of the last years reveals that this value can easily be overpowered by sentiments of fear, protection, and nationalism. Still many reach out to immigrants regardless of their backgrounds, and the Church plays an important role in this.

Amsterdam is well known for being a city *of* culture and knowledge. The

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<sup>4</sup> “February 25, 1941, was the first day of a two-day general strike in Amsterdam, launched almost spontaneously as an expression of Dutch opposition to the anti-Jewish actions being taken by the country’s German occupiers.” (Green, 2016)



cultural environment of the city is a strong asset:

over the past fifteen years, Amsterdam has invested massively in cultural infrastructure. More than 25 institutions have been built, rebuilt or refurbished, including the central public library, the Rijksmuseum, the Stedelijk Museum, Hermitage Amsterdam, Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, and the De La Mar theatre. (World Cities Culture Forum, 2017).

There is a large number of small and diverse initiatives, festivals etc. The knowledge institutes include two universities (free university VU and the university of Amsterdam UVA), as well as many knowledge institutes and startups.

The last canal is the city of change. Adaptation to new situations has been another strong characteristic of the city. It has overcome many challenges, including the fight against flooding (“for the Dutch back then it was literally a case of working on the dykes or drowning.” (Mak, 2001, p. 11)), plagues (severe epidemics in 1652, and 1664 took thousands of lives. (Mak, 2001, p. 133,144)), fires (“Large areas of the city were burned to ashes in 1421, then again in 1452...” (Mak, 2001, p. 27)) and cultural changes as discussed in Chapter 2. Amsterdam has often been at the forefront of embracing change and finding ways to profit from it. In the last years Amsterdam has responded well to the current changes of globalization, information technology, and green energy revolution. The city is also at the forefront of innovation and entrepreneurship. The quote below confirm these values.

The City needs to act as catalyst, bringing together the expertise of urban planners and developers, with that of local communities and the arts, cultural and heritage sectors. Potential also lies in Amsterdam’s current wave of creative entrepreneurship. It is contributing to a climate of innovation that is ‘making Amsterdam an inclusive, vibrant and future-oriented city for citizens,

visitors, companies and entrepreneurs alike.’ (World Cities Culture Forum, 2017)

With this overview of the spiritual life of the city, the section of the outcomes of the research of the context of the city based on the statistical information and other available data is completed. This research indicates important areas of concern and the available strengths of the city and its culture. The next section presents the outcomes of the assessment of the faith leaders of the city in the research survey.

### ***Research Survey Results: Assessment of Needs and Assets***

This section provides the outcomes of the research survey questions regarding the needs and assets of the city (see Appendix G, question 6).

#### *Assessment of the Needs of the City by the Faith Leaders in Amsterdam*

The outcomes of the research survey regarding the highest needs in the city are shown in Figure 16 in Appendix A. At the top of the reported list of needs, is the post-Christian culture: the low percentage of Christians in the city. This item reflects the concern of the faith leaders for the spiritual needs (the lostness) of the city. The second felt need on the list is loneliness, and third, the fragmentation and lack of community. These are indicators of relational poverty of the city, while material poverty is ranked seven on the list. Fourth on the list is the postmodern worldview.

Another aspect that stands out in the assessment is that the corruption of systems and people is on the bottom of the list. The Amsterdam context in this area is different from most other global cities, where material poverty and corruption are the main needs. Ed Silvoso (2007) also ranks the issue of corruption and systemic poverty as the highest priorities for cultural transformation in *Transformation: Change the Marketplace and Change the World*.

Another remarkable outcome is that the influence of Islam and the lack of integration of Muslims in the city are in the bottom three of the list in the survey results (Figure 16 in Appendix A). This stands out because in the political climate and parts of the media, these items are often mentioned as the major problems of the major cities in the Netherlands, as discussed in Chapter 2. This climate is described clearly by Shanook Jansen (2012).

Over the last decade a public debate evolved concerning the integration of Muslims in the Netherlands. Journalist, Deborah Scroggins spoke of a Dutch-Muslim cultural war, which represents the increasingly intolerant attitude towards Muslims in the Netherlands. Many politicians in the Netherlands of both left- and right-wing parties openly declared their concern and distrust towards Islam. (S. N. Jansen, 2012, p. 6)

The survey results show that faith leaders in Amsterdam do not follow this trend. This can indicate that the leaders have a more realistic view about the problems of integration and the influence of Islam in the city that is not based on “imposed fear”.

In the comments of this section of the survey, additional needs were indicated: refugees, including the illegal immigrants; the gap between cultures, especially intolerance and lack of understanding of the difficulties of vulnerable immigrants; and parts of the younger generation with low prospects for jobs, further education and non-supportive home situations. These observations, confirm the outcomes of the city research on the inequalities in the city.

#### *Assessment of the Assets of the City by Faith Leaders in Amsterdam*

After discussing the outcomes of the needs indicated in the survey, the next outcomes are from the assessment of the assets of the city in the research survey. The outcomes are shown in Figure 17 in Appendix A. The first three items with the

highest score are all related to the perspective of Cristian leaders in the city: the increased level of prayer for the city, the growing level of unity and collaboration of the Church, and the growing number of church plants in the city. A possible reason for the high score on these themes is that they represent signs of hope within the post-Christian reality of the city. These first three topics are assets valued by the Church in the city but are seen as less relevant by the rest of the city.

Good and accessible education, freedom for personal expression, and good health care and social care received high scores in the survey. The freedom for personal expression is the positive side of the tolerant Amsterdam culture (see Chapter 2). This freedom produces a climate, when applied within healthy boundaries, for personal growth, innovation, creativity, safety, etc. When this freedom is not used wisely, it will cause problems like individualism, fragmentation, and a postmodern worldview. These problems are real in Amsterdam (as shown in the research of the city above).

The city renewal projects are ranked at the lowest place in the assets list. This indicates that the faith leaders are aware of the positive aspects of these projects but also on the negative side effects like the increase of housing and living costs; low percentage of original residents returning to the neighborhoods, especially the poor; and a loss of sense of community in the neighborhoods (see Chapter 2, political environment).

In analyzing the scores of the assets of the city, it is important to emphasize that all the listed assets have received high scores in the survey. The difference in scoring between the asset “good education level and availability” and the last on the list (city renewal projects) is only 0.53 points. This indicates that the participants recognized all the proposed items of these questions as real assets of the city.

In the additional comments of the survey, one of the leaders added the asset of the growing number of spiritual seekers and more openness and curiosity among secular people for spiritual matters. This is in line with the findings in research of the city regarding the spiritual life in the city: 21% of residents believe in some kind of spiritual power.

*Assessment of Needs and Assets by the Chief of Police of Amsterdam*

Besides the assessment of faith leaders on the needs and assets of the city through the research survey, the same questions were presented to the Chief of Police in Amsterdam. This “outside view” can confirm or challenge the view of the faith leaders, described above. In the response of the Chief of Police on the needs and assets, the highest on the list were loneliness, individualism, fragmentation and lack of community, the gap between the low and highly educated, and a technology gap. The second group of high scores included poverty; inequality; depression, fear, and other psychological problems; red light district; prostitution; human trafficking; litter; and neglect of neighborhoods.

In his list corruption in systems and persons was also the lowest on the list. The changing realities in the needs of the city experienced by the chief are the decline of social cohesion, increasing polarization, increasing loneliness, and lack of diversity in social classes (inner city: high, while some other parts many lower social classes). One can conclude that the priorities indicated by the chief are largely in line with those of the faith leaders.

The top assets indicated by the chief are high general level of welfare, strong social safety net, good level of medical care, good infrastructure, environment relatively safe, low number of riots and terrorist attacks, city renewal, city development projects, and cultural beauty. The survey results had a slightly different

ranking compared to that of the faith leaders, but as indicated most assets scored high in the survey. The level of safety of the city is ranked significantly higher on the list of the chief. The chief is focusing on the objective statistics about crime that are showing a positive trend, while the faith leaders scores reflect the experience of safety by people in the neighborhoods. The subjective safety in Amsterdam is not improving (see above in the research of the city).

The Chief of Police sees an important role of the Church in the city. He comments: “The Church has to be a visible presence in the neighborhoods and find ways to minister to the loneliness and to strengthen social cohesion in the city” (Aalbersberg, personal communication, March 20, 2017). He adds that consistency and longevity are more important than instant results of ministry. The efforts of the ministry of the Church in the city should be based on unconditional love (Aalbersberg, personal communication, March 20, 2017). The validation of the assessment of the faith leaders by the chief indicates that the leaders provided a useful high-level assessment that is a valid part of the exegesis of the city. Besides the input of the Chief of Police, the roundtable discussions of the Amsterdam city consultation also provide another evaluation of the outcomes regarding the context of the city above.

### ***Consultation Roundtable Outcomes: Needs and Assets***

The outcomes of the roundtable discussions during the Amsterdam City consultation regarding assets and needs in the city are presented in Appendix C for the questions of the roundtable session 1). The first conclusion from this session was that the outcomes of the survey on the assessment of the needs and assets, as discussed above, were confirmed as a good overview of the main needs of the city. The spiritual needs (post-Christianity, low percentage of followers of Christ) of the

city are acknowledged as a deep concern.

After reviewing the city research as well as the outcomes of the survey on the other felt needs, the leaders agreed on the following priorities: 1) loneliness and fragmentation; 2) poverty (material and relational); 3) individualism; 4) depression, fear, and other psychological issues; 5) Inequality leading to hopelessness. This outcome confirms that of the research survey presented above. The attendees suggested making a separate category for inequality (apart from material poverty), because it is a deep root cause of many other problems as well. The idea is that inequality is more connected to hopelessness than to poverty only.

The presentations of the roundtable discussions regarding the assessment of the assets of the city showed the following priorities: 1) the freedom to be yourself and for self-expression; 2) the high cultural diversity; 3) the good infrastructure, environment of the city (a city that works; 4) the good care system and networks; 5) the high influence of Amsterdam in the national culture, specifically, the high number of (inter)national influencers in the inner city.

A follow-up conversation focused on the contextualization of the most vulnerable groups in the city, in analogy of the “vulnerable quartet” in the Bible (as discussed in Chapter 4). The conclusions of these discussions are:

- the analogy of the *poor* was identified as the material and relational poor (the lonely), those who do not have a network of support, and those who are not connected with the information age
- the analogy of the *widow* was identified as the single mothers in the city who have to provide for and raise children on their own
- the analogy of the *orphan* was identified as fatherless children and children of broken families

- the analogy of the *stranger* was identified as the immigrants and the non-fits, the outcasts for different reasons

The high level of vulnerability of these groups is confirmed by the research of the city in the previous section.

To summarize, the assessment of needs and assets of the research survey provides a helpful template for the church in the city to prioritize and provide ministries that touch the relevant concerns of the city. This template was evaluated and confirmed by the input of the Chief of Police and the roundtable discussions during the city consultation. The city consultation also provided a list of vulnerable groups that require special attention based on the invitation of Scripture to prioritize the weak and the vulnerable in the community.

### **Project Outcomes Regarding the Vision for Bringing Shalom in the City**

After completing the exegesis of the context of the city, this section presents the outcomes of the research regarding the vision of the faith leaders for bringing shalom to the city. The outcomes presented are based on the research survey questions 1, 2 and 3 (see Appendix G) and the related roundtable discussion during the Amsterdam city consultation. This section starts with presenting the outcomes of the survey of faith leaders regarding the theological vision of their churches and ministries on the Kingdom of God and the engagement of the Church in the city. This is followed by a presentation of the outcomes of the related roundtable discussions.

#### ***Research Survey Outcomes: Theological Views***

The participants in the research survey of the project were comprised of leaders from a wide mix of church backgrounds, cultures, as well as types of ministries and churches. The answers to the survey questions in this section regarding their theological vision regarding the Kingdom, the city, and the role of the Church in



the city can therefore interpreted as the overall view of the Church on these topics. This provides a good indication of the level of support in the city for the first ring of the Kingdom ecosystem: a shared contextualize Kingdom vision in the city.

The survey question on the view on the Kingdom of God requested the participants to score four statements that represented a certain view of the Kingdom of God. Because the statements are not mutually exclusive, each statement could be scored zero to five stars. The statements and related scores are shown in Table 9 in Appendix B. Statement one represents a theological view that expects the manifestation of the Kingdom later (at the return of Christ), and statement two, in the Church only. These views do not support the view proposed by this study as represented in the framework of Chapter 4. Although the scores of statements one and two are not high (1.65 and 1.26), it indicates that there is a substantial group that does not support a Kingdom vision that includes it outworking in the city.

The highest score is on statement three, which represents a view of the manifestation of the Kingdom in the Church and the community in the present, but not yet in fulness. The full Kingdom will only be fully manifested at the return of Christ. This statement is in line with the theological foundation proposed in this study (see Chapter 4). The fourth statement has a stronger emphasis on the Kingdom now. It has a more optimistic vision, on the level of Kingdom manifestations, here and now. This statement also supports the vision about the calling of the Church as an agent of transformation in the community as does statement three. This last statement has a score of 3.44, while statement three has 4.40 out of five. The outcome indicates that the majority of the Churches, ministries, and organizations participating in the research has a Kingdom view that can serve as a basis of the Kingdom ecosystem in the city.

The second question of the survey is about the theological view of the faith leaders on the city (see Table 10 in Appendix B). The statements presented in this question can be scored individually, zero to five stars. The first statement presents a dualistic theological view that assumes that God has no interest in culture, communities, or places. The second represents a view that will encourage believers to keep a distance from the matters of the community, rather than be a shalom bringing agent of the Kingdom. The scores for these views are substantial: 2.37 and 2.07.

The third statement reflects the view that prayer for the city is for spiritual salvation only. Any engagement in works for the city is only successful if it results in salvation. Increasing shalom in other areas is not viewed as a Kingdom fruit. The fourth statement supports the holistic view proposed in this study. It provides a foundation for shalom in all aspects and in all spheres of the city. The score on the third statement is 3.58, and the fourth is 4.40. Probably there are participants who scored on both statement 3 and 4, indicating that salvation as well as holistic engagement in other areas in the city are important.

The third group of statements is measuring the view of the participating organizations on the role of the Church in the city. These statements are highlighting different elements of this role that are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, it is expected that most participants would score on more than one statement. The picture that emerges from the outcomes (see Table 11 in Appendix B) is that the priority in the view of the role of the Church in the city is evangelizing (statement 2) and transformative engagement in the city (statement 5). These conform with the proposed role of the Church in the city in Chapter 4. The high score on this statement shows that a majority of the participants acknowledges this vision.

Statements 3 and 4 reflect the tension between the need for contextualization

and the danger of conformity to the culture. The score can be viewed as an acknowledgement that these concerns should be taken into account, but also that it is not the main element in the role of the Church in the city.

To summarize the outcomes of these three survey questions, one can conclude that the highest scores confirm the core foundations for the vision and theology as proposed by this study.

### ***Consultation Roundtable Outcomes: Theological Views***

During the roundtable discussions in the Amsterdam city consultation, the survey outcomes regarding the view on the Kingdom and the city, as described above, were discussed (see for the related roundtable questions: Appendix C, Section 2). The outcomes of these conversations are evaluated in this section.

The first general outcome of the discussion was a strong confirmation from the participating leaders of the highest scores from the survey on the view of the Kingdom (statement 3), and on the view of the city (statement 4). The faith leaders interpreted these scores as a hopeful indicator that a growing number of churches and ministries in Amsterdam have a holistic view on the Kingdom impact in the city.

The outcomes regarding the vision on the role of the Church for the city were also embraced by the discussion among the leaders. A desire that came out of this discussion was that all Christians in Amsterdam would see themselves as city-changers and as partners in God's dream for the city. A concern was raised regarding the vision of the role of the ecclesia for the city: it has to flow from the leadership level to all members of the Church. What is needed is a strategy to empower members to become agents of God's Kingdom in the city.

The question "how to describe God's heart for the city?" included the following: a desire to bring shalom; the attitude and values found in the beatitudes

(compassion and hope for the hopeless); this is summarized in Micah 6:8 (“To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God”).

Another conclusion was that the leaders noticed a shift towards a more holistic understanding of the Kingdom, driven by God’s concern for all things in the city (Col. 1:15-23). An important observation during the consultation was that most participating leaders are on a journey of change, finding a new (more holistic) vision and ministry. They are making or facing challenging steps towards implementing this new interpretation of their calling.

The interactions during this part of the Amsterdam city consultation confirmed and reinforced the vision that was concluded from the research survey. Most leaders acknowledged that this vision is still rather new for many and requires rethinking of ministry and priorities.

### **Project Outcomes Regarding the Current Engagement of the Church in City**

The purpose of this section is to understand the current engagement of the Church in the city of Amsterdam. It covers the second ring (disciple-making and church-planting) as well as the third ring (relevant ministries for the city), of the Kingdom ecosystem (see Figure 3 in Appendix A). First, the outcomes of the research survey amongst faith leaders regarding disciple-making and church-planting is presented. Secondly, the survey results of the current relevant ministries for the city are presented. Finally, the outcomes of the roundtable discussion related to these themes are evaluated. The total of the outcomes will give a good overview of the level of engagement of the Church in the city.

### ***Research Survey Results: Disciple Making and Church Planting***

The outcomes of the research survey question 4, and its sub questions (see Appendix G), show the effort of disciple-making and church-planting.

The scores presented in Table 12 in Appendix B give an overview in the engagement in this area. The first type of engagement is about gospel proclamation. An involvement of 63.4% is an encouraging score, taking into account that this number includes organizations in the city with a different ministry focus, including prayer and community serving. The numbers of the second and third type of involvement are also significant: more than half of the organizations are intentionally involved in making new disciples and 31% in church-planting.

Figure 18 in Appendix A shows the use of different outreach methods used by the participants. What stands out is that the six most used methods have a strong relational component. The highest outcome indicates that sharing the gospel in the city is connected with showing the love of Christ through serving the needs of the community. Second on the list is friendship evangelism, which shows that evangelism in the city is mostly done in the context of fellowship and relationship building. The next on the list is the *Alpha Courses*<sup>5</sup> and similar formats which includes meals, conversations, and allows for a journey of discovery towards knowing and following Christ. Serving and ministry to children is another fruitful way of building relationship and receiving credibility to share the gospel of Christ.

Another element that stood out is that praying for people in the marketplace and ministering with the gifts of the Spirit (healing, prophecy) is a substantial method in reaching out in the city. This is undeniably a biblical method that is found regularly in the gospels and the book of Acts. The apparent openness for this type of ministry fits the postmodern worldview of the city when done in a personal approach (instead

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<sup>5</sup> The “Alpha (course) is a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith. Each talk looks at a different question around faith and is designed to create conversation. ... No two Alphas look the same, but generally they have three key things in common: food, a talk and good conversation.” (Alpha-International, 2018)

of massive healing campaigns) and in a respectful way.

The more classic methods, including street evangelizing, public preaching, and evangelistic crusades, are still important for reaching out with the gospel. This may not be expected in a post-Christian culture. In some cases, these methods might be used, out of habit or tradition, even when results are declining. However, given that the culture of Amsterdam is not homogeneously post-Christian (see Chapter two in *The post-Christian Reality*). There are large groups in the city that still have Christian background, including significant numbers of people with a Caribbean and African background. Especially for these groups, the more traditional methods of outreach can be relevant. Figure 19 in Appendix A confirms that besides people with a Dutch background, those from African and Latin American backgrounds are mostly reached by the participating organizations. Another conclusion from Figure 20 Appendix A is that no geographical region is left out. Figure 21 in Appendix A shows that the religious backgrounds of the people reached is well spread.

#### *Numbers of People Reached, Disciples Made and Churches Planted*

The research survey of the faith leaders revealed that the total estimated number of people reached in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in the last year is reported by the 70 participating leaders is 22500.<sup>6</sup> This is around 2.6% of the city's population. The number of new disciples (new followers of Christ that are in a process of discipleship) that is reported in total is: 750.<sup>7</sup> This means that the

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<sup>6</sup> This number has a low accuracy, first because it is a wide category. In the survey the definition used is *the people engaged in a significant conversation, are impacted or that gave a clear response to or visited events of outreach ministries*. These numbers are not accurately measured by most ministries. Therefore, this number is a raw indication of the number of people in Amsterdam that have been reached out to, by the participating organizations.

<sup>7</sup> This number is also not a result of precise measurement, and the terms could be interpreted

participating organizations have seen about 0.09% of the population of the city coming into a discipleship relationship during the last year.

The number of church-plants in the city in the last five years is reported as 63. In analyzing the comments, this number needs some correction in order to draw conclusions.<sup>8</sup> For the remainder of this study I will work with the number 40 - 45 church-plants in the last five years. This number implies that the participating organizations planted between eight and nine new churches each year. There are obviously also church plants in the city that are not covered by this survey. The same applies to the number of churches that are closed in the last five years, which are also not accounted for in this survey. Therefore, no solid numbers can be given for the overall growth of the number of churches in the city. However, it is hopeful to realize that the churches and organizations participating in the survey are sharing the gospel and seeing new people entering in a discipleship relationship with Jesus Christ and also planting new communities of faith.

### ***Research Survey Results: Current Ministries for the City***

After the presentation of the research survey outcomes of disciple-making and church-planting (ring two of the Kingdom ecosystem), the outcomes of the survey regarding the current engagement of ministries to the needs of the city are presented. This will provide insight regarding the third ring of the Kingdom ecosystem in the context of Amsterdam.

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differently by the various organizations and ministries.

<sup>8</sup> This number includes 25 connected groups, started by one of the participating churches (which, may be partly qualified as re-organization of an existing larger church in several small groups). Therefore, a number between 40 to 45 would be a safer estimate for new church and spiritual communities planted.

### *Reported City Ministries*

The faith leaders participating in the research survey represented 77.8% who reported that they had active projects or ministries that are focused on serving the needs of the city. The outcomes only report the types of engagement, not the precise outcomes of the ministries or projects and the unique stories behind these numbers. However, during the city consultation ten leaders shared their journeys and the development of their ministries.<sup>9</sup>

The types of ministries reported in the survey are shown in Figure 21 of Appendix A. At the top of the list are serving the individual needs and neighborhood meals. These types of ministries are especially fitted to serve the needs of those who have a weak personal network of support and/or are looking for opportunities for building relationships. Counseling is next type of ministry in the top three, and it addresses the emotional and psychological needs of the people. Counseling offered by faith organizations is often in addition to government or secular professional help offered in the city.

Neighborhood organizing, or community development ministries are a lower level in comparison with city transformation effort I studied during my BGU programs. In Amsterdam these efforts are primarily provided by the city and civic organizations. The outcomes in this category might change in the future when the government is cutting budgets in this area and as a result of more awareness by the faith leaders of the importance for Christ-based community development in Amsterdam.

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<sup>9</sup> Appendix H provides a summary of the talks presented during the Amsterdam city consultation. Reports on the presentations of the city consultation can be retrieved from the website of ACCL: [www.accl.amsterdam](http://www.accl.amsterdam).



Additional types of ministries mentioned in the survey are helping at risk youth, skills and business training, education ministries, increasing health (fitness), legal advice, social and civic support, language learning, art projects, and probation and re-integration ministries.

Figure 22 in Appendix A shows the sectors of the city influenced by the reported ministries. The social/civic sector has the highest score, which is the area of the direct needs of the community. Families scored third on the list. The area of relationships and raising children is a concern that is addressed in the ministries of the Church. The results showed that 28.6 % of the ministries reported the Church/religion sector as the area of their ministries. If this means that the ministry is only focused on church members or church programs, then this number indicates that this large portion of ministries is not reaching outside the Church. The outcome can also be interpreted as ministries that are Church-based or integral part of the Church life. Finally, one can conclude that the other sectors are hardly reached by the reported ministries. This outcome indicates that engagement for shalom in the other sectors shown in Figure 22 Appendix A is an area of attention for the faith leaders in the city in the coming years. The geographical spread of the ministries (Figure 23 in Appendix A) shows a balanced picture.

#### *Reported Financial Investment and Man-hours*

The leaders participating in the survey reported a financial investment in the projects and ministries is almost 6.9 million euros.<sup>10</sup> The interpretation of these numbers is not easy. Not all organizations participating in the survey supplied the

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<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that from this figure the Salvation Army in Amsterdam (SAA) is reporting by far the largest portion of this. Without this organization the number would be 890,752 Euro. The portion of the investment of projects and ministries reported by the churches in the survey is almost 240.000 Euro.

numbers, and it also not clear which portion of the budget of the churches and organizations is used in projects and ministries for the city. However, one can say that the contribution of the Church in projects and ministries for the city is significant. In terms of man-hours the total amount reported was 886,543 hours.<sup>11</sup> To have a more accurate view on the numbers presented in this section, more detailed research is required.

This concludes the outcomes of the research survey regarding the reported ministries to the felt needs of the city. This section is followed by a evaluation of the city consultation discussion on these themes.

### ***Consultation Roundtable Outcomes: City Engagement of the Church***

Before presenting the outcomes of the roundtable discussions regarding the engagement of the city, it is important to insert that in addition to the presentation of the research of this study, the presentations by different leaders during the days of the consultation was another vital component. The topics of the presentations held during the consultation follow (see Appendix H for a brief summary of the talks).

- Alan Platt (Doxa Deo, Pretoria): Receiving a vision for changing the city
- Daniel Chan (CityChurch): The secular culture of the city
- Moses Alagbe (MTC): Changing his paradigm of ministry, from spiritual salvation to holistic transformation
- Lynette Kong (KPN): The calling of a movement of Prayer for the City
- Tim Vreugdenhil (CityChurch): To meet people of the city where they are

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<sup>11</sup> Also, in the number of man-hours reported, the Salvation Army Amsterdam (SAA) was the largest contributor. Without this organization the total amount would be 271,050 hours, from which 239,362 hours has been reported by the churches. One should also be aware that the number of hours reported by the SAA includes many volunteers from Amsterdam churches.

- Gabriel Jansen (Stadslamp): Seeing God in the history of the city
- Alan Platt (Doxa Deo, Pretoria): Lessons from unifying leaders for the city
- Moses Alagbe (MTC): A community healthcare project in the city
- Jurjen ten Brinke (HvN): Towards integral mission in neighborhoods
- Arleen Westerhof (Embassy Amsterdam): Pioneering Economic Summits
- Jonathan Zeijl (CU Amsterdam): The Kingdom and political engagement in the city

During the roundtable discussion in this section, the attending leaders reflected on the presentations of both the research outcomes above and the stories and experiences of the talks. The faith leaders celebrated what God is doing in the city. The stories show many creative ways of ministry in the city<sup>12</sup>. There is much exploration and testing of ways to serve and to find connection with different people groups and communities. This creativity is in line with the asset of Amsterdam as a city of innovation. Another standout quality is the courage of many leaders to go to personal transformation as a result of new paradigms about the calling of the Church and ministry in the city. In the stories on their journeys they also find ways to re-position their ministries.

Elements that the leaders want to add to what is presented about the current ways of serving the city include a stronger collaboration as well as more strategic collaboration within the Kingdom ecosystem. A realization is that it is necessary to invest more time and work in unity and collaboration.

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<sup>12</sup> A few out of many examples: a social grocery shop, complementing the service of food banks in the city, participation in paranormal expo's in the city, offering the ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as an alternative for spiritual seekers, providing a health care community event in Amsterdam south east in partnership with the Amsterdam Medical Center Hospital.

In reflecting on the parts that are still weak or that are not touched by ministries in the city, the following elements were mentioned.

- in the last decade there were many assassinations in the criminal world in the city (average 8.2 per year (AT-5, 2016). There are currently hardly any ministries that are connecting with the families that live in grief and fear caused by this violence
- another group that is not well reached at the moment are the elite in the city center. Many of those are very influential in media and other sectors
- there are also not many Christian leaders in strategic management positions in government, business, and other key sectors of the city. This concern was also raised by the Chief of Police of Amsterdam (Aalbersberg, personal communication, March 20, 2017)
- finally, attention was requested for the many high-level professionals that are suffering from stress and burnouts due to high demand job and the twenty-four seven society

Some of the dreams and desires that were shared based on the inspiration of the consultation were growing towards shared outcomes, instead of shared activities; the desire to have a united apostolic covering over the citywide movement of the Church in the city; a more unified vision and collaboration; and training of members to of all churches to become Kingdom influencers for the city. There was also an overall desire to see more shalom of God manifested in the city.

### **Project Outcomes Regarding City Wide Collaboration and Training**

The final section presents the outcomes of the research survey and the city consultation regarding working together as a Kingdom ecosystem. It shows the existing expressions of collaboration as well as the willingness and ways to strengthen

collaboration in the coming years. It also explores the outcomes regarding citywide training on themes related to the Kingdom ecosystem. Finally, it presents the elements of a suggested common agenda for the city movement in next five years.

### ***Research Survey Results: Citywide Collaboration***

The survey questions numbers 9-12 were designed to assess the area of collaboration within the body of Christ and with other stakeholders in the city. Table 13 in Appendix B shows the outcomes of statements related to collaboration, where 10.9 % of the participants indicate not to collaborate with others in the city. Almost half of the leaders work together with Christian organizations only, and just over 40% partner also with non-Christian stakeholders.

From the participants who are working with others in the city, follow-up questions were presented. Figure 24 in Appendix A shows the results of the involvement of this group with the main city networks. The participation in the networks indicates a good spread of involvement of the participating leaders of 20% to 43%. The highest score is “others” (53%), which include working with other churches and organizations in the neighborhood or projects without labeling it as an official network or creating a named partnership entity.

Figure 25 in Appendix A shows the different types of collaboration of the participants in the city. The highest score is ministry partnership with other Christian organizations. The other elements displayed show a diversity of types of collaboration with the city government and other stakeholders, see Figure 25, Appendix A.

To investigate the future vision and commitment for further collaboration in the city, the participants were asked to score statements about this subject. The outcomes are shown in Table 14 in Appendix B. The themes of collaboration presented in the statements are prayer for the city, fellowship of leaders, evangelism,

ministry in the city, and strategic alliance for holistic ministry. All these themes score above 3.17 out of five. The lowest score is on collaboration in evangelism (statement 3). The reason for a slightly lower score on this theme can be that the most popular evangelism methods are highly relational and, therefore, do not benefit much from additional collaborative strength. Other evangelism methods, including using campaigns and media, can benefit from increased collaboration.

The highest score is in the strategic collaboration (statement 5). This score indicates a vision for working together, strategizing, and having a voice as the whole church in the city, in addition to the local expression. This score supports the vision of this study to find ways to become a unified ecclesia for Amsterdam. The participants scored on this question are already engaged in collaboration. The majority of this group indicates a desire to grow towards more collaboration on the themes mentioned. One can conclude that the organizations that are involved in working together with others have a desire for more collaboration and partnership.

#### *City Wide Training for City Ministry*

The last category of the survey was about the desire for more training in the area of vision and ministry for the city. Table 15 in Appendix B, shows a series of topics of possible training and the score indicating the desire of the participants to have their leaders and or members trained in it. The total number of requests for training for leaders was 27 and for members 36. These numbers are not as high as expected, which is discussed during the consultation (see roundtable discussion outcomes below). The higher request for training for members than for the level of leadership is in line with the observation made during the roundtable discussion above: what is needed is a strategy to empower members to become agents of God's Kingdom in the city.

The highest score is on cultural engagement/cross cultural ministry. This can be explained by the growing percentage of immigrants in the population of the city as well as a growing diversity in religious backgrounds. Organizations that have a vision for city serving and outreach recognize a growing cross-cultural challenge. The lowest scores are on prayer/spiritual warfare, community research, development, and transformation. An explanation for this might be that the field of community development and transformation in Amsterdam has not been the domain of the Church in the last decades. It has been the domain of the city and professional organizations. The low score on prayer and spiritual warfare might indicate that the current offering of these types of training both in local churches as well as by the Kingdom Prayer Net is viewed as sufficient by many participants.

#### ***Consultation Roundtable Outcomes: Collaboration and Next Steps***

During the last roundtable session, the outcomes of the consultation were reviewed by the moderator, and the task was given to formulate the top five priorities for a common agenda for the Church in the city in the next five years to create more shalom of the Kingdom in the city. The final set of priorities agreed upon by the leaders follow.

The Church in the city needs some common practices with a Kingdom focus that improve the collaboration of the churches, ministries, and organizations. The experience of actual practical involvement will strengthen the vision for a unified movement in the city. An important suggestion that can help to implement this point was to work out common rhythms in the city throughout the Church, as modeled by Alan Platt (of the Doxa Deo movement in South Africa) in his approach to city wide movement building. Alan has implemented five rhythms (using the analogy of fingers of a hand). The example of Alan Platt follow.

- one day per month they all fast and pray for the city
- one week per year they celebrate unity (sharing pulpits, have a shared theme on Sunday etc.)
- once a year they have one month of serving/loving the city
- once per quarter all the leaders come together for prayer
- one time per year they come together to evaluate and strategize - do we see the city transformed?

The second priority is to work both on city level as well as the city-part (stadsdeel). On city-part level the churches and organization can meet more regularly and work together in the context of a shared geographical area. On this level there are already collaborative initiatives that can be developed further. The city level collaboration is important for the big picture, a common strategy, and inspiration.

The third priority is to establish an apostolic leadership group or council that will serve the Church in the city, with understanding of the big picture and overview what is going on in the city. This leadership level is needed for the citywide movement to gain momentum and impact.

The fourth priority is to see more people of God in strategic places of influence in all spheres of the city. The first step in this is to find those who are already in positions of influence and equip them to understand their callings and stewardship. Another step is to create places (incubators) in various churches or ministries in the city that will help develop and mentor believers to become influencers of shalom in a certain sphere of the city.

Finally, the leaders in the city must be challenged to build strong relationships and inspired to do this intentionally. Without this intentionality and facilitation, the other priorities will not develop. A challenge in all of this is that the environment of



the city is highly demanding on leaders; therefore, many are overloaded and have to deal with much stress. This should not be an excuse not to work together, but it is a reality to deal with.

A citywide movement can serve the Church in the city and their callings by acting as a movement of city movements. Strengthening existing movements and creating new movements with different foci in the city. A shared desire that came out of the discussion was that a citywide movement should be focussing on catalyzing new initiatives. This includes supporting people with new ideas and visions as well as helping sustain and grow existing initiatives and movements.

On the issue of training, the roundtable discussions affirmed the need for a citywide curriculum for training on themes regarding the city and Kingdom of God. The curriculum outline that I prepared can be a starting point (see Table 3, Appendix E). This overview was not discussed in detail due to lack of time in the program, but it was advised by the attendees to first make an inventory of what is available in the area of training in the city. Also, it was concluded that the curriculum should teach and deepen a Kingdom theology and city vision. Another aspect that was highlighted was training in contextualizing and in evangelism and discipleship in a postmodern context. Finally, advice was given to offer training opportunities and content tailored to the expressed demand of the faith leaders.

### **Closing Remarks on the Outcomes**

This chapter presented the outcomes of the different research components of the project and of the Amsterdam city consultation. The consultation was well received by the participating leaders. Every participant received the opportunity to fill in a evaluation form. I received 15 forms back, which indicate a strong overall appreciation of the event, with a minimal average score 7.9 out of 10 for all items on

the form (see Appendix D for the results of the received evaluation forms).

The goal of the chapter was to share these outcomes and give the necessary background to for interpretation of the information. An effort was made to distill as much of the information gathered as possible, within the space available. The goal was to present these outcomes it a way that they can be understood by leaders who were involved in the research and city consultation, but also by the leaders in the city who were not participating in it. The outcomes are not fully analyzed. This will be done in the next chapter. In Chapter 7 the outcomes will be further interpreted, and conclusions will be drawn. Finally, some recommendations will be given, for the further development of a citywide movement for more shalom in Amsterdam.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is no one like our God

For greater things have yet to come

And greater things are still to be done in this city

– Chris Tomlin

This chapter will integrate the insights and findings from the context, the literature, the theological reflections, and the outcomes of the research from this study. This integration will lead to conclusions and recommendations for the further development of the Kingdom ecosystem as an instrument for the increase of shalom in Amsterdam. There is a challenge in defining recommendations for the Church in the city because it has no clear organizational structure and leadership positions but is rather an ecosystem of leaders, churches, ministries, and movements in the city. In this chapter it will become clear that a movement for more shalom in the city requires some form of movement infrastructure, with leadership, communication, and commitment. For this purpose, this chapter contains a proposal for a design of a spiritual infrastructure for a Kingdom ecosystem in Amsterdam. The Amsterdam Council of Christian Leaders (ACCL) is committed to work with other leaders in the city towards developing this movement infrastructure in the city. Therefore, the recommendations of this chapter will be presented to this ACCL as a first step to help them initiate the necessary steps towards a broader ownership of the vision, development and leadership in the city that will serve the increase of the Kingdom ecosystem in the city.

## **Seeking Shalom: A Shared Vision for the Ecclesia of the City**

This study included a quest for understanding the mission of the Church in the context of the city. From the chapters on literature (Chapter 3) and the theological foundations (Chapter 4), it is clear that the context (its place and culture) of the Church matters for her mission. The ecclesiology is not the starting point for understanding the calling of the Church, but it is the mission of God in this world. (Hirsch, 2006, p. 143) The Church is God's main chosen instrument to accomplish His mission on earth, but the Church is not its goal. The real goal can be formulated with the key phrase in the Lord's prayer: to see "His Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

### ***Finalizing the Theological Framework for Transformational Mission***

The theological framework of this study (see Chapter 4) firmly supports that the mission of God implies a tangible transformational impact on all aspects of the creation, people, culture, and community (not only in the spiritual sphere). God included humankind in this mission from the beginning, especially thought the covenant people of Israel, through Jesus, and finally also through his followers. The concept of the Kingdom of God thought and demonstrated by Jesus Christ is about the reign of God breaking into this world. Where the Kingdom manifests, the mission of God is breaking through, and shalom is established. The understanding of the calling of the Church in the city is that of an ecclesia that is called to influence and serve all area of the culture and community of the city. This calling includes making disciples as well as serving the well-being and advocate principles and rightness of God's Kingdom in the city.

There is, however, the tension of understanding the "here and the not yet" element of the Kingdom. The reality of brokenness and evil will be part of the city,

until Jesus returns. There will be differences in the of expectation among the various churches and ministries of the measure of transformational impact of the Kingdom in the current reality of the city. This is not only influenced by the theological background but also by the different stages of the process of dealing with the post-Christian reality in the city. However, when disappointment brings the Church to a point that it believes a gospel that is powerless to transform people and communities, it is no longer in line with the biblical framework presented in chapter 4 and will not be relevant in a secular city. Is also important to note that the vision presented in this study is different from the old way of institutional power influence of the Church in society from the era of Christendom. The calling of the Church “in the margins” of the culture is based on servanthood out of compassion, love, and hope of the gospel of Kingdom and in dependency on the transformational work of the Holy Spirit. It recognizes that real shalom in flows from the Kingdom of God and begins with prayer.

There can be times that despite strong efforts, the fruit of the Kingdom remains small, and the number of people who become new disciples is low, while in other seasons there is miraculous fruitfulness and revival in the city. A movement of the Kingdom in the city has to embrace reality, but never lose hope of the Kingdom that will manifest in the “now” and be completed when Christ is coming. The value of working together on a city level is crucial to for inspiration, encouragement, and more fruitfulness through collaboration, and sharing vision and signs of hope in the city. The summary of the understanding of vision of the ecclesia in the city is that every effort that helps a person to follow Jesus as Lord and “every transformation in the direction of love and justice in every dimension of society, both private and public, is an element of the Kingdom of God” (Langmead, 2004, p. 234).

### ***Sharing the Language of Shalom***

The language of shalom is introduced as a concept that is instrumental in defining what God's mission wants to accomplish. Shalom is holistic wholeness in all dimensions of life for everyone. God's mission is to transform everything that is not yet in a state of shalom, hence it can be defined a shalom-making. The message of the Kingdom of God is that the reign of God is entering this world, resulting in an increase of shalom. The language of shalom-making is also useful in communication with other stakeholders within and outside of the body of Christ. Within the concept of shalom-making, much common ground can be found with other organizations and people of good will. It is also important to realize that this language of shalom-making to define the mission of the Church is not new in Amsterdam: The Christian Reformed Church (CGK) Amsterdam used the term "*Diepe verde voor Amsterdam* [Deep Peace for Amsterdam]" (GCK Amsterdam, 2003a, p. iii), to define their missional vision for the city.

Recommendation 1 is to use the concept and the language of shalom to define the mission of the Church in the city. It is also recommended to develop a set of documents to explain this mission with specific language and level of detail and background for different audiences.

### ***Understanding of the Purpose of the City***

In order to find the biblical purpose of the city, first the theology of place was explored in Chapter 4. This section concluded that the biblical view of place has been lost in the postmodern culture, as well as in the large parts of the Church.

Recommendation 2 is to extend the brief outline of the theology of place in this study by leaders in the city and become part of the training curriculum in the city. I also recommend that the different streams of the body of Christ in the city add examples of

how and where the connection between God and place is experienced and celebrated in the city. In addition, it would be valuable to research and document the manifestations of God's grace in places in the city throughout history as a testimony that God's Kingdom is connected with the place in the city.

The conclusion of the purpose of the city found in this study is a calling to be God's partner, in order to provide five essential conditions for the life of people from the nations of the world who find a place in the city: a spiritual context (worship and worldview), a governmental and environmental context, a market place, a cultural space, and a community (Figure 26 in Appendix A). In Chapter 4, these areas are defined and a biblical ideal expression for each of them is presented.

Recommendation 3 is to work out the biblical values and instructions for these areas in more detail as well as cross-referencing this model with the description of the city of the new Jerusalem in Revelation 21:10-27.

### ***Embracing the Mission of the Church as the Ecclesia for the City***

In this study, the concept of ecclesia in the Roman and Greek culture as a model for the role of the Church in a community was explored. The concept of ecclesia in a city, is used in the gospels to define the nature of the Church as the community of followers of Jesus being called to infuse the city with the culture of the Kingdom of God. The conclusion is the Church is called to be engaged in every area of life in the city in order to see more of God's shalom. To become this kind of ecclesia, the study proposes the development of six main missional elements of engagement of the Church in the city.

1. to shape a contextualized Kingdom theology
2. to pray for the city (serving as priests for the community)
3. to make disciples of people from all nations and to plant relevant churches

4. to equip the believers as Kingdom leaders and ambassadors in all spheres of society
5. to be a community of faith within the neighborhood: a model and an agent of shalom
6. to serve with relevant ministries for more shalom in the city

Every local church in the city is invited to include these six elements in their vision and ministries. Ministries and organizations in the city are invited to take up specific elements that fit their calling. A citywide movement can help facilitate, inspire, and coordinate citywide collaboration on these elements.

Recommendation 4 is to extend the description of each of these elements. Also, including references to relevant resources regarding each of those aspects for the calling of the Church could be included, as well as examples of successful ministries in Amsterdam.

### ***Learning to Contextualize***

In Chapter 4, the theme of contextualization was briefly worked out. The proposed approach is the process of re-contextualization. The chapter also contains a start of contextualizing the gospel in a postmodern culture and must be expanded with insights and resources from other leaders. Recommendation 5 is to have leaders in the city bring resources together and share examples of ministries and approaches for contextualizing both the gospel as well as ministries and expression of church for postmoderns and other (sub)cultures in the city.

### **Understanding the City: A High-Level Exegesis of Amsterdam**

An important part of this study was used to explore the characteristics and realities of Amsterdam. Amsterdam has the complexity of a global city, although its size is relatively small. The exegesis of the city in this study provided an informed



picture of the important aspects of this complex reality of the city based on data research and the use of other studies. This effort was made to serve the leaders of the Church who are strategizing, contextualizing, and developing vision for relevant ministries in the city. The presented view is composed of the historical and present context of the city, the outcomes of the research of the data, as well as the view of the participating leaders through the survey and the roundtable discussions. Table 14 in Appendix B presents a condensed overview of all of the elements presented in this study.

The outcomes of the survey and the roundtable conversations concluded that the participating leaders identify loneliness, fragmentation, and lack of community, along with the low percentage of Christians, post-Christians, and postmodern mindset as the top three needs of the city, followed by material poverty. This sense of priority for Church leaders is understandable. The first concern of the Church is about the welfare of the people in the community and the spiritual climate in the city. However, for a change of worldview and systemic change of the brokenness of the community, the transformation of the other areas is also needed. The indicated priorities are valid starting points for engagement in the city and serving other areas can be developed as next steps (see the section on strategy later in this chapter).

As a result of the research and the consultation discussion the faith leaders identified the most vulnerable groups in the city in analogy with the “quartet of the vulnerable” in the Scriptures. These groups in Amsterdam are the material and relational poor (the lonely); the single mothers; the children from broken families; and the immigrants and the non-fits, the outcasts for different reasons. The research presented in Chapter 6 confirm that these groups have a significantly lower chance to prosper in the city. Recommendation 6 is to encourage all churches and ministries in

Amsterdam prioritize ministry to these groups in their prayer and missional ministry to the city and, also, to find ways to develop or participate in strategies that will bring systemic changes that will benefit the opportunities of these groups.

Finally, the spiritual situation of the city has been explored in the research (Chapter 6). The main religious affinity groups in Amsterdam are 17% Christian; 13% Muslim; the figures for Buddhist, and Jews are around 1%. Important findings show that besides the atheists and the agnostics, 21% of the people in the city believe in “a higher power”. Recommendation 7 is to invest as leaders of Church in listening to this group, in order to find ways to contextualize the gospel and to explore expressions of Church that are relevant to this group. This group may be more open for the gospel than most of the Church in the city realizes.<sup>1</sup>

### **Is a Kingdom Ecosystem a Current Reality in Amsterdam?**

The Kingdom ecosystem model of this study requires the existence of the three rings of the model for a citywide Kingdom movement. A central question in the study is whether the or not a tangible expression of these rings can be found in the ministry of the Church in the city. In this section the conclusions are presented for this question, based on the research in Chapter 6.

### ***A Kingdom Ecosystem in Amsterdam is Emerging***

The overall conclusion of the question posed, is a Kingdom ecosystem a current reality in Amsterdam? is positive. Even without an intentional central citywide strategy, one can find a substantial development in all three rings of the

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<sup>1</sup> During writing of this chapter, an interview with the chief editor of an esoteric / new Age magazine *Happiness* was one of the news items. She wrote a book called *Rebible*. In an interview she states, “I was searching, everywhere. I read Buddhist scriptures, spoke with wise masters, studied spiritual streams. But now I realize that I left out my own roots in my search. Strange actually...” And later in the interview: “It is surely possible,” states Van Oord in her book *Rebible*, “that Jesus will be understood again by people like me.” (Berg, 2017)

model within churches and ministries that participated in the research. The conclusions regarding each of these rings and the status of collaboration follow.

#### *A Contextualized Kingdom Vision*

As previously discussed, a theological vision for a Kingdom ecosystem in the city must include a holistic relevance for persons, community, and culture. The results of related survey outcomes are presented in Tables 7, 8, and 9 and discussed in Chapter 6. The conclusion from the statements with the highest scores presented in these tables all confirm the core vision of the transformative Kingdom vision, as well as the calling for a wholistic ministry engagement of the Church in the city. This is confirmed by the outcomes of the consultation presented in Chapter 6. Possibly, the influence and teaching by several ministries and leaders with city movement experience from other parts of the world <sup>2</sup> has contributed to this level of consensus regarding the calling of the Church in the city.

The conclusion shows, however, that the scores also indicate that there is a significant minority of the participants that do not share this vision. Recommendation 8 is to communicate and celebrate the significant level of unity of this theological vision, while ongoing investment in providing training, teaching, and conversations about a contextualized Kingdom vision for the city, among leaders in Amsterdam.

#### *Disciple-making and Church Planting*

The research shows in Table 8 of Appendix B that the majority of the researched churches and organizations are engaged in sharing the good news with

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<sup>2</sup> During the research and consultation, it appeared that in the last three years faith leaders in the city developed relationships and received inspirational input from several ministries with a vision for city wide movements and transformation. Examples are Alan Plat (*Doxa Deo*) keynote speaker of the consultation; *City to City Network* (founded by Tim Keller), *Transform your World* from Ed Silviso connected with PCC and ACCL networks; *Tear Netherlands* with integral mission conferences in Amsterdam and Bakke Graduate University alumni and providing input and support for the Amsterdam summit (2015) and Amsterdam city consultation (2017).

people in the city (reaching around 22500 people), and half of these organizations are actively involved in making new disciples (750 over the last year). More than 30% of the researched churches and ministries are engaged in church-planting (see Table 8), planting on average eight to nine new churches per year. Chapter 6 concludes that although the people reached, and disciples are still a fraction of the city population, it is encouraging to see these elements are active in the participating organizations and churches.

The methods of outreach show a that most methods of outreach are highly relational (instead of one-way or mass communication / events). Outreaches are often combined with serving the needs or interests of the community: practical needs, children or youth, prayer for healing, etc. (See Figure 21 in Appendix A)

The outcomes show that around 70% of the outreach reaches people with a Christian background. However, in the near future this group will be smaller, because post-Christianity in future generations will be massive. Around 60% of the outreach efforts also include people with a Muslim, or post-Christian background, and, also, 60% have a postmodern worldview (see Figure 21 in Appendix A). The contextualization of the gospel and expression of church for these groups are of the essence for this increase in this ring of the ecosystem. Recommendation 9 is to bring together ministries and resources that have proven to be successful in reaching and discipling people with a Muslim, postmodern background, as well as those who “believe in higher power”. When the successful approaches are evaluated, training and mentoring for churches and ministries in the city can be utilized in order to become more effective.

#### *Relevant Ministries for the City*

The conclusions of the outcomes in chapter 6 regarding ministries and project

to serve the well-being of the city are summarized below. The survey shows that 77.8% of the churches and ministries participating in the survey have active ministries or projects. The types of ministries, reported in Figure 21 in Appendix A, show a diversity of ways that are currently used and do reflect the priorities for the community listed previously: addressing loneliness (visiting people, serving individual needs, etc.); fragmentation (neighborhood meals, neighborhood organizing, etc.); poverty and refugees (refugee ministries, food banks, second hand clothing, job training, debt alleviation, etc.; and broken relationships (marriage courses, counselling, etc.). As expected the main sectors of engagement through these ministries are social/civic and families, besides the church/religion sector. This is a good starting point for future expansion in other sectors (see the discussion on strategy below).

The man-hours and financial investments of the participating organizations are significant. These include many volunteer hours, as well as paid jobs, that are dedicated to serving the well-being of the community. This study did not provide data on the total budget of the organizations; therefore, it is not possible to know the percentage of the budget of the participating organizations invested in ministries for the city.

It is also not possible based on this research to measure the effect that these ministries have on the various aspects of well-being of the city. In the comments of the survey, however, some stories of significant contributions and creative ministries were reported. This study has not enough room to tell all these stories.

Recommendation 10 is to invest in the creation of a book that documents several of the outstanding ministries and their fruitfulness and make this available for all the leaders in the city. God is working in many places, touching a variety of people,

through faithful leaders and ministries all over the city. During the Amsterdam city consultation, 12 stories were shared, but many others could be told. These are signs of hope and inspiration. I also recommend doing a more comprehensive social impact study of the Church in Amsterdam, using the tools and method of Cinnamon Network.<sup>3</sup>

### *Collaboration within the City*

The outcomes related to the status and vision among the faith leaders in Amsterdam were discussed in Chapter 6. Only about 11% of the organizations participating in the survey do not collaborate with others in the city. In the rest of the organizations, 89% of the leaders are collaborating with others in some way (see Table 13 in Appendix B). Each of the main networks in the city have between 20% and 43% of the leaders involved. About 53% are working together in other ways outside the listed networks. Also, the percentages and types of the collaboration are documented in the outcomes (Chapter 6). This current level of collaborating and networking is a good development; however, the sense of being an integrated part of a citywide ecosystem of God's Kingdom in the city is not yet a reality. The collaboration is pragmatic and based on affinity rather than on an overall vision of an ecclesia for the city. The goal of this study is to move towards this vision.

The scores on the statements listed in Table 14 are important indicators of the desire of the faith leaders to grow further in a collaborative movement of the Kingdom ecosystem. The indicated desire is to invest in the following common activities: prayer, leadership, fellowship, and encouragement; joint outreaches; collaboration in practical ministries to the city; and strategic partnership and

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<sup>3</sup> "Cinnamon network is organization that serves the local church to transform communities" (Cinnamon-Network, 2018)

engagement in bring shalom to the city. These elements are vital to build toward the vision of this study and is a good indicator of the potential for further growth in becoming a more unified ecclesia in Amsterdam. The sections following show conclusions and recommended steps to grow from desire to mobilization and implementation of it.

### ***Remarks on the Kingdom Ecosystem in Amsterdam***

Before looking at the next steps, this paragraph first provides a few remarks on the conclusions about the current status of the ecosystem in Amsterdam. What do the outcomes of the researched group of churches and ministries mean for the rest of the body of Christ in the city? The number of churches in Amsterdam assumed by this study is 350; 10% participated in the research survey in this study. The number of ministries and Christian organizations in the is not exactly known. Also, not all the churches and ministries that have active engagement in the city participated in the survey. This means that one cannot extrapolate the outcomes of this study over all the churches of the city. However, even if the current ecosystem only comprises only 10-15 % of the Church in the city, it is a significant core and a valid starting point for expansion.

This reality reminded me of the parables of the Kingdom regarding the tiny grain of seed that had the potential to become a large tree. Other parables of the Kingdom speak about a small portion of yeast or small seeds that multiply manifold. What stands out from these examples is that Jesus points that the values and life of the Kingdom as more important than large numbers or impressive appearance. The quality of the Kingdom life found in the participating leaders and organizations is hopeful and has the potential to grow and multiply in the coming years when the hope and vision stays alive.

The model of the Kingdom ecosystem proved to be a helpful grid for structuring the conversation and the research of this study. The model also prevents a city movement from losing sight of the essential elements necessary for their holistic calling. In working with this model during this study, I found that one essential element does not get the right priority: prayer for the city. In my research of city movements and interviews with movement leaders <sup>4</sup> I found that most movements have started out of collaborative prayer for the city. In Amsterdam the Kingdom Prayernet facilitated an ongoing movement of 24-7 prayer circles for the city for more than a decade, which is an essential foundation. In the model of Keller (2012), prayer-movements are positioned in the third ring as one of the ministries to the city. But I suggest that it needs a more central place in the model. Figure 27 in Appendix A shows the proposed revised Kingdom ecosystem model.

### **Next Steps in Becoming an Ecclesia for More Shalom in Amsterdam**

Based on the conclusion that there is a viable small beginning of the Kingdom ecosystem in the city Amsterdam, the question is how this movement can grow in size and fruitfulness. Following are a few recommendations of this study, including the city consultation and further discussions in the ACCL and other conversations in the city.

#### ***Strategy: Steps Towards Cultural and Spiritual Change***

As discussed previously, the current engagement of the Church in Amsterdam is mostly limited to the sectors social/civic, families, and church/religion. During his keynote address during first day of the city consultation Alan Platt (2017) suggested a strategic sequence of steps of engagement in a community (see Figure 27 Appendix

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<sup>4</sup> A study of movements based on literature and six interviews with movement leaders during the movement day conference in New York in 2016 (Brinksma, 2016b).



A). The best entry point in the city is to start with serving the felt needs of the community (its pain). This will give trust and credit for the Church to engage in transforming the structural needs (its brokenness). Finally, this will lead to having influence in the spiritual domain of the city (its lostness). Platt calls these levels of engagement the healing presence, the transforming, and the fathering presence of the Church.

This is approached is confirmed by Trousdale (2012) as the entry point to reach the Muslim culture.

We can say categorically that the powerful testimony of transformation so resonates with the discouragement and disillusionment inside Islam that it is the single most significant reason for rapid multiplication of churches among Muslims today. When Muslims observe the types of dramatic transformation that only the gospel can bring in individuals, families, and whole communities, they are often jealous to experience that same transformation. (Trousdale, 2012, p. 124)

Recommendation 11 is to challenge the Church in Amsterdam to adapt this proposed strategic sequence, starting with direct engagement in the felt needs, while investigating and implanting strategies for transforming engagement in spheres of the city and for impacting the worldview (fathering presence).

### ***A Spiritual Infrastructure in the City***

For the increase of the unity in vision and impact, leadership and pathways for relationship building and collaboration are needed. However, the complex citywide Church movement cannot be organized as a mega-church or large corporate structure. Therefore, the language of an ecosystem (which is a more organic structure) can be helpful. This is in line with Allan Platt's statement (as cited in Brinksmma, 2016b):

“The process of the ministry in unity in the city requires a process of resourcing and empowering. It is a relational process. Not the big plans, but relational and leadership empowerment are needed” (Brinksma, 2016b, p. 143).

The statement that a big master plan will not work for a citywide movement fits the leadership culture in Amsterdam: it is non-hierarchical and has tendencies to avoid structures (see Chapter 2). However, leadership and processes are necessary at city level. The roundtable discussions acknowledged the need for city level (apostolic) leadership. The types of activities that are needed to build the vision and momentum in the city include the following.

1. joint prayer for the city
2. fellowship of leaders, encouragement, and friendship
3. joint community engagement including exegeses of the neighborhoods
4. city wide vision casting, direction, and inspiration
5. city wide events, celebrations, and joint outreaches
6. city wide communications, organization, and planning
7. evaluation, reporting, and strategy development on the city level
8. city wide ministries that serve the well-being of the city in all spheres

An important recommendation from the roundtable discussions was to work strategically on different levels in the city, citywide activities, as well as in the different city areas or neighborhoods. I suggest forging a spiritual infrastructure that serves the development of the ecosystem in the city at four levels: 1) local churches and ministries; 2) geographic leadership clusters; 3) ministry and church networks; 4) citywide movement of movements (see Figure 28 in Appendix A).

The first is the local level, where the churches and ministries are placed in the city. Here is where discipling, ministry, and the equipping of Kingdom ambassadors

is taking place. This is also the place for community serving and ministries in the neighborhoods. The second level is the area cluster level, where leaders and pastors come together regularly for prayer, fellowship, exegesis of the city area, and joint engagement to bring shalom for that area. This level can take responsibility for items 2 and 3 of elements above. Current examples are found in Amsterdam north, Amsterdam southeast, IJburg, etc.

The third level comprises city ministries or movements of churches with a specific ministry or church network affinity focus. Current examples include Kingdom prayer-net, Amsterdam in Beweging, Pentecostal Council of Churches, ministries in the red-light area, and the refugee ministry network. At this level, ministry vision, organization, training, and projects are taking place. The elements 1, 5, and 8 from the list above can be done at this level. Also, these movements can facilitate retreats for pastors and leaders, as well as the development of emerging leaders.

The fourth level is a movement of movement: a leadership collective that oversees the whole picture of the city and give empowerment, vision, and strategy at city level. The elements 4, 6, and 7 of the list above can be done at this level. This last group gathers regularly with the leaders of clusters, and church and ministry movements to facilitate information sharing, vision, and strategic planning. Currently the ACCL is trying to fulfill this role.

Recommendation 12 is to discuss, design, and implement a movement infrastructure in Amsterdam, based on this four-level proposal. This also include aligning and connecting existing initiatives on all those level and initiating collaboration and clusters where there is a void. For the fourth level, the ACCL can be

seen as a starting point and can be reinvented and repopulated if that serves the movement in the city.

### ***Movement Leadership in the City***

To build the movement and facilitate the spiritual infrastructure for the city, good leadership is essential. One of the recommendations from the consultation was to establish the adequate apostolic leadership for building the city movement in Amsterdam. In the paragraph on leadership for the city in Chapter 3, some essential characteristics are described for city leadership from different sources. In a interview on movements, Viv Grigg (as cited in Brinksmma, 2016b) explains apostolic function in a city movement: “The apostolic role is the capacity to repeatedly create structures, and to bring forth leaders. These leaders also have the task to establish and guard the DNA of the movement.” (Brinksmma, 2016b, p. 54) The leadership examples from the literature in Chapter 3 are all practitioners who live out the values and vision and catalyze others in doing the same. The structures they create are simple and organic and facilitating information flows are critical.

In the proposed model, there are different types of apostolic leaders needed. Some apostolic leaders with a citywide overview are “city ecosystem leaders” These leaders can oversee, serve, and lead the movement of movements in the city. Others are called to lead networks, organization, or movements in the city that serve specific causes (discipleship, church planting, prayer, marketplace ministries, neighborhood service, reconciliation, etc.).

The same can be said for prophetic leaders for the city. Grigg states that “The prophet is primarily addressing the underlying vision of the nation. He is energizing ...with the promise of another time and situation towards which the community can move” (Grigg, 2009, p. 189). It is important to recognize that movements in the city

need prophetic leaders to discern the focus and direction the Lord wants his people to move in order to bring change. There are also prophetic leaders who are called to see certain issue in the city and ignite a vision to bring change to this issue with Kingdom values.

The leadership that is currently active in leading ministries and networks in the city have great potential and proven characters and vision. The process of the Amsterdam city consultation confirmed that they can feel empowered and recognized to function in their giftings and roles with boldness to lead at the city level. A next crucial step in the development of an ongoing movement of the ecosystem in the city is raising and releasing the next generation of leaders. A part of this challenge is to offer training and ministry opportunities for young leaders, but it also requires a culture of mentorship and coaching of others while leading a ministry or a movement. Recommendation 13 is to invest in training and mentoring of leaders in the city and integrating mentorship and next generation leadership training in the movement leadership culture while it is still in the beginning phase.

### ***Barriers to Overcome in a Citywide Kingdom Ecosystem in Amsterdam***

During the process of this final project, I encountered many leaders and teams who are working passionately for the the welfare of the city and its residents, inspired by the gospel of Jesus Christ. The idea of collaboration at city level with others and moving towards a more unified ecclesia for the city is also welcomed conceptually by most leaders I met. However, in conversations about actual steps towards this goal, I often encountered barriers. This section describes the most important barriers.

#### ***Fragmentation in the Body of Christ***

One of the main needs to address in the city is fragmentation and individualism. I found that this is also true in the body of Christ in the city. Most

churches, ministries, and Christian organizations have a vision and goals that are defined almost completely within their own contexts or organization. The tendency to work individually or to do it only “our way” is a temptation for most leaders in the city. This is understandable from history and the “spirit” of the city. However, if the Church longs for more shalom for the needs of the city, there is a priority to overcome the same issues within the body of Christ.

This issue will not be solved by blame or by putting pressure on each other. However, the awareness of the state of the lostness and brokenness of the culture in the city makes it clear that the Church in the city cannot afford fragmentation; the strength of a being part of a unified and beautifully diverse ecclesia for the city is desperately needed. Prayer and honest conversations can lead to steps of humility and repentance from this. The research and the city consultation have been instrumental in many conversations that led to new steps in this direction.

#### *Differences in Church Language and Culture*

One of the issues that I encountered the most is that leaders of different groups indicated that the language-terminology (*taalveld* in Dutch) of other groups in the city is a reason not to participate in a citywide process. Language is important, and words and terms can have strong associations that can be different for each leader or group. However, in a city with so many different cultural and religious backgrounds, the reality is that leaders have to learn to listen to others beyond the barrier of their own contexts and terminology. This starts within the body of Christ. For some leaders in the city, this was a reason not to participate in the project.

Recommendation 14 is to make an effort by leaders of collaborative activities leaders in their communication and presentation to address the respect for different backgrounds. In each occasion, it is wise to explain that language can be an issue and

to offer an invitation to overcome this together. I also noticed that roundtable discussions and other forms of open interaction among leaders help to understand motives and meaning in the words of the other. Finally, it is recommended to work together to develop common terminology for the key issues of the movement in the city. The proposal to use the language of shalom in this study is an important starting point.

### *Theological and Dogmatic Differences*

Another common issue in citywide collaboration is that theological and dogmatic issues are a barrier. This is true in every city, and it is clear that in working in a unified movement there is a diversity of convictions. The cultural diversity of the Church in Amsterdam makes this even more complex. Different stands in issues including gay-marriage, baptism, women in leadership, etc. can be breaking points for some leaders. For working together for the city, there needs to be a core of common ground but also a large space for different convictions. An essential scripture for this theme is:

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Eph. 4:3-6)

The ACCL proposed to use the Apostles' Creed (the embrace, the practice and underwriting of it) as a foundation for working together as the Church. In my experience it is easier to find common ground with each other, when the common focus is working for the shalom of the city, then in trying to solve the (theological) differences first. Besides this, the Church also needs to be able to work together with non-Christian stakeholders and people of good will.

### *Time and Resources for a Citywide Movement*

Another common barrier for leaders to invest in a citywide process is the lack of time. Many pastors and leaders in the city carry a heavy load in balancing their responsibilities within their own ministries. Life and ministry in the city is demanding and stressful. Many leaders indicated that they felt they had no time for participating in events and activities like the research or the city consultation. This problem is not easy to solve.

I propose that one of the steps is an increase in the awareness that the leaders of the churches have a common calling and stewardship for the whole city. This implies that boards and leadership of churches and ministries see it as part of their calling to invest in citywide relationship building, ministry. If the leaders know that participation in citywide movements is a part of their job description, the time spent in city-wide activities can be part of the regular ministry schedule and not in the leaders' personal time or in the rare spare time of the ministry schedule. A related argument is that if the Church becomes more unified and collaborative with common vision and goals, all churches and ministries in the city should benefit from it. This creation of awareness and values depends on the development and functioning of the spiritual infrastructure discussed above to create the context for these conversations.

Finally, for the steps proposed in the study to develop a citywide movement of the Church, financial and human resources are needed. Until now, all the work for citywide activities and organization has been done on a volunteer basis. To take the next steps, it is necessary to have people that can dedicate serious portions of their time and be compensated if necessary. Churches, organizations, and businesses must be invited to invest in the spiritual infrastructure, the necessary events, and the ministry of the Church in the city.



Recommendation 15 is to promote the use of the value of steps proposed in Chapter 4 for ministry also for collaboration within the citywide movement. These steps are to start with a posture of blessing the other, followed by investing in relationship and then finding ways to minister to the felt need of the other, and finally sharing personal faith and convictions. I propose that this will be helpful to solve many prejudices and release much blessing of the Kingdom of God in the relational dynamic of the Church in the city.

### **The Proposed Agenda for the City**

The priorities for an agenda for the city were discussed during the city consultation. The outcomes of this discussion are presented in Chapter 6. This input, as well as conversations in the ACCL, has led to the following recommendations regarding the agenda for the Church in Amsterdam, over the next five years. The problem with an agenda for the city is the ownership of the role out of this agenda in the city (as discussed in the beginning of this chapter). The suggested way forward is to request the ACCL to take responsibility for this and take initiative to implement the suggested spiritual leadership infrastructure. In shaping this infrastructure, based on relationship investment and trust, items of the agenda and recommendations of this study can be embraced and owned by the various parts of the citywide movement, and coordinated by the level-four leadership collective. Table 17 of Appendix B shows a proposed timeline of the agenda items over the next five years is shown, based on a growing level of trust and capacity to facilitate and communicate through the spiritual infrastructure. Also, in Appendix J is a table of the recommendations of this study is presented with the initial entities that will be asked to take initial responsibility for them.

The first priority is to create some common practices for the whole Church in

Amsterdam with a Kingdom focus in order create expression of unified engagement. The example on rhythms of Alan Platt (see chapter 6) can serve as a useful template. The current proposal is to bring the leaders of the city together for a city-prayer each year at the end of the week of prayer (third week of January) to pray for the city. During this national week of prayer many churches in the city gather for prayer and services in their areas. I propose to to extend this rhythm with the leaders gathering for prayer for the city.

The second rhythm is to have every six months a citywide leadership fellowship time, with a lunch or a breakfast. This time would include networking, encouragement, city-vision sharing, and prayer for one another. The plan is to combine these events with a short time of teaching and reporting on the theology of shalom and related topics that shape the Kingdom vision of the ecosystem.

The third rhythm is a yearly strategic city gathering for all the leaders in the city. This gathering would be either a summit or consultation format. This meeting would build on the Amsterdam city consultation of 2017 and includes inspiration, reports from movements and ministries in the city, and evaluation of progress on the the agenda and priorities. At least every five years this event would be a two-day consultation offering research and updating the agenda and priorities of the city movement.

The fourth rhythm is a common citywide outreach or ministry event or approach where all churches and ministries are invited to work together in their own neighborhoods for the shared causes or strategies. This is currently worked out by a workgroup of the ACCL. A fifth rhythm could be to have one common day of prayer for the city each month.

Another priority of the roundtable discussion was to work both on a citywide level and on the level of geographic city-areas. In some of the city-areas there are already collaborative initiatives of churches and ministries. This agenda item is covered by the proposal for the spiritual infrastructure (at the cluster level). The ACCL will take initiatives to work out the four-level infrastructure proposal and evaluate the existing initiatives in the neighborhood and to bring together clusters of leaders in the parts of the city where there is no collaboration yet. The ACCL will also work with the cluster representatives for initiatives like exegesis of the area and joint neighborhood engagement.

The third agenda priority is the request to establish an apostolic leadership group or council that will serve the big picture and take initiatives to implement the agenda and facilitate the further development of the citywide movement. The ACCL will work with ministry and church network leaders to identify leaders that are gifted and available to join (or replace) the current council.

The fourth agenda item is to find ways to have Kingdom-minded marketplace leaders in strategic positions in the city. Currently there are not many Christians with a Kingdom vision at these places. Investigation is required to find the reasons why most Christian business persons and marketplace leaders in Amsterdam work outside the city. A recommended agenda item is to find churches and ministries which are able to equip, inspire and mentor high potential emerging leaders for the city. This challenge can be discussed with ministries in the city with a focus on the economic and business sector.

A final agenda item is a request to the coordinators of the city movement to facilitate intentional relationship building among leaders in the city. This is the foundation for the movement in the city. This point has been taken into account in the

design of the rhythms discussed above. There are several place and events where leaders can network, share lives and prayer, and encourage each other.

Another desire expressed during the roundtable discussion was that the collaboration in the city would have an outcome-based focus. Desired outcomes are inspiring and help to keep a movement momentum. In the current discussion within the ACCL, there is a proposal to set a citywide goal to work together to bring the current number of active church members in the city from 3.5% to 4.5% of the city population in the coming years. This means that all churches are encouraged and challenged to reach out and disciple more people that are no(t yet) followers of Christ. This will require a building of a catalytic momentum in the city through sharing testimonies, best practices, and inviting ministries that can teach and train leaders to evangelize in different contexts. Ministries and churches have to find ways to reach and disciple more residents of the city. If all churches, ministries and the prayer movements take this as a priority, there will be a growth in outcomes.

Another discussed goal is to pray and work together and with other stakeholders in the city in order to see the number of people with severe loneliness drop under 10% (currently 11%). This would require a citywide campaign, encouraging and challenging churches and ministries to find ways to mobilize their people and to take initiatives in the community that facilitate new relationships and serving of the felt needs of the lonely in the city. Also, for this target, the churches, ministries, the prayer movement, and even the city and other organizations can join hands and work together.

These are high targets but making progress towards them would be a significant improvement in the areas of the highest needs of Amsterdam. These

targets will be discussed with the other leaders in the city and if agreed, will be part of communications and strategic planning in the city.

### **Training for Engagement in the City**

An important instrument of developing a citywide Kingdom ecosystem in Amsterdam is training, coaching, and mentoring of leaders. Many of the recommendations presented in this chapter include implementation within a citywide training curriculum and process. Development and training are vital parts of the agenda of the city in the coming years (see Table 14 in Appendix B).

During the consultation, the subject of training in the city was only briefly discussed due to limited time. The conclusion of the discussion was that a curriculum with training for city vision and ministries as presented during the consultation (see Appendix E) is needed and welcomed. The recommendation of the leaders was to evaluate what is already available in the city and to build on that. Another point of concern was that training offered at city-level must be designed as a layer of training additional to what churches and ministries offer for their own people and with a strong focus on citywide theology, ministry, and application.

After the city consultation, a workgroup of leaders (Amsterdam City Training Curriculum (ACTC) workgroup) from different church backgrounds started to work on a curriculum based on the input of the consultation (see Appendix E). This group combined the proposal of Appendix E with additional topics proposed by the workgroup members. The work on developing training content on all these topics will take a long time. The workgroup felt the urgency to start training leaders with a citywide vision as soon as possible. Therefore, the chosen strategy will be to provide a training of the first eight essential modules of the City to City incubator program (Redeemer-City-to-City, 2017) and add the contextualization and experience of

experienced leaders and trainers from the city. This enables the start of a pilot training in 2018-2019. The targeted leaders for this training are pastors and leaders of churches and ministries in Amsterdam that have a desire to start an active engagement in the city, as well as leaders. The goal is to have unified vision, language, and a learning community of leaders sharing wisdom and experience in Amsterdam.

This training will be extended with other content and topics suggested by the workgroup and approved by the leaders of the city. The ACCL will also continue to challenge leaders in the various networks, to invest time and resources in producing training content and facilitate seminars, schools, and learning communities on topics of the curriculum design. This will come a strategic element of developing a Kingdom ecosystem for more Shalom in Amsterdam

### **A Closing Remark**

This project became a tool that helped me build more relationships with leaders in the city, learn more about Amsterdam, and provided many opportunities to work with other leaders to see more of God's shalom in the city. I thank God for this journey, with other leaders in the city. I pray that this final project and this paper will be used to inspire leaders in the Church to see the whole Church in Amsterdam grow into the destiny of becoming an Ecclesia of the Lord, for the shalom of this precious city.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Figures

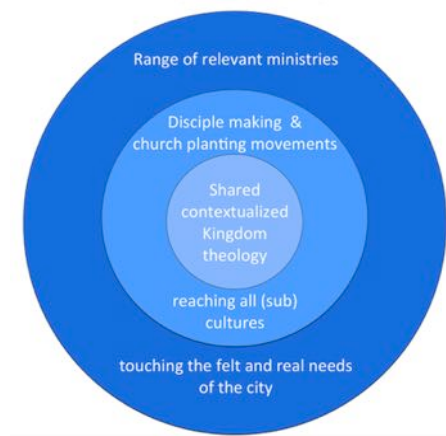


Figure 2. Kingdom ecosystem: a model of the collaborative movement of the body of Christ engaged in the city.

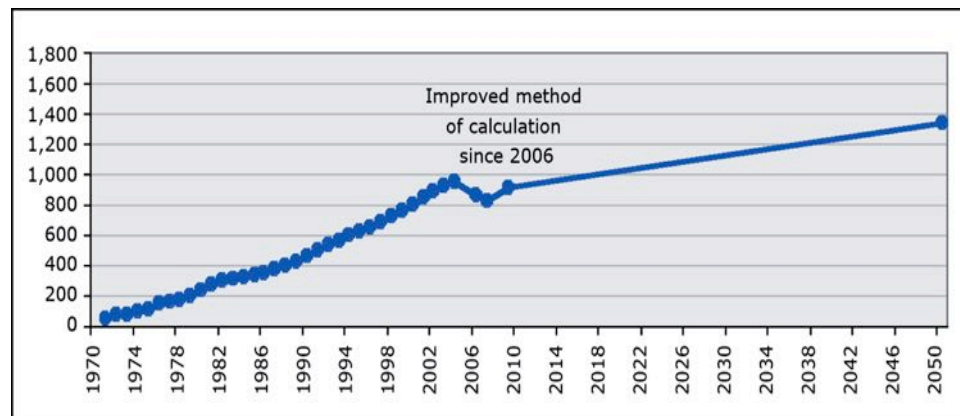


Figure 3. The projected growth of the Muslim population in the Netherlands. The scale of the x-axis shown is the number x 1000 people. (Source: (Forum, 2012))

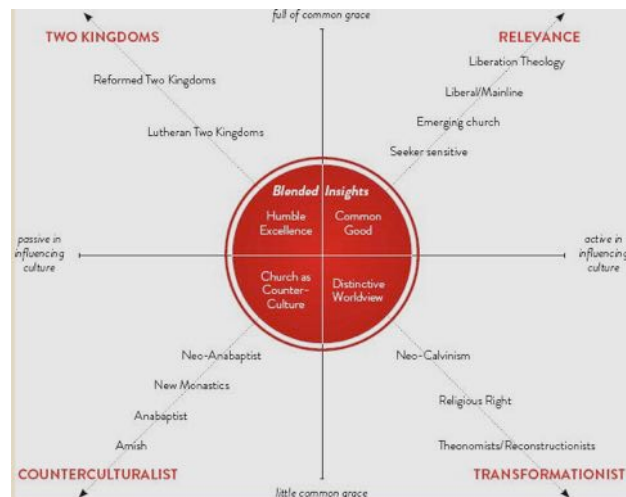


Figure 4. Keller compares four models of culture engagement and proposes a balanced set of blended insights for city movements (Keller, 2012, loc. 6741 - 11994).

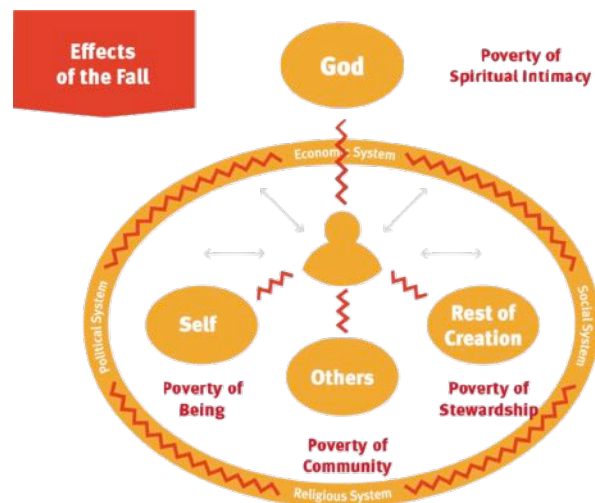


Figure 5. Multifaceted poverty as a result of the fall. Adapted from (Myers, 1999, p. 27)



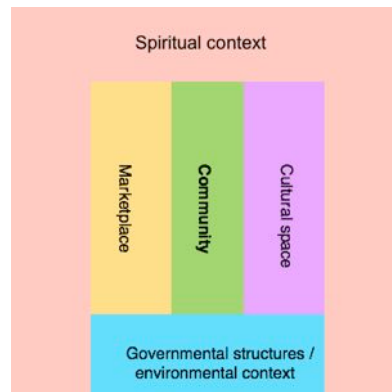


Figure 6. A model of purpose areas for the city, as proposed for this study.

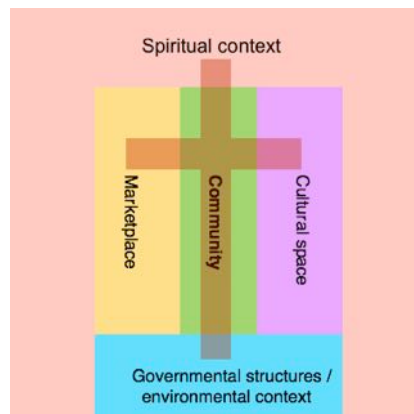


Figure 7. The ecclesia in the city: The Church is engaged in all spheres of the city.

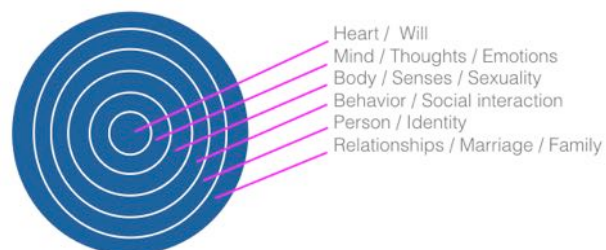


Figure 8. Discipleship process: an ongoing work of transformation in all the different aspects of the believer as proposed by Dallas Willard (Willard, 2002, p. 38).

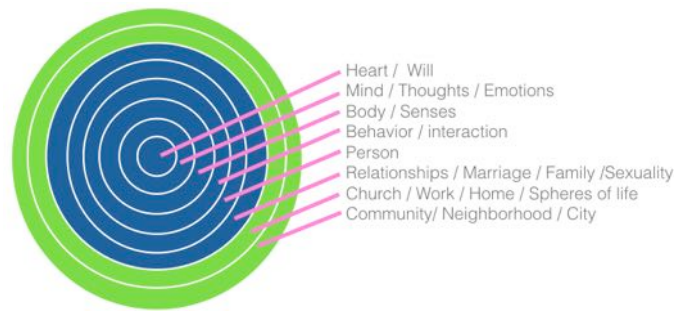


Figure 9. Extension of the discipleship model of Figure 9, in order to equip the believers for their transformational engagement in the community as shalom-makers.

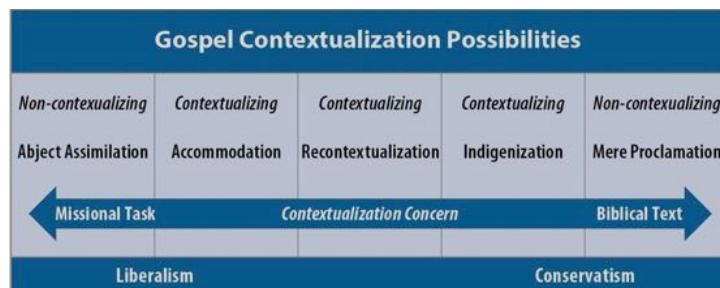


Figure 10. A spectrum of contextualization approaches, proposed by Tyra (Tyra, 2013, p. 66).



Figure 11. Invitation for the Amsterdam city consultation

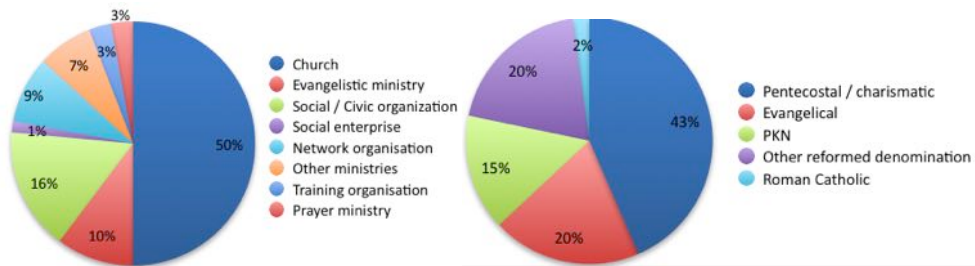


Figure 12. Participating leaders, types of ministry and denomination

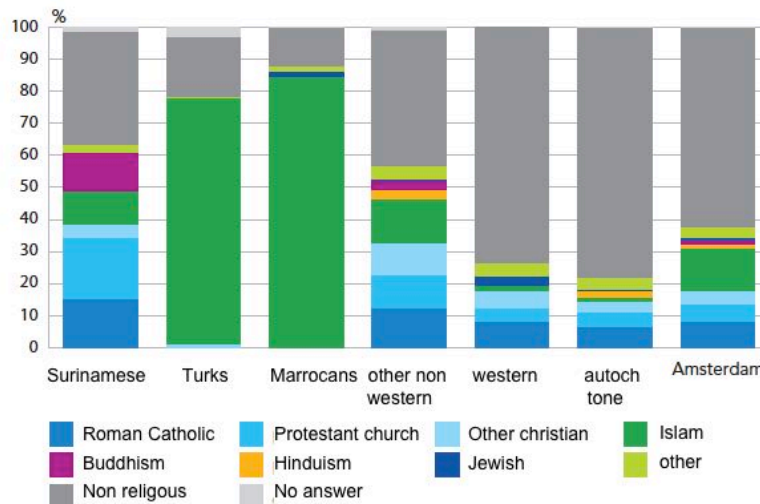


Figure 13. Affinity with religions or spiritual streams in the city (percentage of the population) Source: (OIS Amsterdam, 2016a, p. 118)

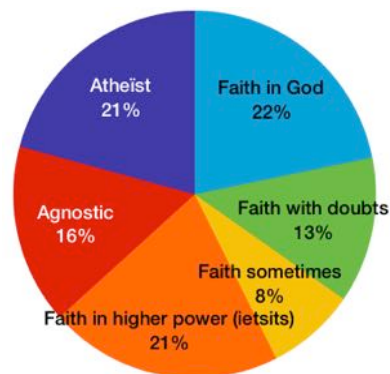


Figure 14. Faith in Amsterdam in different facets of spirituality in the city (percentage of population). Source: (Kennedy, 2017, 5)

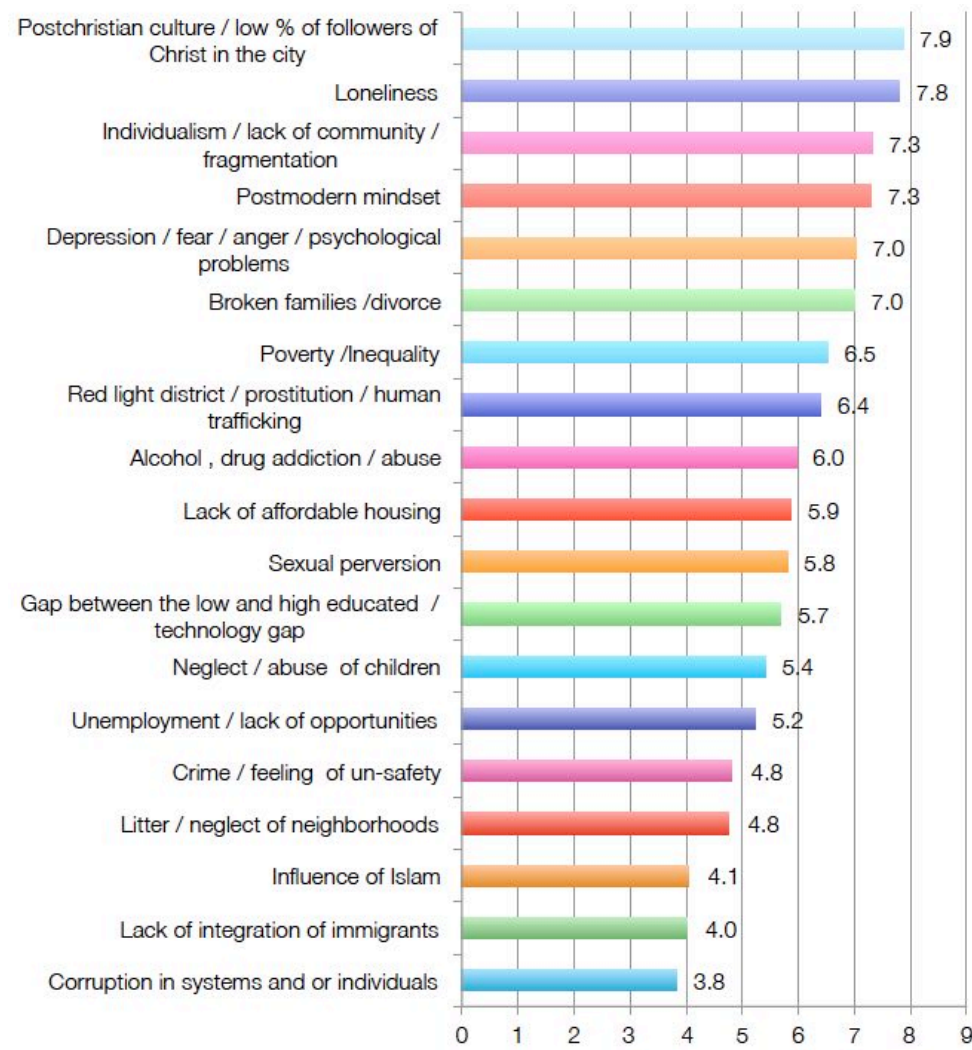


Figure 15. Accumulated results of the assessment of needs of the city

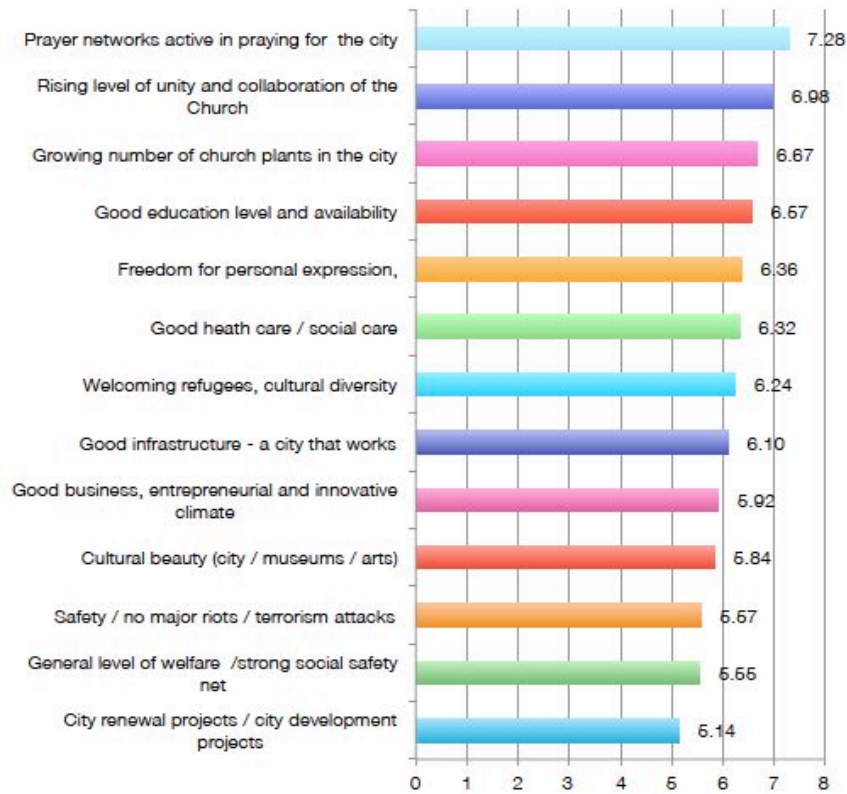


Figure 16. Accumulated results of the assessment of assets of the city.

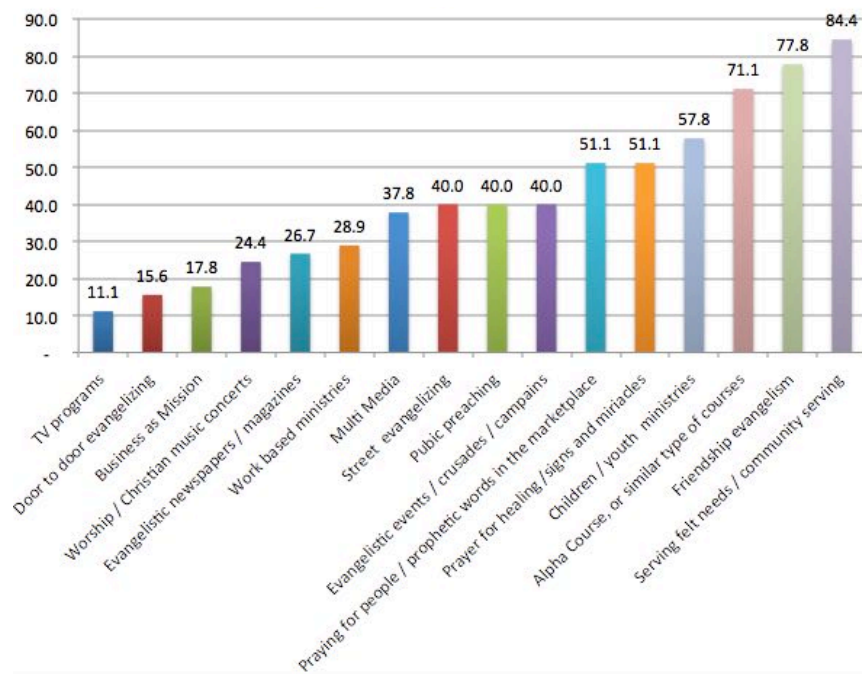
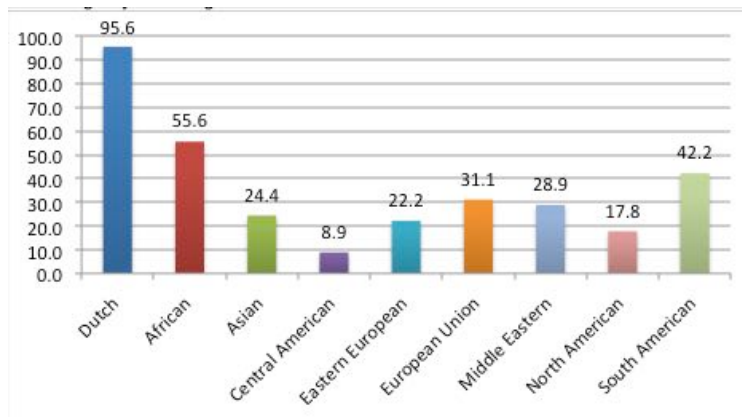
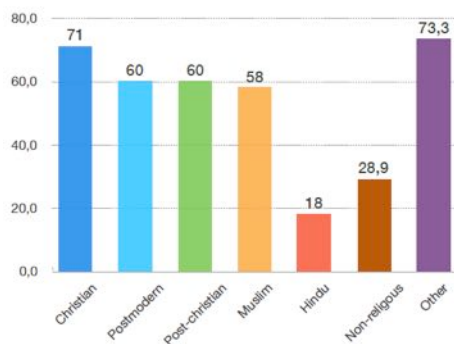


Figure 17. Accumulated survey results of the reported outreach methods.



*Figure 18.* Accumulated survey results of cultural backgrounds of the people reached in the city.



*Figure 19.* Accumulated survey results of religious backgrounds of the people reached in the city. In percentage of the total number of churches and organizations reaching out with the gospel.



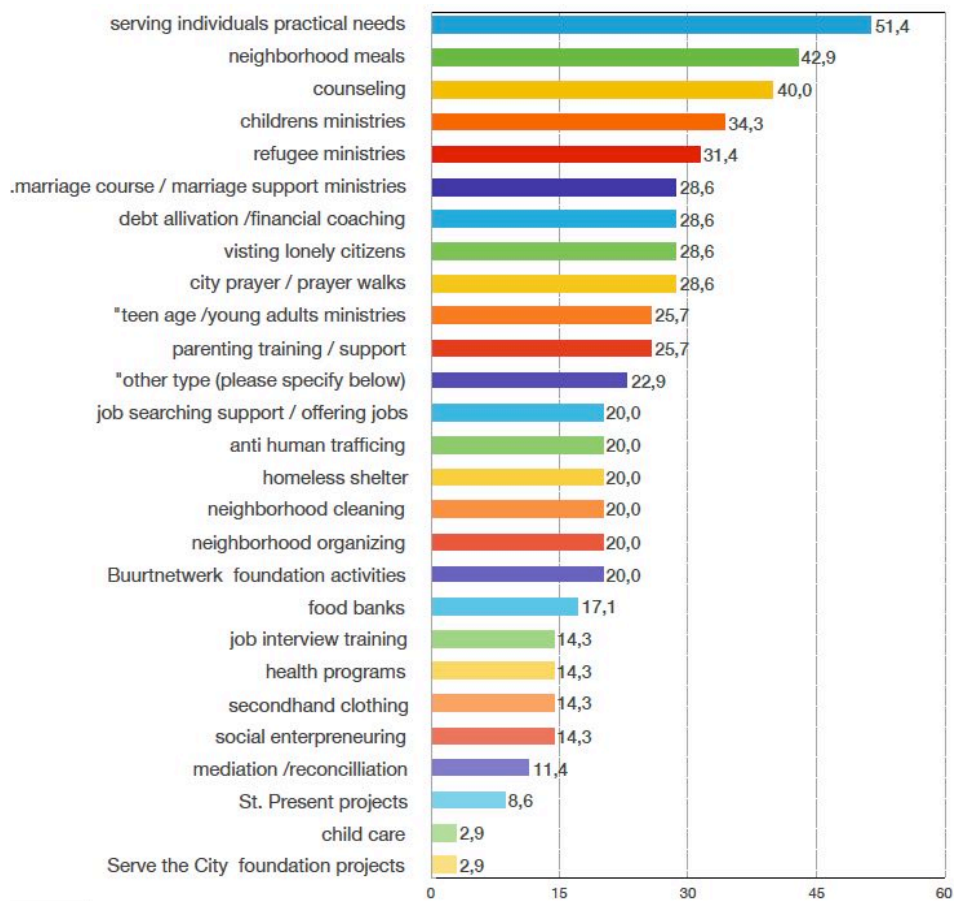


Figure 20. Types of ministries reported in the survey.

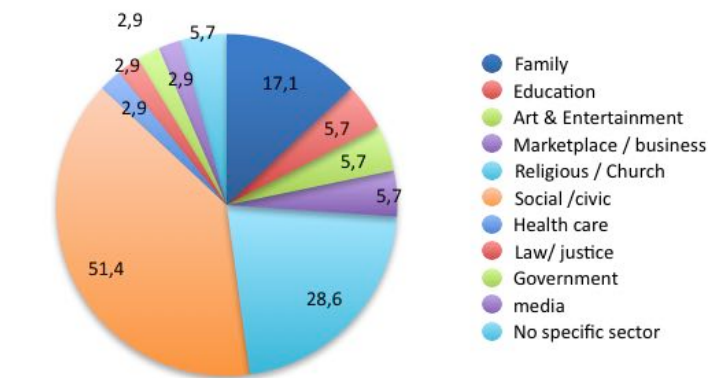


Figure 21. Accumulated survey results of sectors of collaboration in percentage of the reported projects.

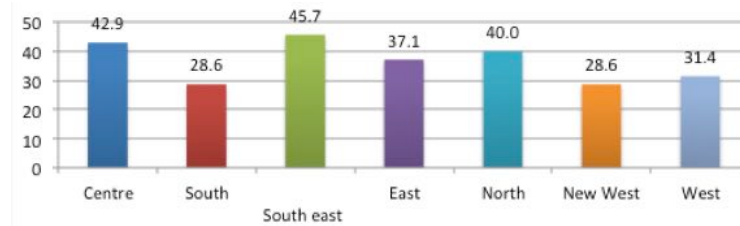


Figure 22. The geographic areas of the reported ministry activities.

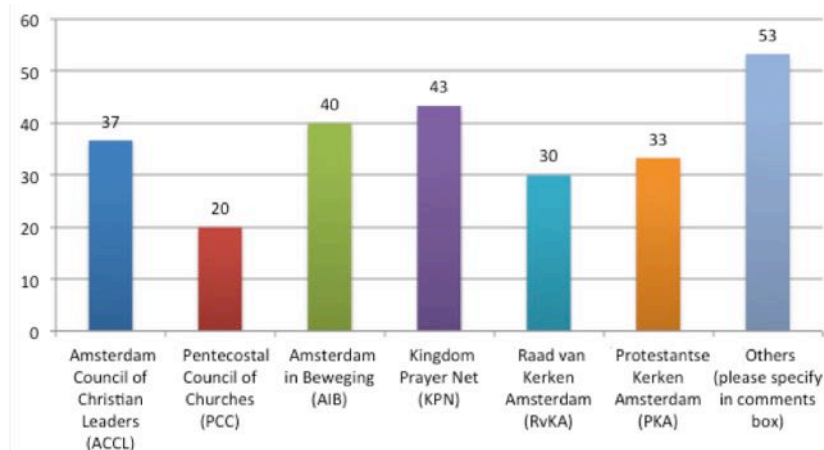


Figure 23. Accumulated survey results of involvement of churches and organizations in city networks, in percentage the total number of those involved in collaboration.

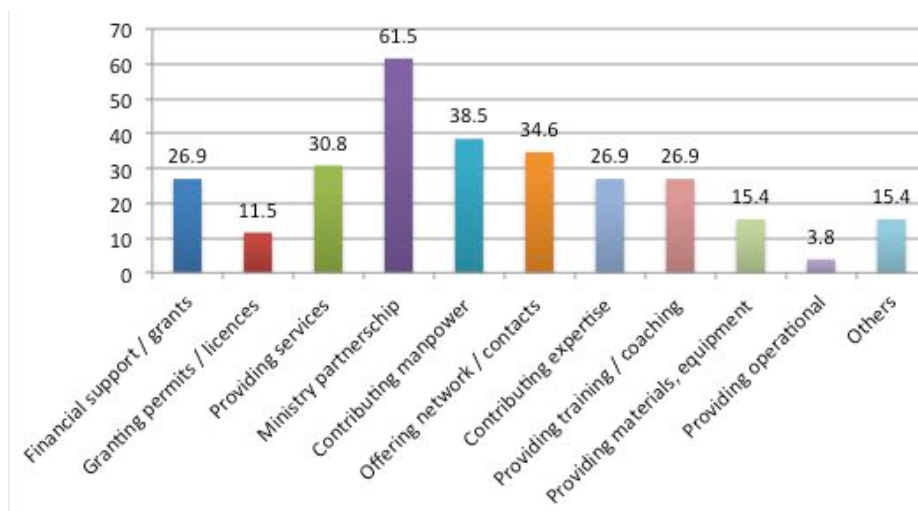


Figure 24. Accumulated survey results of types of collaboration in percentage of the collaboration efforts reported.



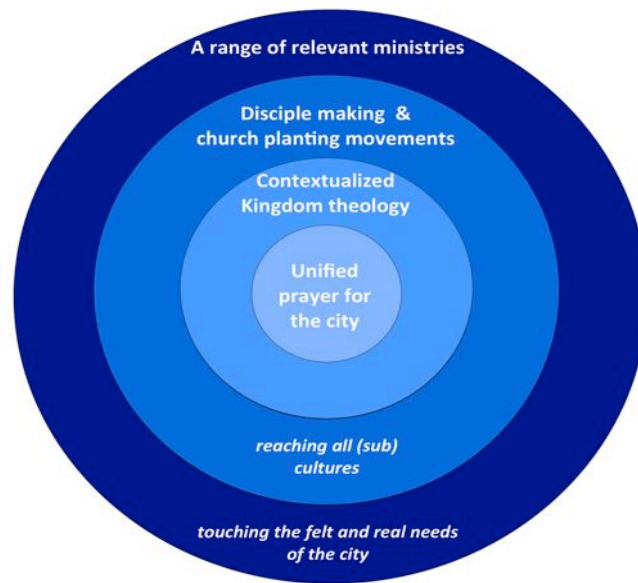


Figure 25. Revised Kingdom Ecosystem model, with prayer for the city at its core.

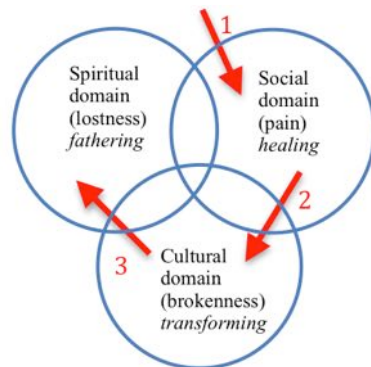


Figure 26. A strategic sequence of involvement of the Church in the community (source: (Platt, 2017)).

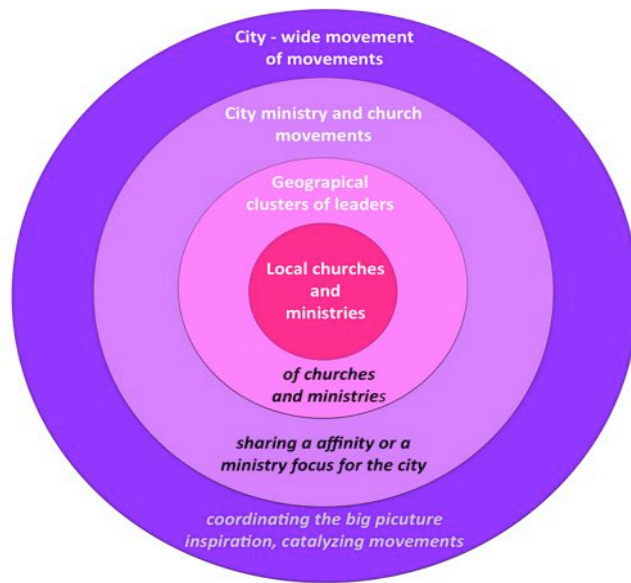


Figure 27. A proposed four level spiritual infrastructure for city-wide movement development.

## Appendix B

### Tables

**Table 1.**

Program of the Amsteram city consultation

<b>Friday April 7</b> 13:30 Registration open 14:00 Start consultation Inspiration (Alan Platt) 14:45 <b>Know your city</b> (research, talks, roundtable) 16:15 break <b>Love your city</b> (research, talks) 18:00 diner 18:50 Love your city conclusions, roundtable and prayer) 20:30 Concluding the first day of the Consultation	<b>Saturday April 8</b> 9:30 Registration open 10:00 Start consultation day 2 10:20 Inspiration (Alan Platt) 10:50 <b>Serve your city</b> (research, talks, roundtable) 12:45 Lunch 13:30 Breakout sessies <b>Impact your city</b> (research) 14:50 Break 15:10 Impact your city (talks, roundtable, panel) Priorities, vision on the city, collaboration and next steps) 16:00 Prayer and closure
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**Table 2.**

Average scores of well-being index per city part in 2014, based on the index of 2004. Source: (OIS Amsterdam, 2016a, p. 24)

Scoring relative positive	Scoring average	Scoring relative negative
city center (109)	east (104)	north (97)
south (108)	west (105)	southeast (99)
		new west (101)

**Table 3.**

Main quality indicators from interviews (88 reports) in the Klipperstraat area. Source: (Brinksma, 2014, p. 49)

	bad	poor	ok
Safe environment	49%	21%	30%
Clean environment	41%	40%	19%
Well-being housing / environment	32%	36%	32%
Relationships / within block	27%	43%	27%

**Table 4.**

Estimate regular church attendance, based on affinity data per main Church background.

	<b>Affinity (% of the population)</b>	<b>Regular church attendance estimate</b>	<b>Regular church attendance % of the population</b>	<b>Regular attendees</b>
RK	7	10%	0,70	5880
Christian general	4,5	50%	2,25	18900
Protestant	2,7	15%	0,41	3402
Reformed	2,5	30%	0,75	6300
Totals	16,7		4,11	34482

**Table 5.**

Estimated church attendance in 2003 and 2016. Source 2003 data: (CGK Amsterdam, 2003a, p. 13)

	<b>From report <i>Diepe Vrede in Amsterdam</i>, 2003</b>			<b>Update estimates situation in 2016</b>		
	nr	Regular attendance	Total	nr	Regular attendance	Total regular attendance
Migrant churches	175	80	14000	190	80	15200
RK	77	45	3465	33	60	1980
PKN	45	45	2025	19	60	1140
Overige	90	60	5400	115	60	6900
Totals	387	64	24890	357	260	25220

**Table 6.**

Accumulated survey results of the theological view of the participating churches and organizations on the Kingdom of God.

Nr	Statement	sum of scores	average score (0-5)
1	The “Kingdom of God” is about the future kingdom of Jesus Christ when he returns. We are not to expect signs or expressions of the Kingdom of God in this world, only in the new heavens and earth.	43	1.65
2	The “Kingdom of God” is about the Church of Jesus Christ only. Until the new heavens and the new earth, there is no Kingdom expression outside the Church.	29	1.26
3	The “Kingdom of God” is about the reign of God in the Church and in the world / culture. It is here and not yet. We expect manifestations and signs in the here and now, and fullness when Jesus returns.	207	4.40
4	The “Kingdom of God” is about the reign of God that is totally available now, because Jesus died and rose again, the enemy is defeated. The people of God are called to establish the Kingdom here on earth.	134	3.44

**Table 7.**

Accumulated survey results of the theological view of the participating churches and organizations on the city.

Nr	Statement	sum of scores	average score (0-5)
1	Cities are of no special interest for God. His dealings are with people, not with culture, communities, locations, etc.	71	2.37
2	Cities are dark places and a battleground of spiritual forces. God's concern is to help His people not to be influenced by its darkness.	58	2.07
3	Cities are only important in God's eyes because the high concentration of many people in it, not the city as culture or place. If the people of the city are following Christ, there will be blessing in the City.	154	3.58
4	Cities are important for God because they are places of community, business, worship, and culture. The mission of God is to bring shalom to all spheres of the city.	229	4.40

**Table 8.**

Accumulated survey results of the view of the participating churches and organizations on the role of the Church in the city.

Nr	Statement	sum of scores	average score (0-5)
1	The Church should be distant from the city. Avoiding the culture of the city.	34	1.31
2	The Church is called to evangelize the city. Saving people from darkness.	169	4.23
3	The Church is called to be relevant for the city. The Church should change in order to adopt the surrounding culture.	122	2.84
4	The Church should be contra the city. The Church is a counter culture and should not adopt the culture of the city.	99	2.68
5	The Church is called to transform the city. The Church is the salt and light that is intended to influence all spheres of the culture.	224	4.39

**Table 9.**

Overview of the outreach, disciple-making and church planting involvement.

Nr.	Type of involvement	percentage
1	bringing the good news of the gospel to people in Amsterdam	63.4
2	making (new) disciples	50.7
3	planting churches or spiritual communities in Amsterdam	31.0

**Table 10.**

Overview of the collaboration of the participating organizations.

Nr.	Statement regarding collaboration	percentage
1	We generally do not work with other churches or ministries in the city	10.9
2	We are actively involved in collaboration with others in the body of Christ and seek more collaboration.	48.4
3	In reaching out to the city we also partner with other organizations in the city outside the body of Christ.	40.4

**Table 11.**

Accumulated survey results faith leaders desire regarding the type and level of future collaboration in city.

Nr	Statement	Sum of scores	Average score (0-5)
1	We want to invest in city wide collaboration with other churches and ministries for prayer for the city.	90	3.91
2	We want to invest in collaboration to fellowship with other pastors and leaders to share what is happening and also receive encouragement, input, and prayer.	97	3.88
3	We want to invest in collaboration with other churches, ministries, and organizations for evangelizing the city, through events, joint outreach, etc.	76	3.17
4	We want to invest in collaboration for practical ways to minister to the city, in order to become more effective.	98	3.92
5	We want to invest in collaboration to bring peace to the city. This includes developing citywide vision, strategy, and action agenda: to encourage, council, bless and where needed, be a prophetic sound.	102	4.08

**Table 12.**

Accumulated survey results of the demand of the participating churches and organizations for training in the area of city engagement.

Description of areas of training	Training of leaders	Training of members
Contextual Kingdom theology (city, work, place, business, justice, etc.)	2	5
City ministries to the felt need of the city.	5	5
Church planting / Disciple making / Evangelism	5	4
Community research / city development / transformation	4	2
City prayer / spiritual warfare	2	4
Culture engagement / Cross cultural ministry	5	7
Other	4	4

**Table 13.**

A summary of city characteristics (assets and needs) of Amsterdam derived from chapter 2 and 6 and grouped by the main purpose areas of a city.

Purpose Areas of the City	Assets	Needs	Characteristics from study CGVK
Spiritual context	Individual freedom, non-dogmatic, non-hierarchical	Lostness (post-christian, losing christian roots and values, low % of followers of Christ); individualism; postmodern mindset: no grid for truth, self /identity confusion;	Freedom and tolerance
Governmental & environmental context	Good infrastructure, city that works, social civic engagement; good level of social safety net and health care; attention for sustainability;	Moving towards Free market - finance driven governance; lack of avoidable housing; controlling and systems approach, risk avoidance.	Care and servanthood
Marketplace	Innovation; good education; rich history of trade, commerce and entrepreneurship; open for social entrepreneurship (innovative ecosystem)	Inequality in high / low educated; low prospects for certain groups; free market idolatry;	Commerce, services & trade
Cultural space	Rich heritage monuments, museums, arts; creativity; world leader in dance music; leader in the game industry; strong in fashion and design.	Lack of balance (truth and purity) in media/communications and arts; tourism focused on red light district and coffeeshops, gay pride, etc.; money driven - lack of good values	Cultural and knowledge
Community	Tolerant; culturally diverse; open for initiatives;	Loneliness; fragmentation; lack of community; depression, fear, anger, stress, etc.; broken families and relationships; poverty; addictions;	Multi ethnic



**Table 14.**  
Overview of a proposed five-year rollout of the agenda of the city

Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Inspire and connect</b>	Relationship building network and ministry leaders - vision sharing	Relationship building network and ministry leaders - vision sharing	Relationship building network and ministry leaders - vision sharing	Relationship building network and ministry leaders - vision sharing	Relationship building network and ministry leaders - vision sharing
<b>Prayer</b>	Mobilize Prayer for the city	Mobilize Prayer for the city	Mobilize Prayer for the city	Mobilize Prayer for the city	Mobilize Prayer for the city
<b>Training</b>	Curriculum development	Pilot city leader training	City leader training and coaching	City leader training and coaching	City leader training and coaching
<b>Spiritual infrastructure</b>	Vision for spiritual infrastructure	Implementation spiritual network infrastructure	Build and extend spiritual network infrastructure	Build and extend spiritual network infrastructure	Build and extend spiritual network infrastructure
<b>Recruit leaders/catalyze</b>			Recrute leaders for city ministries and church planting	Recrute leaders for city ministries and church planting	Recrute leaders for city ministries and church planting
<b>City wide rhythms</b>		Agree and communicate city rhythms	Strengthen and extend participation city rhythms	Strengthen and extend participation city rhythms	Evaluate, adapt and communicate city rhythms
<b>Shared goals/outcomes</b>		Agree and communicate city wide goals	Implement plans, strategies for goals, communicate and inspire	implement Plans, strategies for goals, communicate and inspire	Evaluate and re-strategize goals
<b>Other sectors</b>			Strategies for other purpose areas	Strategies for other purpose areas	Strategies for other purpose areas
<b>Market place leaders</b>			Market place leader mentoring and coaching	Market place leader mentoring and coaching	Market place leader mentoring and coaching
<b>Resource</b>		Fundraising plan	Fundraising	Fundraising	Fundraising
<b>Strategic and inspirational city gatherings</b>	Network leaders meeting	City Summit	City consultation	City summit	City consultation

## **Appendix C**

### **Amsterdam City Consultation Roundtable Questions**

#### **ROUNDTABLE 1**

#### **KNOWING YOUR CITY**

During the roundtable we are discussing the information that has been presented regarding the realities in our city. There are many differences between the different neighborhoods of the city, but during this conversation we are searching for main characteristics that are generally true for all of the city.

In the presentations we looked at the needs or the pain of the city. Please discuss the ranking of the needs presented. Do you agree?

**What would be the top 5 of needs in the City for your table?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

The same question, but now for the top 5 assets of the city.

**What would be the top 5 assets of your table?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Please discuss how you would describe what typifies the culture of Amsterdam:**

How would you contextualize the ‘vulnerable four’ in scripture (the poor, the stranger, the widow and the orphan) in Amsterdam. God is on their side because they are vulnerable in their culture.

**What would be these groups in Amsterdam?**

**Poor .....**

**Stranger .....**

**Widow .....**

**Orphan .....**

#### **ROUNDTABLE 2**

#### **LOVING YOUR CITY**

During the roundtable we are discussing the information that has been presented regarding the vision on the Kingdom, the City and the role of the Church for the city.

**Please evaluate the results of the survey regarding the vision of the Kingdom of God. What would your table want to comment?**

**Please evaluate the results of the survey regarding the vision of the City. What would your table**

**want to comment?**

**Please evaluate the results of the survey regarding the role of the Church for the city. What would your table want to comment?**

**What did you capture as “the heart of God for the city?”**

**What are specific words, attitudes, accents that are needed in contextualizing the good news of the gospel for the city of Amsterdam?**

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### **ROUND TABLE 3**

### **SERVING YOUR CITY**

During the roundtable we are discussing the information that has been presented regarding what is currently happening in the city, inspired by the good news of the gospel of the Kingdom. The topics we looked at are sharing the gospel, making disciples and planting churches or spiritual communities, as well as serving the felt and real needs of all spheres of the city.

**What stood out for you? What can we celebrate about what is already happening in the city?**

**What can your table add to the story? (very briefly)**

**Which areas are still weak or which spheres of the society does not seem to be touched by the ministry of the Church in Amsterdam?**

**What are you dreaming about, after hearing the presentations and stories?**

---

### **ROUNDTABLE 4**

### **IMPACTING YOUR CITY**

During the roundtable we are discussing the information that has been presented regarding collaboration and training. In this round table we want to discuss the shared priorities of the body of Christ in the city and how we can best work together to make these happen. Also what kind of training do we need to help the body of Christ become strong ecosystem for the city?

In conclusion of this day, what does your table suggest to set as priorities in the coming 5 years?

**Priority 1 ....**

**Priority 2 ....**

**Priority 3 ....**

**Priority 4 ....**

**Priority 5 ....**

**What is needed to catalyze a movement of collaboration, sharing, exchange, and learning together in the city?**

**What is the need for training / mentoring ? Please comment on ‘a proposal for curriculum for**

**the city”**

**What can you contribute?**

**How do we resource a city wide movement?**

## Appendix D

### Amsterdam City Consultation Evaluation Outcomes

	General impression	Location	Catering	Inspirati on Alan Platt	Presentat ion Dan Chan	Short talks	Research outcomes and presentati on	Round table process and outcomes	What do you take away?	Is a consultation an added value?	Remarks
1	9	9	8	10		8	9	9	When we join forces it is possible to show the real love of God in a much deeper way	absolutely	
2	9	10	10	10	7		10		We are part of a larger movement and have a shared calling for the city	Yes definititly	Please go on, we need more, take the lead and be blessed
3	8	9	10	10	7	8	9	6			
4	8	9	9	8		8	8	8	The city belongs to God. It is His work. Shine on the place where you are!	Yes.	Lets really take on the job. We need each other. Vision is important. No separation between leaders and members of the body of Christ. The work needs to be done - not just talk about it.
5	9	10	10	9	9	9	8	8	Amsterdam is really in movement.	Yes	
6	10	9	9	8	8	10	8	9	The attitude of bringing pastors together in the city of Amsterdam is of the Lord		
7	8	8	6	8	8	8	9	8	The change to know each other and the open door. The recognition of the need to unite and work together	This is needed to the best of my understanding. United we stand, divided we fail. practical way of unity (John 17:21-22)	The gap between migrant churches and indigenous churches is to big. There needs to be a common platform for practical assistance of pastors who are struggling although we have different needs.
8	8	9				8	8	8	Go on, I am interested		
9	8	8	9	8		8	8	7	That we need one another as body of Christ in the city wholistiactly and in all spheres included.		Move from talk to walk
10	8	10	8	10	7	7		9			
11	8	7	6	8	7	8	8	8	Encouraging, activating	absolutely	
12	8	8	7	8	8	8	8	8	This is the beginning	Yes- looking forward to what comes from this, especially in all spheres	
13	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	9			Praise the Lord; well done!
14	8	9	9	9	9	8	9	8		absolutely	
15	8	10	10	9		10	8	8		Yes	Thanks Piet
Average	8,33	8,87	8,50	8,86	7,90	8,36	8,50	8,07			

## Appendix E

### A Proposal for a Curriculum for City Ministry

Foundational Theological Frameworks	
Theology of Shalom	<i>Understanding the Missio Dei</i>
	<i>Seeking Shalom for the City</i>
	<i>Mercy, Justice and Advocacy for the Vulnerable in our communities</i>
	<i>Shalom and the Message of the Kingdom</i>
	<i>Transformational work of the Spirit and the calling of the Church</i>
Theology of the city	<i>Biblical view of the city and community</i>
	<i>Theology of Place and Presence</i>
Theology of Work and Business	<i>Living transformational lives in all spheres of the city</i>
Ministry Application Topics	
Leadership and the City	<i>Cross cultural leadership - leading in a diverse city</i>
	<i>Mobilizing the Church and collaboration with government and civic organizations for the city</i>
The gospel in the City	<i>Discipleship (in different cultures) / multiplying disciples and leaders</i>
	<i>Bridging the gospel to, and discipling Muslims</i>
	<i>Bridging to the Postmodern Culture, discipling postmoderns</i>
	<i>Church planting and planting missional communities</i>
	<i>Intercession / spiritual warfare and spiritual mapping of the city</i>
	<i>Cultural and spiritual renewal of a Postmodern post-Christian city</i>
Ministry in the City (Principles, Models and Strategies)	<i>Exegeting the city - Case studies from Amsterdam</i>
	<i>Contextualizing poverty alleviation and mercy and justice in a rich city. Serving the poor /widow /orphan / refugee in a healthy and contextualized way</i>
	<i>Business as Mission - examples for the Netherlands and Europe</i>
	<i>Community engagement / asset-based community renewal</i>

**Table 15.**

Proposal for a curriculum for city ministry.

## Appendix F

### Definitions Used in the Arcadis Report

The Arcadis group report “Ranking Well-being In 100 Global Cities”



Figure 28. Definitions used in the Arcadis report (Arcadis, 2016: p 7).

## Appendix G

### Amsterdam City Faith Leaders Survey

This survey was offered in a online survey tool, configured with the SurveyGitzmo tool. The questions are listed below.

#### Your information

**Please fill in the information regarding your organization or ministry**

First Name\*:

Last Name\*:

Title:

Organization / ministry Name\*:

Street Address:

City:

Zip:

Email Address\*:

Telephone\*:

Website:

**Organization / type of ministry\* (select)**

- Church
- Network organization
- Training organization
- Prayer ministry
- Social Business
- Social / Civic organization
- Evangelistic ministry
- Ministry organization

**Please select the Church category your church / ministry / organization is associated with.**

- Roman Catholic
- PKN
- Other reformed denomination
- Evangelical
- Pentecostal / charismatic

#### Vision on the Kingdom of God and on the city.

**1) Your view about the Kingdom of God. Please review the statements and rate them according how they reflect *the vision of your church / ministry / organization*:**

You can review all statements by and score each with 0-5 stars: 0 = totally disagree; 5 = strongly agree.

If you do not have an opinion on a statement, select 'no opinion'. Use comments field if you want to share comments.



The “Kingdom of God” is about the future kingdom of Jesus Christ when he returns. We are not to expect signs or expressions of the Kingdom of God in this world, only in the new heavens and earth.	The “Kingdom of God” is about the Church of Jesus Christ only. Until the new heavens and the new earth, there is no Kingdom expression outside the Church.	The “Kingdom of God” is about the reign of God in the Church and in the world / culture. It is here and not yet. We expect manifestations and signs in the here and now, and fullness when Jesus returns.	The “Kingdom of God” is about the reign of God that is totally available now, because Jesus died and rose again, the enemy is defeated. The people of God are called to establish the Kingdom here on earth.
No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]

**2) View of the city: Please Review the statements and score in which measure it reflects the vision of your church / ministry / organization:**

You can review all statements by and score each with 0-5 stars: 0 = totally disagree; 5 = strongly agree.

If you do not have an opinion on a statement select 'no opinion'. Use comments field if you want to share comments.

Cities are of no special interest for God. His dealings are with people, not with culture, communities, locations, etc.	Cities are dark places and a battleground of spiritual forces. God's concern is to help His people not to be influenced by its darkness.	Cities are only important in God's eyes because the high concentration of many people in it, not the city as culture or place. If the people of the city are following Christ, there will be blessing in the City.	Cities are important for God because they are places of community, business, worship, and culture. The mission of God is to bring shalom to all spheres of the city.
No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]

**3) The role of the Church in the city: Please Review the statements and score in which measure it reflects the vision of your church / ministry / organization:**

You can review all statements by and score each with 0-5 stars: 0 = totally disagree; 5 = strongly agree.

If you do not have an opinion on a statement select 'no opinion'. Use comments field if you want to share comments.

The Church should be <i>distant</i> from the city. Avoiding the culture of the city.	The Church is called to <i>evangelise</i> the city. Saving people from darkness.	The church is called to be <i>relevant</i> for the city. The Church should change in order to adopt the surrounding culture.	The Church should be <i>contra</i> the city. The Church is a counter culture and should not adopt the culture of the city.	The Church is called to <i>transform</i> the city. The Church is the salt and light that is intended to influence all spheres of the culture.
No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]

## Disciple-making and Church Multiplication

**4) Please indicate if your church / ministry / organization is involvement in evangelism, disciple-making and / or church planting. (If you indicate that you are involved, please answer the additional questions in order to give more information on your the way(s) you are involved and the fruit you see).**

**Please indicate the types of activities your church / ministry / organization is involved in.**

- My church / ministry / organization is involved bringing the good news of the gospel, to people in Amsterdam.
- My church / ministry / organization is involved in making (new) disciples.
- My church / ministry / organization is involved in planting churches / spiritual communities in Amsterdam

**What are the main outreach method(s) you use? (you can add others in the comments box)**

Please comment on the effect of your outreach in the comment box

- Door to door evangelizing
- Street evangelizing
- Evangelistic events / crusades / campaigns
- Friendship evangelism
- Alpha Course, or similar type of courses
- Serving felt needs / community serving
- Prayer for healing / signs and miracles
- Praying for people / prophetic words in the marketplace
- Pubic preaching
- TV programs
- Evangelistic newspapers / magazines
- Multi Media
- Worship / Christian music concerts
- Business as Mission
- Work based ministries
- Children / youth ministries

**What is the estimated number of people you reached in sharing the gospel of Christ in the last year?** (engaged in significant conversations, response to your ministry, attendance of events, etc.) (we are not asking for converts, but for the number of people that have been touched by the gospel message)

in one way or the other):

**What is the main cultural background of the people you reached out to?**

- Dutch
- African
- Asian
- Central American
- Eastern European
- European Union
- Middle Eastern
- North American
- Oceanian
- South American

**What are the main religious backgrounds / worldviews of the people you reach out to.**

- Christian
- Postmodern
- Post-Christian
- Muslim
- Hindu
- Buddhist
- Non religious
- Other

What is the number of **new disciples** (new followers of Christ that are in the process of discipleship) in your ministry this year?

What is the number of churches / spiritual communities that your organization have planted in the last five years? (please add more information in your comments if you want):

**RELEVANT MINISTRIES FOR THE CITY**

**5) What is your view of the mission of the Church in the city?**

You can review all statements by and score each with 0-5 stars: 0 = totally disagree; 5 = strongly agree.

If you do not have an opinion on a statement select 'no opinion'. Use comments field if you want to share comments.

Save souls of lost people.	Pray for the people in the city.	Show the love of God by good deeds, and social action.	Equip the believers to be agents of Kingdom life.	Prayer for and active engagement in all that brings an increased measure of shalom of the Kingdom in all spheres of the city.
No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]

**6) Can you indicate your assessment of the most important needs of the city, and of the most important assets or signs of hope for the city?\***

**What do you see as the biggest needs of Amsterdam?**

Individualism / lack of community /fragmentation	0 [ ] 10
--	----------

Loneliness	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Postmodern mindset	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Postchristian culture / low % of followers of Christ in the city	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Influence of Islam	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Lack of integration of immigrants	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Corruption in systems and or individuals	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Poverty /Inequality	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Depression / fear / anger / psychological problems	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Alcohol , drug addiction / abuse	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Broken families /divorce	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Neglect / abuse of children	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Sexual perversion	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Red light district / prostitution / human trafficking	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Lack of affordable housing	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Crime / feeling of un-safety	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Litter / neglect of neighborhoods	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Unemployment / lack of opportunities	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Gap between the low and high educated / technology gap	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10

### What do you see as the biggest asset / signs of hope for Amsterdam?

Welcoming refugees, cultural diversity	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
City renewal projects / city development projects	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Cultural beauty (city / museums / arts)	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
General level of welfare /strong social safety net	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Good health care / social care	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Good education level and availability	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Freedom for personal expression,	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Good business, entrepreneurial and innovative climate	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Good infrastructure - a city that works	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Safety / no major riots / terrorism attacks	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Rising level of unity and collaboration of the Church	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Prayer networks active in praying for the city	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10
Growing number of church plants in the city	0 _____ [ ] _____ 10

**7) Does your church / ministry / organization have active projects or ministries that reach out to the felt needs of the city? *`(this can be any ministry or project that is focused on the well being of***

*the city, not on your own church, ministry or organization, (except for the outreach, discipleship or church planting projects that have been addressed in previous questions) , ranging from intercession for the city to food banks, etc.).*

- Yes, we do have these kinds of projects or ministries
- No, we currently do not have these kinds of projects or ministries.

**8) Can you indicate the ministries of your church / ministry / organization for the city and estimate the impact / effort / investment? (You can fill in more than one project by using the *ADD ANOTHER PROJECT* button on the end page)**

What is the name of your project or ministry? \*:

**What type of ministry is your project (select from the list)**

- city prayer / prayer walks
- visiting lonely citizens
- serving individuals practical needs
- st. Serve the City projects
- St. Buurt netwerk activities
- St. Present projects
- neighborhood organizing
- neighborhood meals
- neighborhood cleaning
- neighborhood gardens
- parenting training / support
- social entrepreneurship
- shelters for homeless
- counseling
- anti human trafficking
- second hand clothing
- debt alleviation /financial coaching
- refugee ministries
- health programs
- reconciliation
- baby day care
- child care
- job support / job creation
- employment training
- food banks
- marriage course / marriage support ministries
- children's ministries
- teen age /young adults ministries
- other type (please specify below)

Please specify type if you selected 'other type':

**Select the main sector your ministry is touching. \***

- Family
- Religious / Church
- Education
- Arts and entertainment
- Business
- Government
- Media
- Social /civic
- Health care
- Law/ justice
- Not a specific sector

**Select the geographic city area(s) where your ministry is operating. \***

- Centre
- South
- South east
- East
- North
- New west
- West
- What is your estimated **annual** financial investment in this ministry (in Euro's)?
- What is the estimated number of man hours for this ministry **annually**?
- **Can you comment on the results of this ministry?**

## **Training and Collaboration**

### **9) Collaboration**

**Please let us know what the experience of your church / ministry / organization is regarding collaboration with the body of Christ and others in the city. \***

- We generally do not work with other churches or organizations in the city
- We are actively involved in collaboration with others in the body of Christ in the city and seek more collaboration.
- In reaching out to the city, we (also) partner with other organizations outside the body of Christ.

**We are currently involved in city networks in Amsterdam (please check the boxes of the city networks participate in, or else add other in the “comments box”).\***

- Amsterdam City Council of Churches (ACCC)
- Pentecostal Council of Churches (PCC)
- Amsterdam in Beweging (AIB)
- Kingdom Prayer Net (KPN)
- Raad van Kerken Amsterdam (RvKA)
- Protestantse Kerken Amsterdam (PKA)
- Others (please specify in comments box)

### **Comments:**

**If you want, please comment on the following:**

**How could collaboration in the body of Christ in the city serve your ministry more or better?**

**What can your church / organization / ministry contribute to others in the body of Christ in the city?**

**10) Please share your vision for collaboration within the body of Christ for the city. What is the type and level of collaboration you see as required for the Kingdom of God in the city?**

We want to invest in city wide collaboration with other churches and ministries for prayer for the city.	We want to invest in collaboration to fellowship with other pastors and leaders to share what is happening and also receive encouragement, input, and prayer.	We want to invest in collaboration with other churches, ministries, and organisations for evangelizing the city, through events, joint outreach, etc..	We want to invest in collaboration for practical ways to minister to the city, in order to become more effective.	We want to invest in collaboration to bring peace to the city. This includes developing citywide vision, strategy, and action agenda: to encourage, council, bless and where needed, be a prophetic sound.
No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]	No opinion [ ]

**11) How and with who do you collaborate for the ministry to the city. Please indicate the collaboration you have with other leaders, organizations or city departments, in your ministry to the city.**

What is the name of your ministry or project for which you build significant collaboration?

What is the name of the leader / organization / department you collaborated with?

**What is the type of collaboration you have established?**

- Financial sponsorship / grant giving
- Granting permits / licenses
- Providing services
- Ministry partnership
- Contributing manpower
- Offering network / contacts
- Contributing expertise
- Providing training / coaching
- Providing operational management
- Providing materials, equipment
- Other

Other types of collaboration:

**Select the sector your partner(organization) is working in.**

- Family
- Religious / Church
- Education / science
- Arts and entertainment
- Business
- Government
- Media
- Social / civic
- Health care
- Law / justice

**12) Please select the areas of training you need for your (team of) leaders. \***

**Does your church / ministry / organization need additional training to become more effective in impacting the city for the Kingdom of God?**

- Yes, we are looking for additional training in this area
- No, we are not looking for additional training

**Please select the areas of the need for training for the leaders / members of the church / ministry / organization.**

	Training your leaders	Training your members
Contextual Kingdom theology (city, work, place, business, justice, etc.)		
City ministries to the felt need of the city.		
Church planting/ Disciple making/ Evangelism		
Community research / city development / transformation		
City prayer/ spiritual warfare		
Culture engagement / Cross cultural ministry		



## Appendix H

### Amsterdam City Consultation Talks Summaries

This summary is made from notes made during the presentations. The powerpoint presentation of some of these talks are available via the website ([www.accl.amsterdam](http://www.accl.amsterdam))

#### Alan Platt Doxa Deo - Pretoria / Miami area

Shares his journey from interim pastor in a church in crises, to a successful pastor of a growing church to leader of city movements.

He started with a 'gift of faith' and conviction that cities can be impacted by the Kingdom of God. No concept yet of how this could become reality.

This started a journey of learning and discovery.

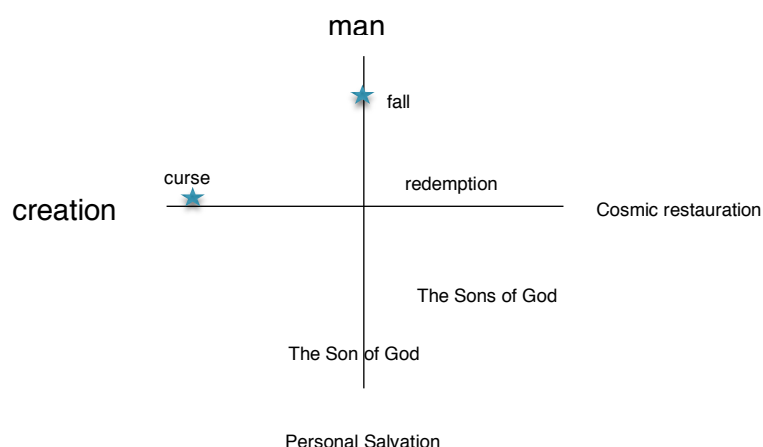
Key scriptures for Allan in his discovery of the calling for the city: Matthew feeding of the five thousand:

First principle he took from it: moving from concern (disciples were overwhelmed by the need) to compassion. The Church is often feeling overwhelmed: what a different we can make? - Get engaged and trust God to give results (move to compassion)

There was a need for a theological shift:

lostness —> salvation John 3:16 ; Rom 10:9 ; Eph 2:3-9

borkeness —> redemption /reconciliation Rom 8: ; Col 1:19-22 ; Rev 2



Kingdom of God reconciles all things - redeeming the culture, reconciling everybody and all things back to God in Christ

Also, a philosophical and strategical shift is necessary.

The order of engagement in society: first serve the pain of the city before we address the sin of the city and change the culture of the city.

The concern of the church is all things!

#### Daniel Chan (Theologian / Citykerk) - The Secular Culture

Daniel explains how the secular culture emerged. From an spiritual dominated worldview to a closed worldview, where there is hardly any space for the supernatural / spiritual world. In the old worldview everything in life was connected to the spiritual reality and therefor the response to situations and the assumed cause always had a spiritual connotation.

People in the secular culture of our city are not without spirituality but it is not longer connected to religion —> many options for finding meaning —> which leads in the end to a deep sense of loss.

The evaluation of grave-sites is a good illustration of this journey: from simple modes stones with scriptures and religious symbols -> to a wide variety of expressions of individuality and meaning of the person - colorful, unique, individual, expressive - a desire to keep te expression alive

A central quote: I don't believe in God, but I miss him (Julian Barnes)

Church in the secular culture is called to be loving and embracing people in this secular city and to become a church that helps them reconnect to the Father  
Don't consider the culture of the city a threat but as a blessing. It helps test your own faith. You have to live out your beliefs - make it a readable picture.

Gabriel Jansen - Stadslamp - former chairman of the evangelical contact network.

Used Melchizedek as the metaphor for his TALK. He was inspired by – Amsterdam pastor Jan van Helden – on the encounter of Abram with Melchizedek.

Abram meets Melchizedek on his way back from his successful battles with pagan kings for his nephew Lot. Melchizedek is King of Salem (city of Peace), Jerusalem, which is still a pagan city- Melchizedek enters the story from a different angle. He is priest differently El and Elyon are names of gods in the religions of Canaan.

What is the lesson?

In our secular, largely un-christian city we can meet God at unexpected places and ways and through unexpected people - we need to be open to that.

Gabriel lists the connections with the denominations and networks in the city. His conclusion: the **Church in the city is real diverse! His call is to celebrate, and embrace diversity.**

God loves Amsterdam in history:

- Amsterdam became prosperous partly by the 'miracle of Amsterdam' in 1345, when it became a pilgrim site with a large economical spinoff
- The oldest building is the Oude Kerk
- There were many Monasteries. The street 'prayer without end' gets its name from it.
- Amsterdam had fully christian governments but also persecution because of faith (hidden churches, do you know "Onze Lieve Heer op Zolder"?)
- The first poor and widow care programs in the city were offered by the Church (still the sites (hofjes).
- Where was the first baptist meeting in the world? Where was the first place the Salvation Army was active in our country?
- The famous Abraham Kuyper had his first church in the city and founded his University (VU)
- Where was the first pentecostal church in our nation?
- Where was the world council of Churches founded in 1948?

AMSTERDAM! You need to know the history of the city if you want to engage in its future.

### **Moses Alagbe - pastor of Maranatha Community Transformation Center and chairman of the PCC**

When pastor Moses arrived in Amsterdam Moses's vision was to preach salvation and bring people to church. It was a sinful city with a weak Church. A shift happened as a result of his studies for a master's in theology on Tindale, teaching of the Kingdom and missions.

A real shift occurred during his studies at Bakke Graduate University (he received a scholarship to do a Dmin program in Global Urban Transformational Leadership. This study made him see that the Kingdom of God was good news for all spheres of society. It was serving the whole person and the whole community. This shifted the focus from the Church to the city and the longing to make a difference in the community. Does God love the city? YES, and now I do to.

His vision:

Concern —> compassion - I am learning it. We need to:

- Pray
- Confront unrighteousness
- To minister to the systems - the underlying structures

### **Tim Vreugdenhil Pioneer / Entrepreneur CityKerk Amsterdam**

Was a successful pastor for almost 15 years, but decided to stop, leave the security of his church and denomination behind like Abraham left his city, without knowing where to arrive. No status, no security, now clear plan.

Rented an empty church building in the center of the city. This is metaphor in itself: once this was a building full of people now it is deserted. The emptiness triggers and forces you to become creative.

This brought all kinds of questions.

A new vision emerged: to inspire thousands of Amsterdammers per year

Thousands: sounds ambitious, but if you cut away, programs, sermons, organization and fixed discipleship models, there is a new space, and time to connect and listen to people.

Without judgement, opinion and agenda.

Tim had over 1000 conversations with people in his first year!

In his conversations Tim tries to create small cracks in the closed worldview of the secular person. His vulnerable position is a good entry point of discussion and engagement.

Why don't you make space in your agenda to meet people where they are and listen to their stories and love them inspired by the Kingdom of God.

## **Lynette Kong Leader of Kingdom Prayer Net**

Lynette shares passion for

Premise: Jeremiah 29: 1-4

1. Establish our Presence... early years we used to ask the different churches to make their presence known to the police. Visiting the banks. making appointment with bank officials and ask them what they want the church to pray for them, etc.

2. The Blessing of praying for the city. Our attitude towards the city: The City is exalted through the blessing of the righteous. It is important to establish shalom in every area of the city. No one church can do that. it needs the city church. There is a war against establishing shalom. It takes a city church to defeat the enemy. It takes the city intercessors to battle for the victory. That those under bondage can be delivered.

Looking at the city from God's eyes/ perspective: Jonah 4:11----God's heart for the City. We love because He first loves us, similarly we love the city because He first loves the City.

We love the City unless we see what God sees and feels what He feels (His Heart), His passion in us is the motivation to pursue what it takes to transform the city.

Love comes as we pray for God's heart to be imparted. Vision for the city is the driving force

KPnet focuses prayer for Spiritual leaders and City. God's Word for me in the early 90s:

"When intercessors come together the pastors will come together" Implication: 1 unity, 2 Leadership.

We pray for the leaders and unity of the leaders. Nothing can be achieved without unity. Unity is the byproduct of relationship. No unity can be achieved without unity. Work unity does not bring revival.

Unity among the different denominations (congregations) brings an exponential anointing

Each church (congregation) has its own sphere of authority. The City Church is made up of many congregations. All spheres of Authority joint in the Unity of the HS brings an amazing breakthrough

Our Prayer:

Amsterdam Spiritual Leadership must be doing Leadership Things. Leaders who will stand in the gap for their cities who don't care who gets the credit. The measure of leadership is not influence with the public but influence with God. This is the kind of leaders we are praying for. he or she will have influence with God

After the round table, we all take time to pray together round the tables.

## **Amsterdam city consultation, day two**

### **Alan Platt**

There are open windows of movement in a region - read the moment well

You cannot facilitate unity without humility.

His example from Miami regions in Florida

Build around:

- 1) Connection
- 2) Collaboration
- 3) Celebration
- 4) How can we strengthen the inner life of the leaders? A soul care process for leaders: (what fills your tank, what empties it, what concerns you, what makes you excited? etc. Leaders become friends. Creates a relational bases of trust.
- 5) Collaboration -we have the tendency to move to action too fast. What you can do is to focus on shared outcomes rather than shared activities - everyone can fill in their own unique contributions. What do we want to see in our city? Every church / leader: what can we do to contribute to this goal.

Alan shares also about the rhythms they share in the city (they use the metaphor of the hand with 5 fingers to remember it):

1x month we all fast and pray for the city

1x week we celebrate unity (share pulpits, have a shared theme on Sunday etc.)

1x year we have one month of serve/ love the city

1x quarter all the leaders come together for prayer

1x year we come together to evaluate and strategize - do we see the city transformed

### **Moses Alagbe - Maranatha Transformation Center project**

Moses shares the journey of his ministry from a focus to personal salvation only to integral mission.

They renamed their church to Maranatha Transformation Center - to clarify the mission of the church and this makes collaboration with city easier.

What we focus on in the South East:

improve the economic situation of the residents

training and coaching of youth and children

improve safety

I see myself pastoring the community rather than a church only

We started school projects: homework classes / support to actually get a diploma

Also, we started a project with the AMC about healthcare in the community. High blood pressure, overweight and diabetes is a big issue. We educate people; provide testing.

We can do good, but we also need to focus on systems that are causing people to stay in their troubles.

### **Jurjen ten Brinke Hoop v Noord/Tear**

In Hoop voor Noord we have five different language groups. They meet once a week in their own cultural setting.

Also, neighborhood work - we bring God to the community. We ask people in our church to work in their own community. 3 of the neighborhoods have some kind of celebration once a month in the community.

Another key we found is to let seekers or 'not yet believers' serve in practical ways in the church services like sound system.

I wrestled with acts of service without a clear witness part. It was a tension that I ran into in different settings. During a trip to Africa with TEAR in the context of integral missions, I finally understood that it is the integral mission of God - He gives blessing and is already at work. If we serve in his Name He will be glorified, and the Kingdom will manifest and opportunities to share will come based on questions and experiences.

### **Arleen Westerhof Embassy Amsterdam / European Economic Summit**

Arleen shares her journey of the calling of God to get engaged in the economic realm. She started to build a network based on prophetic encouragement and divine connections. This led to the organizing of the European Economic Summit in Amsterdam.

The important discovery that there can be biblical answers to real economic problems that we are facing in our world.

The summit brought a relational economic paradigm and a focus on mutuality

Through this network and increased insights favor increased to see opportunities to disciple nations in this area.

The dream is to see the Joseph's and the Daniels rise up.

The powerpoint of Arleen shows the various opportunities that the Lord opened for her and others in her network to do exactly that.

We agree that it is a point of attention and prayer to see more Christ followers with a Kingdom mindset on strategic positions in the city / in all sectors;

### **Jonathan Zeijl, chairperson Christen Unie (CU) Amsterdam**

Jonathan is inspired by Eze. 33 - Watchman for Israel

In the room there is hardly anyone who knows the only (CDA) council member. That is a concern.

In 2018 there are new council elections in Amsterdam. Jonathan proposes that it should be our goal to see at least one Kingdom minded person in the council. But there are also good people needed to populate committees on crucial issues in the city. Please pray and scout those people in our churches and organizations. CU also needs a good HR person.

Another point of interest for us as christian leaders is that there will be a change in the governmental structure of the city. There will be 1 central council based on the political parties. There are also 22 boroughs defined in the city, which will have advisory boards of residents (4? of each borough). These people will be asked to give input and serve as the connection between the city government and the people in the communities.

It would be a great strategic plan to have christians engaged in all of them.

Also, the CU wants to connect and communicate with a city wide leaders network in order to exchange info and prayer.

## Appendix I

### Research Survey Design

Kingdom ecosystem model ring	Survey question	Main questions of the survey
<b>First ring:</b> contextual Kingdom vision	1	Your view about the Kingdom of God
	2	Your view of the city
	3	Your view of the role of the Church in the city
<b>Second ring:</b> Disciple-making and Church Multiplication	4	Church involvement in sharing the gospel, disciple-making and church planting
		Nr. people the gospel was shared with
		Types of outreach methods used
		Main cultural backgrounds of the people reached out to
		Main religious back-grounds of the people reached out to
		Number of new disciples made in the last year
		Number of churches of planted in last 5 years
<b>Third ring:</b> relevant ministries for the city	5	Your view of the mission of the Church in the city
	6	Your assessment of the most important needs of the city
		Your assessment of the biggest assets / hope for Amsterdam
	7	Do you have projects /ministries serving the city?
	8*	Project / ministry name
		Project / ministry type
		The sectors touched by the project or ministry
		The geographic areas of the project or ministry
		Estimated annual financial investment
		Estimated annual nr. hours invested
<b>Training and collaboration in the city</b>	9	Type of collaboration in the city
		Involved in networks in the city
	10	Vision on collaboration in the city
	11*	Ministry / project of collaboration
		Type of collaboraition
		Sectors of collaboration
	12	Training needs for city engagement

*\* questions 8 and 11 can be repeated for each different project or ministry of an organization.*

Design of the research survey, grouping question per ecosystem topic.

## Appendix J. Recommendations Overview

Category	Nr	Recommendation	Who
<b>Contextualization</b>	<b>R6</b>	Work out contextualizing to Postmodern context and collect examples of successful contextualization in the city and from other similar places.	Network leaders, find best practices and examples
	<b>R9</b>	Investing in listening of the group that believes in a higher power (ietisten); explore examples and ways to contextualize the gospel and church for this group.	Network leaders, find best practices and examples
<b>Embrace / unity</b>	<b>R15</b>	Invest in common language for city engagement and ministry based on the concept of shalom and a grace towards unique language and expression of the different spiritual and cultural tribes in the city. Inclusive (embrace otherness)	ACCL promote / training
	<b>R16</b>	Use the apostolic creed as the foundational confession and lifestyle for partnership with other faith leaders and organizations in a city-wide movement.	City Movements and ministries
	<b>R18</b>	Cultivate values of collaboration and engagement of other leaders in the city, similar to the 4 steps of ministry suggested by Ed Silvoso: Bless, Relate, Serve, Proclaim convictions	ACCL promote / training
<b>Funding / investment</b>	<b>R17</b>	Work out a funding strategy for city-wide movement leadership, training, networking and ministry and communication. Challenging churches and ministries to enable leaders to invest a part of their time and energy in city-wide movement engagement and training.	ACCL / City network leaders
<b>Spiritual infrastructure</b>	<b>R12</b>	Use the revised Kingdom ecosystem model in Amsterdam, in communication and teaching about Kingdom city movements.	ACCL promote / training
	<b>R13</b>	Implement the four level spiritual infrastructure to facilitate the development of a city-wide model for Church in Amsterdam. Connecting the existing networks and collaboration and initiate new expression on the various levels.	ACCL initiate conversation and steps with other network leaders.
<b>Stories</b>	<b>R5</b>	Collecting stories of inspiring ministries in the city	ACT Foundation
	<b>R11</b>	Create and publish a book with examples of the relevant ministries in Amsterdam as signs of hope and inspiration.	ACT Foundation
<b>Strategy / goals</b>	<b>R21</b>	Agree on common outcomes for the next five years in the city and communicate the goals and inspire and facilitate strategy, collaboration and plans to help churches and organizations towards fruitful contribution.	ACCL promote and agree with other network leaders. Shared communication and plans
	<b>R19</b>	Agree, communicate and facilitate common rhythms in the city.	Network leaders agree and communicatie / organize
	<b>R8</b>	Encourage all churches and ministries to prioritize serving the needs of the vulnerable quartet	ACCL promote / training
	<b>R7</b>	In setting goals for the engagement in the city, use the strategic sequence (pain fo the city - brokenness of the city - culture and listless of the city)	ACCL / network leaders
<b>Theology / curriculum</b>	<b>R1</b>	Review and finalizing of the theological framework of God's transformative Mission and the Kingdom of God	ACTC workgroup, with additional theologians from other networks and main denominations in the city
	<b>R2</b>	Purpose areas for the city to be included in the ACTC	ACTC workgroup
	<b>R3</b>	Purpose areas values worked out and cross-referenced with Rev 21:10 -27	ACTC workgroup
	<b>R4</b>	Essential elements of the Ecclesia for the city included in the Amsterdam City Training Curriculum (ACTC)	ACTC workgroup
	<b>R14</b>	Create a leadership culture that integrates mentoring and training the next generation of leaders for the city.	ACTC workgroup
	<b>R20</b>	Find churches and organizations that can facilitate training and mentoring of (future) marketplace leaders with a Kingdom mindset and vision.	ACTC workgroup

## **Appendix K**

### **City Wide Movements in Amsterdam**

During the last four decades, several attempts to network christian churches and organizations in the city of Amsterdam have been made. The most prominent will be discussed briefly below. There might be more significant networks in the city, but they are not part of this overview.

#### **Evangelisch Contact Amsterdam (ECA)**

The ECA is a network that provided a platform for fellowship and prayer for churches, christian organizations and ministries who want to serve the city inspired by the gospel of Jesus Christ. The network was founded by pastor Boiten who led a ministry in the red-light district and Floyd McClung, leader of YWAM Netherlands and Amsterdam in 1975. The churches and groups involved in this platform changed over the years through withdrawal of traditional churches in the city and the growing number of migrant churches and evangelical and pentecostal church plants. In 2010 the network ended due to lack of attendance in platform meetings.

#### **Stadslamp (City Light)**

When the ECA stopped in 2010 the facilitation of the network of churches connected in the former ECA was continued by the Stadslamp. This is a small organization led by Gabriel Jansen, who was the former chairman of the ECA board. The stadslamp facilitates a network website with addresses and information of churches and organizations in Amsterdam. The Stadslamp is actually a service organization for the Church in the city.

#### **Amsterdam in Beweging (AIB)**

Amsterdam in Beweging is a network that was founded in 2002 by Siebrand Wierda and comprises of about thirty churches, ministries and pioneer works. The network provided a platform of collaboration, sharing of resources and training in order to strengthen the witness of Jesus Christ. Until recently the network was open for churches and organizations with a reformed background. Recently they opened their policy to more evangelical churches.

The vision of AIB was to plant new churches and to bring shalom to the city. The network pioneered over fifteen new churches and a few ministry organizations for holistic service to the community. The church planting activities are strongly connected to the City to City network of Redeemer New York (Tim Keller).

#### **Kingdom Prayer Net (KPN)**

From the early eighties in the twentieth century there were a few attempts to start city wide prayer networks for the city. In the nineties a new initiative was born to train and gather intercessors for prayer for the city and the Church in the city. This ministry was led by Lynette Kong and became the Kingdom Prayer Network Amsterdam. This work became a sustained prayer movement in the city that established two 24/7 prayer circles in Amsterdam with people praying for the city every hour of the day and night all days of the year. The KPN can be seen as the strongest city wide movement in the Amsterdam.

The KPN also organizes collaborate prayer groups in all main areas of the city praying for the community and the churches in that area. Intercessors from more than eighty churches are involved in the prayer movement. The intercessors are well trained by the KPN leadership and they also have been hosting fellowship meals for pastors and leaders in the city for several years.

#### **Pentecostal Council of Churches (PCC)**

The PCC was founded in 1999 as a platform for mainly African immigrant churches with a pentecostal background. In 2007 the bylaws of the collective were changed in order to open the network for churches with other backgrounds, subscribing the vision of the PCC. The PCC comprises of more than thirty churches, mainly from the South East part of Amsterdam. The vision is unity, collaboration of the connected churches as well as with civic and government organizations, to spread the gospel and have a meaningful contribution to the community.



### **Council of Churches in Amsterdam (RvKA)**

This council is the official section of the national council of churches in Amsterdam. It is the institutional ecumenical network in Amsterdam that connects about twenty church organizations, churches and ministries. This platform also has a collective ministry to refugees as well as drug habilitation. The goal of the council is to facilitate collaboration and dialog between the churches and organizations, and they also seek to improve the dialoge with other faith organizations. Finally, the council seeks to serve the well-being of the city of amsterdam (website RvK)

### **Amsterdam Council of Christian Leaders (ACCL)**

The ACCL is a network of network-, church and ministry leaders that seeks to mobilize the body of Christ for the well-being of the city. The council started five years ago with leaders with a Pentecostal background from several cultural backgrounds. The desire of these leaders was to create a infrastructure and leadership for more collaboration and unity in the work of the Kingdom of God in the city.

The vision of the ACCL is to be a council where movement leaders and church network leaders work together to serve movements and activities of the Church in the city and to represent the Church to the city and collaborate with the city. The PCC and several churches are represented in the council, and it is in the process of having representation of AIB, as well as strong connections and collaboration with the Stadslamp and Kingdom Prayer Net.za

## Appendix L

### Postmodern Characteristics

Below are a number of overviews of postmodern characteristics, derived from different sources, to prevent the danger of painting a on-sided picture. The first table of characteristics is from my own personal observations and readings over the last ten years. The others are directly copied from other sources.

Traditional / Modern emphasis	Post modern emphasis
Facts, research, logic	Feeling, imagination, speculation, experience
Trust in absolute truth	Rejects absolute truth – construct your own meaning and reality
Traditional religious convictions	Spiritual pluralism – your own spiritual journey
Individualism and personal relations	Group relations, interaction, community
Values based on tradition and the Bible	Moral relativism –based on feelings
Objective truth (Science, math, history, research)	Rejects objective knowledge. The vacuum is filled with accumulated insights and experiences driven by subjective needs and community processes
Follows traditional values	Creates own values – no objective good and bad or sinful
Sexual boundaries from Christian / religious morale	Leaves it to the individual to choose their own sexual identity and fulfillment.
Perspective from logic and knowledge	Open for the mystical experience and spiritual exploration
Emphasis on doctrine	Emphasis and personal discovery
Trust on systems and structures	Suspicion of systems and structures, working from organism and networks
Cynicism / with drawl from global problems	Searching for meaning and hope, exploring possibilities and cooperation
Preference for hierarchy and positional authority	Authenticity and values define authority and leadership

**Table 16.**  
Collected modern versus postmodern emphasis, P.J.Brinksma

	Pre-modernism	Modernism	Postmodernism
Metaphysics	Realism: supernaturalism	Realism: naturalism	Anti-realism
Epistemology	Mysticism and or faith	Objectivism: experience and reason	Social subjectivism
Human nature	Original sin; subject to God's will	Empty canvas (development) and autonomy	Social construction
Ethics	Collectivism: altruism	Individualism	Collectivism: egalitarianism
Politics and Economics	Feudalism	Liberal capitalism	Socialism
When and where	Medieval	The enlightenment. 20 <sup>th</sup> century sciences, and technological fields	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century humanities and related professions

**Table 17.**

Overview of the view on main categories from premodern to the postmodern worldview.

Source: Explaining postmodernism: skepticism and socialism from Rousseau to Foucault by Stephan Hicks; scholarly publishing Tempe AZ. and New Berlin / MI. Wisconsin, first edition, 2004.

Below are a few characteristics formulated by Graham Johanson.

### **The Tenets of Modernity**

- True knowledge is determined with certainty by reason
- Two levels of knowledge: objective/scientific (open to debate) and subjective/spiritual/moral (only personal conviction)
- World exists in cause-effect relationship
- Knowledge is good; facts are “value-free”
- Progress and scientific discovery will lead to better world and happiness
- Humanity basically good and reason can solve all problems
- Individuals are autonomous in society and have rights society must honor

### **Modernity and progress**

- A Challenge to the center of our society from the margins
- Progress Via Modernity (1470 – the beginning of the Italian Renaissance) and Enlightenment (1700 – the start of the enlightenment)

- Modernity – a. secular, natural and this worldly b. power of individual minds, no more submission c. belief in Progress d. experimental study of nature, inventions to control nature and subdue for social use

### **The Tenets of Post-Modernity**

- Reacting to the all the tenets of Modernity
- Reject idea of objective truth
- Suspicious and skeptical of authority (family, government and society)
- In search of identity apart from knowledge but through relationship
- less morality, only expediency
- In search of transcendence, to experience otherness

### **Distrust of institutions and authority**

- Big stories are construction of those in power built to legitimize and preserve that power
- No favors to elders due to ecological disasters – Live for today
- Image – free to choose – any truths
- Global awareness – ecological destruction, human rights, destruction of ethnic cultures, racial and religious intolerance, sexual discrimination, abuse of animals

### **Modernity's View of Life**

- Romantic view of life
- Have a purpose
- Design
- Hierarchy
- Word-oriented
- A completed work
- Analysis from a distance
- Creation/synthesis
- Metaphysics (philosophy that deals with first principles to explain the nature of reality)

### **Post-Modernity's View of Life**

- Absurd view of life
- Play instead
- Chance
- Anarchy
- Silence-oriented
- Work in process
- Analysis thru participating
- Deconstruction/antithesis
- Irony
- "The Simpsons"

Source: Graham Johnston, "Preaching to a Post-Modern World", Baker, 2001, pp. 25-26