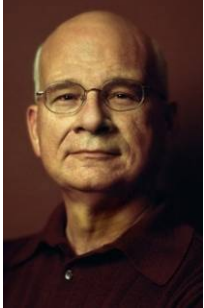


Plenary Session Highlights

Four dynamic speakers – Tim Keller, Ray Bakke, Brenda Salter McNeil, and Bill Hybels - inspired attendees by sharing their ideas of what it means to catalyze a Gospel Movement in cities.



“It Takes a Movement to Change a City”

Timothy J. Keller, Senior Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church

A movement occurs when the growth of Christians in a city outpaces the overall population in a city. As the number of people who find their faith in Jesus Christ and who attend biblically-based churches increases, this will eventually impact a city. A movement is not defined by any one church, organization, leader or command center but it is the Holy Spirit moving across the whole city and across denominational lines. A movement is an organic phenomenon, one in which a set of forces or energy are unleashed.

A city-wide Gospel Movement is comprised of three layers:

1. **First Layer:** at the core is a contextualized biblical Gospel theology which is a God-ordained centrist position between legalistic moralism and licentious relativism;
2. **Second Layer:** a number of church multiplication movements will occur within and among different denominations;
3. **Third Layer:** an ecosystem of collaborative ministry networks exists. An ecosystem is defined as a biological system in which various life forms feed on each other; when one is removed, the others cannot sustain themselves.

Dr. Keller describes seven categories of ministry networks:

1. **City-Wide Prayer** across churches and denominations;
2. **Specialists Evangelism** - movements reaching every people group, especially youth and students;
3. **Justice and Mercy** – Christians will never have an impact on a city if we are not perceived as the Most Valuable Players (MVPs) who pursue answers to pressing social problems such as poverty and justice;
4. **Vocational Faith/Work Initiatives** – Christians in various industries and fields have to be brought together to develop schools of thought and to know each other;
5. **Institutions that support family life** – the Jewish community is a model and shining example of schools, community centers and other institutions that enable families to stay in the city;
6. **Institutions that provide leadership training;**
7. **Spirit of unity** among a city’s leadership instead of competition and tribalism.

When all of these networks are in place and 10%-20% of the population is attending evangelical Christian churches, then you will have a tipping point of city transformation.



“How U.S. Cities are Changing:” An Interview with Ray Bakke
Raymond J. Bakke, *Chancellor, Bakke Graduate University*

A major religious shift is taking place in the United States, specifically as people of other religions are becoming our neighbors. The population growth in the world’s cities has exploded:

- Since the year 2000, more than 50% of the earth’s population (numbering six billion) has been living in cities;
- 500 cities around the world are made of up 1 million people or more;
- The fastest-growing cities are in Africa, Asia and Latin America;
- The British Empire colonized 52 nations; today London is home to immigrants from each of those nations;
- 14% of Paris’ population are immigrants from Algeria, North Africa;
- Immigrants from 133 countries live in one section of Flushing, Queens;
- 40% of the world’s population lives in two countries: China and India.

God is behind this movement into the cities; He is on a mission. Pastoral leadership has to change and consider the transformation of our cities. However, leadership cannot be replicated quickly. As an example, Jesus only had three years to change the world, yet he spent 50% of his time investing in 12 disciples. He did not run programs; He did discipleship. As leaders, we need to return to taking a core group of people in our lives and walking with them.

As a first step, Dr. Bakke advises leaders to “Google” inward - find out what God has uniquely gifted you to do. Discover how you were transformed and identify the pieces of your journey. The next step is to find others with whom to share your journey. Many people need to know the toolkit that you have learned to possess, that the Holy Spirit has gifted you with. Openly share your failures, successes and vulnerabilities. Be open to participating in a mentoring network and in sharing your experiences with leaders around the globe.



"Catalytic Leadership in Urban Communities"

Brenda Salter McNeil, President, *Salter McNeil & Associates, LLC*

As in the story of Chuck Yeager, the first pilot to ever break the sound barrier, we are to stand firm in the midst of the violent shaking and quaking from the catalytic events happening around us. Catalytic events startle us to get our attention; they have a way of causing us to move out of our comfort zones and into the places that make us nervous. The world is experiencing catalytic events in our cities that demand catalytic leaders. The world may categorize them as disasters or catastrophes, but Christians need to reframe them as catalytic events.

Catalytic events provide new opportunities to share the Gospel and have the potential to do one of two things:

1. Move us towards preservation because we become so scared by the catalytic event that we attempt to return to what is familiar and comfortable or;
2. We embrace it as catalytic leaders for transformation as leaders.

Recognize the catalytic events happening in your city and mobilize people to go into the places of transformation, which may be uncomfortable for them. Questions that you could ask: *What is the socio-economic divide in your city? What is the political, racial and cultural divide?* Then, advocate for racial, cultural and economic justice.



"Leading for Change"

Bill Hybels, Senior Pastor, *Willow Creek Community Church*

Any movement that will achieve any significance in the world must be led by an organized core group of passionate people, led by a leader on his or her face before God. Your core leadership not only has to sense your commitment to God, but it has to be able to see and "smell" it also. Bill Hybels shared the story of King Hezekiah and his faithfulness to God from the book of 2 Kings. Upon assuming the throne from his father, King Hezekiah quickly established his core leadership and assumed a position of humility before His Sovereign God, which was witnessed by all the people in his kingdom.

Questions that you should be asking about your core leadership: *How strong is it? Is it unified? Is it on fire? Is it mission-minded? Most importantly, does your core group of leaders trust that you are a leader on your knees before God? Also, what type of legacy will you leave?* Movements live on despite the passing of people and their investments. If you want to leave a legacy, attach it to a movement. It's better to invest in heavenly treasures and the things of God than to allow the lawyers to take it all when you die.