

**From Fragmentation to Wholeness:  
Quantum Physics and Urban Ministry**

**A Faith and Learning Paper for the Integration of a Sub-discipline**

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“All art is self-portrait; all literature is autobiography.” So declared a wise friend of mine. When a person puts pen to paper or touch to a keyboard while engaging the power of the mind, what materializes is the product of thought processed against the canvas of life. Thus, all writing is an expression of one’s operational value system and level of consciousness. At the core is the integration of what one believes with what one desires to express in life, within the context of who one is. This is where faith and learning converge.

The integration of faith and learning within a Christian university context is the product of meshing Christian faith and the diversity of academic disciplines in a manner that delineates their interconnectedness and interdependence. What makes Christian education unique is the desire within the Christian academy to meld, blend, and integrate the Christian faith with the vast body of knowledge that has evolved in human history. Moreover, this paradigm of integrating faith and learning is indispensable, since having an overarching Christian context shapes the conception of the entire substantive content of one’s particular discipline. However one views God, the sacred, the divine, determines how one views the world. In sociological terms, this idea is known as “selective perception”—“the tendency of individuals to perceive those elements of a situation which support previous expectations and purposes.”<sup>1</sup> All perception is relative, thus, where we stand determines what we see.

The purpose of the paper is twofold: First, to present an effective approach for the transformation of cities, urban ministry, and the interconnectedness of faith and learning within a framework of wholeness that integrates the various aspects of the discipline. This holistic approach is a reflection of my developing Christian faith, with its integral view of life, and its implications for moving Christian action from a fragmented, segmented mode of thinking to an integrational one of wholeness that celebrates the oneness of all human life and its social expressions. Second, it is to enable students of urban transformation to understand the larger context out of which emerges the social

policies and urban practices by which to effect change. All content emerges from some context. Depending on the nature and breadth of the context, the content for social-spiritual change that ensues will either address symptoms or get at the root of the problems.

### **Context Determines Content**

The basic premise of this paper is that *context determines content*. Not unlike the “field” of gravity, *context* is the “field” of attraction that generates one’s “paradigm” (as Kuhn called it) or framework of operation, which in turn influences the *content* and substance of what one sees, thinks, believes, and chooses to do or not do. Gravity is a good analogy by which to illustrate the understanding of “context” as a “field”, for it is an energy field with which we are all familiar. When we see an apple fall from a tree, we know that it fell to the ground because of the field of gravity. While concepts related to the gravitational field are very familiar to most of us, this may not be true worldwide in all its dimensions.

A missionary once with great difficulty gained access to a remote tribe. He arrived with his truck, but the natives had never seen a motorized vehicle before. They seemed reluctant at first, but then gradually began touching his truck. Finally, they gained confidence and wanted a ride. The missionary had them all get in the back of his truck and gradually drove off. As he looked in the rearview mirror, to his surprise he saw them falling to the ground out the backend of the truck. It turned out that as the truck started to move they became nervous and wanted to get off; so, they just stepped off the end of the truck just like they would step out of their huts. They had no understanding of the field of gravity with its laws of motion, inertia, and velocity—*within the context of a moving vehicle*—and the corresponding need to “hang on” or not step off a vehicle in motion. The fact that they did not understand how the field of gravity changes depending on the context wherein it operates did not null its force in their lives. Whether or not they understood the various dynamics of gravity, the force of the field was still operative.

In an urban environment, there are also invisible energy fields operating. However one may work for urban transformation, there is always present an interplay of invisible “fields” that is just as real as gravity. These fields *are* operative irrespective of

whether one even recognizes them or worse yet, knows nothing about them. From these fields or *context* emerge the social problems or *content* social workers, urbanologists,, and community developers are trying to ameliorate, such as teen pregnancy, drug addiction, gang violence, urban blight, welfare, dysfunctional families, the illegal economy, housing, unemployment, and traffic gridlock. Without an understanding of the underlying context from which these problems arise, we can't genuinely understand how they come about, influence each other, or how they can be successfully addressed.

The truth underlying this insight is brought out by David R. Hawkins, when he declared that “there is no greater lesson that needs to be learned to reduce human suffering and bring ignorance to an end,” than the truth that “*all content is subject to context.*”<sup>2</sup> This is the central point I am making in this paper. If our goal as urban change agents is to “reduce human suffering,” and if our goal as professors is to “bring ignorance to an end,” then we have to instill in our students a whole new understanding, a major quantum leap of awareness. This is one that moves their thinking and action from a focus on human problems as so many disconnected, discrete, and isolated difficulties, to one that sees the totality of the human experience and how all the forces at play are interconnected. It is one that shifts the focus from content to context, because as Hawkins declares: “Neither God nor Truth can be found within the limitation of content only for, by simple observation, content is only definition or description whereas context supplies meaning, significance, and concordance with the reality of existence itself. This is important to comprehend not only in spiritual work but also in everyday social and political policies.”<sup>3</sup>

In order to train effective urban change agents in our program of community development and urban economic transformation, we must not just help students understand the magnitude of the social problems that so heavily weigh down our cities, nationally and globally, and the toll in human lives that result from such destructive forces. More importantly, they need a thorough understanding of the deeper *context*, the “field” out of which all this *content* and social malaise emerges. What I am suggesting here is that without a focus on the origination of context—the precise force fields at work— people (us included) will continue to fall out the back end of urban social transformation “trucks”, and we will be at a loss to figure out why our programs and

policies don't work. This is because not just we as teachers, but also our students and the urban residents we work with, are often unaware of the invisible fields at work in our own lives much less in the lives of all those living and working in complex urban environments.

Context reveals that, ultimately, one's perception of God is intertwined with one's view of life, for "context is the total universe."<sup>4</sup> Anthropologists have long noted that since the beginning of recorded history, when humans first began to make sense of their world, their "universe", such meaning-making or content perception was always interpreted within the context of their understanding of divine forces. This phenomenon is unmistakably observed in some developing societies and tribal groups that are dominated by animism, the belief that the spirit world inhabits all things, animate and inanimate. In such societies there is little distinction between the lines of the sacred and the mundane. The sacred influences daily existence, and everyday life is viewed in relation to the spirit world. One does not engage in everyday pursuits without first connecting with the sacred for blessing and approval.<sup>5</sup> There is no duality of thinking, no separation of faith and learning, no distinction between "religion and science." All is one.

Though developed societies might believe they are different, in *essence* everyone's view of God influences daily living. Context is not like a pair of eyeglasses that can be put on or removed, depending on circumstances. It is more like eyesight itself, that is with us all the time. This is a reality that is more openly acknowledged in some cultures than in others. To be clear, however, I am not advocating here a return to primeval reasoning with its extreme view of animistic causality. Nonetheless, social scientists have observed that the integral view of life in more simple societies is a far cry from the disconnected and fragmented form of living found in more complex societies where people separate the secular from the sacred, and where connected communities (*Gemeinschaft*) have given way to discontinuous associations (*Gesellschaft*).<sup>6</sup>

In point of fact, on close examination one can detect across segments of most societies that a people's God-view does indeed shape their life-view. Emile Durkheim, one of the founding fathers of sociology, devoted his most influential book, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, to the subject of the interconnectedness between a people's view of God and their view of society. Durkheim, however, transposed the

process; for him a people's understanding of society gave rise to their view of God.<sup>7</sup> The reality, however, is the reverse, in that a person's God-view (evident in their relation to authority) influences their life-view (the meaning given to life). Neuropsychologist Kurt Ebert declares, "Our 'God-View' *strongly* influences our 'Life-View' of reality. . . If God is perceived as punitive the world is likely to be seen as frightening; a place filled with opportunities to be punished for our errors and lapses. If we, as God, are loving, we overlook 'other's transgressions' and the world is likely to be seen as benign."<sup>8</sup> Thus, however we see God, determines how we are going to view life and those around us through all the events and situations we experience. To illustrate, if we intrinsically operate from a disconnected view of life—nothing is integrated. Faith and life are consequently viewed as unrelated, independent, discrete entities. What one then does in the academy has no bearing on faith, for one essentially has to "bracket" one's values, as suggests Peter L. Berger and Hansfried Kellner, "in the sense of controlling the way in which these values might distort the sociological vision."<sup>9</sup>

Many a scientist believes that it is possible, even ideal, to separate one's values, personal beliefs, and principles from their discipline. Max Weber took the position that all science must be "value free."<sup>10</sup> Yet, according to David R. Hawkins, such an approach falls prey to the "fallacy of objectivity," for in actuality all reality is selectively perceived and subjectively experienced.

Objectivity is an artificial mental construct that attempts to create an authentic, believable 'reality'; however, it fails to do so because the entire, seemingly logical construction is built entirely on subjectivity and belief. There is no inherent authority of 'truth' to any concept except for the subjective value ascribed to it. Credibility is a subjective decision and purely experiential and indefinable. What is convincing to one person may be dismissed as nonsense by another.<sup>11</sup>

In reading this above quote, one must not confuse subjectivity with moral relativism, which states that there are no objective absolutes. Moral relativism believes that there are no norms, no moral absolutes outside of the person's subjective experience, and thus whatever is true for you is "truth." There is therefore nothing that can serve as a moral compass outside oneself—a position which, of course, is false. The valid point Hawkins is making here is that what most people believe is their "objective reality" is fallacious, since it can only be experienced through the lens of subjectivity. You see or

hear something, so your senses tell you it is “reality.” In fact, however, the senses are experienced subjectively. Anything in the perceptual field that is *stochastic*—data that does not fit within one’s operating paradigm—tends to be regarded as unimportant, as “noise”, as random insignificance, and is discarded in one’s perception, belief, or data analysis. The meaning of this excerpt on subjectivity is thus that credibility is experiential, as when we put our faith in Christ and experience salvation first-hand.

Thomas S. Kuhn did not believe that there was such a thing as value-free research. He made it clear that one’s values (content) are largely influenced by the dominant “paradigm” (context) operating in society at the time, particularly in science.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Columbus, operating out of a round-earth paradigm had an entirely different set of plans on to how to reach India, than those who preferred an overland route due to the flat-earth context influencing navigation. Though we may not realize it, there is present in most of our thinking a similar scientific flatland view that limits our range of ability to see solutions. René Descartes’ mind/body split and dualistic thinking (context) has influenced much of Western thinking up to this present day, including medicine. This has resulted in an approach to medical treatment that focuses on the physical—the body—devoid of any concern for the mental and especially the spiritual dimensions. This paradigm ignores how the spirit of the person (something which cannot be “measured” by science) can be the principle factor in bringing about healing. Holistic medicine, with its inclusive context and understanding of the world, does not separate the person into three different parts—mind, body, spirit—but regards the person as a “whole”, as an “integral” entity, resulting in a content of medical treatment that addresses the “wholeness” of the person.

Faith and learning then is not some mere Christian academic exercise of integrating faith with a given body of knowledge. All learning is inevitably integrated with “faith,” whether at a church-based or a state-based institution of higher education, whether or not the academic is willing to recognize it as such. “All sentient beings live by faith. Despite naïve and pretentious claims to the contrary, all people live solely by the principle of faith—it is only a question of faith in ‘what’ . . . Even the hypothetical ‘nonbeliever’ or skeptic lives by faith in their own intellect, which, to that person represents ‘reality’.”<sup>13</sup> This is because there are no dualities; life really is *one*. Our overall

faith framework, from which meaning is derived, determines the focus and specifics of our discipline. To put it succinctly, *context determines content*. Clearly, the very exposition of a “faith and learning” manuscript demonstrates awareness of this precise interaction, that the *context* of one’s core personal faith will inevitably influence the conceptualization or *content* of one’s discipline.

Urban ministry, my area of academic engagement, arises out of a convergence of sociology, urban theory, economics, and political science, within a theological context illuminated by the person and ministry of Jesus Christ for the socio-economic transformation of cities. Unfortunately, much of what passes for urban ministry today operates out of a worldview of fragmentation—content divorced of context. The focus is on the parts, independent from the whole. Thus, there is a fixation on *content* in isolation, without the awareness that a limiting fragmentary *context* is defining the parameters of vision. The wholeness principle, however, creates a sense of connectedness between all seemingly disconnected parts.

### **Plato’s View of the City**

Plato once observed that “any city, however small, is in fact divided into two, one the city of the poor, the other of the rich; these are at war with one another; and in either there are many smaller divisions, and you would be altogether beside the mark if you treated them all as a single State.”<sup>14</sup> While the Greek city-state that Plato was talking about contrasts politically from our present cities, the sharp economic division that he described is still with us today. And, as Molly O’Meara Sheehan says, “Centuries of technological innovations and social progress have done little to close the gap.”<sup>15</sup> I would suggest that a chief reason for the persistent existence of this conflictual division to this day has to do with the continued prevalence of Greek dualistic thinking, brought to its peak expression by Newtonian physics and Cartesian dualism.

This binary, either/or mode of thinking, separates mind and matter, space and time, the spiritual from the physical. It has given rise to shortsighted social policies that fail to see the wholeness of the city and thereby end up benefiting the few at the expense of the many. It has also provided conservative Christians with a foundation to the idea of “two gospels”—the Evangelical Gospel focused on personal salvation and the Social



Gospel focused on rectifying societal injustices and institutional inequities. This position has resulted in the erroneous view that the Christian mandate (the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20) is only concerned with spiritual matters while the biblical call to do justice, love mercy, and to challenge the powers that oppress wherever and however they exercise injustice (Isaiah 10:1-3; Micah 6:8,9; Matthew 21:12-14), is often regarded as peripheral. In the minds of many politicians, this Cartesian split of mind and body relegates the solution of urban problems such as AIDS, poverty, racism, unemployment, welfare, urban blight, violence, and economic injustice, to faith-based organizations to solve. Many conservative Christians, dominated by the same Cartesian split, even go further and leave it up to God to resolve. They relegate the solution of these problems to some end time event when God shall “destroy those who destroy the earth” (Revelation 11:18). In either case, it is a matter of self-justifying fragmented thinking that fails to see our society as one entirety, based on a context of dualism that results in a content of thinking and practice that is focused on the parts divorced from the whole. It also gives rise to the secular sociological worldview that there is no substrate of interconnectedness between humans of distinct socioeconomic status.

All of this perceived disintegration was turned on its head 100 years ago in 1905 when a theory more all-encompassing than a round earth was discovered to be true. Albert Einstein at the age of 26 published his five seminal scientific papers leading to the development of three separate branches of physics: theoretical, quantum, and nuclear.<sup>16</sup> He also planted the seeds for the paradigm-shifting movement from fragmentation to wholeness thinking, which physicist David Bohm later built on and made integral to his life work. In a 1901 letter to his friend Marcel Grossmann, Einstein wrote, “It is a wonderful feeling to recognize the unity of a complex of phenomena that to direct observation appear to be quite separate things.”<sup>17</sup> Einstein clearly shattered the erroneous worldview of duality with his theory of relativity and the revolutionary idea that energy and matter are one and the same, depending on velocity, in his famous formula  $E=mc^2$ , where energy [E] equals matter [m, for mass] multiplied by the speed of light [c] squared. “Einstein revealed that we do not live in a universe with discrete, physical objects separated by dead space. The Universe is *one indivisible, dynamic whole* in which energy and matter are so deeply entangled it is impossible to consider them as independent

elements.”<sup>18</sup> Albert Einstein, much to the surprise of many, did indeed have a major influence on urban ministry.

Incredibly, one hundred years later the obsolete Newtonian mechanistic “flat-land” worldview, with its sequential, absolutistic, discrete, and linear view of space and time, and with its concomitant visualization of separateness of the observer from “reality”, is still the dominant one framing life in our society. The result of this sustained view of Newtonian discreteness is a fragmentary worldview that gives rise to a disconnected understanding of our world, which impacts politics, the economy, urban theory, urban planning, social policy, sociology, race/ethnic relations, gender and intersexual dynamics, theology, and Christian ministry in an urban context.

Yet, even Newton’s most influential ideas, his laws of motion, are now being questioned with new research that challenges the very foundations of classical physics and “traditional views of the world.”<sup>19</sup> The new theory, by Efthimios Harokopos, challenges Newton’s long-held view that “force” is the cause of motion. Harokopos shifts the focus to *power* as the cause of motion, which “leads to a major revision of the foundations of Classical Mechanics.”<sup>20</sup> What this theory does is to shift the basis of physics from a linear, dualistic, and deterministic view of reality, acted on by force, with its absolutism of space, time, position, velocity, and acceleration. This is replaced by power, “a mechanism that operates based on its own rules rather than taking place due to forces or based on rules inherent in the bodies themselves.”<sup>21</sup> “Power allows grounding the physics that all phenomena are caused by energy transfer, including those attributed to gravitation, to the metaphysics of substantial space-time being a giant mechanism and a substance.” Thus, “at the phenomenal level time and motion cannot be separated because there is no motion without time and no time without motion, i.e. time and motion are inextricably related.”<sup>22</sup> Instead of a fragmented universe dominated by absolute, discrete, and distant entities, one has *wholeness*, interrelatedness, and oneness, what Einstein himself discovered. Power is not a motion, as is force, but a state of being. This is precisely what David R. Hawkins stated in his seminal work, *Power vs. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior*.

“Force always moves against something, whereas power doesn’t move against anything at all. Force is incomplete and therefore has to be fed energy constantly. Power is total and complete in itself and requires nothing from outside... Force

always creates counterforce; its effect is to polarize rather than unify... Power on the other hand, is still. It's like a standing field that doesn't move. Gravity itself, for instance, doesn't move against anything. Its power moves all objects within its field, but the gravity field itself does not move... Power gives life and energy—forces takes these away... Force must always be justified, whereas power requires no justification. Force is associated with the partial, power with the whole.<sup>23</sup>

In this paper I will take issue with Newton's paradigm and Plato's dualistic thinking, and their repercussions for urban ministry. I will shift the focus from a fragmentary worldview to one of wholeness through an understanding of quantum physics and the principle that *context influences content*. I will then illustrate such wholeness with the Four Worlds Model for engaging in theological, sociological, urban spatial thinking and research methodology for an analysis of the city and the practice of urban ministry in a global milieu. What will be presented here is merely the "cover" to the jigsaw puzzle of urban transformation—the theoretical context. The detailed examination of the pieces—the corresponding practical content—will not be discussed except in passing.

### **From Fragmentation to Wholeness**

We live in a fragmented world due to the fragmentation of our thinking and perception of reality, coming down to us since the time of Plato. A fragmentary worldview is the product of thought, observed David Bohm, who succeeded Einstein at Princeton. It is a system of thinking that fragments the world into bits and pieces that should not be broken up and conversely, and seeks to create unity where none exists.<sup>24</sup>

For example, the human family is one—"and he has made of one blood all nations" (Acts 17:26)—and is not the product of separate evolutionary processes. "The Human Genome Project has so far revealed that what people consider racial differences comprise only 0.01% of the body's estimated 35,000 genes."<sup>25</sup> Yet racism, sexism and discrimination emerge from intolerance toward the one hundredth of 1% of the human differences. Why? Our focus is on our separateness rather than on our interconnectedness. Focusing on what differentiates people at the expense of what they have in common does not further the cause for unity or demonstrates an understanding of reality. To focus on such minimal diversity is to focus on a gnat on an elephant's back

and miss the whole elephant. This is not to say that our real differences are purely biological, because they are not. What differentiates us as humans is not so much biology, as our operational paradigms, our systems of values, our levels of consciousness, and the contexts out of which we move and have our being.

These artificially constructed biological boundaries that separate some while unifying others—races, nations, cultures, classes, genders, neighborhoods, cities, religions—with each part regarded as “independent and self-existent”, are actually an invention of thought and then imposed on reality, which we then believe to be “real”.<sup>26</sup> This reification of constructs has unconsciously validated the sensation of separateness in our society, between people groups, in the social transformation of cities, and in urban ministry.

The result in our society is a fragmentary, binary, mechanistic worldview, comparable to seeing the world like a clock with interchangeable and disposable parts. This divides what is indivisible—the wholeness of the human family; and unites what is not really unitable—groupings of people and sectors of cities into clusters separate from the whole.<sup>27</sup> All of this is a consequence of the outmoded Newtonian view of the world with its mind/body Cartesian split of either/or thinking and its dualistic understanding of reality. This divided reality is actually an illusion, constructed by the mind, to frame the narrow context of our reductionist thinking and selective way of seeing. A prime example of this is the “false divisions and false unification” of academic departments, which like “intellectual guilds” (John Skoyles) protect privileged expertise, when in reality it is all one—knowledge. “In science, for example, every little specialty is fragmented from every other one.”<sup>28</sup> Knowledge is thus fragmented and everything gets broken up into discrete, disconnected, and discontinuous parts, and we accept it as a given and normal, and the way things have always been. Yet Edward O. Wilson suggests, in *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*, that we need to bridge this academic gap and link all branches of learning, especially the sciences and the humanities, with a broad base of knowledge that is transcending rather than reductionist.<sup>29</sup> Wilson writes: “The greatest enterprise of the mind has always been and always will be the attempted linkage of the sciences and the humanities. The ongoing fragmentation of knowledge and resulting chaos in philosophy are therefore not reflections of the real world but artifacts of scholarship.”<sup>30</sup>

What I am doing in this paper is precisely this very methodology of bringing together three disciplines that normally do not cross-communicate: the physical sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. This synthesis creates a greater holistic understanding toward learning than is possible through a single disciplinary focus. This cross-curricular approach is also the new direction in education, at all levels, for it models the higher level thinking skills of Bloom's Taxonomy.<sup>31</sup>

Where does fragmented thinking come from? This is a question that David Bohm answers in his book *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. Bohm exposes the power of paradigms in creating segmented thinking. "Fragmentation is continually being brought about by the almost universal habit of taking the content of our thought for 'a description of the world as it is'. ...in this habit, our thought is regarded as in direct correspondence with objective reality. Since, our thought is pervaded with differences and distinctions, it follows that such a habit leads us to look on these as real divisions, so that the world is then seen and experienced as actually broken up into fragments."<sup>32</sup>

Bohm then adds, "If we regard our theories as 'direct descriptions of reality as it is', then we will inevitably treat these differences and distinctions as divisions, implying separate existence... We will thus be led to the illusion that the world is actually constituted of separate fragments and, ... this will cause us to act in such a way that we do in fact produce the very fragmentation implied in our attitude to the theory."<sup>33</sup> Or as Marilyn Ferguson says, "If we think of reality as constituted of independent fragments, we will think in fragmented ways."<sup>34</sup> The opposite would also be true. If we think of reality as aspects of an unbroken whole, we will think in a holistic manner. For, "the separateness of things is but an illusion, and all things are actually part of the same unbroken continuum."<sup>35</sup> To this importance of context, Anais Nin adds, "We do not see the world as it is, we see it as we are." Thus, Blacks and Whites are often separated in the minds of some *by thought* as though they came from two distinct creations and biological processes; urban and suburban sectors are perceived as having no connection with each other; developed and impoverished nations are seen as disconnected; and even when the connection is recognized, it is forced through a fragmented focus resulting in some contrived construct.

Yet, the brain “sees” holistically. Let me give an example. Notice how easy you are able to read the next paragraph even though it is a scrambled mess.

Aoccdrnig to rscheearch at the Uinervtisy of Ntghmoiatm, it deosn't mttar in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.<sup>36</sup>

The research alluded to here is from G. E. Rawlinson’s unpublished 1976 Ph.D. dissertation from the Psychology Department at University of Nottingham, Nottingham UK, titled, “The significance of letter position in word recognition.” This is a good example of the insight that the human mind is oriented toward wholeness and not fragmentation. It is the very point David Bohm seeks to bring out in his book, *Thought as a System*. Yet, we continue to be dominated by a worldview of fragmentation.

Amit Goswami, theoretical physicist at the University of Oregon, asks a crucial question. “How did I acquire a worldview (more importantly, am I stuck with it?) that dictates so much separateness between me and my fellow humans, all of us sharing similar genetic, mental, and spiritual endowments? If I disown the outdated worldview that is based on material realism [that only matter is real and objects are independent of us] and investigate the new/old one that quantum physics seems to demand, might the world and I be once more integrated?”<sup>37</sup> The answer is an unequivocal yes!

It thus becomes apparent that the erroneous prevailing worldview limiting urban studies and urban ministry emerges from classical physics, based on the Cartesian-Newtonian worldview, which has given rise to a philosophy of material realism where only matter is real and everything else is secondary phenomena. “Material realism poses a universe without any spiritual meaning: mechanical, empty, and lonely,” Goswami declares. Even though Isaac Newton himself was a strong believer in God, by our accepting the current Cartesian-Newtonian worldview with its materialistic philosophy we are supporting a position that negates God. This is not so much a “crisis of faith” as a “crisis of confusion.”<sup>38</sup> And most people, even theologians, are not even aware of this crossover from physics to other branches of learning. This is because, as Postman and Weingartner tell us, “People can believe in two contradictory ideas simultaneously” and

not see the contradiction.<sup>39</sup> Trying to fit God theologically and missionally within this Procrustean worldview is like trying to trap light in a box.

Fragmented thinking reached its zenith with the writings of Jacques Derrida, the Algerian-born Frenchman and father of *deconstructionism*, who died on October 8, 2004. “Deconstruction [is] the method of inquiry that asserted that all writing was full of confusion and contradiction, and that the author's intent could not overcome the inherent contradictions of language itself, robbing texts—whether literature, history or philosophy—of truthfulness, absolute meaning and permanence. The concept was eventually applied to the whole gamut of arts and social sciences, including linguistics, anthropology, political science, even architecture.”<sup>40</sup> It was a fragmentation that impacted a number of academic disciplines, especially literary criticism and the social sciences. “Literary critics broke texts into isolated passages and phrases to find hidden meanings. Advocates of feminism, gay rights, and third-world causes embraced the method as an instrument to reveal the prejudices and inconsistencies of Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare, Freud and other ‘dead white male’ icons of Western culture.”<sup>41</sup> The result was a state of meaningless confusion, which strongly influenced sociology, urban analysis, and even architecture during the 1970’s and 1980’s. “Architects and designers could claim to take a ‘deconstructionist’ approach to buildings by abandoning traditional symmetry and creating zigzaggy, sometimes disquieting spaces.”<sup>42</sup> Even Hollywood felt its impact in the Woody Allen film, *Deconstructing Harry*, which suggests “that his protagonist could best be understood by breaking down and analyzing his neurotic contradictions.”<sup>43</sup> The problem is that when the dust of all this deconstructionism settled, no sense of wholeness and meaning emerged.

Harold Isaacs, in his book, *Idols of the Tribe*, tells us that this “fragmentation of human society” is a “dangerous paradox.”

The fragmentation of human society is a pervasive fact in human affairs and always has been. It persists and increases in our own time as part of an ironic, painful, and dangerous paradox: the more global our science and technology, the more tribal our politics; the more universal our system of communications, the less we know what to communicate; the closer we get to other planets, the less able we become to lead a tolerable existence in our own; the more it becomes apparent that human beings cannot decently survive with their separatenesses, the more separate they become. In the face of an ever more urgent need to pool the world's resources and its powers, human society is splitting itself into smaller and smaller fragments.<sup>44</sup>

This is because the basic premise of fragmented thinking is that the parts—discrete and discontinuous—organize the whole. The problem with this mechanistic approach is that it seldom moves from the parts to the whole, nor does it always see their inter-relationships and interdependencies. Thus, “you can’t get there from here.” No matter how hard one tries, the problems plaguing our world—racism, poverty, AIDS, war, inequality, urban blight, violence, sexualization, and dehumanization—will not be solved if the starting point is a perspective of fragmentation. One needs to understand the gravity-like energy field—the context—undergirding these problems.

For example, we have known for years that the teen pregnancy rate has been increasing. Without understanding the underlying dynamics—the attractor patterns—it was simply assumed that sex education would be the answer to teen pregnancy. Obviously, it was believed that these kids didn’t understand how to prevent conception. Nonetheless, sex education didn’t work. Then, the idea surfaced that these kids just didn’t have access to birth control. Contraception was made available to them at no charge. Did that bring an end to teen pregnancies? No. Why not? The people trying to resolve the issue were projecting *their own* context onto the teens who were operating out of a completely different context—different rules—like gravity pulling them into certain behaviors. “I want to have a baby because it makes me feel needed.” “He doesn’t want to use a condom. If I ask him to use one he will leave me for another girl who will give him sex without a condom. All of these reasons and more are brought out by sociologists Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas in their groundbreaking study, *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*,<sup>45</sup> showing that other “attractor fields” are operational.

In teaching students how to be successful change agents in urban ministry, one must teach them how to recognize, understand, and be effective in contexts *other than their own*. This is key. For the “content”—the programs they initiate and policies they implement—must be relevant to the particular context or social situation in which they find themselves. This metacognitive facility of successfully understanding differing contexts is crucial to the training of effective workers in urban development, since urban workers are most often at a different level of operational values than are the people they



want to help. In urban ministry the easiest trap to fall into is to fail to recognize the context out of which arise the very problems one is trying to solve. This is because the context that gives rise to the *emergency emotions* (shame, guilt, apathy, grief, fear, craving, anger, pride) cultivating urban blight in neighborhoods is not the same context that gives rise to the *welfare emotions* (courage, trust, willingness, acceptance, reason, love, joy, peace, compassion) out of which the urban workers are functioning.<sup>46</sup> To falsely project one context on another, or to operate out of a totally incongruent context, leads to initiating projects that are ineffective in their environment, and eventually results in burnout and a sense of failure when our faultily based solutions don't work and we don't know why.

For this reason David Bohm clarifies, “The present approach of analysis of the world into independently existent parts does not work very well in modern physics . . . Both in relativity theory and quantum theory, notions implying the undivided wholeness of the universe would provide a much more orderly way of considering the general nature of reality.”<sup>47</sup> Gandhi recognized this quantum truth in race relations. “The different races of mankind are like different branches of a tree. Once we recognized the common parent stock from which we all spring, we realize the basic unity of the human family.”

### **The Biblical View of Wholeness<sup>48</sup>**

This worldview of *wholeness* has a biblical foundation. It is best embodied in the concept of *shalom*. Unfortunately, this word is often translated to just mean “peace.” While *shalom* embraces peace, it is much more than peace. At the root of *shalom* is the concept of *wholeness*. Any cursory examination of the Internet will let one know the meaning of *shalom*. “Contrary to popular opinion the Hebrew word ‘shalom’ does not mean ‘peace,’ at least not in the English sense of the word. It comes from a Hebrew root-word that means ‘wholeness’.”<sup>49</sup> Peace is only possible when one experiences “integrity,” “completeness,” and “wholeness.” Peace is an inward *tranquillity of spirit* emanating from *wholeness*, manifested in an outward absence of conflict. Without wholeness there is no peace, just a façade and a superficial experience but no *shalom*.

Right from the very beginning, the creation process is one of *shalom*—wholeness—where the creation of human beings is one where the “whole is in the parts.”

“Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness’” (Genesis 1:26). Human beings are not separate from God, but one with God, where the wholeness of God is in the part, Adam and Eve. On the seventh day God created the Sabbath, rest. But the Sabbath is more than just rest; just like *shalom* is more than just peace. God created the Sabbath to symbolize the “wholeness” of his creation.<sup>50</sup> As Howard Snyder declares, “‘On the seventh day God created *shalom*—the crown and goal of all his work.’”<sup>51</sup> The Sabbath symbolized the integral, holistic union between God, humans, and nature, all as one, in a “Shalom Community”,<sup>52</sup> called the Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden was “a community of people living and working together in harmony and mutual trust, caring for creation and relating personally to their God who walked in the garden with them.”<sup>53</sup>

In this holistic environment God placed the first humans. Just like God is Light, they are light, enshrouded in an energy field of light (Genesis 2:25). Willful sin, however, severed the *shalom* connection and divine union, and brought fragmentation, contention, and separation from God and each other (Genesis 3). As Christine Aroney-Sine declares:

Essentially the Fall unleashed the forces of ‘anti-shalom’ ripping apart the harmony and mutual love of God’s original creation. It broke God’s *shalom* relationships and fractured the spirit of togetherness that bound us to God, to each other and to God’s creation. Exploitation, oppression, poverty, death and disease, war and violence, discrimination between male and female and across racial boundaries and the destruction and abuse of creation all gradually invaded our world as a result of the Fall.<sup>54</sup>

The rest of the biblical narrative is an attempt by God to remind His children of their wholeness with Him, and that they will not have *shalom*, wholeness, in their lives until they are in oneness again with God.

The concepts of wholeness and fragmentation are embodied in the two principle cities in the Bible, Jerusalem and Babylon. Throughout the Bible Jerusalem is the city identified with the people of God, whereas Babylon is the city identified with the forces of evil that rise up against God. Jerusalem comes from two Hebrew words “Jeru” meaning “foundation” or “cornerstone” and “shalem” or *shalom*. “The meaning of the name is undoubtedly ‘foundation of Shalem.’ The traditional interpretation, ‘city of peace,’ is as inaccurate etymologically as it is inappropriate historically.”<sup>55</sup> Thus

Jerusalem is the very site, center and foundation of *shalom*, wholeness. This is a far cry from the current status of the city of Jerusalem in present day Israel. Babylon, on the other hand, first emerges after the flood, when the next generation after the flood decided to build city with a tower that would “reach to heaven”. It was an attempt to achieve an illusory wholeness independent and separate from God. “Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.’” (Genesis 11:4). So God “confused”, “confounded” (Babel from the Hebrew *balal* to “mix”)<sup>56</sup> their language, and “scattered” them abroad “over the face of the earth” (vs. 8). Babylon is a symbol of fragmentation, segregation, confusion, that which divides and separates. These two biblical cities represent the two forces of wholeness and fragmentation all the way through Scripture to the very end in Revelation. And today they also represent the two dimensions or opportunities that lie before cities, to be a force for wholeness or a force for fragmentation.

There is more that can be said here about economic justice, wholeness and the “shalom community” that God desired to see manifested in the nation of Israel, but the limits of this paper preclude such elaboration.<sup>57</sup> But let me say just one thing. The whole framework of Jubilee in the Old Testament is built on the concept of the Sabbath and is centered in *shalom*, when the land would be restored to its original owners, slaves would be set free, debts would be cancelled, justice and liberty would be proclaimed throughout the land, and the nation would be restored to wholeness and experience *shalom* once again (Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 15). Jesus came to bring to fulfillment what the nation of Israel failed to do, to make Jubilee a living reality (Luke 4:16-20). “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your ears” (vs. 21). Jesus’ entire ministry was built on wholeness. That is why he spent so much time “healing” people for healing comes from the Greek word *sozo*—“to make whole”. Such action was symbolic of *shalom*, the *modus operandi* of Jesus. The wholeness of Jesus was not dualistic, but monistic—based on the unity of oneness between God, Christ, and his followers. At the conclusion of his ministry Jesus’ prayer in John 17 was for wholeness among his disciples. This was not the kind of illusory dualistic “wholeness” the builders of the tower of Babel desired, independent from God, but one in total oneness of spirit with God. “The glory that you have given me

I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (vss. 22, 23).

This very wholeness was to characterize the ministry of Church. Thus, in the parable of the Last Judgment Jesus made it clear that any action done to others was actually action done to Him. “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, *you did it to me*” (Matthew 25:40). Here the whole does indeed organize the parts, for Jesus who is the whole is in the “least”, the part. Jesus said that when we do it to the part we do it to the whole, for the whole is the part and the part is the whole—the holographic effect. The implications of this wholeness for urban ministry are staggering.

Take India, for example, where the largest number of the world’s poor is concentrated. Of all the cities in India, Calcutta perhaps is most symbolic of the destitution and misery of the world’s poor. More poor people are found in Calcutta than perhaps any other large world city. Hundreds of thousands live abject lives of despair and hopelessness on the streets of Calcutta in states of absolute poverty with no possible future but one of starvation and death. For most people these are just meaningless numbers and statistics to be ignored in the same manner that the poor in Calcutta, or in other ‘Calcuttas’ of the world, are ignored and passed by. It is life lived at a consciousness level of apathy, and society responds in kind. “Society often lacks sufficient motivation to be of any real help to cultures or individuals at this level and sees them as drains of resources . . . It is the level of the abandonment of hope, and few have the courage to really look into its face.”<sup>58</sup>

Yet one person did truly have the courage to look right into the face of poverty, and there she saw the face of Jesus. Mother Teresa saw in the poor, the homeless, the untouchables, the dead and dying in the streets of Calcutta the face and person of Jesus Christ. She related to them in the same manner, and the poor saw in her the face of Jesus looking back at them. Why did she see Jesus in the poor while the vast majority, even Christians, only saw the destitute? It was due to the *context of wholeness* out of which she lived. Her holistic context—seeing the person of Jesus in the poor—fueled the content of her ministry. Thus, by serving the poor she was serving Jesus.

Whenever persons volunteered to work along side her Sisters of Mercy, Mother Teresa would carefully instruct them. “When you minister with us to the poor and needy, I want you to look at them with eyes of love and touch them with hands of love and speak to them with words of love. Because it is not simply to the poor to whom you are ministering. It is to Christ. And each poor person, for the moment he is before you, is Christ to you and you are Christ to him. I urge you to look at them and see Jesus.”<sup>59</sup>

From the very context of who she *was* emerged the content of what she *did*. She lived and loved as one who saw Christ in the poorest of the poor. Her consciousness influenced and energized those around her without a word being spoken, for in her face, attitude and behavior, the poor (and everyone else for that matter) saw the embodiment of God’s love and acceptance. The intentionality of her heart collapsed the wave function of separation between her and the poor, creating a reality of oneness such that in the poor she touched she saw the person of Jesus Christ. This is the Heisenberg Principle in action, the presence of the observer impacts the outcome, creating an experience of nonduality. Mother Teresa by her very “essence”—her energy signature—conveyed to the poor how she actually felt about them. Let me explain how this works.

Whether we know it or not, without saying a word, we are communicating to everyone we encounter a “sense” of how we feel about them and how we regard them. This sentiment, even when held unconsciously, gives rise within us to unspoken expectations based on our underlying beliefs. We are constantly transmitting a subtle, unspoken message, either one of unconditional love and oneness or one of disdain and indifference that radiates from the very “core” of our being toward others, resulting in a “reality” of duality—us versus them.. People pick up on it once they enter our “energy field,” our sphere of influence. Our lips and actions may say one thing, but the energy context that surrounds us may declare otherwise. Thus, an urban worker, though meaning well and desirous of making a difference in a given community, may convey, unbeknown to him or her, an attitude of duality emerging from their context—“These people are hopeless... I don’t think anything that I can do will make a difference... Nothing seems to work!”—that may counteract the content of what they do. It can also work in the reverse.

Since education is one of the principle ways of turning around persons and a given community, let me give three examples from urban education. Teachers exert a tremendous influence on their students. Without saying a word, their very spirit, attitudes and thought patterns, even on a subconscious level, are picked up by students. The reality of the influence of this tacit context was brought out by Rosenthal and Jacobsen<sup>60</sup> in their classic and much cited study on “how much of an outcome teachers' expectancies could have on a group of children.” Suggesting that a study of IQ was the focus of their experiment, they tested students' IQs at the beginning of the school year. They then informed the teachers which students in their classes had scored in the top 20% and would thus be expected to be “bloomers” that year. Unbeknownst to the teachers, the names on the list of the so-called “bloomers” were actually randomly chosen ethnically diverse students with average test scores. The teachers, however, believing what was told them, subtly conveyed their underlying belief to the students that they indeed were high ability students, even though the students knew nothing about their original test results. Throughout the year, these students did make significant gains, and most surprisingly demonstrated at the end of the year IQ test gains in some cases of more than 25 points.

Claude Steele at Stanford University gives a most sobering example of the reverse process, which all too frequently happens in urban schools. This is one where bright African American students (with combined SATs of 1,200 to 1,500), are devalued, ignored, and treated with passive indifference by their teachers because of the “devalued status of their race.” Teachers then do not *expect* them to be brilliant and outstanding students. The result is that these same students who have the mental acumen to succeed in the best universities, often end up with “academic demotivation” and experience a “disidentification” with school and eventually drop out.<sup>61</sup>

On the other hand, the influence of just one dedicated person is sufficient to create a paradigm shift that can positively affect the lives of many by counteracting the negative societal forces that keep multitudes from succeeding. Such is the case of Jaime Escalante who enabled 18 Latino students from Garfield High School in East Los Angeles to pass the AP calculus exam in 1982. The examiners from the Educational Testing Service were so incredulous of such a feat that they had the students repeat the AP exam because they believed they had cheated. On repeating the exam all 18 passed again. [A movie was

made of Escalante's experience, *Stand and Deliver* (1988).] By 1991 Escalante had empowered 570 Latino students to successfully pass the AP exam in calculus. In all three cases, the teachers changed the context for their students, which resulted in different content. This is much more effective than the prevailing method of working on content without addressing context.

What do all these people—the Mother Teresas, the Rosenthals and Jacobsens, the Claude Steeles, and the Jaime Escalantes—have in common? Why were these agents of change successful when others around them were not? They all brought with them a *context* that the people they encountered were more than they presently were, irrespective of who they appeared to be or had been or what other people may have thought of them. In quantum theory this is the Heisenberg Principle—the intention of the observer influences the outcome. In chaos theory this is the introduction of “energy” at the point of phase transition,<sup>62</sup> which enables a person to spiral upwards. This *sensitivity to initial conditions*, also known as the “*butterfly effect*”, has the effect of changing outcomes by just changing one critical thing—their context.

Hugh Everett, a Princeton physicist, called this phase transition a “choice point.”<sup>63</sup> Choice points are those critical moments in time when the course of any event or life may be changed by the choices made. Each choice leads to a whole new “world” in our life. “A choice point, according to Everett, is like a bridge, making it possible to begin one path and then change course to experience the outcome of a new path. But these opportune moments to redefine outcomes may come only at specific intervals where the roads of time *bend their courses* and approach other roads. Sometimes the roads are so close that they touch. You can make a choice to continue the current course to its end, or choose to take a new course.”<sup>64</sup> From a Christian framework, it is giving people “hope” as a result of genuinely perceiving them as children of God and giving them a new context at sensitive choice points. All it takes is a simple shift in awareness to see multiple possible options and choices available.

### **What Is “Holistic” Ministry**

Too often the church operates on a limited understanding of wholeness and holistic ministry. What passes for “holistic” ministry in much of the Christian literature

on urban ministry is a combining of the “social” along with the “spiritual”, as a counter to traditional Christian ministry focused exclusively on “saving” people from personal sin, but doing little to address social injustice and systems of oppression. Thus, for Bryant Myers, Vice President of World Vision International, what makes the gospel “holistic” are three things: evangelism (“naming the name of Jesus”), deliverance, and justice.<sup>65</sup> For Network 9:35, an Evangelicals for Social Action website, holistic ministry is defined as, “the whole gospel for the whole person.”<sup>66</sup> This also happens to be the mission slogan of Palmer Theological Seminary, where Ron Sider, the founder of ESA, works. The definition is expanded by an acrostic for HOLISTIC:

H - Helps people who are unhealthy, homeless, hungry & hungering  
O - Opposes dichotomies  
L - Leverages all spiritual gifts, skills, life experiences & resources of all [God’s] people  
I - Investment - in lives, community, nation and world  
S - Sign of shalom  
T - The total person  
I - Integrity marks our HM [Holistic Ministry]  
C - Challenges evil

In another definition, enunciated at a consultation sponsored by the World Evangelical Fellowship, held in Cyprus in 2000, the delegates agreed to a definition of holistic ministry as “linking social, physical, and spiritual needs—instead of evangelism in isolation.”<sup>67</sup> Many more definitions could be given, but they are all pretty much the same, the gospel addresses both social as well as spiritual needs.

What all these definitions have in common is a move away from the dichotomous split mentioned at the beginning of this paper, between an “evangelical gospel” and a “social gospel.” There are not *two* gospels; there is only *one*—a holistic gospel that encompasses both dimensions of spiritual and social. This is certainly a step forward. Yet, even such language as “dimensions” is in itself somewhat dualistic, for there are not two dimensions that can be separated by our categorization, but one integral context of wholeness that embraces the totality of the human experience.

Even taking on systems of oppression, while noble in its intention, is not the kind of wholeness I am addressing here. I am addressing wholeness from the perspective of quantum mechanics, wholeness from the context of nonduality, as Jesus expressed in Matthew 25. This is wholeness that emerges from one undivided holographic universe.<sup>68</sup>



Because we are one (“he has made of one blood all nations”), we are all connected. There is no “other”; there is no “there but for the grace of God go I.” There is only that person who is an extension of me, who is the person of Christ in need. From this context there is only one gospel, the content of which is concerned with the totality of the person.

Modern quantum and relativity theories, like the biblical approach, are focused on wholeness. Yet, these two theories clash with prevalent Cartesian thinking, the most prevailing expression of thinking and manner of seeing the world, due to its inherent dualism between mind and matter. Bohm declares, “Both in relativity and in quantum theory the Cartesian order is leading to serious contradictions and confusion. This is because both theories imply that the actual state of affairs is unbroken wholeness of the universe rather than analysis into independent parts.”<sup>69</sup> This totality of “unbroken wholeness” shows that “there is a universal flux,” where “mind and matter are not separate substances, [but] are different aspects of one whole and unbroken movement.”<sup>70</sup> It is a holistic worldview that at its deepest level acknowledges the integral nature of our social reality, for it sees the “whole in every part,” much like a hologram, where the whole is in the parts. Thus the whole organizes the parts, which are synchronous and continuous. The parts cannot even be understood in isolation of the whole. They are all interconnected, interdependent, and interrelated in a universe, which David Bohm and B. J. Hiley regard as one “undivided wholeness”.<sup>71</sup> This remarkable insight is the contribution of quantum physics to theology, sociology, and urban studies.

Are we just playing with words here, with their semantic meaning, and majoring in minors? No. The present evangelical understanding of holistic ministry, while it does admirably unify the Cartesian mind/body split of the spiritual, which regards the social as an independent and separate realm, is still working within a Newtonian binary framework. It is focused on the “other”, helping the “other” who is not like me, and is different from me. And even if social as well as spiritual needs are addressed, it is still with the “other” in mind, as a separate part isolated from the whole.

Paul addressed this difference between context and content in I Corinthians 13, when he declared that giving my possessions to the poor is not sufficient unless it emerges from love. “Though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profits me nothing.” Simply engaging in

“social” ministry is not sufficient if it does not emerge from the holistic context of love, the kind that Mother Teresa had, when in the poor she saw the person of Christ. If it does not emerge from God’s context of wholeness, it simply becomes a matter of adding more content to the same old framework. It becomes an attempt to connect the pieces without a sense of the whole. What I am addressing here is not one more “dimension” to the gospel, but a “paradigm shift”—a whole new way of “seeing” reality.

Paul strongly brings out this principle of wholeness in his classic analogy of the church as one body. “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12). Though Paul talks about the various members of the body and their relation to each other, his focus is not on the members but on *the body* itself—the whole. The diverse array of members, the parts, cannot be understood in isolation of the whole, because the parts have no meaning separate from the whole. This is why in Galatians 3:28 Paul stressed the importance of moving away from disconnectedness to oneness. “There is no longer Jew or Greek [no separateness based on race or ethnicity], there is no longer slave or free [no separateness based on socioeconomic status], there is no longer male and female [no separateness based on gender]; for all of you are one [wholeness] in Christ Jesus.”

Then, building on this wholeness Paul pushed further the boundaries against discrimination. “We should treat the members that seem to be “weaker” with “greater honor” and “respect” and as “indispensable”, for “God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body” (1 Corinthians 12:22-25). Dissension comes from disconnectedness; harmony emerges from oneness. Until the church and the world understand this, conflict will be the norm. Until urban ministry understands this, superficial programs will be the norm, even if they append the social along with the spiritual.

A wholeness worldview would move the Church away from discriminatory practices to a methodology of mission that embraces the oneness of the human family. In fact, it is “the only way home.” Yet the fragmentary worldview is the dominant one today, leading to extremes in social inequality, and even to global genocide. Even worse,

it has resulted in a fragmented expression of Christianity in America that has given rise to what Jim Wallis calls, a “pro-war” and “pro-rich” Jesus, who is a “selective moralist.”<sup>72</sup>

### **Why Is the Newtonian Worldview Still Dominant?**

If Albert Einstein, Max Planck, Neils Bohr, and David Bohm (to name a few) changed the way to view the nature of reality, then why is the Newtonian worldview still the dominant perception of reality? Why can't people see the “wholeness” of it all? Robert Nadeau and Menas Kafatos, scientists at George Mason University, give us the answer in their book, *The Non-Local Universe: The New Physics and Matters of the Mind*.

Just as we can safely disregard the effects of the finiteness of light speed in most applications of classical dynamics on the macro level because the speed of light is so large that relativistic effects are negligible, so can we disregard the quantum of action on the micro level because its effects are so small. Yet everything we deal with on the macro level obeys the rules of relativity theory and quantum mechanics, and, as chaos theory has shown, unrestricted classical determinism does not universally apply even in our dealing with macro-level systems. Classical physics is a workable approximation that seems precise only because the largeness of the speed of light and the smallness of the quantum of action give rise to negligible effects.”<sup>73</sup>

In other words, since both classical and quantum physics lie outside our frame of reference and daily living—except to the specialist—we can't see through this “glass darkly” to recognize that there is another world out there. This world is what Bohm called the “implicate order”—the unmanifest, invisible realm. The “explicate order”, or the world that we see and inhabit, is its extension.<sup>74</sup>

Even Einstein himself, however, could not fully accept the mysterious action of the quantum world. His famous experiment with Podolsky and Rosen, known as the EPR Experiment, suggested that two particles of light instantaneously influence each other, even at great distances, in an equal and opposite manner. Yet Einstein could not accept this strange or “spooky action at a distance”, as he regarded it, even if it was his own experiment, for the influence took place *faster than the speed of light*. For Einstein, no action could be faster than light. But what Einstein did not fully grasp is that the reason the two parts of the widely “separated” system are able to influence each other immediately, faster than the speed of light, is because both are part of one holistic system.

Einstein, in spite of his own evidence to the contrary, could not see beyond physicality and the Newtonian order of causality—his limiting context—to cross the threshold into spirituality.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, Einstein “believed that nature exists independently of the experimenter,”<sup>76</sup> and that there is a universe out there independent of human consciousness (Hawkins). He could not accept the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle—the world is not independent of the observer,<sup>77</sup> such that intention facilitates transformation. Yet, something more than physicality and Newtonian causality was provably at work here, as Pearcey and Thaxton alluded, “The two electrons seem to be bound together by some mysterious unity.”<sup>78</sup>

It was David Bohm who was able to take this insight to the next level through an understanding that a “new order” or *context* was actually at work here. Not the Newtonian order of a world made up of “distinct but interacting parts,” with the observer existing independent of the observed, but another order based on “the universe as *an undivided and unbroken whole*.”<sup>79</sup> It was an order “radically different from that of Galileo and Newton—the order of *undivided wholeness*.”<sup>80</sup> Bohm affirmed the Heisenberg Principle—that the intention of the observer collapses the wave function and impacts the field, the outcome—and took it to yet another level, to a new order, to a new *context*. Through “his theory of the *implicate order*, founded on a vision of wholeness, or totality, in which matter and consciousness are united,”<sup>81</sup> Bohm was able to show that it is not just matter and energy that are one, as Einstein had proved. Einstein not only regarded Bohm as his “intellectual successor,” but also proclaimed, “If anyone can do it, then it will be Bohm,”<sup>82</sup> referring to the solving of the dilemmas that arose in quantum mechanics.

Yet, “Einstein rebelled against the Heisenberg Principle because he preferred to think that there was a universe out there independent of human consciousness.”<sup>83</sup> Bohm, however, suggested that the two particles are not really two separate parts, but represent an “unbroken wholeness,” which emerges from the implicate order and affirms “a new notion of unbroken wholeness, in which consciousness is no longer to be fundamentally separated from matter.”<sup>84</sup> Bohm was one of the first scientists to introduce the idea that ours is a holographic universe, where everything is connected to everything else.<sup>85</sup> In this universe “matter and meaning are inseparable.”<sup>86</sup> For Bohm the Heisenberg Principle was

instrumental in opening the door of awareness to a holistic undivided universe that went beyond the mechanism of Newtown and the relativism of Einstein. This is the nonlocality of quantum *wholeness* that transcends the binary separateness of localistic, Newtonian thinking that has unfortunately pervaded our entire society, right down to our flawed views of urban dwellers as separate from “us”.

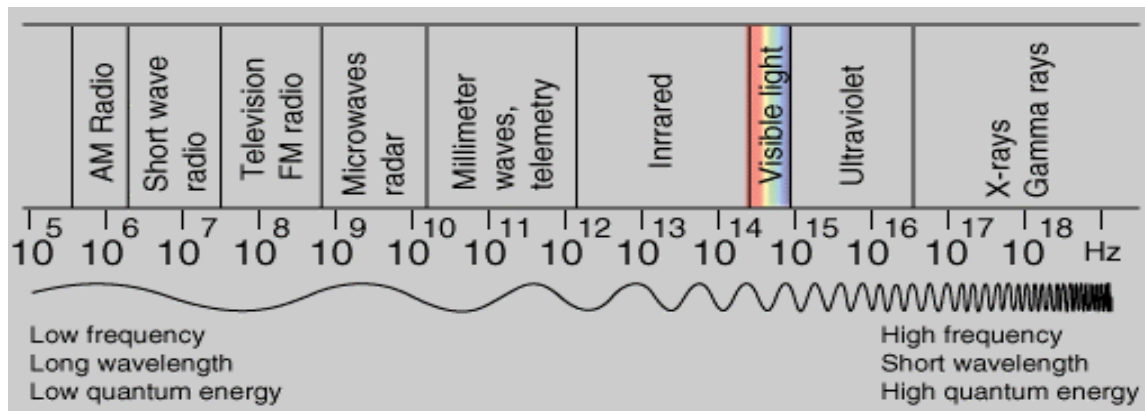
F. David Peat, physicist and author of David Bohm’s biography, *Infinite Potential: The Life and Times of David Bohm* (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc. 1996), explains the implicate order of Bohm.

The world we seem to live in—the world of classical objects, the world of Newtonian physics—Dave referred to as the “explicate order.” He felt that what we take for reality is only one particular level or perception of order. And underneath that is what he called the “implicate order,” the enfolded order, in which things are folded together and deeply interconnected, and out of which the explicate order unfolds. The explicate is only, you could say, the froth on top of the milk and the implicate order is much deeper. It includes not only matter, but consciousness; it’s only in the explicate order that we tend to break them apart, to see them as two separate things.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, this invisible, enfolded universe—the implicate order—runs parallel to the visible one—the explicate. The *unfolded* explicate order, the world of which we are physically a part, is itself merely a visible manifestation of the *enfolded*, invisible implicate order of the universe. As Bohm stated, “the implicate order is a theory of the whole.”<sup>88</sup> Thus, there is no ‘out there’ or ‘in here’, for it is all one. Bohm’s theory of the implicate order built on Einstein’s theory of relativity, where time and space are relative. If you slow time down, declared Einstein, you get matter; if you speed it up, you get energy, but it is all one. Bohm took these ideas further, beyond time and space, to show “that the implicate order applies both to matter (living and non-living) and to consciousness.”<sup>89</sup> It is manifested in what he called, a *holomovement*, “an unbroken and undivided totality.” This is “a movement in which ‘new wholes’ are continually emerging.”<sup>90</sup> This, of course, is the unmanifest realm of God. (Though Bohm himself did not explicitly connect consciousness with God, as does David Hawkins, his ideas lead in this direction, and this is why many of his colleagues refused to follow him in uniting matter with consciousness.) It is timeless and eternal; there is no past, present or future with omnipresence. It is all one; it is all now! God is the Eternal Now, the Great “I am”,

as there is no context that lies outside of God. “God is the ultimate context of which the universe and all existence is the content.”<sup>91</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. recognized this when he declared: “Everything that we see is a shadow cast by that which we do not see.” Thus the only limitations to detecting this are our illusory perceptions, our mental constructs, and our limited contexts we set up to protect our egos and positionalities.<sup>92</sup> J.B. Philips was right when he wrote, *Your God Is Too Small* (1962).

The electromagnetic spectrum of light illustrates how this narrowness of vision prevents us from seeing the whole. When light passes through a prism it breaks out in the seven spectral colors of the rainbow, but it is all *one light*. Beyond these colors at both extremes lies infrared and ultraviolet, neither of which can be seen with the naked eye. And beyond these lie other low and high frequencies of light and energy not visible without instrumentation, that go from long wavelengths to short ones (see graphics).



Source: <http://hyperphysics.phy-astr.gsu.edu/hbase/ems1.html#c1>.

We only see the narrow band or spectrum of visible light available to us. The part that we do not see does not cease to exist because we can't see it. It is there; we just can't distinguish it with natural vision. Yet animals seem to have no difficulty. Cats have much better eyesight at night than do humans. Dogs are able to hear beyond the spectral range of the human ear; birds also sing beyond the range of human hearing. An illustration of these abilities is also found in the Bible, when Balaam's donkey saw the angel blocking his path, but Balaam couldn't (Numbers 22:22-31). The same with Elisha's servant, who could not see the Lord's hosts surrounding the besieged city of Dothan, until the Lord

opened his eyes (2 Kings 6:8-17). Jesus spoke of the implicate and explicate orders in his own way in his conversations in John 3 and 4, where he talked about being “born of water and Spirit,” and the one who is “born of the Spirit is spirit,” and “the wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit,” and “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” Thus, the visible and invisible worlds are inextricably linked as one and can be “seen” and experienced through the context of *wholeness*.

If we truly accept the Doctrine of Creation, with its integral interconnectedness between God and the created world, then a holistic worldview is the only one acceptable for the church in all its dimensions and methods of ministry. Ironically, the Christian message has always been about ‘wholeness’ but its practice often has been one of “fragmentation”.

What are the implications of all this for urban ministry, urban theology, and the social transformation of cities, as well as for Christian community economic development—the empowering of local communities to develop the resources for the holistic transformation of their quality of life through economic, educational, physical, social, spiritual, and relational means?<sup>93</sup> It means a great deal, for this all makes a significant and qualitative change.

### **Wholeness and Urban Theory**

From the traditional urban theory arising out of the Chicago School of urban studies at the beginning of the last century, to the postmodern Los Angeles School arising at the end of the same century, the approach to cities has largely been and continues to be one of fragmentation—focusing on the parts, rather than starting from the whole. When Ernest Burgess first developed his concentric zone model of urban development,<sup>94</sup> he created a theoretical framework or context for understanding cities based on the geographical layout of the city of Chicago. That model has been the dominant framework for urban analysis for three-quarters of a century. The focus has been on what Louis Wirth called “three fundamental processes: the ecological, the economic, and the cultural.”<sup>95</sup> A lot of the studies that emerged out of the Chicago School were focused on

the urban life of the marginal and the dispossessed. The model is still the prevailing one and has influenced urban theories, theologies, and models of urban ministry framed around “inner city” work and urban mission for working with youth, the poor, and the outcasts. But it was dichotomous, discrete, discontinuous, and disconnected, because it was and continues to be a fragmented approach to the city, in line with Plato, divorced from the totality of the city as one.

On September 4, 1781, forty-four Spanish settlers from the San Gabriel Mission founded a town and named it *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora La Reina de Los Angeles de la Porciuncula*, "The Town of Our Lady Queen of the Angels of the Small Portion". Today it goes by a much shorter name—“Los Angeles.” From that small beginning with just 44 settlers, the City of Los Angeles today (US Census count as of July 1, 2004) is the second largest city in the United States with a population of 3,847,400. However, its metropolitan area is the eighth largest in the world with a population of 17,950,000—behind Tokyo, Mexico City, Seoul, New York, São Paulo, Delhi, and Mumbai.<sup>96</sup> It is the most ethnically diverse city in the *world*, not just the United States. David Rieff calls it the “capital of the Third World.”<sup>97</sup> And it competes with Miami as “the capital of Latin America,” though Miami seems to have the edge here.

Yet, Los Angeles, as the best example of urban deconstructionism, defies all forms of urban analysis, and is regarded as an aberration. This is because Los Angeles is the quintessential American fragmented city. Dorothy Parker (American short-story writer and poet, 1893-1967) gave us the best definition of LA. "Los Angeles is 72 suburbs in search of a city." It is a case of the parts in search of the whole. Today (2006) it would be 88 suburbs in search of a city. For Michael Dear, Los Angeles “owes little to conventional ideas about urbanism.”<sup>98</sup> This is because it does not fit into the traditional concentric zone model of the Chicago School nor any other approach, which seldom really worked. Thus it has given rise to a new school of urban analysis, the “Los Angeles School” or the postmodern approach, centered around the work of Michael Dear at USC, and Edward Soja at UCLA, though their ideas are being challenged by Mark Gottdiener.<sup>99</sup>

“By postmodern, [Dear] means that cities are developing in a way that is no longer rational or manageable according to the old logic of urban development,” namely



the Chicago School.<sup>100</sup> This “new urban sociology” with its critical sociospatial theory focuses on geography, architecture, urban space, place, territory, limits, borders, margins, periphery, and movement away from the center city. Soja, for example, argues for a “geographical materialism” that emerges within the dialectics of space, time, and social being.<sup>101</sup> He declares: “For at least fifty years, Los Angeles has been defying conventional categorical description of the urban, of what is city and what is suburb, of what can be identified as community or neighbourhood, of what copresence means in the elastic urban context. It has in effect been deconstructing the urban into a confusing collage of signs which advertise what are often little more than imaginary communities and outlandish representations of urban locality.”<sup>102</sup>

Yet no matter which approach is taken, the same crises, catastrophes, and calamities still plague cities: ineffective schools, juvenile crime, gangs, violence, poverty, urban blight, interethnic and racial tensions, immigration, international drug and sex trafficking, political corruption, and environmental waste. The postmodern Los Angeles School will make no more difference in urban transformation than the traditional Chicago School if the approach of both is that of fragmentation and Cartesian dualisms, starting from the parts in isolation from the whole.

Cities, as macrosystems, are comprised of many microsystems, which on the surface are seen as independent fragments, isolated from each other. Yet in harmony with Hugh Everett’s “many-worlds” interpretation of the universe,<sup>103</sup> “the states of the macrosystems are, by being correlated and entangled with each other, impossible to understand in isolation from each other and must be viewed as one composite system. It is no longer possible to speak [of] the state of one (sub)system in isolation from the other (sub)systems. Instead we are forced to deal with the states of subsystems *relative* to each other.”<sup>104</sup> Everett was talking about quantum physics and the implications for a many-worlds view of the universe. His words, however, also describe the city as a microcosm of the universe with its many “worlds”— the world of politics, the world of finance, the world of religion, the world of entertainment, the world of sports, the world of crime, the world of poverty, the night-time world vs. the day-time world, the world of tourism, the world of homelessness, the world of neighborhoods, the world of the undocumented, the gay world, the world of the religious, etc. The list is endless.

Virtually all urban residents interact with more than one world at the same time. But only when urban residents begin to see all of these “worlds”, as well as each other, as interconnected, as part of one integral whole, will people begin to experience "saneness" in our cities. Yet, what often makes for an “urban insaneness” is a “fragmentation by choice”, where urban residents carry on a precarious balance in separate worlds, not wanting one world to know of their connections or “life” in another world(s). Such duplicity leads to a soul fragmentation in an already fragmented “urban universe.” Mahatma Gandhi spoke of this fragmented self when he declared. “One man cannot do right in one department of life whilst he is occupied in doing wrong in any other department. Life is one indivisible whole.”<sup>105</sup>

This urban insaneness was the very problem depicted in the movie *Crash* (Best Picture of 2005), an impacting visual example of what happens when people are stuck in separate worlds as a result of their paradigms of fragmented thinking and limited choices. Unlike any film in recent memory (*Blade Runner* in 1982, with Harrison Ford, a futuristic film about Los Angeles, comes close), director Paul Haggis captured the reality of urban life in LA. This "reality" is the stark fragmentation and disconnect among human beings living in densely populated areas, in this case Los Angeles. The problem is not so much the racism and the violence, which rises to the surface in our cities, but the sense of fragmentation that lies beneath. To focus on racism and violence at the expense of fragmentation from which these ills arise, as did a number of the critics, is to focus on the parts and miss the whole. The problem was not racism but disconnectedness. All this is what Haggis so masterfully captures in this film—fragmented lives in search of wholeness. What the viewer sees but the characters in the film do not experience is that all the events and plots are connected. Paul Haggis takes this film even to a deeper level, however, and pulls from chaos theory and the "butterfly effect"—the importance of sensitivity to initial conditions, at the choice points. One small act of kindness or disrespect can have immense consequences down the road. People's lives are totally altered through some small kindness or stupidity—those choice points—and eventually the rogue character is changed and the good cop ends up becoming the opposite of what he intended to be.

Thus, ‘one small act of compassion,’ in a move from a negative attractor field to a

positive one, set off the ‘butterfly effect’. It is the *energy field* of compassion that transforms, however, not the particular act itself. In the end, people's lives are changed, but they do not see their interconnectedness, or their experience of oneness. Until we do we will continue to "crash" into each other in order to "feel something" as Graham, the police detective, states philosophically in the opening scene. The closing scene with snow falling is so symbolic of the need for a new context to experience urban life. Since when does it snow in LA? That's the point of Haggis. Something radically new, a new optic for "seeing" urban life and experiencing each other, is needed in order to sense wholeness in a fragmentary environment. Better than any other film, Paul Haggis' *Crash* captures all these wonderful sociological and spiritual dynamics, which most reviewers missed. The reviewers missed these dynamics because they were all caught up with the content of racism and missed the film's context of disconnection in need of interconnectedness. It truly is a masterpiece for understanding urban life, especially if one grasps its underlying message—fragmentation in search of wholeness.

One of the problems of urban life for many urban dwellers is that because of socioeconomic circumstances and/or levels of consciousness, they experience very few opportunities to making lasting change in their lives due to the limited choices available. Even when a door of opportunity may present itself, the trauma of their level of poverty fragmenting them from the whole, may blind them from seeing the door, or may immobilize them from going through it. And it may prevent them from recognizing that they stand at a critical choice point, a “phase transition”, where they either spiral upwards toward self-reorganization or downwards toward self-destruction.

Kai Erickson wrote some very important thoughts about the immobilizing effect of the trauma of poverty and the fragmentation of spirit it leaves people in.

It has long been recognized...that living in conditions of chronic poverty is often traumatizing, and if one looks carefully at the faces as well as the clinic records of people who live in institutions or hang out in vacant corners of skid row or enlist in the migrant labor force or eke out a living in the urban slums, one can scarcely avoid seeing the familiar symptoms of trauma—a numbness of spirit, a susceptibility to anxiety and rage and depression, a sense of helplessness, an inability to concentrate, a lost of various motor skills, a heightened apprehension about the physical and social environment, a preoccupation with death, a retreat into dependence, and a general loss of ego functions. One can find those symptoms wherever people feel left out of things, abandoned, separated from the

life around them. From that point of view, being too poor to participate in the promise of the culture or too old to take a meaningful place in the structure of the community can be counted as a kind of disaster.<sup>106</sup>

David R. Hawkins called this level of consciousness and state of existence, “the level of apathy.”<sup>107</sup> Successful urban Christian ministries seek to identify these critical moments and crucial life conditions, and provide alternatives that facilitate significant choice points leading to new developmental paths. One of the goals of Christian ministry is to create these choice points when people are stuck in a limited worldview and blindly cannot see alternatives, new contexts within which to operate.

John Saxe brought this out in his classic poem, “The Blind Men and the Elephant.”

It was six men of Indostan  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(Though all of them were blind)  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind.

Like the blind men and elephant, urbanologists, politicians, academics, civic leaders, clergy, urban youth workers, and missiologists continue to argue for differing and diverging contents to get at the roots of urban problems, because they cannot “see” the actual reality due to their limited contexts. But unless their respective contexts change—from fragmentation to wholeness—they will continue to miss the *whole elephant*. The content of what wise men saw, or better stated, “felt”, was determined by the context of their situation—they were all *blind!* After describing what each experienced out of their narrow context, Saxe concludes:

And so these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong!

Then he adds the following moral:

So oft in theologic wars,  
The disputants, I ween,  
Rail on in utter ignorance  
Of what each other mean,

And prate about an Elephant  
Not one of them has seen!

What is the lesson to be learned? *Context determines content*. If our context is just a trunk, then we are only going to see a snake! This is because the whole is the primary interconnected reality, not the parts. And until we recognize the wholeness of the city we will continue to come up with *part*-ial solutions.

Plato was wrong. The city is not *two* cities, one of the rich and one of the poor, but *one* city with extremes of wealth. Until each side is cognizant of the other and their bounded interconnectedness, each will ultimately push for unproductive solutions that will miss the whole elephant. Yet, urbanologists miss the mark when they focus their research on separate urban social problems (the content), in isolation of their interconnectedness with the city as a whole (the context). Christian urbanologists should know better because of the Hebrew concept of the *corporate personality*, “where the individual and the community are inseparable and each finds its existential significance in close relationship to the other.”<sup>108</sup> But what one finds emerging in urban studies is the fragmentary outcome of Greek dualistic thought and the Cartesian split between the body (the social, material needs) and the mind (the spiritual and cognitive dimensions).

Part of Plato’s problem, and our problem as well, was that he was focused on the *content*, the rich versus the poor, and not on the *context*—the totality of the city-state that created such discrepancies. We must therefore stand Plato on his head and do the opposite of what he said. We must treat the city as holistic—a “single state.” We tend to think that we get rid of urban problems by getting rid of content—poverty, violence, inequality, border problems, injustice, urban blight, the undocumented, and the homeless. But these concerns emerge as disconnected problems from narrow fields of reference, limited contexts that do not take in the whole. And, unless we change the context (the social conditions) that creates them, our sweeping “solutions” are just relocating dust. We thus find ourselves spinning in place like hamsters in their little wheels, going nowhere.

I head up a program that is seeking to train the next generation of urban change agents. The context we teach them must be inclusive and overarching, as in quantum mechanics, in order for them to effect positive change within social systems. The content of the solutions they bring to bear on social problems do not just come out of thin air.

These emerge from their operative contexts. If these contexts are limited in scope and understanding, so will their solutions be, for problem-solving solutions will take place within the limits of their scope of understanding. It is my task to expand their sights, give them a much more expansive way of seeing the world. What I am doing in my classes and one of the purposes of this paper, is to push the limits of their understanding into chaos theory and quantum mechanics so they can understand that contextually speaking, society is one entity. So also is our global reality; we live in *one* world.

To illustrate how the issue of context works in the real world, consider the fiasco and fall-out this nation and especially the poor have experienced as a result of shortsighted welfare policies of the past. When the Social Security Act went into effect in 1935, one of the small programs created was Aid to Dependent Children (ADC, now AFDC), to help families facing poverty. In order to ensure that money was only going to eligible families, states had what was called the "man-in-the-house" rule. Mothers and children were prohibited from receiving benefits if any man was in the home. Perhaps they were thinking there would be no need for aid if the father or an able-bodied male were present and could bring home income. This was falsely based, among other factors, on the flawed assumption of a 100% employment rate for low-income fathers or cohabiting males. The result was that all the fathers and cohabitators took off in order to help the family financially. Although the Supreme Court eventually struck down the so-called "man-in-the-house" rule in 1968, it has not been able to erase its continued legacy. This is one where kids in poor urban areas have been growing up without fathers and consistent male role models in the home. Kids growing up without fathers, born to young single mothers are now the highest prison population. At school meetings, teachers complain that the parents don't show up and Johnny is underachieving. In a society where higher education is becoming increasingly more important in the job market, Black and Latino students have the highest dropout rates. In essence, in low-income areas, the family is even more fragmented than before this policy took effect.

Today, it is common for kids to grow up without fathers in an environment where they are needed the most—one rampant with gangs, violence, drugs, poor education, unsafe streets, and urban blight. No one seems responsible, or even worse, appears to care. The single female-headed household tends to be the norm in urban America. Such

limited policies emerging from a narrow contextual understanding of poverty and its implications for the wider society, have affected everything in our society from our family, justice system, prison system, educational system, religious system, economic system, political system, all from a decision that got rid of fathers in low socioeconomic homes. *Now I am not implying that this one decision alone is the sole contributor to all of today's urban problems.* However, it is representational of the law of *sensitivity to initial conditions* from nonlinear dynamics, representing the unforeseen consequences that emerge from fragmented contexts. And what makes things worse is the fact that social policy makers often don't see, even after the fact, the unraveling of the “social fabric” when the wrong “thread” is pulled.<sup>109</sup>

People are blind to how the contents of their social programs actually emerge from unrecognized contexts that focus in on the parts and do not take in the whole. And even then people don't know how to adjust their context even when the facts are right in front of them. This is a concrete example of how context determines content. The limited context of this ill-fated decision did not foresee its macro effect on all of society, or its micro effect on each child whose dad left home unnecessarily.

When I teach students to have a wholeness perspective with an underlying understanding of quantum mechanics that stresses the connection of the entire biosphere and even the Universe, I am giving them a context out of which they can draw effective solutions for the future. Imparting to them this base of contextual understanding is crucial, since we cannot give them content-only solutions, such as—“If this event happens, class, do this.” No. One cannot possibly foresee all aspects of the future and all the social problems students will be grappling with over the span of their lifetime in order to tell them what to do ahead of time. Many politicians and urban organizations spend billions and years seeking to solve urban social problems, yet seem to be no further ahead than before. This is because they are focused on *content*, and one cannot surrender content faster than the human mind is able to produce it. “It is a losing game,” says Hawkins.<sup>110</sup> *We cannot teach enough content to address every possible scenario students are going to come up against.* Thus, we must give them the broadest base of a holistic context that will enable them to creatively produce specific solutions to an ever-complex world that has innumerable permutations to each decision. Shifting their focus to context will enable

them to see practical solutions they couldn't see before while focused on content. This shift of awareness needs to be a *conscious* skill the students need to develop and be able to employ in analyzing and synthesizing the spiral of development in urban environments.

Take what Texas achieved with Mexico, as an example. The Rio Grande is *one* river. You cannot have one side siphoning off all the water in a drought and leaving the other side dry. You cannot have one side polluting the river and the other side expecting clean drinking water. Since it is one river, it is one problem, and not a separate Mexican problem or a US problem. Thus, measures were enacted on both sides by the International Boundary and Water Commission to mutually benefit both populations, with Texas doing the lion's share since they had the most money. Interestingly enough, “the mission of the IBWC is to apply the rights and obligations . . . in a way that benefits the social and economic welfare of the peoples on the two sides of the boundary and improves relations between the two countries.”<sup>111</sup> This is *wholeness!*

Take neighborhood filth, as another example. One walks through some neighborhoods and garbage is everywhere. What is the solution? Organizing a neighborhood clean-up drive? That will help, but only temporarily. The problem is not the content of garbage in the streets, but the context of the mind, the collective consciousness of the neighborhood, that often does not extend beyond an individual “I-don’t-give-a-damn” attitude. Oscar Lewis called it the “culture of poverty.”<sup>112</sup> Rupert Sheldrake calls it “morphogenetic fields”—attractor fields of “collective consciousness” which influence thinking, behavior, and the pattern of action, linking all people that come within its invisible influence, across time and space.<sup>113</sup> But Muhammad Ali explained it best when he declared. “The slum is not in the neighborhood, the slum is not in the ghetto, the slum is in the people. The people make the slum. And the condition our people are in now, if you gave them a 93 million dollar project, they will make a slum of out it in 24 hours.” He then added what would happen with a different context and operative level of consciousness, “Then you can take a nation of people who are intelligent and they can make a slum a paradise.”<sup>114</sup> He was right, as he understood the core problem perfectly.

Yet, you cannot *force* people to change their contexts. So how does one change context? As stated earlier, the greatest lesson we can learn is that “all content is subject to



context.” But what creates “context”? “*Attractors create context*”—alignment with the attractor patterns of consciousness or morphogenetic fields—those nonlinear dynamic gravity-like attractor fields of levels of consciousness and operational value systems.<sup>115</sup>

Let me illustrate. Urbanologists have long recognized the importance of levels of consciousness, though not necessarily using those words, to show how attractor fields work in urban communities. In 1982, James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling developed what they called, “the Broken Window Theory.”<sup>116</sup> “If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge.” Soon an irreversible decline sets in and the neighborhood spirals downward toward urban blight. It is not just a “broken window,” but also graffiti, garbage in the streets, abandoned cars, shattered glass, unkempt yards, all of which serve as “broken windows” to further escalate urban decay. This is because “serious street crime flourishes in areas in which disorderly behavior goes unchecked.”<sup>117</sup> The best way then to fight crime is to fight the disorder that precedes it... graffiti, panhandling, uncollected trash, and unrepaired buildings. David Hawkins describes the downward spiral this way.

Unless early signs of decline are corrected in a neighborhood, they attract further abuses, damage, and neglect, and the rate of decline accelerates as though there were a magnet-like attraction to all that is negative. It starts with graffiti and eventuates into gang turf warfare, drugs, shootings, and arson. Thus, the attractor fields of consciousness levels act as though they have a magnetic attractor or repellent effect on other energies, almost as though they were charged or polarized. It is the attractor field of the negative energy of apathy that attracts the classical social expressions of poverty, crime, overpopulation, and structural decline.<sup>118</sup>

What is taking place here is that people are tuning in to certain morphogenetic fields (context), from which emerges the content of broken windows, car thefts, garbage littered streets, drug infestation, and a downward spiral toward community disintegration. This is related to Einstein’s theory where energy becomes matter or form, in this case urban blight, and Bohm’s unmanifest implicate order unfolding into the visible explicate order.

Robert J. Sampson and Stephen W. Raudenbush have recently revisited the Broken Window Theory.<sup>119</sup> Their research suggested to them that not only race and class played a role in the perception of urban blight, but also “social psychological mechanisms,” or the “social context.” They thus conclude:

Theories about broken windows also are at stake, even though we say nothing here about the causes of crime. Attempts to improve urban neighborhoods by reducing disorder—cleaning streets and sidewalks, painting over graffiti, removing abandoned cars, reducing public drinking and the associated litter, and eliminating sources of blight such as prostitution, gang gatherings, and drug sales—are admirable and may produce many positive effects. They seem to be the urban policy of the day. Nevertheless, our results suggest that these steps may have only limited payoffs in neighborhoods inhabited by large numbers of ethnic minority and poor people. The limitation on effectiveness in no way derives from deficiencies in the residents of such neighborhoods. Rather, it is due to social psychological processes of implicit bias and statistical discrimination as played out in the current (and historically durable) racialized context of cities in the United States. In other words, simply removing (or adding) graffiti may lead to nothing, depending on the social context.<sup>120</sup>

Thus, for Sampson and Raudenbush, the context does indeed determine the content. And focusing on the content of the number of broken windows, abandoned cars, trash, and squalor, without looking into the *context*, the attractor fields from whence these negative social dynamics emerge, is to miss the whole elephant. What all this means is that long-term urban transformation must first be from within in order to produce a lasting external change. All external change without first the internal, is futile.

### **Chaos Theory**

What is involved in change here is *chaos theory*, the theory of nonlinear dynamics (a branch of mathematics), brought to light in the 1960s by Edward Lorenz, a meteorologist at MIT working on a project to predict the weather accurately. Chaos theory shows that order can come out of chaos as a result of the law of *sensitive dependence on initial conditions*, which can result in large and unpredictable outcomes. Newtonian linear dynamics, with its Second Law of Thermodynamics, hold that only the reverse is possible. But Ilya Prigogine, the 1977 Nobel Prize laureate in chemistry, showed the reverse was also true, that complex structures could come from simpler ones. What Prigogine says is that states of chaos are not end-states in themselves. In reality they are the states of upheaval, what he called “dissipative structures,” just prior to a system undergoing a radical transformation to a higher level of organization, as a result of infused new energy through *sensitivity to initial conditions*.<sup>121</sup>

This law “describes the process in which a minuscule variation in a pattern of

inputs can result in a very significant change in the eventual output. The effect of the minute variation becomes amplified until it affects the whole system and an entire new energy pattern evolves. In physics this is called ‘turbulence.’ Such turbulence in the attractor energy fields creates an emotional upset which continues until a new level of equilibrium is established.”<sup>122</sup> In chaos theory, the point at which this turbulence takes place is called a “phase transition” (or what Everett called a “choice point”)—the point at which a person, a system, or a neighborhood bifurcates to a higher level of complexity or spirals downward to disintegration. Those “initial conditions” are often miniscule, small problems, such as a “broken window,” which can escalate to full blown urban blight.

“In essence, this means that one’s motive, which arises from the principles that one is committed to”—those attractor fields—is what gives meaning to our lives and significance to our actions.<sup>123</sup> Like iron filings, the “content” of our mind and heart is drawn by the positive or negative “contexts”—the attractor magnetic fields—operative in our life and in our environments, which are the result of the willful choices we make. “Compassion is one of the highest of all of the energy attractor power patterns.”<sup>124</sup> It is the energy field that infuses change in individual and collective lives. Thus, through an understanding of chaos theory and attractor patterns, the chaos in urban neighborhoods can be transformed into a positive pattern that spirals people upwards. Ministry operating out of the context of compassion is one of the greatest sources of power for urban transformation, for it includes the Other in wholeness.

When people’s *context* expands to include others, so also will the *content* of their actions. When we as human beings accept as a working framework the context that God has indeed made of one blood all nations, being that they share 99.99% of the same genetic code with every person on Earth, then the content problems of AIDS, global poverty, environmental sustainability, and other global ills can begin to be solved. For as Bohm suggested, our worldview “will cause us to act in such a way that we do in fact produce the very” wholeness that we now see. Until then the United States will continue to be regarded as the “stingiest” nation on earth.<sup>125</sup> This is because globalization, while giving an illusion of wholeness due to its superficial sense of inclusion, is in reality an economic process that emerges from a fragmentary worldview. It thus creates a world of alienation, separation and inequality, which benefits the privileged few at the expense of

the disenfranchised many. And the problems of globalization cannot be solved until there is a shift in paradigms—from exclusion to inclusion—out of which can emerge truly effective solutions for all.

When Miguel de Unamuno, the great Spanish philosopher said, “*cada cabeza es un mundo*” [each head is a world], he was talking wholeness. When John Donne declared: “No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.” He was talking wholeness. When Rodney King pleaded with the people of Los Angeles, “Can’t we just get along?” He also was talking wholeness. And when Blaise Pascal declared that the “sole cause of man’s unhappiness is that he does not know how to stay quietly in his room,”<sup>126</sup> he too was talking about wholeness. For unless I am integral, unless I am whole, unless I have an internally balanced equilibrium, the rapid pace of urban life will create fragmented foibles of adult attention deficit disorder in my life. And I will not be able to stand, much less sit, to hear above the cacophony of the city and the din of my heart, the voice of God, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

But how are people going to know God in the midst of all the wired technoise of fragmentation? Walk down South Street in Philadelphia, 42<sup>nd</sup> Street in New York City, Hollywood and Sunset Boulevards in Los Angeles (or any other similar street in a major city in America) to catch a glimpse of fragmentation at its best (or shall we say “worst”). Where does urban ministry begin in such a context? Are people still interested in God and religion or has secularization become the dominant force in society? Apparently not.

The secularization thesis claims that potential consumers in a modern, enlightened age no longer find a need for faith in the supernatural. Does this thesis hold true, however, when we shift the focus from religious *consumers* to religious *suppliers*? Is the problem one of demand or one of supply? Depending on which view one takes it will make a big difference in the kind of ministry one engages in. In other words, does the low level of religious interest, reflect a weak *demand*, or an unattractive *product*, badly marketed, within a free market economy? Research in religious economies, by Rodney

Stark, shows that the secularization thesis is simply wrong. The reality is that levels of religious interest vary, not in response to modernity and scientific sophistication, but to the kind of ‘product’ religious suppliers are putting out on the market in light of human need.<sup>127</sup> In other words, it is a problem of content divorced of context. Religious suppliers are focused on content (demand), whereas the real problem is one of context—suppliers that fail to take into account the *social conditions* of urban life and how religion can be relevant under such conditions. Sound urban ministry comes from sound urban theory and holistic theology.

Our overarching context *does* indeed determine the resulting content of our lives. Our views about God tell us more about ourselves than about God, for they expose the *context* out of which we operate and the resulting *content* that emerges. Hawkins suggests that “context is all inclusive of the totality of the person and the process—the mind, the body, the style of the practice, the person, the setting, the room, the building, the city, the country, the state, the continent, the world, the sky, the planets, the galaxy, the universe, the mind of God.”<sup>128</sup> Thus the parameters of context extend from the mind of man to the mind of God, from the smallest to the greatest. An atheist, then, merely reveals a context so small that there is only room for the content of personal ego. The same can be said of the theologies, urban theories, and methodologies of ministry that emerge to meet the challenge of urban ministry. If their context is too small, many well-meaning programs are found to be ineffective. Thus, the need arises for a perspective of wholeness to meet the global challenges of the task at hand.

### **The Four Worlds Model**

This worldview of wholeness means we have to look at the world differently; one that is a manifestation of undivided unity and interconnectedness. It accordingly calls for a new theoretical framework and methodology for ministry—a wider context—one with a holistic intent such as the one that emerges from “the Four Worlds Model.”

How does one effectively go about doing the business of God’s Kingdom within the encompassing global context? The divine imperative for cross-cultural ministry, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,” obviously demands a person who will be sensitive to the perspective of other cultures and worldviews.

The Four Worlds Model contends that we all come from some perspective; thus *where* we stand determines *what* we see. This is because our “context”—our social, spatial, spiritual attractor frames of awareness—influences our “content”—our words, thoughts, actions, and worldviews. To illustrate how this applies to urban ministry, let’s look at a positive means of understanding context on a macro level with the Four Worlds Model.<sup>129</sup> In this model, drawn from the work of Ronnie Lessem and Sudhanshu Palsule, *Managing in Four Worlds*, there are “four worlds” or contexts: the West, the North, the East, and the South. (The ideas are simplified for this paper.)

Largely emerging from North America and the United Kingdom, the West tends to be individualistic, action-based, and pragmatic. It approaches to life as context-free, universalistic, and self-reliant. It thus believes its ideas are not context or culture-bound, but can thus be applied universally in all contexts and cultures since this is what is perceived to be best for the world. Politicians often feel that what is good for America is good for the world. It is such actions that often give rise to “the ugly American.” The Church has often been guilty of the same practice. A representative proverb from this perspective is, “Time is money.”

The North tends to be rational, logistical, and consensual, and is best manifested in Northern Europe (primarily Scandinavia though also prevalent in France and Germany). This is why Derrida found such a stronghold in the North. It is inclined to be systemic, emotionless, and objective. Thus, in line with Cartesian thinking, the head should prevail over the heart, the mind over the body, reason over emotion. “I think therefore I am.”

The East is more holistic, intuitive, and relationistic. Prevalent in Japan, China, and India, it seeks harmony in a context-rich environment, where everything is interconnected. “All is one.”

The South seems to be family-centered, communal, with rich storytelling. Dominating in Africa and Latin America, it is humanistic with its focus on the essential dignity, fullness, and worth of the human soul. It tends toward expressiveness, community, and tribal subjectiveness, in a manner that subsumes the individual to the group. “It takes a village...” “Mi casa es su casa.”

These four worlds are “ideal types” (mental abstractions by which to measure reality) and are not intended to fully describe every complexity of the “real” world. Neither is this model presented to justify some kind of relativism that all values are of equal worth and must be supported simply because a given culture is centered on those values.<sup>130</sup> Such an idea is neither biblical nor humanely compassionate, since many cultural values go contrary, not only to sound biblical principals but against human rights as well. An example would be female circumcision, as practiced in some African societies. This is not a matter of “cultural relativism,” and a watering down of “truth”. “All spiritual truths are eternal, outside of time. They never change. They are qualities of God—joy, perfection, love, beauty.”<sup>131</sup> What we are addressing here is the human side of transformation, not its divine side. Some will not be able to make the distinction, however, and therein lays the rub—the “wild cards” outside the expected. For this we must trust the Holy Spirit and divine intervention.

Moreover, due to global communications, international travel, immigration, and the resulting cultural diffusion and adaptations of worldviews, these worlds are blending more and more, thus the boundaries between them are becoming more and more blurred. The West and the North, nevertheless, are the most dominant and influential frames of understanding in the world today, and the most prevalent in the Church. To keep embracing these two worlds as the model for everything in the church, however, is to a certain degree to embrace “death and dying.” Those two worlds are no longer the centers of church growth, spiritual vibrancy, and divine dynamics, as this has long shifted to the South and East. Urban explosion with its concomitant problems of overpopulation, unemployment, squatter settlements, poverty, crime, and corruption, have also become part of urban life in the worlds of the East and South.

“For the first time since it began two millenniums ago, Christianity is no longer ‘Western’ in any very meaningful sense.”<sup>132</sup> The South, for example, now challenges the North and the West for its lackadaisical spiritual attitude and practice. This is because the character of global Christianity has changed; it is now more socially conservative, and will become increasingly so. All of which will have a big influence on the direction Christianity takes in this new millennium.

Christianity, once dominated by the United States and Europe, still preserves an

almost exclusive West-North worldview, orientation, and theology. It tends toward a linear view of history and is most comfortable in understanding the parts as organizing the whole. The East and South, however, have a more cyclical view of history, with the whole organizing the parts. The East is most dissimilar or opposite to the West, just like the South is most disparate or opposite to the North. History, however, is neither linear nor cyclical, but *spiral*, moving us to the next level of awareness as we open ourselves more and more to an understanding of God and God's action in the world through God's Spirit.<sup>133</sup> "Life is not a cycle," affirms John Edser, "its a spiral, with quantum steps."

The source of many of the problems in world Christianity today is our ethnocentric, North-West paradigm. The fact is, that it doesn't even occur to us that we need the holistic orientations of the East and the South to be whole. For this reason Albert Schweitzer wrote the book, *Indian Thought and Its Development*, to help the West not only understand Eastern thinking, but also by gaining such insight it would "necessarily make European thought clearer and richer."<sup>134</sup> Church leaders, evangelists, and theologians span the globe as "ethnocentric globetrotters," with a message that tends to be monocultural, monolingual, and monomemetic (one prevailing operational value system with its one-right-way approach). Yet as we expand our contexts, the more inclusive our content will be for mutual understanding. As Albert Schweitzer said, "Until he extends his circle of compassion to include all living things, man will not himself find peace."

We tend to forget that the Bible is not a "western" book, but is written from an "eastern" frame of understanding. As stated earlier, the Hebrew word for peace, for example, is *shalom*. But our western mindset translates it as "peace" (KJV), or "welfare" (NRSV). In actuality, at its root lies the eastern concept of "wholeness." Within this understanding, God's admonition to His people in Jeremiah 29:7 takes on an entirely new meaning. "But seek the *wholeness* of the city... for in its *wholeness* you will find your *wholeness*."

Only when we approach the city from a vision and mission of wholeness will we ourselves experience that wholeness. This is why Paulo Freire says that it is an "illusion that the hearts of men and women can be transformed while the social structures which make those hearts 'sick' are left intact and unchanged."<sup>135</sup> This is not the dichotomous



either/or, but the nondualist both/and. This is what urban ministry is about, not only changing the hearts of men and women, and boys and girls, but also the social structures that make those hearts sick. To err on one side or the other is to play spiritual games in which God does not participate. Neither must we.

The Church and its institutions of higher education today can find their wholeness only if they move beyond the parameters of an exclusive West-North fragmentary mindset to embrace the inclusive wholeness of the East and South. Let me draw on a lesson of wholeness from the East that would benefit the West and North. It is the Buddhist concept of “emptiness”, which has been greatly misunderstood in the West. Many of us in the West have not even considered the possibility that we have something to learn from our counterparts in other wisdom traditions.

### **An Example From the Eastern World**

Because we here in the West have the greatest difficulty in appreciating an Eastern context, I would like to integrate one of the perceptions from the East with faith and learning. The concept of “emptiness” in Tibetan Mahayana tradition is crucial to an understanding of wholeness. In this connotation, emptiness does not mean “empty,” a “void,” that “nothing exists.”<sup>136</sup> “Emptiness is just another way of saying that things are devoid of individual, inherent, and independent existence.”<sup>137</sup> “Emptiness is full.”<sup>138</sup> All things are connected in some unfathomable but tangible way. Ultimately, all things are dependent on one another. Emptiness is another word for interdependence—a state of interconnectedness devoid or “empty” of isolated, fragmented individualism.

Emptiness is not about “getting rid of” but “filling the life with.” How does one get rid of darkness? By turning on the light! Emptiness is about oneness, interdependence, and interconnectedness with God and the Other . . . in need. As Jesus said:

1. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart . . . and your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37, 39).
2. “Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40).
3. “Those who say, ‘I love God,’ and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for

those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen” (1 John 4:20).

4. “And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3); “He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? says the LORD” (Jeremiah 22:16).

The reason we in the West have problems understanding the eastern concept of “emptiness” is because it is a “koan.” A koan is saying (a parable, a story, a question, some times paradoxical—two seemingly clashing ideas), that seeks to expand awareness.

The word *koan* is Japanese and comes from the Chinese characters 公案, *kung-an*, meaning “public dictate.”<sup>139</sup> Koans are grasped, not through the mind with its linear, logical, rational, sequential mode of thought, but through the spirit, by means of nonlinear intuition, moving one from fragmented thinking to holistic discernment.

A classic Zen koan is: “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” One meaning is “silence”; another is “emptiness”—divesting oneself of independent existence and accepting our human interconnectedness. Thus, to view and live life as a separate, independent, intrinsic entity, isolated from others, is to be like one hand trying to clap.

Jesus spoke in koans (“parables”), as the Bible is originally an “eastern” and not a “western” book. These examples contain important Christian principles:

- “Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it” (Mt. 10:39).
- “If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away” (Mt. 18:8).
- “Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (John. 12:24).

The content of Jesus’ sayings is often misunderstood because of our western thought patterns and context. Yet, as Jim Wallis correctly assesses, “social location often determines biblical interpretation.”<sup>140</sup> When our context (our social or spiritual location) changes, so does our content (what we focus on).

“Interdependence rather than independence defines our lives and everything

around us,” declares the Dalai Lama. “None of us is an island. The world is a vast web of intertwined events, people, and things. These linkages may be difficult to see, but they are real, always there, lurking just beneath the surface.”<sup>141</sup> Because of this fundamental interconnectedness between people and people, and between people and things, then *compassion*—my caring for others because of our *oneness*—becomes the method of effecting change in the world. Compassion is the only mode of ministry usable when one moves from fragmentation to wholeness, through emptiness and interdependence. “It is because of this interrelatedness that we are able to empathize with the sufferings of others.”<sup>142</sup>

Western Christianity, with its unbalanced focus on the individual and personal faith, is obsessed with the ego and getting rid of “self.” Yet, as David R. Hawkins declares: “Spiritual seekers know that the core of all pathways to God is surrender, but to what and how are not clear. Without a decisive technique, many seekers spend years surrendering on content and complain that they are no further along than before. The mind goes right on with its endless production and, therefore, one cannot surrender content as fast as it is produced; it is a losing game.”<sup>143</sup> Thus, it is not “content”—the ego, the self, our attachments—that we surrender; but the “context”—our spiritual location, spiritual will, choice, and the “nonlinear field of awareness” of who we are in relation to God. “By analogy, it would be like looking at the planet Earth from outer space, where space is the context and Earth is the content.”<sup>144</sup> To focus on ego “is merely utilizing the ego to attack the ego, thereby reinforcing it. The vilification of the ego creates so much guilt that the most common way that human consciousness handles the conflict is through denial, secularism, and by projecting blame onto others.”<sup>145</sup> Yet, when one moves the focus from ego (content) to God (context), one removes the “illusions” that keep genuine surrender from taking place. It is much like “the shining sun is not conditional upon the removal of the clouds; it merely becomes apparent.”<sup>146</sup> Thus, “the ego is dissolved not by denunciation or self-hatred, which are expressions of the ego, but by benign and nonmoralistic acceptance and compassion that arise out of understanding its intrinsic nature and origin.”<sup>147</sup>

Jesus described the futility of surrendering content. “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but

it finds none. Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So will it be also with this evil generation" [Matthew 12:43-45, NRSV].

Jesus was addressing the Pharisees and what made that generation "evil". It was their overriding concern with "self" and their obsession with personal piety devoid of social concern. But as Jim Wallis says, "God is personal, but never private."<sup>148</sup>

### **One World**

None of the four worlds by itself provides the full picture and solution to the needs of a global faith and world society. As Lessum and Palsule declare: "Each of the four modes depends on the other three for reaching its fullest potential."<sup>149</sup> When the western mindset projects the view that the West does not need any input from other cultural paradigms, we alienate the very ones we hope to win. In the same way, when higher socioeconomic status groups project the view to urban inhabitants that the underprivileged are not really needed in society, we contribute to the vicious circle of fragmentation. Thus, a blending of the strengths of the four worlds will result in an expanded context for understanding the human condition in urban environments, the mission of the Church in the city, and the methodology of God's Kingdom. In seeing all four worlds as one, we will "transcend and include"<sup>150</sup> past limitations and new challenges, and develop a vision of "one world" to which to proclaims God's call. "For God so loved the world..." Just America? No. "Go you therefore and teach all nations..." From the perspectives of just the West and the North? No. What also is needed are the perspectives of the East and the South. Conceivably God's mandate is to teach "all nations" from the "divine perspective," which includes all four worlds, but transcends them through emanating wholeness.

*Our cities are populated with people from all four worlds.* This truth provides a basis for strategic urban ministry, both on the international scale as well as nationally. Let me give an example of the value of the Four Worlds Model for urban ministry in addressing one of the most prevalent and persistent problems in urban economic

development—unemployment and economic achievement. For many African Americans and Latinos this is the most persistent and debilitating social problem in an urban context. Yet, everyone does not perceive the problem in the same way, nor are the solutions proposed the same. Thus, among people that come from the pragmatic world of the West some tend to see the problem as being one of individual achievement or the lack thereof, and a failure to take advantage of the opportunities presented. For example, the United States program for economic development in Puerto Rico after World War II was called “Operation Bootstrap.” This was a very Western, rugged individual, do it yourself metaphor—pull yourself up, you can do it, you have only yourself to blame. Unemployment within this mindset exists because people are lazy and/or are part of a welfare system that rewards non-effort. Political and religious conservatives often express this attitude toward the poor and persons of color.

For those in the North, focused on rational systems and equity, the problem of poverty and unemployment is a systemic one. It is the result of the system that “blames the victim” by limiting the options of the poor. Therefore the problem of unemployment is a rational “systems problem”, reflective of the larger society that does not incorporate the needs of all within its socioeconomic structures. This attitude is often manifested among the social liberals, the do-gooders, the “guilty rich,” who are quick to lift the guilt from the poor and place all the blame on the society.

For the East unemployment is a failure of group integration, a culture out of harmony with the overall needs of all within. Therefore, everyone must band together, the strong support the weak, and all work together to help each other. The group is more important than the individual. If one fails all fail. So the one who has helps the one who has not, for the tables can very well be reversed. Honor, respect, harmony, group solidarity are the greatest values and of ultimate importance. Such approach toward employment is often seen among Asian Americans, Arabs, Jews, East Indians, where within each group, one support the other. It is not surprising then that the majority of the world’s “merchant minorities”, small business brokers and money lenders, come primarily from these groups.

For the South, also focused on group solidarity and group cohesion, the response may not be one of an upward spiral but a downward one, where if a person breaks away

from the solidarity of group, they are immediately labeled as “nonconformists”. When members of the group seek to achieve, others instead of supporting them might seek to bring them down—the crab syndrome. “You think you are better than we are?” “Stop trying to be ‘white’!” Thus, group *underachievement* may be valued above individual success. This attitude and behavior is sometimes seen among some Blacks and Latinos in relation to education. John McWhorter calls this “the cult of anti-intellectualism,”<sup>151</sup> and may well be the most destructive force keeping African American and Latinos, especially males, from succeeding in school. It is “a defining feature of cultural blackness today.”<sup>152</sup>

Yet Elliot Liebow, in his classic study of street corner society, *Tally’s Corner*, brings out an important insight into why African American men hanging out on street corners have different attitudes toward jobs than middle-class society. It has to do with “time orientation.” Far too often, middle-class observers view the “could care less” attitude of street corner society as a “present-time orientation” with an inability to “defer gratification” and with no interest in employment. This stands in sharp relief to the future-orientation of the wider society and their concern for jobs. But Liebow brings out, that in reality both middle-class and the poor-class are future oriented. “The difference between the two [classes] lies not so much in their different orientations to time as in their different orientations to future time or, more specifically, to their different futures.”<sup>153</sup> It is a situation of different contexts resulting in different contents regarding the future. The first sees hope in the future and saves; the other only sees hopelessness and consumes. Liebow declares:

The future orientation of the middle-class person presumes, among other things, a surplus of resources to be invested in the future and a belief that the future will be sufficiently stable both to justify his investment (money in a bank, time and effort in a job, investment of himself in marriage and family, etc.) and to permit the consumption of his investment at a time, place and manner of his own choosing and to his greater satisfaction. But the streetcorner man lives in sea of want. He does not, as a rule, have a surplus of resources, either economic or psychological. Gratification of hunger and the desire for simple creature comforts cannot be long deferred. Neither can support for one’s flagging self-esteem. Living on the edge of both economic and psychological subsistence, the streetcorner man is obliged to expend all his resources on maintaining himself from moment to moment.<sup>154</sup>

Liebow then adds. “As for the future, the young streetcorner man has a fairly

good picture of it . . . It is a future in which everything is uncertain except the ultimate destruction of his hopes and the eventual realization of his fears.”<sup>155</sup> Can the average suburban inhabitant, or private college student, coming from a different context, begin to understand the content of that degree of hopelessness?

This value of seeing life from the perspective of the other through the Four Worlds Model is an important skill to possess and is a teaching tool necessary for students in urban transformation. It is very easy for persons to come into any situation with preconceived ideas and plans of action that fail simply because of insensitivity to the dynamics operative in differing contexts and cultures. What is needed is an approach of incarnational ministry, becoming “flesh” to meet the needs of those with whom one identifies.

In urban churches all four worlds are to be found; in academic institutions all four worldviews exist, in addition to the differing levels of consciousness and systems of values nesting within this model. It can readily be seen that this more encompassing diversity rapidly surpasses the superficial differences of skin color, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation that we so often focus on as the observable content. The *real* diversity, the most empowering diversity of all, is the human diversity of cultural values and thinking systems that determine *how* people think, not just *what* they say, value, or do.<sup>156</sup> Therefore, the key question in understanding human differences is: “What kind of *thinking* prompted that kind of action?” And the answer is: There is *context* that generated that *content*. Multicultural ministry in a global economy means much more than just transcending race and appreciating cultural differences. It means valuing and nurturing the diversity of thought and core ways of seeing the world and perceiving reality—the context—out of which emerges our actions and the choices we make—the content.

### **A Biblical Example**

A biblical example of the Four Worlds Model is seen in the first Christian Church Council in Jerusalem in Acts 15. The Early Church leaders had to make crucial decisions when two worlds clashed—the East (Hebrew) with the West (Greek). The Holy Spirit gave them wisdom in resolving the crisis and potential schism, by taking *different steps*

of actions for *different groups*, thereby safeguarding the *unity* of the Church.

Acknowledgement that both sides were being led by the same Holy Spirit at the different level each was, brought about a sense of wholeness and harmony.

Paul later developed a most important operational principle for the church when confronting such potentially divisive differences, both with regard to matters of internal management as well as methods of mission. It is the Incarnational Principle for multicultural ministry. “To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law... To those outside the law I became as one outside the law.... To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. *I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some.* I do it all for the sake of the gospel” (I Corinthians 9:19-23. NRSV). What does it mean to become “western” to work with those in the West; “eastern” to relate to those in the East; “northern” to reason with those in the North; and “southern” to experience community with those in the South? This Incarnational Principle epitomizes wholeness.

Incarnational wholeness is modeled through radical humility—the realization that God is the Source of everything. We know nothing in and of ourselves. We are not the origin of anything, for everything comes from God. “What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?” (1 Corinthians 4:7). Radical humility is not a humbling of oneself, but an attitude manifested in a comportment, which relinquishes “positionalities”—the taking of a position and defending it at all costs because my ego is at stake. It is a sense that we really do not “know” anything, and therefore recognizes that no one really needs my opinion, for God is the Source and not ego. It is the door for spiritual advancement. Pride shuts that door and prevents growth; humility opens it. *Content generates pride; context generates humility; and positionality creates duality.*

What is the core of the ego? “The core of the ego is atheistic,” David Hawkins reminds us. Why? “Because it is god. And even if it quotes God it does so for its own reasons, and kills you in the name of God, that way it gets to still be god, yet pretend not to be.”<sup>157</sup> Hawkins then adds, “It is pride beyond all else. Pride in the form of the vanity of thought, mentation, concepts, and opinions are all the basis of ignorance. The antidote is radical humility.”<sup>158</sup> For this reason it is important to recognize that the “*self-justified*



*positionality is the real enemy of peace.*”<sup>159</sup> Even if I am technically right, without humility the ego will have a field day.

From such an internal spirit of humility materializes effective urban ministry into the most beneficial form for the whole. This humility enables us to realize that the power for transformation resides not with the church or with well-researched models of urban ministry, but with the Holy Spirit. “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3). The church can no longer take a one-size-fits-all approach to urban ministry. The first century church didn’t; neither must the twenty-first century church. Why? Because just like in Early Christianity, the wind of the Spirit blows where it chooses. You see its manifestations, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. “So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

This new wind of the Spirit is enabling us to see that as important as secular paradigms are for understanding the city, they do not give us the total picture. We thus need to operate by an entirely new paradigm than even the best of this earth’s thinking. This is because our context is broader than theirs, for our stakes are higher—the manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth through wholeness. Because the challenge is greater, our task is not to regurgitate worn out theories or postmodern ones, but divine principles from a higher level of consciousness. Redeem means to take back; salvation means to make whole. This is the mission before us to take back the wholeness of the city, because in its wholeness we shall find and experience our own wholeness. And we will not experience this wholeness by fleeing the city to our secure, isolated hovels.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have sought to provide a fresh framework for understanding the city and urban transformation. Quantum physics with its nondualistic approach to life provides such an approach, one that will enable urban workers to literally think outside their prevailing paradigms. It is one that shifts thinking from fragmentation to wholeness. The Four Worlds Model illustrates this wholeness of approach. Today global communications, the Internet, and world transportation are blending “one world” out of the four. In light of this, the new kind of urban leaders needed in this Third Millennium are “one world” visionaries that both include and transcend the four worlds. They are

civic leaders that no longer take a one-size-fits-all approach to urban planning and neighborhood revitalization. But are ones who understand that the content of urban transformation arises from an awareness of the context of the attractor forces at work in urban environments. As social change agents we cannot reduce human suffering and bring ignorance to an end if we fail to see the connection between content and context. We heal our segregated cities and fragmented planet through wholeness operating from within. This healing wholeness is brought about through the spiral of understanding our human oneness.

The city is like a river, watering both banks. If one bank pollutes neither side will have clean water to drink, for it is all *one river*. One cannot just put a wall down the middle of the river and say this is my water and that's yours. It is all one water. So is the city—one city—not two as Plato said, one for the rich and one for poor. Pollution on one side taints the whole. Only when we recognize that the river is one, that the city is one, that planet Earth's humanity is one, will we be able to begin the integral process that converts that river of death into the river life.

“And he showed me a river, a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, gushing out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the great street of the city, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, . . . and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:1, 2, adapted from The Peshitta).

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