

Subdivided By Faith? An Historical Account of Evangelicals and the City

By Mark T. Mulder and James K. A. Smith

Introduction

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In their landmark study, *Divided by Faith*, Michael Emerson and Christian Smith articulated the ways in which evangelical spirituality and practice actually contributed to the racialization and segregation of American culture—the very antithesis of the picture of the redeemed community “from every nation, tribe, people and language” (Rev. 7:9).¹ We want to consider whether evangelicals tend to exhibit an anti-urban bias that contributes to a negative view of urban life and contributes to the growth of suburban and exurban social arrangements in the United States. (And like the case studied by Emerson and Smith, if such evangelical antipathy exists, these sensibilities seem to be in contrast to the biblical eschatological hope that locates redemption in a *city* [Rev. 21:2].) We believe that such an anti-urban bias accords neither with an integral Christian theoretical framework, nor with the findings of social research—which increasingly points to the corrosive effects of the suburbanization of U.S. populations, and also indicates the unique possibilities for community in urban settings.

We believe that religion is a significant but heretofore overlooked cultural factor in discussions of anti-urban bias (and any relation between anti-urban bias and consequent suburban expansion).² But if we consider the role of culture, and religion in particular, as factors that influence the built environment, new sets of questions arise. Why/how does religious belief influence anti-urban bias in America? Does it mitigate or intensify it? In particular, we believe that it is important that urban studies consider the increasingly influential role of evangelicals in the shape

In an echo of Michael Emerson and Christian Smith’s study of evangelicals and the racialized society (detailed vividly in *Divided by Faith*), **Mark T. Mulder** and **James K. A. Smith** attempt to trace the history and literature concerning evangelicals and their relationship to the city. While there exists an interesting literature about general urban antipathy in the U.S., the authors contend religion remains a salient and under-examined component within that phenomenon. This paper calls for more theologically-nuanced studies regarding evangelicals, anti-urban bias, and geographical habits. Mr. Mulder is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Mr. Smith is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College.

416 of public policy and investigate any correlation between evangelical theology or spirituality, certain attitudes toward the city, and tendencies toward suburban and exurban settlement patterns. Attending to this particular aspect of culture (religion) must move beyond reactionary caricatures in order to gain a more nuanced picture of the specificity of religious communities and identities. Such nuance, we would suggest, actually might require some attention to the particularities of theology—moving beyond the general sociological accounts of religious communities to more fine-grained attention to detail as would be found in theological accounts. For instance, a general consideration of “religion” as a factor would fail to recognize different accounts of the city that are expressed in Catholic “parish” theology vs. Protestant congregationalism, which tends toward greater mobility and less connection to place.³ Considering the particularities of evangelicalism, as a particular strain of Christian theology and practice, requires a level of more fine-grained analysis beyond generic “religion.”⁴

Prior to World War II, the U.S. maintained a migratory pattern of “urban implosion”—people continued to be drawn toward the city. In other words, people still saw the city, despite its myriad problems, as a place to improve an individual’s

¹Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

²It should be noted that other scholars have made recent calls for more attention to be paid to religion and culture within the field of urban studies. See especially Elaine B. Sharp, “Revitalizing Urban Research: Can Cultural Explanation Bring Us Back from the Periphery?” *Urban Affairs Review* 43 (2007): 58-59 and Meredith Ramsay, “Redeeming the City: Exploring the Relationship Between Church and Metropolis,” *Urban Affairs Review* 33 (1998): 595-626. This echoes Christian Smith’s methodological call for theoretical models and methodologies which can attend to the nuances of culture in Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³Mark T. Mulder, “A Dissonant Faith: The Exodus of Reformed Dutch Churches from the South Side of Chicago” (Dissertation, Urban Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2003); John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Gerald Gamm, *Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

⁴Even the term “evangelical” might still be too generic, since it might wash over important differences; for instance, while both Southern Baptist and Pentecostal congregations would be considered “evangelical” (or “conservative Protestant”) by the standard sociological measures such as the RELTRAD method (see Brian Steensland, J. Z. Park, M. D. Regnerus, L. D. Robinson, W. B. Wilcox, and R. D. Woodberry, “The Measure of American Religion: Toward Improving the State of the Art,” *Social Forces* 79 [2002]: 291-318), when it comes to how Baptists and Pentecostals view urban life and relationship to the city, there seem to be significant differences (see, for example, Yannick Fer, “Pentecôtisme et Modernité Urbaine: Entre Déterritorialisation des Identités et Réinvestissement Symbolique de L’espace Urbain,” *Social Compass* 54 [2007]: 201-210). However, we cannot pursue this further layer of distinction here; instead we will work with the RELTRAD method of identifying evangelicals, which resonates with Emerson and Smith’s definition of evangelicals helpful. In *Divided by Faith*, they outline the following four hallmarks: 1) a high view of scriptural authority, 2) belief in Jesus Christ as the sole route to salvation, 3) an emphasis on a conversion experience (being “born again”), and 4) engagement in evangelism.

or family's quality of life. Since World War II, the U.S. has experienced an era of "urban explosion," during which the dominant migratory pattern has been out from the urban core to the surrounding area. We wonder whether evangelicals are over-represented in this suburban demographic trend. Working through the lens of existing literature on anti-urban bias, this article considers the historical relationship between evangelical piety and suburban development. Then we survey existing literature on possible relationships between evangelical theology/spirituality and both anti-urban bias and suburban/exurban settlement patterns. We conclude by identifying the need for further research that would analyze evangelical literature on "the city" further and generate new data on the geographical habits of evangelicals.

A History of General Urban Antipathy in the United States

An ethos of suspicion of the city has a longstanding pedigree in the United States. A quarter of a century ago, Alfred Kazin in *The American Heritage* wrote a seminal article entitled "Fear of the City: 1783-1983." Therein he contended that before American cities even existed, "the best American minds were either uninterested in cities or were suspicious of them."⁵ Kazin went on to craft a list of great American thinkers and their antipathy toward the city. He noted that Thomas Jefferson contended that cities corrupted virtue, that Ralph Waldo Emerson cited city crowds as obstructions to the perfect life, that John Adams (along with his son, John Quincy) hated Boston, and that Herman Melville despised New York. The persistence of an anti-urban bias continues in the United States well into the 21st century. The antipathy for the urban that these early men of stature exhibited continues to manifest in the contemporary United States; as John Friedmann has noted, "Americans have been overtaken by fear.... We seek refuge inside walled compounds. And we continue to flee from central cities into leafy suburbs in hopes of escaping the shadowy monsters of our dark imaginings."⁶ In short, the sentiment toward urban antipathy has both historical and contemporary resonance. What follows is an overview of significant contentions as to why anti-urban bias has been such a persistent feature within U.S. culture.

In his classic tome on place, *Topophilia*, eminent geographer Yi-Fu Tuan discussed the anti-urban ethos of the United States. He contended that the dominant myths in the American psyche were profoundly nonurban. He went on to note that the prevailing spatial metaphors in the U.S. have had to do with the West, gardens, the frontier, and the wilderness. Tuan claimed that such sensibilities manifested as a protest against urban Europe's sophistication and corruption. For many Americans, the city represented "temptations and iniquities."⁷ In fact, that perception

⁵Alfred Kazin, "Fear of the City: 1783-1983," *The American Heritage* (1983): 14.

⁶John Friedmann, "City of Fear or Open City?" *Journal of the American Planning Association* 3 (2002): 237.

⁷Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New York:

became so entrenched that Americans tend to see the city reflexively as a "Babylon- den of iniquity, atheistic and un-American, impersonal and destructive."⁸ Tuan insisted that such an anti-urban sensibility had a foundation in the pervasiveness of the agrarian myth. That is, because virtue and sensibility were found in the rural farmers who provided the backbone of the country, it was assumed that the oppo- site features must be nurtured in the city.

Some authors have contended that the U.S. differs from Europe in urban per- ceptions because historically this country has done such a pitiable job of building civilized cities. In *The Urban Wilderness: A History of the American City*, Sam Bass Warner noted that in the United States the source of aversion towards the city lay with a long tradition of endless failures "to build and maintain humane cities."⁹ He contended that for U.S. cities, there never existed a romantic notion of the "good old days." Instead, based on his work studying historical Boston and Philadelphia as well as contemporary planning, Bass Warner argued that people in the U.S. had no sense of urban history. That is, "they live in one of the world's most urbanized countries as if it were a wilderness in both time and space."¹⁰ Because of a lack of historical perception, Americans panic about the state of cities in the U.S.; if they knew the processes that gave birth to the present condition, they might have a better, more reasoned understanding.

In *Dead Cities*, Mike Davis made a similar contention.¹¹ Davis noted that in the U.S. the development of the city has been a quest for a calculable and safe bour- geois environment. In an apparent paradox, cities came to be seen as the epitome of insecurity. Davis asserted that the source of the problem is twofold. First, Ameri- can preoccupation with safety and technology actually led to bewildering com- plexity and vulnerability that ruptured to the surface most recently on September 11, 2001. Second, the dependence on market capitalism in the U.S. engendered a domination of, rather than cooperation with, nature.

Likewise, in her seminal book about cities, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs addressed the topic of fear within the urban U.S. as related to design. She noted that "today barbarism has taken over many city streets, or people fear it has, which comes to the same thing in the end."¹² She went on to note that people in the U.S. could address the perceived savagery of the city simply by de- signing better places within the cities that will invite citizens to spend more time in them. In this way, Jacobs utilized the impression of unsafe cities to promote urban design that cultivated activity and civic participation. She insisted that the prob-

Columbia University Press, 1974), 193.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Sam Bass Warner, *The Urban Wilderness: A History of the American City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 3.

¹⁰Ibid., 4.

¹¹Mike Davis, *Dead Cities* (New York: The New Press, 2002).

¹²Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), 30.

lem resided in public places “custom made for easy crime.”¹³ In the end, Warner’s, Davis’, and Jacobs’ contentions typify the notion that the crafting of inhospitable urban environments has been pivotal in the maintenance of urban distrust in the United States.

In his classic *Crabgrass Frontiers: The Suburbanization of the United States*, Kenneth Jackson posited that U.S. anti-urbanism had less to do with shoddy design and more to do with the mythical ideal of the pastoral American suburbs. Jackson insisted that as the suburbs drew off the wealthy, core cities became associated with myriad social problems. Throughout the 20th century, as suburbs solidified their position as the favored abode of the middle and upper classes, the core city became “identified in the popular mind with poor people, crime, minorities, deterioration, older dwellings, and abandoned buildings.”¹⁴ In the U.S., “cities became identified with fear and danger rather than with glamour and pleasure.”¹⁵ Jackson utilized Memphis as an example: in the mid-1980s the city had halved its murder rate from mid-1910s; yet in 1915 the central business district bustled with vibrancy while in 1985 it provoked only thoughts of quiet, dismal desertion. In other words, Jackson correlated present fears of the city with post-World War II suburban proliferation that had deleterious consequences for adjacent cities. But in this case, one can see that such fears are, we might say, “irrational;” they are not tethered to evidence, but rather float as a perception.

Some experts have posited that the language used by government leaders in addressing post-World War II urban problems actually exacerbated urban paranoia. In a 2002 article that appeared in the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Jennifer S. Light contended that for many in the U.S. the fear of anarchic cities became so palpable that government leaders slowly began adopting militaristic language when referencing urban problems. She offered a quote from a 1965 *New York Times Magazine* article written by Kenneth Clark (author of *Dark Ghetto*) by way of example: “The dark ghettos now represent a nuclear stockpile which can annihilate the very foundations of America.”¹⁶ Light went on to note how by the late 1960s, the domestic social welfare issues that so many in the U.S. tended to associate with cities were characterized frequently as needing military-type fixes. Attorney General Robert Kennedy indicated that something akin to the Marshall Plan was necessary to remedy ghetto problems. Milwaukee Mayor Henry Maier insisted on a “domestic equivalent of the military Joint Chiefs of Staff” in order “to win our war against ghetto conditions.”¹⁷ Light also highlighted the federal government programs: the War on Poverty and the War on Crime. In New York City

¹³Ibid., 31.

¹⁴Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontiers: The Suburbanization of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 275.

¹⁵Ibid., 276.

¹⁶Jennifer S. Light, “Urban Security from Warfare to Welfare,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26.3 (2002): 608.

¹⁷Ibid., 609.

during the 1960s, the military language even seeped into discussions about confronting urban blight. Light cited a 1965 report on the Community Renewal Program:

The City's existing housing and renewal programs, to the extent that they can be adapted to change, and both fiscal and human resources, represent our "forces". The "enemy" assumes many guises, including slum housing, poverty, and unequal opportunity.¹⁸

Light concluded that using such language to characterize urban blight as an enemy to be attacked exacerbated anti-urban paranoia in the U.S.¹⁹

Others have brokered such militaristic construals of the city as well. In a 2002 article in *Urban Affairs Review*, Todd Swanstrom posed the question: "Are Fear and Urbanism at War?"²⁰ He contended that a significant portion of public paranoia about cities in the U.S. has had to do with military-type fears. He noted rightly that government policies after World War II sought the decentralization of cities in an effort to lessen the cataclysmic damages ravaged upon dense urban areas in the event of nuclear attack. Swanstrom went on to note that that specific urban fear played a significant role in justifying in the public mind the flight from the city to the suburbs. The density of cities, according to Swanstrom, seems to create the aura of fear: "Wherever large numbers of people are packed into dense urban settings, dangers are heightened. The threats include epidemics, fires, crime, and riots."²¹

Of course, a related fear to that of density: race. Numerous volumes have documented the role of race and racism in creating fear of the city. In their 2001 article, "Fear and Misperception of Los Angeles Urban Space" the authors reported that their research—utilizing cognitive mapping techniques—suggested that the prime reason for urban fear in Los Angeles had less to do with crime and more to do with the presence of large Hispanic and Black populations. That is, respondents in the study tended to perceive their own communities—even if they were high crime areas—as more secure while "constantly projecting fear into their neighbor's backyard, especially where people of another ethnicity live."²² The study found also that the co-presence of African-American and Hispanic populations increased fear above and beyond fear of either group separately. The authors speculated such heightened fear levels had to do with the two groups' "non-Whiteness" and "uneasiness

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 611.

¹⁹In an interview with LAPD officers (most of whom commute to Los Angeles from inland suburbs) after the L.A. riots, one of the officers commented: "You want to fix this city? I say you start out with carpet-bombing, level some buildings, plow all this shit under and start all over again." in Marc Cooper, "LA's State of Siege: City of Angels, Cops from Hell," *Inside the L.A. Riots: What Really Happened—and Why it Will Happen Again* (New York: Institute for Alternative Journalism, 1992): 12-19.

²⁰Todd Swanstrom, "Are Fear and Urbanism at War?" *Urban Affairs Review* 1 (2002): 135-140.

²¹*Ibid.*, 137.

²²Sorin Matie, Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach, and Jack Linchuan Qiu, "Fear and Misperception of Los Angeles Urban Space," *Communication Research* 28 (2001): 452.

due to racial imagery."²³ They wondered as well whether the frequently noted enmity between African American and Hispanic gangs played a role in heightening fear in areas where the two groups comingled.

Beyond the aforementioned article, it should be noted that entire volumes from historians, sociologists, geographers, and political scientists have detailed the significance of race and the role of "white flight" (a term which connotes the aspect of fear) in establishing more recent urban geographic patterns in the United States. Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton have articulated the most comprehensive and compelling contention in *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*.²⁴ The latter have asserted that residential segregation is the foundation of persistent inequality. Moreover, Massey and Denton contended that despite the major 1968 civil rights law that banned discrimination in housing sales and rentals, remarkably little has been modified to disrupt the pattern of African American residential segregation. In addition, that historic obstacle of residential segregation has continued to hold as the root of problems that afflict the impoverished segments of the African American population. According to Massey and Denton, the sources of residential segregation are in the northward migration of African Americans from the South. Such an influx threatened the established social structures of northern cities. In response, initially white homeowners implemented intimidation and residential zoning laws to restrict African American mobility. When such maneuvers failed to stem the tide, many of the white homeowners left for the suburbs. Such a pattern continued throughout the 20th century and into the next.

In a similar vein, in *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*,²⁵ Thomas Sugrue articulated the causes and effects of residential segregation clearly. Despite civil rights legislation, Detroit had a rampant problem with discrimination in the labor market. Sugrue noted that such "complex and pervasive racial discrimination that greeted black laborers in the 'land of hope' ensured that they would suffer disproportionately the effects of deindustrialization and urban decline."²⁶ In the end, the promise of steady and secure employment in the North proved to be an illusion for many African Americans.

As debilitating as restricted employment was, Sugrue made the case that residential segregation became the most "visible and intractable manifestation of ra-

²³Ibid., 454.

²⁴Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

²⁵Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). For information on racial change in New York, Washington, D.C., and St. Louis, respectively see Harold X. Connolly, *A Ghetto Grows in Brooklyn* (New York: New York University Press, 1977); Constance Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967); and James T. Little, Hugh O. Nourse, R. B. Read, and Charles L. Leven, *The Contemporary Neighborhood Succession Process: Lessons in the Dynamic of Decay from the St. Louis Experience* (St. Louis: Institute for Urban and Regional Studies, 1975).

²⁶Ibid., 8.

cial inequality." In many northern metropolises, African Americans "found themselves entrapped in rapidly expanding yet persistently isolated ghettos."²⁷ Federal housing policies played a complicit role, starkly demarcating the residential areas of Detroit and other U.S. cities into bifurcated racial areas. Because of federally instituted lending practices, Sugrue charted an emerging sense of entitlement from whites to state assistance in acquiring property in racially restrictive neighborhoods.

That sense of entitlement, combined with a massive influx of African Americans, proved to be a tinderbox. Ultimately, however, Sugrue argued that the culminating violence of the late 1960s in Detroit operated only as a symptom of an illness that had been festering since World War II: residential segregation and deindustrialization. In his case study of Detroit, Sugrue related the significance of residential segregation in the plight of the U.S. urban north. Based on the compelling findings regarding race and segregation as articulated by Massey and Denton and Sugrue, it remains virtually impossible to overestimate the role of race in fomenting urban fear in the United States.²⁸

Edward Banfield in *The Unheavenly City* acknowledged that in the late 1960s conventional wisdom in the U.S. declared that the nation's cities were in a universal crisis and, indeed, places to be feared. He went on to note that some national leaders declared many U.S. cities uninhabitable, and that the contemporary configurations and structures needed to be destroyed to make way for better, rebuilt urban areas. Banfield allowed that surface examinations of U.S. cities made such contentions somewhat plausible. After all, numerous urban areas in multiple regions in the country had square miles of slums, blight, and chaotic sprawl. However, Banfield also insisted that a deeper study revealed that "the overwhelming majority of city dwellers live more comfortably and conveniently than ever before."²⁹ Then Banfield went on to name and debunk a number of perceived urban crises: congestion, decline of the central business district, revenue shortfalls, poverty, inadequate housing, and so forth. He contended that these problems may

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸For more on the issue of race in the United States, see William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978) and *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996); Stephen Steinberg, *Turning Back: The Retreat from Racial Justice in American Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); Howard Winant, *Racial Conditions: Politics, Theory, Comparisons* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Thomas D. Boston, *Race, Class, and Conservatism* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1988). For more on the development of a "white identity," see David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, 2nd ed. (New York and London: Verso, 1999); Matthew Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995); and Theodore W. Allen, "The Invention of the White Race," in *Racial Oppression and Social Control*, Vol. 1, ed. Nicholas Canny (London: Verso, 1994).

²⁹Edward Banfield, *The Unheavenly City: The Nature and Future of Our Urban Crisis* (New York: Little & Brown, 1970), 3.

have continued to exist to varying degrees in U.S. cities but that, in fact, the situation had improved in recent years. Banfield contended that the focus on an “urban crisis” in the U.S. had more to do with rising expectations and less to do with reality. To put it another way: “Although things have been getting better absolutely, they have been getting worse relative to what [people in the U.S.] think they should be.”³⁰ In the end, Banfield asserted that though prevalent, any alleged crisis in U.S. cities had little credibility upon close examination and apprehension of historical context.

Echoing the contentions of Banfield, Steve Macek, in *Urban Nightmares: The Media, the Right, and the Moral Panic Over the City*, emphasized that much of the ethos of urban fear in the U.S. has little grounding in reality. Instead, Macek insisted that the anxiety that surrounded the U.S. city in the last generation was a manifestation of a toxic mix of conservative political machinations and mass media malfeasance. In short, since the Reagan era, mainstream and conservative politicians and their constituency (read: largely middle-class white suburban- and ex-urbanites) have “turned decisively against aid to cities and their neediest inhabitants.”³¹ Funding that targeted the urban poor areas was slashed under a discourse that blamed the minority residents for their deprivation and isolation. According to Macek, the media compounded the problem by validating the conservative narrative and, in turn, amplifying the urban antipathy. As evidence, Macek cited numerous prominent headlines and magazine covers and popular movies that portrayed U.S. cities as lawless slums and, subsequently, “fanned the flames of the panic over the urban crisis.”³²

In sum, the historical narrative of urban aversion in the U.S. includes wide-ranging contentions: poor design, the agrarian myth, density, a militaristic ethos, political neglect, media inflammation, segregation, and racism—among others. To be sure, all the latter played particular roles in particular contexts throughout U.S. history. However, we also posit that a nuanced exploration of anti-urban bias in the U.S. must include a close analysis of the function of religion and faith in that dynamic.

The Role of Religion of Fostering Urban Antipathy in the United States

In spite of arguments like Banfield’s, the general suspicion of the city has a long history. Sociologists Roger Finke and Rodney Stark document that the notion has been articulated with both religious and social scientific accents. On the one hand, they cite John Lancaster Spaulding’s 1880 evaluation: “In the city neither the rich nor the poor can realize the infinite charm of the Christian ideal. The heart is

³⁰Ibid., 19.

³¹Steve Macek, *Urban Nightmares: The Media, the Right, and the Moral Panic Over the City* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xii.

³²Ibid., 198.

troubled there."³³ On the other hand, they cited a 1960s trend among sociologists of religion (such as Peter Berger) who also saw the "cosmopolitanism" of the city as inherently secularizing.³⁴ But Finke and Stark contest such a picture, documenting the ways in which "the growth of cities increased religious participation."³⁵ On the basis of available data they also question the common assumption that Protestantism is inherently rural.³⁶

However, their survey of available census data (the earliest sources cited are from 1890, the most recent from the 1960s—all before the realities of suburbia really took hold) is driven primarily by an interest to contest the "secularization thesis." Close attention to detail finds that they tend to blur distinctions between towns, villages, and cities. In addition, their conclusions are shaped by their assumption of a consumer-choice paradigm and their celebration of the religious "marketplace," leading them to claim, for instance, that "the more important reason" that "religious mobilization" is higher in cities and town (beyond the simple factor of proximity and ease of access) "is that people in cities, and even in small towns, are more likely to have access to a church that is right for them"³⁷—a particularly Protestant, free church and capitalist assumption. While they rightly note that available data contests the common picture of cities as inherently less religious, their explanation of this in terms of an urban pluralism energizing religious consumption is highly contestable.

Is religion ever a factor relative to "fear of the city" and anti-urban bias? Does religion mitigate or intensify this unique American phobia? Or do some particular religions and/or spiritualities contribute to fear of the city, while perhaps others counter it?³⁸ We are interested particularly in whether evangelical³⁹ spirituality,

³³Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in the Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 201.

³⁴This was part of a wider school of thought in urban sociology, which tended to see the city core in primarily negative terms. This, however, has changed significantly. As Becky Nicolaides has suggested recently in her survey of urban studies, "hell moved from the city to the suburbs." Becky Nicolaides, "How Hell Moved from the City to the Suburbs: Urban Scholars and Changing Perceptions of Authentic Community," in *The New Suburban History*, eds. Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 80-98.

³⁵Finke and Stark, 201.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 203-204.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 202.

³⁸Again, we can anticipate problems with the RELTRAD method, which fails to distinguish Pentecostals from evangelicals—a distinction which, on this point, might be very significant. For example, Harvie M. Conn notes that Holiness traditions had "a strong urban orientation" which contributed to their growth, particularly among the urban poor (see Harvie M. Conn, *The American City and the Evangelical Church: An Historical Overview* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994], 90). But the RELTRAD coding would not recognize this distinction. Also see Ankica Marinovic Bobinac, "Urbanost Pentekostalnih Zajednica: Socio-demografska Obilježja Zagrebackih Pentekostalaca [Urbanity of Pentecostal Communities: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Zagreb Pentecostals]," *Sociologija Sela* 37 (1999): 407-427 and Yannick Fer, "Pentecôtisme et Modernité Urbaine: Entre Déterritorialisation des Identities et Réinvestissement Symbolique de l'Espace Urbain," *Social Compass* 54 (2007): 201-210.

³⁹For our purposes here, generally we accept the RELTRAD method of defining evangelicals

practice, and theology (especially ecclesiology) affect attitudes regarding the city.

Do evangelicals exhibit the same general fear of the city that has characterized U.S. culture? Less? More? If evangelicals tend to exhibit a heightened anti-urban bias, and tend to be over-represented in suburban and exurban contexts, is there something about evangelical theology that might explain this? Historical research suggests a link: the centrality of “the family” in evangelical theology and spiritual practice, along with theological underpinnings attached to “the American dream” or particular visions of “the good life.”

“Particularly Evangelical”: Historical Considerations

Eminent urban historian Robert Fishman has suggested a historical link between particularly evangelical religious commitments and the historical emergence of suburbia. Fellow historian Margaret Marsh noted, “Fishman’s study of the origins of the Anglo-American suburb underscores the idea that suburbs emerged from a particular set of beliefs—an ideology that grew out of evangelical religion and ideas about the ‘closed domesticated nuclear family.’”⁴⁰ According to Fishman, the emergence of single-class suburbs was motivated by the desire of an emerging bourgeois class in eighteenth-century England to segregate itself from the squalor of the poor.⁴¹ However, this was compounded by a marked change in the configuration of the bourgeois family. Drawing on the work of Lawrence Stone, Fishman equated the emergence of the bourgeois family with a new social configuration in which the nuclear, “immediate” family becomes “the primary and overwhelming focus of its members’ lives.” Such a “modern” family is “not a natural biological unit that has remained constant through history but [rather] the product of a long historical evolution.”⁴² In earlier social configurations, the family was “‘open’ in the sense that ‘outside’ influences from neighbors and kin outweighed internal ties among the ‘nucleus’ of faith, mother, and children.”⁴³ But by the 18th century, a new, more intense configuration of the family emerges (which Fishman took to be a reflection of a wider emphasis on increased personal autonomy encouraged by merchant capitalism): “The result was Stone’s ‘closed, domesticated nuclear family;’ closed in around itself, separated from its environment, focused especially on mutual intimacy and on child raising.”⁴⁴

It is this emergence of the “closed” family and the “closed” home which generated a conflict with the basic principles of “the city.” And this tension, according to Fishburn, was amplified by “the Evangelical movement” which fueled this ver-

as “conservative Protestants.”

⁴⁰Margaret Marsh, “Urban View and Suburban Landscapes: A Twenty-first-century Assessment of the History of Metropolitan Development,” *Journal of Urban History* 33 (2007): 650.

⁴¹Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 33.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., 34.

sion of the "family." Thus he called evangelicals "the ideologists of the closed, domesticated nuclear family." Any threat to the family was considered a threat to faith, and for evangelicals such as Wilberforce, "[c]hief among the enemies of the family was the city."⁴⁵ Home to all sorts of distractions and temptations, the city was villainized and renounced as hostile to domestic sanctity though the evangelical merchants never saw fit to renounce their connection to the economic revenue to be found in the urban centers.⁴⁶ In addition, evangelicals encouraged a view of women and domestic life that encouraged the development of the home as sequestered enclave of righteousness. Dolores Hayden has documented the ways in which the American dream of the detached, single-family home in the suburbs has been consistently infused with and fueled by particular religious ideologies:

From the beginning, the dream conflated piety and gender-stereotyped "family values." The ideology of female domesticity, developed in the United States during the same era when suburban borderlands were first attracting settlers, elevated the religious significance of woman's work, defined as bearing and rearing children in the strong moral atmosphere of a Protestant home set in a natural landscape. The single-family home was invested with church-like symbols as a sacred space where women's work would win a reward in heaven.⁴⁷

She goes on to note real estate advertisements that built a symbolic connection between the suburbs and either Eden or heaven.⁴⁸

In sum, these factors engendered a "deep reaction against the metropolis as a proper setting for family life."⁴⁹ This diagnosis of the ills of the city, coupled with the ideal of a domestic Eden, found embodiment in the development of Clapham

⁴⁵Ibid., 34-35.

⁴⁶Granted, this was coupled with a desire to escape the increasing filth, stench, and disease of the industrial city. However, while the Clapham sect responded with a strategy of flight, later northern Protestants in Birmingham, Manchester and elsewhere responded to these conditions by developing programs to transform the city. Thus, one can see a contrast between the suburban gospel of domestic bliss associated with Clapham and what Tristram Hunt calls the "municipal Gospel" of Joseph Chamberlain (Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* [New York: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Company, 2005], 313-381). See also Iain J. Shaw, *High Calvinism in Action: Calvinism and the City, Manchester and London, c. 1810-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Conn noted that in the United States, the rapid expansion of dispensationalist theology at the turn of the 20th century—a vision of the end times which posited an increasingly evil social order (now articulated in *Left Behind* novels)—eliminated any impetus for social change. "The world and the present age belonged to Satan, and lasting reform was impossible until Jesus returned to destroy Satan's power and set up the perfect kingdom." (Conn, *The American City and the Evangelical Church*), 61-62. As dispensationalist theology became evangelical orthodoxy through the 20th century, it undercut any possible embrace of a "municipal Gospel." Any attention given to the urban core was energy expended to "save souls." Our thanks to Deanna Smith for helpful conversations on this point.

⁴⁷Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2003), 6.

⁴⁸Ibid., 6-8.

⁴⁹Ibid., 50.

in Surrey as a prototypically evangelical commuter suburb.⁵⁰ This was celebrated in the lyric of one of its inhabitants, the Puritan poet William Cowper who, in praising domestic bliss, proclaimed:

God made the country, and man made the town.
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life hold out to all, should most abound
And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves?⁵¹

In Clapham, the evangelical ideal expressed itself in an architecture that came to be imitated widely, particularly in the U.S. (which is not surprising, given the deeply Protestant—yea Puritan—ethos of the American dream).

Fishman went on to argue that it was this English evangelical influence on figures such as Catharine Beecher (daughter of Lyman Beecher), Andrew Jackson Downing, and Calvert Vaux that gave birth to new American attitudes that were the catalyst for American suburbia.⁵² Though “Beecher was never a publicist for suburbia as such,” her 1841 *Treatise on Domestic Economy* “was crucial in spreading the Evangelical idea of the sanctified home, which, as in England, led directly to suburbia in America.”⁵³

It would be easy enough to extrapolate theoretically from this historical link between evangelical emphases on the family and the emergence of the suburbia in our contemporary context, where evangelicals continue to “focus on the family” and the freedoms of mercantile (now consumer) capitalism. But does there exist social scientific data to corroborate this historical intuition? What data do we have regarding any correlation between evangelical spirituality and suburban location?

Where Are Evangelicals? And Why?

While fundamentalism was considered a “rural” religion,⁵⁴ evangelicalism has often been considered a quintessentially suburban religious phenomenon. Fishman’s historical account would lead us to anticipate such. But does research bear this out? There are perhaps two ways to pose the question. On the one hand, one could ask how religious, or more specifically evangelical, the suburbs are. On this score,

⁵⁰What became suburban homes were originally weekend retreats. As they became primary residences, the London townhouses gradually became “offices,” spaces devoted only to the commercial—and hence vacant at night and on weekends. This was a separation of home and work, which, up to that point, had shared the same space (Fishman, 51-62).

⁵¹William Cowper, “The Task,” 1785, Book III, accessed at <<http://www.ccel.org/c/cowper/works/task.htm>>

⁵²Fishman, 121.

⁵³Ibid., 122-123.

⁵⁴Gregory Singleton contests this somewhat in “Fundamentalism and Urbanization: A Quantitative Critique of Impressionistic Interpretations,” in *The New Urban History*, ed. Leo Schnore (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 205-227.

research seems to indicate that suburban Americans "are no more prone to religiosity than their urban counterparts."⁵⁵ On the other hand, we might ask how suburban evangelicals are.

Despite an explosion of social scientific interest in evangelicals over the past decade, questions of place and locale, particularly at the level of fine-grained distinctions between urban, suburban, and exurban, rarely are asked in such studies. However, there is some research that suggests evangelicals tend to be located more often in suburban contexts. While we do not have data about where evangelical parishioners live, we do have some data about where evangelical congregations are located. Changes in the urban landscape over the 20th century find expression in changes in the religious landscape at the same time.

Etan Diamond's study of religion in post-war metropolitan Indianapolis shows that mainline denominations simply followed the flow of their parishioners and responded systemically to the shift of population to the suburbs, with significant demographic research informing plans for new churches.⁵⁶ "By 1979, mainline Presbyterians were abandoning two churches in the city for each one organized in the suburbs."⁵⁷ And there seems to have been little deliberation about the justice of such development, though he does note a Methodist study which viewed the population shift both positively and negatively, worried about "a tendency 'to flee from the areas where housing is deteriorating and where new population groups are moving in.'"⁵⁸ But for the most part, mainline Protestant expansion into the sub-

⁵⁵Conn, *The American City and the Evangelical Church*, 98; Dennison Nash, "And a Little Child Shall Lead Them: A Test of an Hypothesis that Children Were the Source of the American 'Religious Revival,'" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 7 (1968): 238-240; William M. Newman, "Religion in Suburban America," in *The Changing Face of the Suburbs*, ed. Barry Schwartz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 267-268; and Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

⁵⁶Etan Diamond, *Souls of the City: Religion and the Search for Community in Postwar America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 30-33.

⁵⁷Conn, 142, though he argues also that mainline Protestantism "was not as quick to desert the urban setting" (100). But as noted below, this may be a factor of bureaucratic sluggishness rather than social commitment. The situation of Roman Catholicism is a little more complicated, but also follows the trend: on Catholics and "white flight," Diamond notes in his study of metropolitan Indianapolis that in the three years immediately following World War II, the Catholic Church founded nine new parishes on all sides of the city; five more were added in the 1950s and four more in the 1960s (29-30). However, he does not provide membership statistics so it is difficult to engage what percent of the Catholic population was worshipping in suburban parishes during this period. But the founding of a parish is indicative that sufficient numbers of Catholics lived in the area to support a parish priest. This is corroborated by F. J. Perella who recounts that "like many mainline Protestants, Roman Catholics moved by the millions to the suburbs." See F. J. Perella Jr., "Roman Catholic Approaches to Urban Ministry, 1945-1985," in *Churches, Cities, and Human Community: Urban Ministry in the United States, 1945-1985*, ed. C. J. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996). Diamond also notes the challenges that the Catholic church, unlike Protestant congregations, faced from suburban zoning boards (40-46).

⁵⁸Diamond, 28.

urbs was intentional and planned,⁵⁹ including recommendations that new churches “not purchase anything smaller than a five- to ten-acre lot to provide ample parking space and room for expansion.”⁶⁰ Thus, mainline church suburban expansion already anticipated what would become the suburban church “campus” of the 1980s.

However, mainline expansion into the suburbs was governed generally by a principle of “comity”: this was a principle of non-competition that established rules for distributing churches equally throughout the suburbs.⁶¹ Comity committees—interdenominational “federations” of mainline bodies—would plot new suburban churches according to this rule. But this principle was compromised, particularly by “sects” (for example, free church, non-denominational, and evangelical congregations—Diamond calls them “independent congregations”) who would “walk in without comity assignment.”⁶² Church polity (principles of government and organization) was a factor in this development. Mainline denominations tended to have episcopal structures that were more centralized and bureaucratic, which translated into intentional but slow suburban growth; conservative Protestant groups, however, prized congregational autonomy which minimized bureaucratic processes and enabled particular congregations to plant “daughter” churches quickly (and without concern about comity).⁶³ As one can imagine, this generated significant tension. “One mainline Protestant church consultant complained that conservative Protestant ‘sects’ and ‘cults’ were ‘positively war-like in their aggressiveness’ to found new suburban churches.”⁶⁴ So while comity was a principle of non-competition between mainline denominations, comity committees slowed the process of church planting in the suburbs, thus creating a gap for evangelical churches to fill.

And fill it they did. Diamond’s report on suburban growth in Indianapolis found that of the 191 new congregations formed in the Indianapolis suburbs between 1941 and 1970, “58 percent were affiliated with some sort of conservative Protestant, Pentecostal, or Holiness tradition. In contrast, only 29 percent of the new suburban churches were affiliated with mainline Protestant denominations.”⁶⁵

⁵⁹Ibid., 34.

⁶⁰Ibid., 33.

⁶¹Ibid., 24-25, 33-35.

⁶²Ibid., 35.

⁶³Ibid., 36.

⁶⁴Ibid., 36. Diamond noted that mainline Protestants also saw evangelical growth in the suburbs as incongruous, since they took such conservative Protestantism to be a rural, Southern phenomenon, whereas they envisioned the suburbs as cosmopolitan, inclusive, and “middle-of-the-road” (36-37). Mainline Protestants seemed to view the suburbs as something of a liberal, mainline Eden, even assuming that re-location to the suburbs would engender its own kind of conversion: “William Whyte declared in *The Organization Man* that ‘acclimation to suburbia also stimulates switches in religious affiliations, and the couple from, say, a small Ozark town is likely to discard their former fundamentalist allegiance to become Methodists or Presbyterians’” (37).

⁶⁵Ibid., 37.

Thus the particularities of 'free church,' nondenominational polity that characterized evangelical churches, would be one factor to explain the growth of evangelicalism in the suburbs.

As Diamond observed,

[T]he new suburban congregations took a highly internal attitude toward community. Community was found within the walls of the church, and if the view turned outward, it was to people who were similar to themselves and who shared the same general set of cultural ideals and economic aspirations. As such, congregations tended to focus their community-building activities less on serving a needy population than on creating opportunities for friendship and interaction.⁶⁶

Hence the birth of suburban church "programming" as a "conscious effort to create community among families whose sense of "place" and "belonging" had most likely been disrupted in their relocation to suburbia."⁶⁷

Echoing the origins of suburbia in Clapham, Diamond notes that in an American context in the middle of the 20th century, "if one theme ran consistently through the new suburban church, it was 'family.' Across the nation, the suburban family had taken on iconic status since it was seen as the fundamental unit of American society and the bedrock of American democracy."⁶⁸ Though Diamond does not draw this conclusion, one might suggest that mainline predictions about suburbia went wrong precisely because they underestimated this organizing principle of the family, and thus failed to anticipate that suburbanites found evangelical, conservative Protestant congregations to be those focused most intentionally on the family, and hence fortifying a larger American story. The narrow demographic slice that occupied the suburbs in the 1940s and 50s (overwhelmingly white and middle class) would, by the 1960s and 70s, come to see the urban core in distinct ways. "To suburbanites, the city was the 'other.'"⁶⁹

More recent research confirms this suburban center-of-gravity for evangelicalism. A 2004 study, "America's Evangelicals," conducted by John Green and Anna Greenberg, found that 25.4% of evangelicals surveyed lived in rural areas, whereas 31.9% lived in areas considered "urban," with the remaining 42.7% living in "suburban" and "exurban" social environments. Thus a significant percentage of evangelicals live in suburban/exurban contexts. However, when these numbers are considered with respect to race, the picture has notable characteristics: only 18.4% of white evangelicals live in urban areas, while 51.8% live in suburban/exurban contexts (just 29.8% live in rural areas). The situation is starkly different for black and Hispanic evangelicals: 68.9% of black evangelicals and 70.3% of Hispanic evangelicals live in urban areas, while only 18.5% of black evangelicals

⁶⁶Ibid., 53-54.

⁶⁷Ibid., 54.

⁶⁸Ibid., 54.

⁶⁹Ibid., 135.

and 14% of Hispanic evangelicals live in suburban or exurban contexts.⁷⁰ The study also found an interesting contrast with other Christian traditions: more mainline Protestants, like evangelicals, live in suburban and exurban contexts rather than either urban or rural environments (45.5%), whereas more Roman Catholics (47.9%) live in urban areas.

In a study of Philadelphia congregations, the authors found that Catholic congregations were more likely to be “resident” congregations—that is, congregations in which 50% or more of members live within ten blocks of the congregation’s building. “In fact, being a Catholic congregation was by far the biggest predictor (odds ratio of 3.9) of being a resident congregation, despite some relaxation of the requirement that Catholics attend the church within their parish.”⁷¹ In contrast, Baptist, Pentecostal and nondenominational Christian congregations (all considered “evangelical” by RELTRAD) made up more than half of “city commuter” congregations.⁷² However, the study cannot tell us whether evangelicals tend to suburban locations because the Philadelphia Congregations Census was restricted to congregations within the city limits. Thus the study only considers suburban residents who commute to urban congregations.

Finally, a study by Kimberly Karnes and her colleagues concerning the spatial distribution of megachurches—which are overwhelmingly evangelical—fails to provide information regarding any correlation between evangelicalism and anti-urban bias/suburban settlement because of a fuzzy and un-nuanced use of the term “urban.”⁷³ In other words, the study flies a bit too high and thus recognizes no significant difference between urban and suburban locales but groups entire metro areas as “urban.”⁷⁴

Conclusion: Evangelical Attitudes Regarding “the City”

Just how do evangelicals tend to think of “the city?” What images and associations does the “urban” evoke for them? To date, we have no social scientific data on this. “Place” has not been a lens for sociological research on evangelicalism, or

⁷⁰Accessed at <<http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/EVANGEL.asp>> Consideration of regional differences are illuminating and perhaps surprising. For instance, in the “Deep South,” more evangelicals live in suburban/exurban contexts (37.4%) than rural (26.1%), whereas in the “West North Central” region, 45.4% of evangelicals live in rural areas and only 37.1% live in suburban/exurban contexts.

⁷¹Jill Witmer Sinha, Amy Hillier, Ram A. Cuaan, and Charlene C. McGrew, “Proximity Matters: Exploring Relationships Among Neighborhoods, Congregations, and the Residential Patterns of Members,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 46 (2007): 251.

⁷²Ibid., 253.

⁷³Kimberly Karnes, W. McIntosh, I. L. Morris, and S. Pearson-Merkowitz, “Mighty Fortresses: Explaining the Spatial Distribution of American Megachurches,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 46 (2007): 261-268.

⁷⁴This same lack of nuance or distinction between urban and suburban makes it difficult to draw conclusions from Gregory Singleton’s study of links between fundamentalism and urbanization.

even American religion more generally. Work in this direction—which we hope to pursue elsewhere—should begin by first engaging a primary source of evangelical thinking about cities: a vast literature on “urban mission” and “urban evangelism,”⁷⁵ as well as a growing evangelical literature on suburban spirituality.⁷⁶ Content analysis of this literature will generate valuable data for determining evangelical perceptions of the city.⁷⁷ But to date, no research has been conducted that investigates evangelical perceptions of the city specifically. This indicates a serious lacuna, despite the flourishing industry of sociological analyses of evangelicalism.

From the perspective of urban studies, a survey of the literature indicates that religion needs to be reassessed as a significant factor with respect to anti-urban bias and the expansion of suburban social arrangements. Particular attention should be given to the increasing social and political role played by U.S. evangelicalism. Our future research aims to explore evangelical literature on “the city” in order to discern the stated evangelical perceptions of urban environments. This needs to be supplemented further by quantitative data on geographical trends in American evangelicalism. In addition, we are engaged in gathering new, qualitative data on how various Christian traditions relate to and inhabit the city (evangelicals, mainline Protestants, Black churches, and Roman Catholics). We see the impetus for such a line of inquiry in the history we have recounted here, which suggests that there are significant relationships between evangelical theology/spirituality, anti-urban bias, and suburban settlement. But to date, research has, for the most part, failed to ask the question about evangelicals and place. This calls for further study. What do evangelicals say and think about the city? What assumptions are embedded in evangelical literature regarding urban ministry? Of course we realize that these may be complicated questions: evangelicals concerned with “urban ministry” may tend to think of the city as a “field ripe unto harvest” for evangelism. But in doing so, might they also generally consider the city as little more than a container for many, many “souls”? We are interested in how evangelicals think about urban social arrangements. Is it possible that evangelicals who are zealous about urban ministry might, in fact, tend to have very negative views about “the city” as

⁷⁵See, for example, Ray Bakke, *The Urban Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987); and David Claerbaut, *Urban Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983).

⁷⁶See, for example, Al Hsu, *The Suburban Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006); and Will & Lisa Samson, *Justice in the Burbs: Being the Hands of Jesus Wherever You Live* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007).

⁷⁷We might consider also how evangelicals spend their money; or more specifically, how evangelical charities and ministries channel their resources, particularly in comparison with other religious groups. For instance, Meredith Ramsay notes that the Campaign for Human Development, a Roman Catholic agency, was named by the Ford Foundation in the 1970s as “the largest and most important source of financial support for community organizing in the United States.” See Meredith Ramsay, “Redeeming the City: Exploring the Relationship Between Church and Metropolis,” *Urban Affairs Review* 33 (1998): 598, cited in F. J. Perella, “Roman Catholic Approaches to Urban Ministry, 1945-1985,” in *Churches, Cities, and Human Community: Urban Ministry in the United States, 1945-1985*, ed. C. J. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 179-211.

a social arrangement (Saved from the city?)? Finally, what is it about evangelical theology and spirituality that possibly fosters either an anti-urban bias and/or an inclination to suburban modes of life? Historical sources, coupled with the data that is available, suggests that evangelicalism may amplify and exacerbate a more generally American anti-urban bias. And this would seem an odd stance for a people whose hope is a coming city (Rev. 21:2).

